



16 July 2024

To the People of the Diocese, Staff of the Diocesan Offices and Agencies, Schools, Parishes, Clergy and Parish Leaders

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the end of last year, I advised you of a review and changes in two of our important Diocesan teams, Religious Education & Spirituality and Pastoral Ministries. I am pleased to now advise that following regular discussion and discernment over the last several months, the Implementation Committee has provided their final report to me.

First, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Implementation Committee for their participation and commitment to this important work. In particular, their dedication to listening to the people of our Diocese and their engagement with the teams involved throughout the process is to be especially acknowledged.

Additionally, I would also like to thank the Religious Education & Spirituality and Pastoral Ministries teams for their patience and contributions. The contents and recommendations were discussed with each team prior to the report being finalised and I thank the members of these teams for their input and feedback.

Importantly, the report acknowledges and considers the change in leadership following the recent resignations of the leaders of each of these teams. Similar to all other team changes under the *Many parts. One body. One mission.* initiative introduced by Bishop Bill Wright, it was agreed that the best outcomes are achieved when the new leaders can work with their teams in consultative ways to implement the recommendations for change.

Thus, the report contains a number of recommendations that the new Director of Mission & Evangelisation (who leads the Pastoral Ministries Team) and new Head of Religious Education & Spirituality will be tasked with implementing with their teams.

The recommendations also include a review of the Governance relationships and statutes at a Diocesan level, and once reviewed, a reconstituting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. That Pastoral Council will then be tasked with finalising the Diocesan Synod and developing a Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Work on this will begin soon, and it will take however long is required for us to ensure we achieve the best plans possible for our Diocese.

To ensure the direction and momentum is maintained, the Implementation Committee has agreed to remain in place and will continue to meet on a regular basis to monitor progress.

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Our approach to mission and evangelisation is shaped through the many contributions and views shared during this process, and I thank everyone who has walked this journey with us and offered their views and experiences.

I look forward to the work of our new leaders as we continue focusing our missionary efforts, supporting our Diocese, our clergy, our parishes, our people and those beyond, and defining our path forward as a community of Christ's disciples.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name 'Michael Kennedy' in a cursive script.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle