

**Media Statement**

**Thursday 2 February 2023**

## **Pope Francis names new Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle**

The Holy Father has appointed Bishop Michael Kennedy, currently the Bishop of Armidale, as the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Pope Francis made the official announcement at noon in Rome (10pm local time) on Thursday 2 February 2023.

Noting the appointment follows the untimely death of Bishop Bill Wright in November 2021, Bishop Kennedy said, 'I willingly and heartily accept this new appointment, knowing that like all new endeavours, it will hold both joys and challenges. To be the chief pastor leading a Diocese in worship, teaching, evangelisation, and governance is an awesome privilege and responsibility.'

'I am now looking forward to meeting and getting to know the priests and the people of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.'

Bishop Kennedy was born in Wagga Wagga and educated in Catholic schools. He gained a Diploma in Education from the Sydney Catholic College of Education and taught for several years at Xavier Catholic College in Albury, before commencing seminary studies at Vianney College in rural New South Wales. In 1994 he continued his academic studies in Rome, attaining a Licentiate in Sacred Theology and a Diploma in Mariology.

Ordained a priest in 1999, Bishop Kennedy has held a variety of positions across New South Wales, most recently serving as the Bishop of Armidale, a position he has held since 2011. Bishop Kennedy has also previously served in roles across education and as the Director of Vocations, reflecting his commitment to his motto 'Euntes Docete' (*Go out and teach*).

In announcing this appointment, it is noted Fr Greg Barker stays on in the position as the Diocesan Administrator until Bishop Kennedy is installed in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

A date for the Oath of Office, Profession of Faith and Taking of Possession has not yet been set.

**ENDS**

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