

## **Parish Pastoral Council 21 October, 2020 Report on Ecumenism**

### **Duty Statement on Ecumenism**

#### **Background**

We live in a world which has become increasingly polarised, in which people have demonstrated, nevertheless, new ways to communicate with each other despite the restrictions that we all face at the moment. Our world has also become, as many now say, increasingly materialistic and more oriented to consumerism than ever before. The new electronic universe is indispensable, pervasive, seductive and dangerous. The Christian Church has come under new pressure and criticism from the secular world at large. The phenomenon of the church-going tribes of the immediate post-war world in the 1950s has largely disappeared, congregations have dwindled, small churches have closed and passed into private hands and others have become divided by conflict on the subject of the nature of their mission and the ways in which to conduct it.

At the same time Western society in particular has become much more mixed along ethnic lines and there is a new awareness of the plight and the rights of indigenous peoples generally. We are fortunate in the Yass Valley and immediately beyond it in that there is still a strong awareness of the importance of the Church at large and an enduring sense of the significance of Christianity and the life of the spirit in our own worlds. For example, the clergy of the Yass Valley meet on a co-operative basis at agreed intervals and are welcome to participate in society at large, often on an invited basis, at meetings such as the annual commemoration of ANZAC Day and at public events. They are also welcome in the schools. Moreover, there is a natural sense of social ecumenism in our society, which is based on the common belief in the Australian fair go and the importance of helping each other in times of need, especially in a major crisis, such as one involving bushfires and floods.

#### **Duties**

The duties of the Ecumenism portfolio are difficult to spell out in specific terms in this context but they do include in particular

- Promoting the cause of our indigenous people, with special reference to the work of reconciliation in our own community
- Organising social events involving a meal and a visiting speaker on a subject of major importance, such as the plight of refugees and the situation of ethnic groups in our society
- Organising talks from time to time with visiting speakers on the general subject of faith and belief in contemporary society, which recognise that there remains an enduring interest in the life of the spirit in our times
- Keeping in touch with the work of the Church at large in our local area and promoting events and activities, such as the Men's Breakfast at the Vine Church, the Circle of Sisters at the Anglican Church and the Annual Christmas Carols in Victoria Park
- Supporting the activities of other ecumenical groups, such as Prayer in the Spirit of Taizé
- Establishing links with other ecumenical groups in our region

- Promoting these and other activities in the religious and secular media in the Yass Valley and beyond, with special reference to *Catholic Voice*, the *Yass Valley Times* and the Yass Shire Council's web site for community notices

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21 October, 2020