



CWT Annual Report 2025

The Women's Taskforce of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn had a successful 2025 with a range of events and enriching experiences for the different women we serve. Each event allowed women to gather and share experiences, as well as be inspired by others in focusing on topics of interest to women across the Archdiocese.

On 13 March, a highly successful **International Women's Day breakfast** was held at the Ainslie Football Club, attracting approximately 80 attendees. The event featured Dr Trudy Dantis as guest speaker, whose address on *Learning and Living Synodality at the Second Assembly* was warmly received and generated significant interest and discussion. Strong attendance, an engaging presentation and a welcoming venue combined to create a vibrant and affirming occasion, highlighting the Taskforce's ongoing commitment to dialogue, formation and inclusive participation within the Church and wider community.

In May, the Taskforce hosted a **Spirituality of Motherhood Reflection Morning** which drew over 30 participants ranging in age from 0 to 93 years, reflecting the richly intergenerational nature of our Church. The morning explored motherhood in a broadened sense and surfaced clear priorities for parish life: greater visibility of women in ministry (including welcoming female altar servers), more intentional engagement of mothers and families, and stronger pastoral care to foster belonging—particularly for parents grieving children who have left the faith. Practical suggestions included better integration of playgroups into parish life, mentoring and “buddy” supports for women, the renewal of children's liturgies and children's Masses, and more consistent pathways of lifelong faith formation and sacramental accompaniment so that mothers, children, and older parishioners are recognised and welcomed within the worshipping community.

In early 2025, the Taskforce renewed its commitment to **support women living in rural areas of the Archdiocese**. We planned to do this through organised visits to rural communities. During the year, we made three visits - to Young, Braidwood and Galong (the Farm). These visits enabled different members of the Taskforce to meet with a range of women across the Archdiocese and each visit had its own unique quality. The purpose of the visits was to: meet the women and hear about their lived experiences as women of faith in the various communities; explain and promote the role of the Taskforce; assess if there was any support the Taskforce could offer the women as they participate actively in their parishes; ask if any of the women were interested in joining the Taskforce as a way to keep the relationships between the rural communities and the Taskforce (representing the Archdiocese) strong; explore if having a contact person might work best in keeping communications clear and consistent? Each visit highlighted how much women are doing in their communities; supporting vulnerable and sometimes desperate people; seeking ways to enhance the liturgical life of their communities; asking for formation opportunities to ensure the living faith of their parish is nurtured and sustained. All the women asked for more regular and active support from the Archdiocese and for ways to be found to keep their little churches open, as a sign that their communities are valued and precious. The Taskforce members who made these visits were grateful for the warm welcomes, felt a renewed sense of responsibility to follow up the requests of these women and to affirm their desire to see their small communities flourish. Along with two women from Braidwood, two members of the

Taskforce will meet with Archbishop Prowse in February to pass on and discuss the joys, hopes and challenges articulated by these women of the Archdiocese.

The year concluded with a successful **Annual Dinner** on 31 October at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, where a panel of 3 speakers shared their expertise on the topic of *Gender-based violence as a social justice issue and how to break the silence in institutions like the Catholic Church*. Each speaker shared an example of potential solutions in addressing the issue and ways in which the Catholic Church has already started responding with successful workable solutions and presented to a full house of an audience of 150 people. The audience included 3 senior secondary colleges within the Archdiocese, who provided sound feedback on how inspirational and excellent the presentations were. Both written and verbal feedback demonstrated the evening was a great event whereby attendees commented on how each speaker's presentation dovetailed beautifully into the next, enabling a link between the successful examples of how institutions like the Catholic Church can, and has, addressed gender-based violence as a social justice issue at the local level and each presentation shared the journey of the presenters in developing ways the Catholic Church can learn from models of success – a fitting focus in this Pilgrim Year of Hope.

We expanded our **financial support** in other areas in 2025, including a young refugee woman in need of counselling support services and supported 4 women from the Archdiocese to attend the 2025 WATAC (Women and the Australian Church) Conference held in Sydney from 14-16 November, with Julia Baird as the keynote speaker. The conference program was developed to inspire and nourish women working for a church that is inclusive, diverse and welcoming.

Reflecting on 2025, we expanded our reach and concluded the year with a well-attended Christmas event shared with Canberra branch of WATAC and looked at ways to join with other groups to share in supporting women in participation and leadership across the Catholic community in the Archdiocese.

We look forward to another year of expanding, connecting, and serving in 2026.

Archdiocesan Women's Taskforce
January 2026