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2025



Status Report:

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To the People of the Diocese, Clergy, Parishes, All staff of the Diocese, its Schools and Agencies

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

In October 2024 I wrote to provide you with an update concerning the progress made regarding the implementation of recommendations from the Review of the Pastoral Ministries and Religious Education & Spirituality teams outlined in Dr Dan White's report and the Implementation committee report.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a further update on the work of our Diocesan teams. A high-level summary of this progress across the key areas of governance, strategic planning and collaboration, evangelisation and community engagement, and religious education and Catholic identity is reported over page.

The Assistant Head of Catholic Schools Religious Education and Spirituality, the Director of Mission and Evangelisation, and the Chancellor have all developed and advanced plans and processes for the implementation of the changes recommended in the review. Given this, I have thanked the Implementation Committee chaired by the Vicar General Father Matthew Muller and indicated their ongoing oversight is no longer necessary.

I would like to also extend my thanks to the Mission and Evangelisation (formerly the Pastoral Ministries) and Religious Education & Spirituality teams for their professionalism and commitment through this process.

Important work is also under way to enable a reconstitution of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council will then be tasked with finalising the Diocesan Synod and developing a Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

I thank you all for your engagement with this important work as we continue to shape our mission and evangelisation efforts, guiding others to encounter Jesus Christ and nurture a deeper relationship with Him within the Church community.

Yours in Christ



Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

A. Governance:

- The Diocesan Chancellor and Head of Governance have further refined a proposed new governance framework. The Bishop has approved the framework. Work is now commencing on the details of roles and responsibilities. Once that task is done new statutes will be drawn up, and then new members recruited.
- Draft statutes for the Diocesan Pastoral Council are progressing and undergoing further development. It is planned to have all statutes for governing bodies in draft form by the end of March.

B. Strategic Planning & Collaboration:

- A review and restructure of the Mission & Evangelisation team has been completed. The name of the team has changed from Pastoral Ministries to Mission & Evangelisation to reflect its future focus and the team re-positioned to take the form of three distinct, but collaborative groups being: Mission & Evangelisation Partners, Chaplains, and Directorate. This structure is intended to support the Bishop's articulation for parishes to:

Thrive in liturgy, worship and prayer;

Engage in genuine faith formation; and

Seek opportunities for mission in word and deeds.

- The Mission & Evangelisation and Religious Education & Spirituality teams have taken tangible action strengthening their collegial relationship and working collaboratively on supporting major Diocesan goals and initiatives, especially in the areas of formation, supporting the mission of parish communities and strengthening Catholic identity and mission. An example of this is the planned initiatives associated with the Jubilee of Hope with more to follow in 2025.

C. Evangelisation & Community Engagement:

- Appointments have been made and the trial of the Family Engagement Co-ordinator and the Priest Chaplain roles in the Maitland parishes has commenced.
- Plans are advanced for the Mission & Evangelisation team to consult with Parish Priests and their pastoral advisers regarding the development of Diocesan evangelisation and mission goals and strategies.

- A dedicated resource devoted to Youth Ministry has been included in the Mission & Evangelisation team to work collaboratively with parish and school communities in recognition of youth ministry being an important Diocesan priority.
- Strategic plans and a re-commitment to the support and provision of Chaplaincy services has been made following a review, which looked at the nature, scope, and ongoing challenges that are present in the current provision of these services.
- The Pastoral Placement program has been rested for 12 months whilst planning for the youth ministry in the Diocese is underway.

D. Religious Education & Catholic Identity:

- The Mission & Evangelisation and Religious Education & Spirituality teams have been working collaboratively in conjunction with other Diocesan teams on the development of a program of induction, formation, and ongoing spiritual and pastoral support for Diocesan teams, agencies, and governing bodies.
- The Religious Education & Spirituality team have increased their team resources and capabilities to deliver valued support and services in the areas of formation and curriculum development.
- The Religious Education & Spirituality team have introduced new initiatives that aim to build the capacity of future faith leaders in schools, as well as provide more affordable and flexible opportunities for teaching staff to gain their required Accreditation to Work, Teach and Lead.

The Implementation Committee and Dr Dan White's report can be found at the following:

[Implementation Committee Report \(May 2024\)](#)

[Dr Dan White Report – Executive Summary & Recommendations \(Nov 2023\)](#)