



Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn WOMEN'S TASKFORCE

Annual Report 2024

The Catholic Women's Taskforce of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn has had an enriching and eventful year in 2024, filled with opportunities for faith formation, dialogue, and fellowship. Through a series of thoughtfully planned events, we sought to inspire, educate, and connect Catholic women and men across our Archdiocese.

The year began with our breakfast for International Women's Day on March 7 at the Ainslie Football Club, where 130 attendees, including many College students, gathered to hear Selina Walker, an indigenous advocate for social justice. Her inspiring address underscored the importance of being authentic and taking small steps to change society, setting a strong and empowering tone for the year ahead.

In April, we focused on the later stages of life with the Spirituality of Ageing Workshops, facilitated by Sr Kerin Caldwell SGS. These workshops, held in collaboration with Spirit Weavers from Wagga on April 27, welcomed 40 and 30 participants, respectively at the Canberra and Wagga events. Through thought-provoking presentations and reflections, attendees explored the spiritual dimensions of ageing, finding renewed purpose and assurance of God's faithfulness.

Building on our commitment to inclusivity and the recommendations of the Plenary Council, we hosted a Cultural Competence Workshop on June 22, led by Kylee Shea. Twenty-five lay, religious and clergy participants from various ministries and parishes deepened their understanding of racism, generational trauma and empowerment as Kylie shared stories from her family. This interactive session encouraged participants to engage in meaningful conversations about cultural diversity within and beyond the Church, equipping them with the skills to foster more inclusive and welcoming faith communities.

At the Round Tables Consultation in August, a panel of four distinguished women—Dr Moira Byrne, Ms Libby Andrew, Ms Katrina Marson, and Mrs Bronnie Schlager— inspired discussions on the challenges and aspirations of Catholic women through sharing their diverse experiences.

In July, we offered a space for deeper spiritual reflection with a Weekend Retreat on Mary Magdalene, facilitated by Andrea Dean from July 26 to 28 in Mittagong. Participants delved into the life and significance of Mary Magdalene, exploring her role as a disciple and witness to Christ. Through guided meditations, prayer, input and community, the retreat became a reflective and nourishing experience for all who attended.

Our commitment to the local Church was highlighted during the Archdiocesan Assembly on October 19, where several members actively participated in conversations about the Church and facilitated table groups. These discussions reinforced the importance of fostering lay leadership and ministry opportunities.

The year concluded with a celebratory evening at the Catholic Women's Dinner on November 1 at the Southern Cross Club. Our guest speaker, Sonia di Mezza, CEO of Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services, delivered an impressive address, detailing her global humanitarian work. She urged attendees to centre their lives on God, whom she has experienced as her advisor, protector, and guide, motivating her commitment to live with purpose and authenticity. Among the attendees were Marymead CatholicCare staff members and their CEO Anne Kirwan, who emphasized the crucial work of MacKillop House, the pressing need to address the housing crisis and her thanks for the ongoing support financial support of the Catholic Women's Taskforce.

Reflecting on 2024, we are grateful for the connections, learning, and spiritual growth this year has brought. Each event reinforced our mission to uplift and empower Catholic women within our Archdiocese. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our speakers, facilitators, volunteers, and attendees who made these gatherings possible. Your participation and support ensure that our work remains impactful and relevant.

With enthusiasm and faith, we look forward to another year of growth, connection, and service in 2025.