

ABM Anglican Board of Mission - Australia **Working for Love, Hope & Justice**

Brisbane Diocese Committee

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Report of the Heads of Committee Conference - Melbourne, 16-18 August, 2013

Delegates from most of the Australian Dioceses attended, but it was noted that in many Diocese there are still no ABM Committees. In some cases the ABM Auxiliary does what it can. In others there is a Diocesan Mission Committee of which an ABM representative is part and in other cases there is only a single representative. The strongest Committees seem to be in Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane. A new Committee was formed last year in Canberra-Goulburn, but there was, unfortunately no representative from there at the Conference.

The conference was opened on the Friday morning, by the Archbishop of Melbourne, The Rt Rev'd Phillip Freier. He spoke about what is happening in Melbourne Diocese and referred us to the 6 strategic directions as outlined in the Diocesan Newspaper.

After housekeeping matters, Christopher Brookes led a discussion on what were the expected outcomes of the conference. Each delegate was asked to write their expected outcomes on small stickers which were arranged in topical groups and dealt with during the conference. I felt this was a useful exercise and a way in which all of our concerns were dealt with. Some items raised included:

- ABM visitors → Organisation → pre-visit info, etc
- What is the position re speakers from ABM visiting Dioceses?
- If a parish support one or more projects, and I am asked by a parishioner "How does ABM judge the results of its projects?" – what should I say?
- Are there particular projects that need more support?
- More of a question? A better distribution of the ABM Project Books
- Raise awareness of ABM esp. projects inc. indigenous ministry (which is very relevant in Gippsland)
- Enlightening Parish Pastoral Districts in the Diocese in selecting mission projects
- Dissemination of information
- Guidelines for relationship between Diocese and ABM
- Overseas (speakers) Partner Churches
- Aluminium signs and door mats
- A snapshot of ABM recent successes and immediate future challenges
- Bank accounts
- Website update
- Outcomes: How to "kick-start" a committee
- Managing committee meetings
- Child protection sense of how ABM is travelling nationally
- Learn from other dioceses about fundraising strategies
- Logos and branding (+ letterhead)
- [Find some more clergy for the Northern Territory] (more of a hoped-for on-the-side outcome!)
- Awareness of what ABM is doing
- Banners and procedures
- An understand of how ABM is helping us achieve Millennium Development Goals

- Hearing what others are doing in their diocese to support ABM
- Ways of engagement with diocese
- Feedback on projects (regularly)
- Latest updates on current projects
- Ideas for getting the ABM message into church schools
- How to encourage clergy to use the website and disseminate info?
- How is the endowment fund building
- Formation of “Friends of ABM” group
- Raise awareness of local mission in other parts of the country

There was reference to the use/purchase of the large advertising banners, the new proposed aluminium signs and doormats. Many asked for regular updates on the projects in the “Project” book, with suggestions that progress be made available on the ABM website. Delegates were reminded that those Parishes etc who had specifically indicated their support for a particular project are sent updates twice a year. Next year there will be many project updates in the Annual Report. It was also advised that as from 1 January next year the ABM website will be re-vamped and “Partners” will be themed. The removal of the weekly “numbers” from the Lenten envelopes was mentioned and we were advised of the huge savings in cost in doing so, and the fact that by so doing there was more freedom in how they were used both by Parishes and agencies as well as individual Parishioners. This action has not resulted in less support for the Lenten Appeal.

After lunch, the ABM Support Officer, Lorraine Forster addressed us. We all expressed our thanks for the work Lorraine was doing in supporting us and in ensuring we had the resources we felt we needed, even though different committees and representatives all seemed to have different expectations. Lorraine spoke about the textured Committee Guidelines, tailored to meet the situation in each Diocese and asked that if they had not been finalized for us to do so. (We have seen the one for our Diocese and adjusted it, but I will need to check whether it was ever made “official”). It was noted that all who make ABM presentations need to have “Blue Cards” or their state equivalent. Lorraine noted the “Can do” attitude of the staff and their working together. Ideas for promoting ABM included the bags from the Philippines, ABM mats and aluminium signs, and napkins with the ABM Logo. Fund raising ideas included musical evenings, art shows, sponsored fun run, selling on e-bay, silent auctions, progressive dinners, computer classes, trivia nights and Christian Karaoke nights.

Michael Robinson spoke on speaking for ABM, including the utilization of people out of the Sydney office, how to assist with Synod presentations, that he is preparing a feedback form that might be completed after each speaking engagement to send to him so he can assist in determining and advising on the best processes, noting those Parishes which are best/worst at supporting ABM, contacting “lost” Parishes with regard to ABM support and reference to “Speakers Corner” on the ABM website.

Some of the items noted in an “around the Dioceses” session were training sessions for Parish Representatives, diocesan/provincial/area dinners, getting into schools, usage of the ABM banners, mission breakfast, as well as the difficulties faced by some.

Christopher Brooks’ session on Communication included **Highlights of 2013** such as

- Continue to clean data
- Improved receipting procedures
- Better contact with supporters
- Understanding our donor-base better
- Income level with 2012
- Increase in numbers gifting ABM in their will
- More communication about projects
- Quicker response launching emergency appeals
- Streamlined electronic communications (on-A-Mission now monthly; Pew Reflections sent 1 month earlier; Facebook page getting good traction; Twitter feed up and running; ACO

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Challenges of 2013 included

- Obtaining visas for visitors
- New Christmas Appeal
- Project information gathering and updates

In the Future ABM looks towards

- New website
- New bequest program
- Better strategic Partner visits
- More speaking engagements fulfilled – targeting new supporter base
- More support for Parish Mission secretaries to do their work
- Strengthening committees to carry out their work
- New imagery database (meta-tagging)
- Stronger volunteer presence with appropriate skill base

The official conference dinner was held at St John's Church in Toorak and was combined with the Annual Melbourne Diocese Committee annual Mission dinner.

The Saturday morning Eucharist was celebrated in the Chapel at Christ Church South Yarra.

John Deane delivered an "ABM Update" beginning with a brief history of ABM from the 1850s to the present, noting many of the changes that took place on the way. Some of the points he made:

- Mission comes out of God's love. It is a gift expressed through partnerships and building respected relationships. It is about transformation of all involved in the process who are changed in some way, especially growing and learning
- The 5 marks of mission help us see and express missional attributes to respond in accordance with partnerships.
- The re-structuring of 1999-2000 gave the opportunity for change to an appropriate structure to deliver what is needed.
- ABM is incorporated as a company with two committees - Community Development and Church to Church
- The Board (see later) is involved in how we create and manage the outcomes with regard to the engagement of the Australian Church, which differs from Diocese to Diocese.
- ABM is recognized by Government as an agency for its development work and as such has to be compliant with such bodies as AUSAID, Children's Commission, Tax Department.
- ABM has been using "Anglicans in Development" for its development work and engages in partnerships through A.I.D., the Church to Church Programme, pilgrimages, the Encounter programme and service work with partners through schools.
- Partnerships are with churches not countries, and while there are no current partnerships with Churches in Japan, Fiji, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, for example, there are still ongoing relationships.
- The Anglican Alliance, based in London, is trying to improve and link the use of resources and responses by developmental bodies throughout the Anglican Communion, in 5 regions, without Church politics.
- Reconciliation is really a NATSIAC responsibility and while the Church is not in a position to do much as yet, we must ensure this continues. Malcolm McCallum has been brought in to try to raise the profile of the programme.

Claire Barrett-Leonard, Deputy Chair of the ABM Board, spoke about the work of the Board, noting:

The Main purposes of the Board include:

Governance (Bringing together a diverse range of skills and experience is an important aspect of good governance and a pre-requisite for a constructive board.)

Role, (Our Primary Role is Governance rather than management, To work with and support the ED Determining the strategic and work plans by the way of sign off/ approval.)

Strategic planning (The board is responsible for ensuring that a strategic plan is developed and maintained. We ensure that parameters are set within which strategies can be developed We can refuse approval of strategies that are too risky or non-compliant)

Policies (Operational policies are often developed by the executive and approved or amended by the board. The board can request the development of a new policy and in a sense, 'policies are an expression of the values and perspectives that underlie organisational actions' and through the development, adoption and review of governance policies, the ABM board shows its character. Board members are bound by governance policies once adopted and this enables the board to speak with one voice.

Finance (The director is responsible for the day to day financial management of ABM. We have finance and investment committees, who present their reports to the board for acceptance. We oversee a number of budgets, and income expenditure from other sources – such as AUSaid)

board members (Board member conduct: Act honestly and in good faith at all times and in the interest of our partners. Carry out duties in a lawful manner. Avoid conflicts of interest as much as possible Be diligent and Devote time for board meetings – inc preparation. Observe confidentiality of information Recognize the moral and legal duties of the role. Be loyal to the board – ie stick with decisions once made.

Composition and size:

The board is currently at about 12 people, and members are nominated either as a 'expert' , or because they represent a province. An analysis of the boards strengths and weaknesses can often help to identify the right person needed. Terms are for 3 years

Current board members are

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall President of the Board / Primate of the ACofA

Justice Richard Refshaughe - Chair of the ABM Board, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory 2008; Chancellor, Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; Adjunct Professor, Australian National University and the University of Canberra. Australian Volunteers International. Duties include communication: act as spokesperson for the board, and is the main contact with the ED - Meeting management – leading meetings, setting the tone for the meeting, ensuring complete records of the meetings. - delegation – the chair can choose to delegate aspects of his roles – but he remains accountable

Claire Barrett-Lennard Provincial Representative WA, Dev Com

Arthur Copeman Diocese of Newcastle.

John Deane ED, ABM; Vice President (Finance), ACFID Anglican Alliance

Bishop Chris Jones CEO - Anglicare Tasmania; Partnerships (C2C)

Mr Stephen Matthew

Mr Philip Miller

Mr Ian Morgan - newly appointed chair of ABM's Finance Committee.

Richard Refshauge - Mr Christopher Roper, Chair Dev Com

Mrs Jan Still – media and communications expert!

Bishop Garry Weatherill - Bishop of Ballarat (VIC)

At any one meeting of the board – these are the types of things you'd see on the agenda:

The establishment of ABM's strategic direction and priorities

The monitoring of organisational and partner performance

Addressing any issues which have been identified in evaluating projects or partner relationships

The approval of policies, procedures and organisational governance procedures

Defining key relationships with other individual or organisational stakeholders

The development of performance targets, as appropriate for the Executive Director.

Provide advice regarding risk management

Evaluating the boards own effectiveness

Legislative and legal compliance – and this is a big one!

Isabel Robinson outlined the ABM and the Amity Foundation Community Development in China Project

- ABM officially began a partnership with The Amity Foundation in 2009, at the suggestion of Act for Peace
- Project funding for 3 year Ethnic Women's Health Project in Yunnan Province began in 2010

Ethnic Women's Health Project

- Located in Zhangfeng Township, Longchuan County, Yunnan Province.
- Majority of women involved are of Dai ethnic minority

Purpose of Project

- Promote local women's awareness of health care
- Change behaviour
- Build up local Women's Associations to be health advocates within their communities

Results

- 39 health workers and health volunteers trained in HIV prevention; reproductive health knowledge; diabetes/hypertension
- 655 village women trained in women's reproductive health knowledge
- 854 village women trained in how to have a healthy pregnancy
- 500 women received physical check-ups. Of these women, 77% were shown to have some form of gynaecological problem and could take follow up action
- Three health information bulletin boards set up in Guangshan, Nongguan and Huangxiang villages
- 300 people attended public information campaign on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness
- 85 sanitary toilets installed in 3 villages, with poorest households given priority
- The project was driven by the Women's Association in each village. Through the project, these associations grew in confidence and knowledge, and are able to continue health promotion work on their own

After an informal evening meal on the Saturday, members attended Church on Sunday at All Saints, East Kilda; Christ Church, South Yarra; St Martin's, Hawksburn or St Stephen's, Mt Waverley.

Following lunch and session reflecting on the conference, the conference concluded at 2 p.m. on the Sunday.

I found the whole conference worthwhile. Besides the usual opportunity to discuss idea with other representatives, I appreciated the idea of listing our expected outcomes. Almost all of these were solved during the conference, with just a few for Christopher Brooks to follow-up. I also especially appreciated John Deane's session on the ABM update and the outline of the form and work of the Board and its relationship to executive section in Sydney and the Dioceses.

I wish to express my appreciation to Archbishop Phillip Aspinall and the Diocese for making funds available for me to attend.

The Reverend Ken Spreadborough – Chair, Brisbane Committee.