

Annual Report 2023

The Archdiocesan Women's Taskforce continued to evolve in 2023. A renewal of the Taskforce membership took place, two major events were organised, the recommendations of the Plenary Council were studied and strategies for the promotion of educational and formation resources were planned.

The renewal process was initiated in early May when more than 30 women met at the Archdiocesan Offices or via Zoom. After reviewing the history and purpose of the taskforce, exploring the concept of synodality and prayerful reflection, a new model of membership emerged. Establishing two options of membership, 'friends' and 'members' allowed for flexible engagement dependent upon the capacity of volunteers to be involved with the events and projects of the Taskforce. Seven new members joined the Taskforce and twelve became 'friends' of the Taskforce. All are invited to meetings and receive all communications, with each contributing their time and talents as they are able.

The two major events of the year were the International Women's Day Breakfast and the Catholic Women's Dinner. The Breakfast in March was hosted by Canberra Seniors Centre and our guest speaker was Dr Helen Watchirs OAM. Helen's presentation blended the personal and the professional. Her commitment to Human Rights and her achievements as ACT Human Rights Commissioner were inspiring. Attendance at the Breakfast was larger than expected and once again we will need to find a venue with larger capacity.

The second annual Catholic Women's Dinner was held on October 28 at the Southern Cross Club. Genevieve Jacobs was an entertaining and challenging guest speaker, highlighting her deep connection with the Catholic Church in this Archdiocese and her passion for a transformed Church that would genuinely consult, honestly acknowledge failure and unequivocally involve women in decision-making. Ms Lisa Higginson, Deputy Director of Marymead CatholicCare, thanked the Taskforce for their fundraising efforts and accepted a \$5000 donation towards MacKillop House, a place of safety for women and children.

After studying the [recommendations of the Plenary Council](#), the Taskforce members completed the online course [Cultural Competency in a Catholic Context](#) and wrote to the Archbishop supporting the full set of recommendations and making suggestions on how the Taskforce could support the implementation in the Archdiocese.

The Taskforce has collated a list of low cost and accessible resources for faith formation. Over time these resources will be added to the [Taskforce website](#) to support those seeking spiritual nourishment and education in faith.

Once again, the members of the Taskforce have worked generously and collaboratively to advocate for and enhance the participation of women in the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and to provide financial support for MacKillop House, a project of [Marymead CatholicCare](#).