

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

## **Brisbane Diocese Committee**

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### **REPORT ON THE ABM DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES CONFERENCE 2014**

The 2014 ABM Diocesan Representatives conference was held at the Church of the Resurrection, Swanbourne, Perth from 29 to 31 August. 17 Dioceses were represented. This report is not in chronological order as many changes were made to the original agenda due to the illness and therefore non-attendance of the Executive Officer, the Rev'd John Deane, and also because many changes were made because the times of some items were extended due to the requirements of the delegates.

After the general welcoming procedures, a welcome to country was presented by local indigenous leader, Tom Little who also demonstrated his considerable ability on the didgeridoo.

Following prayers and conference housekeeping by the Ven Lionel Snell, the following points were presented as purposes for the conference:

- Relationship and communication between ABM staff and diocesan representatives.
- To learn what is happening in other dioceses
- Updates on what is happening with ABM in general
- Fellowship with other delegates and staff
- Looking at the "bigger picture" of local ABM Ministry
- Re-charge our ABM "batteries"

Delegates were asked to indicate what they hoped to gain from the conference. These included:

- Criteria and qualifications for Encounter Visitors
- Where ABM visitors should visit
- Details of the Auxiliary and how to raise their profile
- Getting the ABM word out, especially on social media
- Selling ABM to a new generation
- Allowing more time for sharing ideas so we don't "re-invent the wheel."
- Being an indigenous priest
- How to keep the ABM focus as the national Mission agency.
- Fundraising hints
- Items that we need to pass back to parishes in our Dioceses
- Results or progress of the ABM projects
- Provincial gatherings of ABM Diocesan representatives
- How do we attack appeal overload

(Many of these were answered during presentations. Christopher Brooks dealt with all outstanding items during the concluding stages of the conference.)

Archbishop Roger Herft addressed the conference, welcoming all, but reminding all those from the Eastern States that WA was actually the first place settled by Europeans - some Dutch sailors in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He spoke of the need for listening, vibrant communities and the need for engagement with those in need and on the edge of society, He said we should not allow any structure of the Church to be an obstacle to Ministry. He said he believes that most of the Parishes in the Perth Diocese were ABM supporters and that they were taking the partnerships and those delivering the ABM message at the local level seriously. He spoke of the trust with our partners to engage in Mission. He noted that the Perth Diocese is now linked with Eldoret in Kenya with a prayer companionship, ABM project and in bringing two people from Eldorat to the National Schools conference. He believes there is a great need for ABM in schools where we need to be telling the story with vibrancy and hope so that ABM becomes the first choice for fundraising in the schools and to constantly put ABM on the agenda of school principals. Archbishop Herft then shared some stories from his pilgrimages to the Philippines and China.

Malcolm Maccallum, ABM reconciliation officer, told the story of Yagan, in the early years of the settlement of WA, with regard to the relationships of the indigenous peoples and the European Settlers. He outlined his role with ABM including key challenges and responsibilities, and spoke about the Elders report into preventing indigenous self-harm and youth suicide.

Claire Barrett-Leonard, deputy chair (and presently acting chair) of the ABM Board gave an update on the Board, including changes to membership and the need for a new Chair, visitors to the Board and the situation with regard to Provincial Reps on the Board keeping in contact with all Diocesan Reps in the Province.

Lorraine Forster presented an update on the Church to Church programme, noting particularly that the purpose of the programme is to improve our Partners' ability to train lay people and ordinands and to support Theological Training and Evangelism. Donations are not tax deductible and hence the importance of appeals such as the Auxiliary Appeal, November, Lent, Martyrs appeal etc. The challenge in raising funds is often because of difficulties in communication, remoteness and unreliability of power in the Partners' areas.

She spoke of the 2015 programmes in the Philippines, Kenya, Myanmar, Zanzibar and PNG as well as the Good Friday Gifts for Jerusalem and the Middle East, as well as the Encounter Programme. ABM is trying to make these projects more generic, rather than being for a specific purpose to allow better use of the income. The outcomes mean that both Church to Church and partners are winners and the lives of ABM supporters re enriched.

Each delegate then indicated activities etc that had been happening in the Diocese/parish. A selection follows:

Armidale: There is small parish support though the actual financial support has increased. They have strong support from the Cathedral Parish. Activities included an ABM breakfast and book sale, an English style high tea and a "music and mulled wine" evening.

Adelaide (including the Provincial Committee): The provincial committee meets every two months. They have a provincial ABM dinner with guest speaker and auction and an ABM Sunday. For these activities Bp McCall sends a copy of the invitation to ABM Sydney who sends it out to all in South Australia who are on the ABM e-mail list, sending by postcode.

Willochra: Has re-started their Mission Committee

Tasmania: Have endorsed an ABM Youth Ambassador who goes on the Modawa pilgrimage and then speaks at Synod, schools, youth groups and ABM functions. ABM meets some of the costs, but the rest has been met by a Parish in Launceston. (The total cost is about \$5000). The “Who is my Neighbour Exhibition” was used in a shop front with a note to indicate further contacts.

Rockhampton: Trying to develop a closer relationship with Popondotta Diocese in PNG. Through the Encounter Programme they have hosted three priests from Popondotta to the Rockhampton Diocese in the last three years.

Sydney: Hopes for a positive forward change through the new Archbishop.

Perth: Putting lots of time and effort into schools especially with regard to the Pilgrimage to the Philippines. The Auxiliary has reached its “use by” date and a “friends of ABM” has been started, open to everyone in an endeavour to expand the support base for fund raising.

North Queensland: Lots of Parishes give, but mostly under \$1000 each.

Northern Territory: The new representative is Jenny Brandon from Katherine. She noted the ABM support for clergy especially in East Arnhem, particularly for training, support and networking.

Newcastle: “Who is my neighbour” went well. They are developing a Companion Diocese with Guadalcanal in the Solomons. Giving remains strong. The Auxiliary project is for South Sudan.

Melbourne: Still have some problems. They have a strategic plan for the next 12 months to lift giving by 10%. There is a focus on Pilgrimages. They continue to have an annual dinner and had a “table for 12 at 12” series of luncheons with each Committee member hosting a table.

Grafton: Still doing lots of sorting with regard to the Auxiliary. Have a Bishop’s garden party.

Bunbury: Not much happening.

Brisbane: Hosted “One World Won Tok” and some schools are arranging Pilgrimages, especially to Vanuatu. A successful Provincial conference was held in Brisbane in February. Parish visits are continuing. Meagan Morrison from PNG visited the Committee in May. The “Who is my neighbour” exhibition went well. It is still doing the rounds, presently with Bp Cameron Venables in the Western Region and then Greg Henderson wants it. Last year’s November Appeal went well as usual with many thanks to the Auxiliary for their help and support. Giving is still high, but down just a little. Used stamps makes about \$10,000 a year enabling us to give \$10,000 last year to the Crisis Care Centre in Honiara and also \$1000 to the Solomons Flood Appeal earlier this year.

Bendigo: Has moved from a centralized Mission Co-ordinator and are now working with Parishes at a local level. Trying to work out the best way forward.

Bathurst: There is no formal Diocesan set-up. There have been some speakers from ABM at Synod and some individual parishes.

On the Saturday afternoon The Rev’d David Lord introduced three young people who told of their experiences with the Philippines Pilgrimage and the effect it had on them.

On the Sunday morning, after sharing the Parish Eucharist, Christopher Brooks demonstrated the ABM Facebook page and the ABM Website.

The conference concluded at lunch on the Sunday.

Looking at all of the expectations for the conference, which all seemed to have been fulfilled for the delegates one way or another, one can conclude that it was a success. I have come away with a clear indication that ABM is alive and well in so many of the Dioceses and the others are working hard for it to be so there. I have also gleaned a number of ideas to put to the Brisbane Committee for possible use within our Diocese.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to Archbishop Phillip and the Brisbane Diocese for making it possible for me have the opportunity to once again attend this annual conference. The conference next year is scheduled for the last weekend in July in Newcastle, if that is possible. If not, the request will be made to Brisbane to host it.

The Rev'd Ken Spreadborough,

Chair,

Brisbane ABM Committee