# REPORT TO THE RIGHT REVEREND WJ RAY, BISHOP OF NORTH QUEENSLAND ON THE ABM DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES CONFERENCE HELD IN PERTH, 24th to 26th JULY, 2015, AT THE PARISH HALL, PARISH OF ST THOMAS, CARDIFF, DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

Conferees joined in opening prayers. Bishop Gregory Thompson welcomed all to the Diocese and outlined the nature of the Diocese and its ABM involvement. Canon Katherine Bowyer spoke of housekeeping matters.

Here are the significant issues raised at the conference:

 **What is happening in ABM:** Christopher Brooks overviewed the departmental personnel of ABM and also outlined the achievements of each department for the past year.

**What will happen in ABM:** Christopher Brooks also led this section dealing with the plans ABM has for the current year.

* A marketing working group has been set up for Victoria and is based in Melbourne with a focus on electronic marketing
* ABM is endeavouring to get speaker feedback from parishes
* There is now a strong ABM presence in 13 key Australian cathedrals
* The Raiser’s Edge donor management system has been enhanced to enable more appropriate reporting to dioceses
* A Speaker’s pack is being designed as a tool for ABM Speakers
* The ABM web site has been optimised for smart devices, a ploy known as Mobilegeddon
* There has been some reliance on enabling supporters to access information. The emphasis will now be on pushing information to them.
* Weekly updates will be sent to other media such as Anglican web sites.
* There will be more analysis of appeals
* External donation sites such as Give Now, Donate Planet and Everyday Hero have been examined but these can cost more because people pay for additional administration costs at these sites

**Around the dioceses:** I presented the summary I had presented at the February Regional Conference of a number of North Queensland parishes. I explained that I would add to that summary by next year. It is clear from the reporting in this section that the number of diocesan auxiliaries is reducing.

**ABM Finances**: the bottom line is that the last financial year produced a total giving figure which was $130,000 down on the previous year. Nevertheless, the giving for emergency appeals was up by $300,000. Campaign giving was level. Ordinary giving was around $2 million and total giving including income from Ausaid, bequests and emergencies was around $5.8 million

**Diocese of Guadalcanal:** Presented by Bishop Peter Stuart.

**Principals of ABM mission in Guadalcanal:**

* God is a God of mission
* Gods’ mission is present and active
* We contribute to God’s mission
* No one expression of mission should colonise other expressions of mission.
* Our partnership in mission is essential for what we can contribute and for what we can receive
* As an agency of the Anglican Church of Australia, ABM is a means of this partnership which can attract others

**The Diocese of Guadalcanal:**

* The Solomons are close to Australia and comprise over 900 islands
* The Anglican Diocese of Melanesia comprises nine dioceses
* The Solomons have similar problems we have in Australia, e.g. young people prefer Pentecostal churches
* 32% of Solomon islanders call themselves Anglican
* The Diocese was inaugurated on 23rd June 2013 and the Bishop is the Right Reverend Nathan Tome. The Diocese excludes Honiara
* There is still damage from World War II as well as from the ethnic tension crisis of 1998-2003 caused by colonial heritage. There is also lack of unity, land issues, uneven development, government mismanagement, economic woes, the waning of traditional authority structures and law enforcement. The country is almost bankrupt so poverty will grow worse in the near future. Deforestation has altered water courses.
* The martyrs of 2003 are still a fresh memory.
* The 2014 flooding has had a dramatic impact and dengue fever has increased.

**ABM Projects:**

* ABM takes part in peace, reconciliation, HIV & AIDS, health, domestic violence and education
* Church capacity building projects are under way.
* Disaster risk education is given
* Mother’s Union and positive parenting have been established

The conference was adequately served by suitable prayer and worship occasions, generous meal and refreshment servings along with workshop time. There was also energy generating conference spinners led by Brett Collins.

Rod Gooden

Diocesan Representative 10th September, 2014