



Anglican Church of Australia

Primate: **The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith**

Communique from the National Bishops' Meeting, 17-21 March 2023

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Greetings!

Thank you for your prayers for the bishops as we've met in Hobart over recent days. We have been conscious of your encouragement and support for our deliberations.

Bishop Richard and Dr Helen Condie were gracious hosts of the bishops and spouses present.

As you would expect we had a full agenda grounded in common prayer, Bible study on the themes of gospel, judgement and blessing, and worship with local congregations in various city churches on the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

A significant focus of our work was in relation to the Statement from the Heart, and its invitation to walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

We heard from NATSIAC Chair, the Reverend Canon Honorary Associate Professor Uncle Glenn Loughrey, about the forthcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament, and the transformational process of recognition, conciliation and reconciliation that flows from it.

Wiradjuri woman, the Reverend Shannon Smith, showed us the grace of Jesus as she shared her generational story of cultural conflict and faith.

At our Conference Dinner Professor Tim McCormack addressed issues of Tasmania's colonial past and its shocking legacy for Tasmanian Aboriginal people. These three presentations had a profound impact on us.

An ecumenical guest, Dr David Kirchhoffer, led us through an instrument for moral discernment developed over many years by the Faith and Order Commission of WCC, the application of which will be further explored in coming meetings.

We spent a day in conversation around many of the issues confronting our church and reaffirmed the Bishops' Protocols. The Scriptures call us to be patient, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph 4:2-3).

A second meeting has been scheduled for later in the year.

As we move towards Holy Week and Easter, we look to our Crucified and Risen Lord, the source of our life and hope.

Grace and peace,

The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith on behalf of the National Bishops' Meeting
Archbishop of Adelaide and
Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia