



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council Meeting 2

Friday 14 July 6:00pm-9.00pm; Saturday 15 July 2023

St. Brendan's Pastoral Centre, Shepparton

121 Knight Street, Shepparton VIC 3630

REPORT ON THE MEETING

Present

Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Very Rev Joe Taylor VG, Rev Vijay Bandanadam ALCP/OSS, Rev Stephen Bolling, Mrs Alana Brennan, Mr Mick Chalkley, Mrs Jobelle Collier, Mr Paul Desmond, Mrs Gabrielle Downie, Mrs Angela Finn, Mr Stephen McKinley, Mr Michael McLinden, Mr Jean-Marie Mupenda, Mr Miggy Podosky, Rev Jackson Saunders, Mrs Christine Sebire.

Officers

Dr Chris Cotter, Executive Officer

Mr Tim Nolan, Minute Secretary

Mr Dean Mason, Facilitator

Appointments: College of Consultors and Diocesan Finance Council

Bishop Shane announced the following appointments, which he had made after considering recommendations from members of the SMPC:

Member of Diocesan Finance Council

- **Mr Mick Chalkley (St Therese's Parish, Kennington)**

Participants in meetings of the College of Consultors

- **Mr Brendan Lindsay (St Brendan's Parish, Shepparton)**
- **Mrs Christine Sebire (St Mary's Parish, Echuca)**



Discernment in Common for Appointment of Council Chair

The Discernment Process “Spiritual Conversation” was used to make recommendations to **Bishop Shane** for the appointment of the Chair of the Council. This way of discernment in common was used during the Assemblies of the 5th Plenary Council of Australia in 2021 and 2022.

Discernment Process “Spiritual Conversation”

The purpose of this process is to assist Council members in their prayerful discernment of making their recommendation(s) for the position of Chair of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council (SMPC).

1. *Scripture focus: “...the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you” (Matthew 10:20).*
2. *In the light of the Scripture text, reflect prayerfully on your comments relating to the attributes of the SMPC Chair, the presence of these attributes in yourself or other members of the Council and any patterns you are noticing, ask: “**What is the Spirit saying to me?**”*
3. *Each member of the Council will be given 2 minutes to share the fruits of their prayerful reflection on the attributes and their presence in themselves or other members of the Council, saying “**In my prayer today I...and I feel...**”*
4. *When all Members of the Council have spoken there will be a brief period of silence.*
5. *Then each Member of the Council will be given 1 minute to speak about what they have heard: “**I have heard...and I feel...**”.*
6. *Open dialogue (if time allows)*
7. *Brief reflection from Bishop Shane*
8. *Written recommendation(s), which will include the option of a brief reflection, will be invited at the conclusion. These will be collected and presented to Bishop Shane.*

Chair of the Council

After reflecting overnight on the Council’s recommendations, **Bishop Shane** announced **Mrs Gabrielle Downey** as Chairperson of the Council for an initial period of 12 months, with a review of the arrangement in July 2024.



Identity of the Council

Members were invited to reflect on the Statutes and purpose of the Council. The difference between being a Council, and a 'committee' or a 'team' or a 'taskforce' were highlighted.

Setting priorities

Mr Dean Mason (facilitator) invited Members of the Council to identify what they would like to have achieved in one year's time and in three years' time.

Bishop Shane highlighted the importance of the anniversary of the founding of the diocese on Saturday 30 March 2024 and several other priorities including:

- Consideration of the ministry of permanent deacons
- The recently enhanced ministries of lector, acolyte and catechist
- Parish visitation
- Carrying Forward the Plenary Council
- The Australian Bishop's response to the *Light from the Southern Cross*
- 2021-2024 Synod on Synodality

The members were invited to consider the date of 28 March 2026 and asked:

- What would the group most like to be seeing as a result of the council's work?
- What would the members be proud of?
- What would they like to hear people saying about the work of the Council?
- What they might have learned?

Members were asked to consider what action they want to have been completed or commenced by March 2026, informed by:

- Their prayerful reflection on the themes of the **252 Postcards** (for concrete action) created by participants at the **Diocesan Assembly** (listening and dialogue, parish-SMPC relationship, communication, inclusion and openness, youth and young people, action for justice, women, parish-school relationships (and families), formation and faith education, renewal of Church, and the structure, operations, strategy, workplan and spirit of the Council).
- the strategic directions identified in the Conclusions of the *Final Report on the Preparation and Consultation for the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council* (p. 29).
- their interests and knowledge of the needs of the diocese.

It was generally accepted that the themes of the **252 Postcards** aligned with the strategic directions found in the Conclusions of the *Final Report on the Preparation and Consultation for the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council* (p. 29).



Next Steps

Council members committed to a 'Strategic Direction interest group' and to a meeting of this group before the next Council meeting on 24-25 August.

At these meetings each interest group is to develop a set of activities that could provide ways to operationalise the Strategic Direction. The Executive (**Bishop Shane, Mrs Gabby Downey and Dr Chris Cotter**) will meet and begin work on creating a draft Strategic Work Plan which will include and align the activities developed by the interest groups.

All groups agreed to incorporate Strategic Direction 2 within their focus on Strategic Directions 1, 3, or 4.

Strategic Direction interest groups	Strategic Direction in common
1. Provide a strategic direction for the Diocese relating to the missionary and pastoral outreach to families, young people, marginalised groups and those who are baptised but are no longer active in parish life.	<p>Strategic Direction 2 Provide a strategic direction for the Diocese relating to the promotion of the equal dignity of women and men; to enhancing the role of women in the Church in Sandhurst; and to overcoming assumptions, culture, practices and language that lead to inequality.</p>
3. Provide a strategic direction for the Diocese aimed at strengthening the connection between parishes and schools, parishes and Chancery, Chancery and Catholic Education Sandhurst, and other Catholic entities in the Diocese.	
4. Provide a strategic direction for the Diocese relating to the initial and ongoing formation of the faithful in missionary discipleship, missionary and pastoral outreach, theology and liturgy, ministry, listening, dialogue and discernment.	

Vote of thanks to the facilitator

Bishop Shane expressed thanks **Mr Dean Mason** for his facilitation of the first two meetings of the Council.

Next Meetings

- Friday 25 August – Saturday 26 August, Shepparton
- Friday 17 November – Saturday 18 November, Shepparton