



22 May 2025

To: The People of the Diocese, Clergy, Staff of the Diocesan Offices and Agencies, Schools and Parishes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Over the past days, our Diocese has been impacted by severe and ongoing rainfall, leading to flooding across several of our communities. Many Local Government Areas within our Diocese have been declared natural disaster zones.

I write to you with a heart full of concern, prayer, and solidarity for all those affected—especially those in and around Taree, Wingham, and the wider Manning region, who are experiencing some of the worst of these conditions.

These severe weather events have caused significant disruption and damage, with many in our Diocese directly affected—whether by floodwaters, separation from loved ones, or through their tireless efforts assisting others.

In the midst of these challenging times, I have been deeply moved and filled with hope by the stories emerging from across our communities. I have heard of schools and parishes coming together to provide digital learning opportunities for students, dry and welcoming spaces for families displaced by the floods, and countless acts of quiet compassion — from offering prayers to staying connected with those who have experienced great loss.

These acts of kindness, generosity, and solidarity are a powerful witness to the love of Christ alive in our Diocese. They remind us that even in hardship, we are never alone — we are a people of faith, united in love and compassion for one another.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) and all first responders for their unwavering support of communities across the region. We are all grateful for their courage and commitment.

Please follow emergency services' advice, check in on your neighbours, and take all necessary precautions as the rain is expected to continue over the coming days.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in need of emotional support, I encourage you to reach out to the Rosewood Centre, who are available to provide assistance during this difficult time via telehealth appointments.

Please know that you are in my prayers and that we are inviting the people of the Diocese to pray for you as well. When the time is right, we will explore how we can best offer our practical support.

May God watch over all those affected, and may we find strength in our faith and in one another. Please be assured of my ongoing prayers for your safety and recovery.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by the letters 'MK' and a stylized surname.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy  
**Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle**

+MK/ed