

ANGLICAN CURSILLO MOVEMENT OF AUSTRALIA



Anglican Cursillo Movement of Australia
National Secretariat

1. PURPOSE

The Anglican Cursillo Movement in Australia is part of a world-wide lay-led movement of the Christian Church which aims to evangelise environments through small Christian communities committed to living and spreading the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spanish word 'cursillo' means 'a short course' such as is used in a sprint race. While the 'short course' (cursillo) within the Cursillo terminology refers to the Three Day Programme, it is really 'Short courses in Christian living'. However, the word 'Cursillo' is used also in a general sense to cover all phases of the movement.

We understand that it -

- a) is a **movement** of the Church - NOT a sect or organisation
- b) has a method for achieving its ends
- c) reinforces what is fundamental for being a Christian
- d) creates groups of Christians who meet and who witness in community in their 'environments'

Cursillo Three Day (or sometimes two day) Programmes are held to prepare people for meeting in Christian groups to love, share with, support and challenge each other as they witness Christian living in their environments. This ongoing activity is called The Fourth Day.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Since the inception of the Cursillo Movement in Australia (1979) more than 24,000 people have completed a Three-Day Weekend Course throughout Australia. Cursillo has active Secretariats in the Dioceses of Bathurst, Brisbane, Bunbury, Grafton, Newcastle, North Queensland, Perth, Sydney & Tasmania. Several other Dioceses or Provinces do not currently have active Secretariats, but they still have Cursillo groups functioning within them. These include South Australia, Armidale, Bendigo, Canberra/Goulburn, Gippsland, Melbourne, Northern Territory & Wangaratta.

3. PRESENT EXECUTIVE

1. The Right Reverend Ian Palmer, National Episcopal Advisor – Melbourne
2. The Reverend Jane Lamont, National Spiritual Director – Diocese of Tasmania
3. Mr Lew Hitchick, National Lay Director – Diocese of Bathurst
4. Mrs Leanne Doyle, National Secretary – Diocese of Perth
5. Mrs Marea Niland National Treasurer – Diocese of Newcastle
6. Mr Alan Gray, National Webmaster – Diocese of Brisbane (*While strictly not part of the Executive he plays an integral role in communication within Cursillo*).

4. ACTIVITIES SINCE 2017

1. The national Secretariat normally conducts meetings once each year hosted by various Dioceses around Australia; but this has been interrupted by the onset of the pandemic during 2020.
2. Since the last report to General Synod in 2017, three National meetings have been conducted at Adelaide (Sep. 2017), Cairns (North Queensland - August 2018) and Sydney (Sep. 2019). The 2020 meeting was scheduled for Newcastle but had to be cancelled due to COVID 19 restrictions, as was the 2021 meeting which was to have been held in Brisbane Diocese. The 2020 and 2021 national meetings were held via Zoom.
3. Since 2020 National Executive has continued to meet via Zoom and we believe this should be an ongoing practice into the future.
4. Each year (with the exception of 2020) numerous workshops, training and information days have been held in most participating Dioceses. They have covered such diverse subjects as team training for Cursillo weekends, follow up information days for weekend participants, 'Regenerate' & 'Fire Days' to encourage & re-invigorate members.
5. Various Dioceses have experimented with "side-by-side" Cursillos (*men & women at same venue at same time, but separately run programmes*), also combined 'mixed' weekends and shortened versions of Cursillo to encompass a wider community. During COVID several "Virtual Ultreyas" have been held in a number of Dioceses and have proved reasonably successful. (*An 'Ultreya' is a gathering which seeks to encourage one another in the Faith by worship, witness talk and songs of praise. It is derived from the Spanish word meaning 'onward' or 'upward'.*)
6. All of these meetings and experimental innovations are vital to the overall operation of the Cursillo Movement in Australia by providing: -
 - a. Encouragement and support for each Diocesan Lay Director, Spiritual Advisor and Team member
 - b. A forum that can hopefully offer assistance when required
 - c. Discussion forums together with ongoing training and regular review of the Movement
 - d. Dissemination of resource materials
 - e. Communication and connection to all Dioceses particularly those in recess. In this regard a Protocol has been developed which is now being forwarded to all Diocesan Cursillo groups.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS 2017 – 2021

1. Setting up of a new National website www.cursillo-australia.org
2. Researching the design of an APP to bring the Website to the Smart Phone which is still in progress.
3. The setting up of Digital Conference facilities for groups over long distance and during COVID through a programme called 'Zoom'. This is a most important area that the restrictions of the corona virus have actually inspired and enabled.
4. Experimentation with 1st QR Card - At an instant, people can obtain dates, contact info, education & more. They can easily SHARE with others who do not have it – also it should help to keep the database more current – still in planning stage.
5. Planting of Cursillo in Hong Kong in 2018 (at Archbishop Paul Kwong's request) – two successful Cursillo weekends have since taken place there.
6. Using electronic tools such as 'Zoom' to conduct diocesan 'gatherings' and encouragement days. Several dioceses have experimented with this approach and feedback has been quite positive.
7. New initiative in setting up a voluntary list of members who will be prepared to visit various Dioceses to renew & re-invigorate Cursillo. The Diocese of North Queensland

was looking at taking up this initiative to promote Cursillo and activities such as Ultreyas, Group Reunions, Three Day Weekends, Welcome and Training Days until the pandemic intervened. However, in 2021 the Diocese was able to conduct a successful three-day Cursillo without the need of outside assistance, and for this we give thanks to God.

8. Files and ACMA (*Anglican Cursillo Movement of Australia*) information can now be readily accessed in Google Drive by each Diocese.
9. Contact has been made with New Zealand Cursillo and this connection has already facilitated sharing of ideas and encouragement between us.
10. Review of Cursillo in connection with the National Redress Scheme.

6. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

1. The major challenge for the Movement (and indeed for the whole Church) is to present the Gospel of Christ in a meaningful way to the current generations of Australians. To quote Eduardo Bonnin (one of the founders of the Cursillo Movement) from an interview he gave: *“The Movement of Cursillo, by the Grace of God and the prayers of a lot of people, was born of an intense preoccupation with real people in the ordinariness of daily life; ordinary people whose main preoccupation is with simply living, (who) rarely have time to ask themselves why, and even less to find time to be preoccupied with the meaning of their own existence. What we wanted at the beginning and have always desired, is that the liberty of man encounters the Spirit of God”*.
2. Many Dioceses are presently struggling with numbers for Secretariats & Servant Communities as well as difficulty finding candidates for Three Day Weekends. This has prompted Affirmative action that was taken at the October 2020 National Secretariat Meeting which was held via ‘Zoom’; some of which is set out in “Achievements” above. This item will also continue to be on our agenda for future National meetings.

Future steps continue to include: -

1. The provision of Cursillo support to Dioceses in recess
2. Supporting new “mission fields” (such as Hong Kong & Highveld in South Africa).
3. Making more use of the National Cursillo website
4. Continuing to creatively investigate a variety of Digital Conference options for scattered Cursillo Groups as well as developing more Digital Apps for “Smart Phones”.
5. Overcoming the communication barrier within the church & establishing a more effective national database.
6. Continuing to liaise with other related Groups in Australia & overseas.
7. Evangelising God’s people through the Cursillo method with the support and participation of the local clergy. We believe Cursillo can assist Parishes and Dioceses in empowering Christians for their role in the Church.

Ultreya! (Onwards & Upwards!)

Lew Hitchick
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Anglican Cursillo



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