



Anglican Church of Australia

Primate: The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith

Vale Bishop Keith Rayner

13 January 2025

It is with sadness and immense gratitude to God that I notify you of the death of Bishop Keith Rayner, who died peacefully yesterday afternoon (Sunday 12th January, 2025).

Born in November, 1929, Keith was ordained in the Diocese of Brisbane in 1953, and served curacies at Auchenflower and Dalby. Incumbencies followed at the Brisbane parishes of Sunnybank and Wynnum, during which time he also completed his doctoral thesis on “the History of Anglicanism within the Diocese of Brisbane”.

Keith was elected Bishop of Wangaratta in 1969, and was then Archbishop of Adelaide from 1975 until 1990. He was installed as Archbishop of Melbourne in November, 1990, where he ministered until his retirement in 1999, on his 70th birthday.

Bishop Keith was Primate from 1991 until his retirement, having been the Acting Primate from 1989. He was a key figure, both as Primate and as Archbishop of Melbourne, in the eventual Ordination of the first women to the Priesthood in Australia, leading the important National Bishops’ Meeting in 1991, and chairing General Synod and the Melbourne Synod of 1992 which passed the necessary Canon to allow dioceses to ordain women to the priesthood.

Keith Chaired the newly-formed Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, established by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1980. He was an important contributor in the planning of the 1988 Lambeth Conference. He was also, after his retirement, a member of the committee which in 2000-2001 conducted a review of the See of Canterbury. His counsel was sought and valued at the highest levels, by a succession of Archbishops of Canterbury and other leaders within the global church.

A person of deep prayer and faith, Bishop Keith was an important influence on many people, both Lay and Ordained, during his life. I give thanks to God for his life and faithful ministry.

Funeral details are yet to be finalised, and will be notified in due course.

May Keith Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

Every blessing
+Geoff

The Most Reverend Geoff Smith
Archbishop of Adelaide and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia.