

The Australian Centre
for Christianity
and Culture

WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
**CHRISTIANITY
AND CULTURE**

Prayer for the Centre

*God, powerful and gentle,
You love this southern land
And all its peoples, old and new.
As the cross shines in the heavens
So may Christ bring light to our nation,
As the waves encircle our shores
So may your mercy enfold us.*

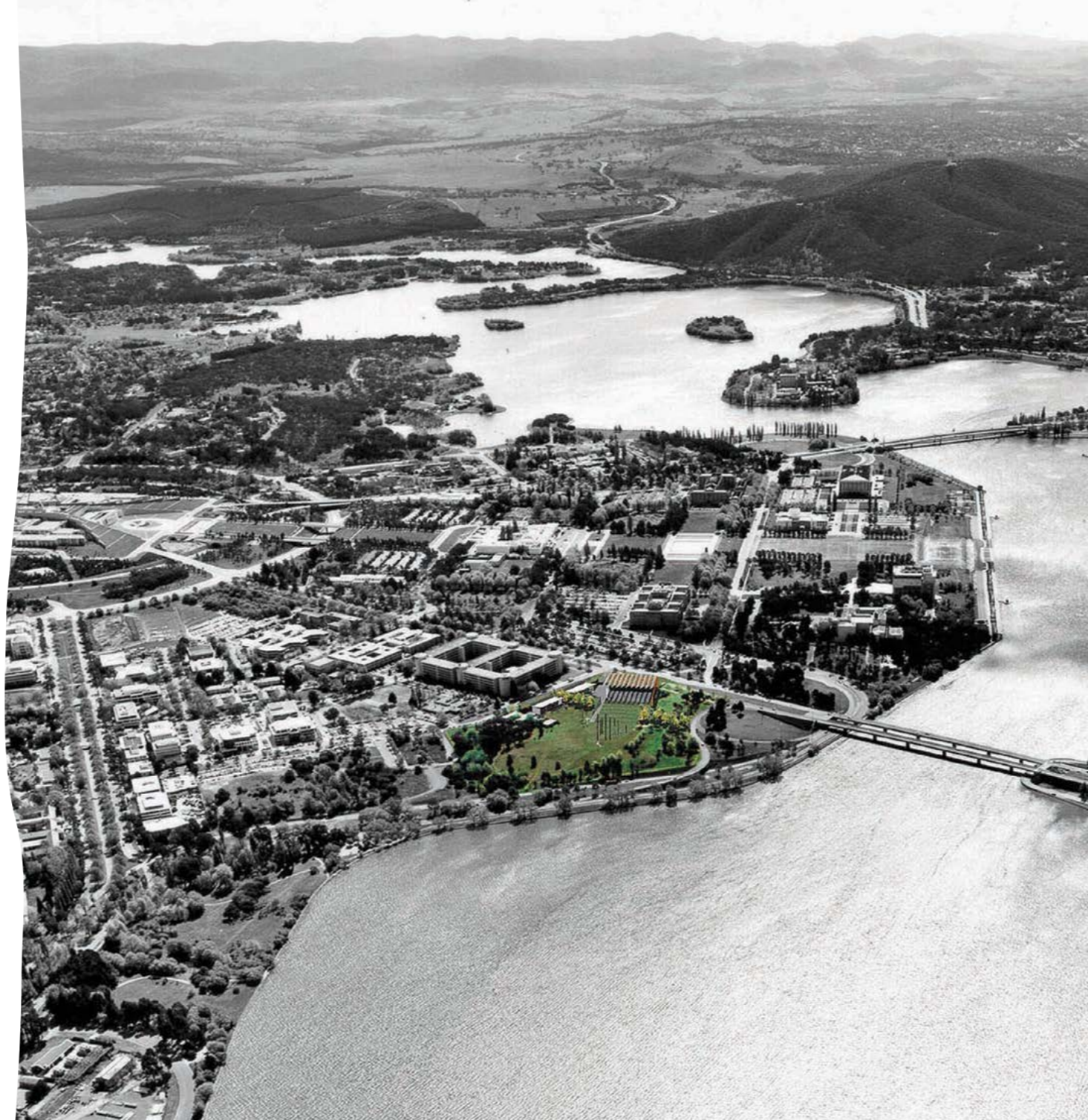
*May the God who formed our southern land
Be for us a rock and strength.
May the God who rules our southern seas
Keep us safe from every storm.
May the God who made the southern skies turn
Our darkness into light.*

*As Canberra is a meeting place
Central to the Government of Australia,
So may this Centre be a true meeting place
Where all God's people may gather in a spirit of prayer,
A spirit of unity of minds and hearts; and
Where we may share in the very Communion of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

*We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Archbishop Francis Carroll

*The Centre is unique in Australia.
It began in 1998 as an ecumenical
venture for engagement with
Australian culture and the issues of
the day. It was established through a
partnership between Charles Sturt
University and the Anglican Diocese of
Canberra and Goulburn. It is situated
at the eastern edge of the Parliamentary
Triangle in Canberra (green shading
on photo) on a 99 year lease to the
University which currently provides
the major source of its funding.*



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Welcome to the Centre

From deep roots in Christian faith the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture exists for the well being of the spiritual life of the nation. This intent is captured in our vision of 'wisdom for the common good'. Central to this vision is the importance of maintaining and respecting Christian wisdom concerning how we should live and what we aspire to be as a community and society.

We live in times of significant transition with many challenges facing Australia and its neighbours. In this context the Centre works to revitalize people's spiritual hunger and reconnect them to God's ways with the world. This involves engaging faith with the issues of the day. We also put great emphasis on hosting new conversations across boundaries that often divide people. Our intention is to recover a spirit of justice, friendship and compassion that moves us beyond self-interest and cultivates a sense of gratitude and trust.

To further these concerns the Centre has initiated two major dialogues. The Christianity and Islam dialogue signals the Centre's commitment to inter-religious dialogue and witness as a contribution to the flourishing of society. The dialogue concerning indigenous reconciliation is a core business of the Centre. A major task is to be attentive to the voices and aspirations of indigenous Australians. We have much to learn from the First Peoples of this country. In particular we are engaged in understanding the depths and wellspring of indigenous spirituality and the insights this offers to a renewed Christianity.

Fostering and celebrating a sense of the divine in the world is an important part of the Centre's work. One way in which we do this is by investing in the arts and culture through exhibitions, seminars, public events, as well as film and religious poetry prizes.

From its inception the Centre has hosted forums and public conversations on matters of national importance for civil society, institutional life, public theology and ethics.

The Centre is at an exciting and creative time in its life. This brochure will give you a glimpse of its activities, programs, and future plans. We believe that Christian faith is meant to be a public faith and involved in the issues of the day. We join with all who seek wisdom and work for the common good. I hope you can join us in this vital work for a better, fairer and compassionate Australia. Visit our website (www.acc-c.org.au), become a subscriber to our regular e bulletin, join the Friends of the Centre and find out how you can be involved.

Grace and peace,

Professeor Anthony Maher
Executive Director



Place of Meeting with 12 stones and campfire at the heart of the Centre's commitment to dialogue and reconciliation. In the background black pine (left) planted by Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II, and white pine (right) planted by Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE in 2000. And beyond the native grasslands of the site.

Vision, Purpose and Faith

Vision

Our vision is to be the 'go to' place for new engagements between Christian faith, Australian society, landscape and cultures, and indigenous peoples. We nurture a broad and inclusive place for conversation across differences and divisions; a place where all voices can be heard; a place to seek fresh wisdom.

In a time of great challenges for our country, when people's spiritual hunger remains unabated, the Christian faith offers a way of life and meaning that builds hope and community. It is a faith and theological tradition that draws upon deep wisdom for life from ancient times. It has a remarkable capacity to enable people to creatively respond to the needs of the times and contribute to a fresh and resilient wisdom for society.

At heart the vision for the Centre is ecumenical; a single house that embraces the great diversity which is and always has been, the Christian faith. The Centre operates at the interface of the academy, the church and the public space.

From this place we seek a fresh engagement of faith with culture so imaginatively stated many years before by a former Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Ernest Burgmann:

'I want the great things of abiding value... thoroughly baptized into the Australian scene, blown through by Australian winds, and even coated now and then with Australian dust.'

This vision, grounded in the good news of God's love in Christ, calls Australians into deeper reconciliation with our indigenous people. It embraces people of all faiths and none. We look to the horizon of the common good and the well being of the spiritual life of the nation.

Purpose

- From deep roots in Christian faith the Centre exists
- For the spiritual life of the nation
- Through fresh engagements, dialogue and reconciliation between indigenous Australians, cultures and society, religious traditions and public theology
- Promoting wisdom, creativity, resilience and peace
- In the life of churches and other communities of faith
- The arts and sciences; institutions and leadership
- Civil society & public life

Faith

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture is an ecumenical body and its basis of faith reflects that of the National Council of Churches of Australia. This faith is based on a common confession of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, witnessed to in Holy Scripture, expressed in the ancient Apostles Creed and embodied in the life and mission of the Church. From deep roots in the Christian tradition animated by faith in Jesus Christ the Centre promotes a creative and critical engagement with Australian culture.

Culture can be broadly understood as that diverse reality embodying the values, beliefs, expressions in art and all its forms; customs; and ways of life of any given society. Through it God's transformative work can occur.

The Centre undertakes its work in four key areas:

- encounter and dialogue between Christians and those of other faiths and no faith
- pursuit of creativity in the arts and sciences
- promotion of institutional resilience and ethical leadership
- fostering of wisdom in civil society
- In all these areas the Centre bears witness to God's love and wisdom at work in the world



Pilgrim Poles: 20 metres high, created in 1996 by young people, depict different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christian symbols.

Profile of the Executive Director



Professor Anthony M Maher is the Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity & Culture, the Director of the Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society (CRES). He is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom and a past President of the Association of Practical Theology in Oceania (APTO). He was the Consultant Theologian to Catholic Education Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, the Academic Dean and Professor of Theology at the Australian Institute for Theological Education, and the Coordinator of Pastoral-Practical Theology at the Catholic Institute of Sydney (Sydney College of Divinity). Prior to his move to Australia, Anthony was a Senior Lecturer in Social, Economic and Political Ethics, and the Philosophy of Religion, at Newman University, Birmingham. Anthony's research interests encompass ecclesiology, practical theology and the characteristics of Mission within post-secular culture, together with Ignatian spirituality, pedagogy and formation. Recent publications include: *Theology and the People of God* (St Paul's Publications 2022), *The Forgotten Jesuit of Catholic Modernism: George Tyrrell's Prophetic Theology* (Fortress Press 2018), *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age*, (Coventry Press 2018).

Bridging the Divide Between Faith Theology and Life (ATF Press 2015) and *Educating Hearts: Seven Characteristics of a Good School* (St Paul's Publications 2013). Current research comprises work on an Australian methodology for Theology, and two books on synodal ecclesiology, one being an Australian case study, considering the Australian Plenary Council, the second, explores a post-foundational ecclesiology as a foundation for a synodal Church. Anthony is married to Lesley, who is a Director of Mission and formation, they have been married for thirty years, and have four children.



Professor Anthony Maher with Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Peter Dutton MP at Parliament House, following a meeting on the role of Christianity in society and the development of a national Australian Sacred space.



Humanitarian Aid Worker's Memorial 2013 in honour of all deceased Australians and members of Australian Aid Organisations who served in International Humanitarian Work.



We seek in all our ventures and collaborations the spiritual life and well-being of the nation.

Beautifully designed in the shape of a Jewish menorah, the Bible Garden contains most of the plants mentioned in the Bible.

Founding Vision

The idea for an Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture was succinctly stated in 1994 by the then Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, George Browning. He said, 'Australia needs a spiritual centre, a focus for the expression of its religious and Christian heritage, a place for major national religious state occasions and a centre to celebrate and develop our religious identity and unity. The national Church Centre to be located in Canberra adjacent to the Parliamentary triangle will meet this need, and provide an expression of the spiritual insights of Australians and spiritual hope for our nation'.

And so it was that our history is interwoven with that of Canberra, the national capital of Australia.

The Centre was developed from a vision for a national ecumenical centre and a place to promote reconciliation. Three key people were involved: Bishop George Browning; the Governor-General at the time, Sir William Deane; and aboriginal leader Lowitja O'Donoghue AC.

A natural partner for this vision was Charles Sturt University (CSU) with whom the Diocese had established a School of Theology (based at St Mark's National Theological Centre in 1995).

The formation of the original ACC&C had three key elements:

- **The need for a national meeting place** in the Australian capital for significant national ceremonies and events that would express shared Australian experiences and values. Such a meeting place requires a Great Space for 3,000 people (together with galleries and exhibition spaces).
- **The promotion of dialogue, public theology and engagement** within Christianity and between Christianity and other faiths; between Christianity and indigenous Australians; and between Christianity and the broader Australian community.
- **An Ecumenical Christian leadership and witness** through hospitality in providing a national meeting place, facilitating fresh dialogue, developing innovative liturgical expressions and promotion of Australian religious and theological expression in arts, music, literature and dance.



Founding visionaries for the Centre, Bishop George Browning, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue and Sir William Deane.

Brief History

The Centre is located on land originally allocated to the Church of England (now the Anglican Church of Australia) in 1926 to build a national Anglican Church. In 1927 the site was dedicated for St Mark's National Anglican Cathedral, however it was never built due to lack of funds. This is one of Canberra's most magnificent sites. The 9 hectares adjoins the Parliamentary Triangle, overlooking Lake Burley Griffin. The land originally was cared for and occupied for centuries by the Ngunnawal people. In 1995, the Anglican Church entered into agreement with other Christian churches in Australia to develop the site together in consultation with the local indigenous community. A dedication ceremony was held on 4 November 1995 and the foundation stone was laid in 1996. A Tent of Meeting (now the Place of Meeting) was erected focusing on a simple campfire and three sculptured poles depicting different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christianity.

On 2 June 1998, the Centre was established under the authority of Charles Sturt University in collaboration with the Anglican diocese and with the approval of the National Council of Churches in Australia. In 1999, the Reverend Dr. David Millikan was appointed the first Executive Director.

In 2000 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planted the first tree of reconciliation, along with Aboriginal elder and leader Lowitza O Donoghue, AC.

The Chapel was built in 2000 from funds gifted by the Commonwealth Government on the occasion of the Centenary of Federation.

George Browning House was officially opened in February 2008. GBH provides accommodation for the Centre's staff and scholars. It also houses the University Strategic Research Centre for Research, Ethics and Society. Personnel include Asstt Director Dr Jonathan Cole, Professors Frank Brennan SJ, AO; Scott Cowdell, Wayne Hudson, John Painter and David Tacey. Also located in George Browning House is the Centre for Ecumenical Studies and its Director, the Rev'd Dr Ray Williamson, whose longstanding leadership in ecumenism is well known in Australia and internationally. The ACC&C also hosts the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS) and its Director, Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay. The ACC&C hosts Christians for an Ethical Society with its lecture program focussed on social values and justice in Australian society. The ACC&C also provides accommodation for doctoral research students of CSU; other research fellows of the ACC&C and visiting scholars from Australia and overseas.

These days the Centre is a hub of activity. The facilities of the chapel and the new Ross Chambers Pavilion enables the Centre to host conferences, dialogues, think tanks, prophetic ministries, ecumenical and interfaith events. It offers a place for creative worship, art exhibitions, retreats, prayer and spiritual reflection. It also contributes significantly to interfaith activities and dialogue. Its previous Executive Director Rev Professor James Haire AC was involved in such dialogues at local, national and international levels, including negotiations to end violence in areas of conflict in Asia. He is a Presidential Friend of Indonesia and his work with the Centre over 10 years was seen by the Australian Government as of such significance to award him a Companion of the

Order of Australia for his eminent achievement. The present Executive Director is involved in international commissions in ecumenism and theology.

From the beginning, it was envisaged by the founders of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture that it would be a spiritual place for significant national religious and ceremonial occasions and a centre to celebrate and develop our religious identity and unity. In faithfulness to the original vision the Centre has become a place for reconciliation, for dialogue, for hospitality, for interaction with other faiths. This genuinely ecumenical centre has deep roots in Christian faith and engages with the significant issues impacting on Australian society. It celebrates the arts and their contribution to the common good. It offers a prophetic voice within the National Capital and celebrates the importance of Christianity in shaping our history, society and values.

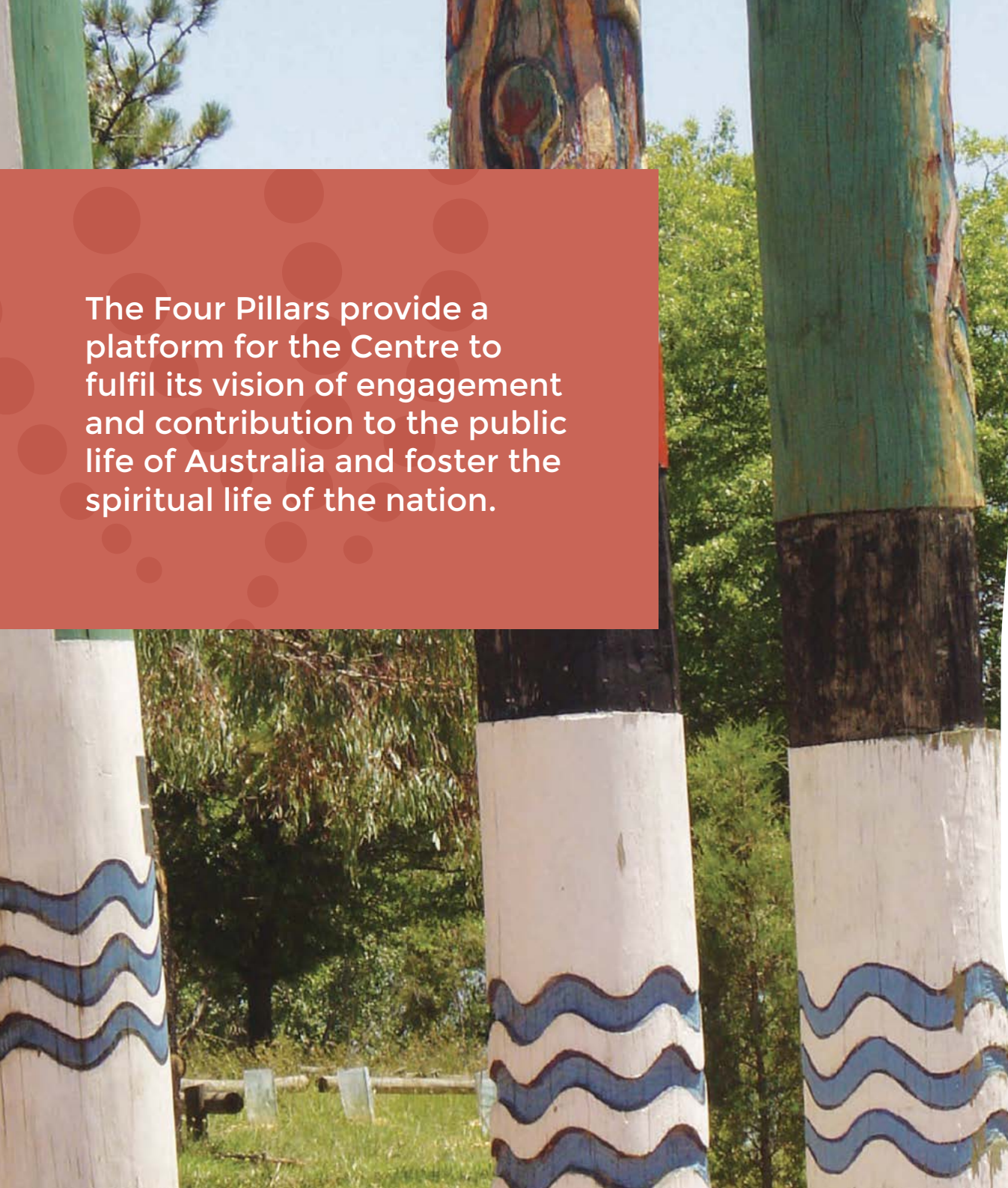
Our work today is now more important than ever given the many challenges and tensions that confront us daily as a nation. The Centre works for more tolerant, mature and inclusive approaches in responding to the challenges of the times. The practice of shared values in a democratic society like Australia requires a new national dialogue on the things that matter. This involves creating places, spaces, public discourse and events that encourage a greater openness to, and an appreciation of, our rich tradition of cultural and religious diversity. We need a fresh wisdom that works for the common good beyond self-interest and the hollowing out of cherished values.



Father Frank Brennan SJ, AO, Professor Anthony Maher and Dr Stan Grant at the Yindyamarra Pledge for Democracy, hosted by Charles Sturt University and the ACC&C at the ACC&C Chapel on 17 October.



Ceramic tile mosaic depicting 'The Holy Spirit in our Land' – replica of a painting by East Kimberly Aboriginal artist Hector Jadany held in the National Gallery of Australia.



The Four Pillars provide a platform for the Centre to fulfil its vision of engagement and contribution to the public life of Australia and foster the spiritual life of the nation.

The Four Pillars

Peace through new religious engagements

This pillar focuses on religious engagement, dialogue and reconciliation; all vital tasks at this time in Australia. This work is undertaken in a spirit of hope and generosity as a counter to fear and negativity in society.

From its outset the Centre has embodied the aspirations and hopes of the universal Church of God; genuinely ecumenical rather than denominationally based. Accordingly it was called the 'Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture'. In this sense the Centre seeks to give voice to the wisdom and diversity of the Christian tradition. The make up of the Board and our Ambassadors is intended to reflect this. Given the origins of the Centre the identifier 'Christianity' is critical. And it is of the essence of the Centre that it offers hospitality from its own 'home', as it were, in the Christian faith.

In a time when the churches have become overly preoccupied with their own internal concerns the Centre offers a unique way for the churches to act as one church and engage with Australian society and the issues of the day. In this context mutual respect and attentive listening is an imperative for all including the Christian community.

The 'Culture' banner provides a broad area that encompasses many concerns including other faiths and indigenous traditions. Critical to the Centre's work is its commitment to inter-religious dialogue and witness. The religious traditions of Australia are diverse and their adherents number over 14 million. Mutual respect and appreciation of the gifts of others are key elements in dialogue. But it goes further than this. Inter-religious dialogue is not simply a dialogue across the faiths. It is also a dialogue between people of different religious traditions and issues confronting public life in Australia. The Centre has an important role to play in hosting and initiating such activity.

The Centre is well positioned to promote the cause of inter-religious dialogue and engagement for the common good. The most significant issue on the agenda is the relationship between the Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The Centre is recognized as a place in the National Capital where there can be effective dialogue between the faiths to promote peace and understanding. We work closely with the Canberra Interfaith Network as well as local and federal governments.

The commitment to a national dialogue between Christianity and Islam is a key current project of the Centre. We are also working towards the appointment of a leading Jewish and Muslim scholar at the Centre as a contribution to a national dialogue between the Abrahamic religious traditions in Australia.

Wisdom for Civil Society

This pillar concerns issues to do with social ethics in Australia. It focuses on the liberal democratic tradition and its undergirding values. Given the increasing multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of our society, the emerging tension between secular and post secular accounts of Australia, and the significant issues before us, we now need more than anything a fresh wisdom. The Centre's work is to foster a wisdom that is intellectually robust, relevant to civil society and practical in its application. In short a wisdom that 'stands at the crossroads' of life (Proverbs 8).

We have identified issues that we want to focus on:

- Indigenous Peoples of Australia
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Global Warming and environment
- Charities, Welfare and not-for-profit sector
- Children in our Society
- Democracy and Freedom of Religion
- Aid & Development
- Ageing and Pastoral Care
- Leadership and Ethics
- Security and peace studies

The Centre is well placed to continue to host, initiate, promote and contribute to discussion on such matters in Australian public life. For example a recent Public Forum at the Centre on Asylum Seekers attracted 350 people from the churches and beyond. Our involvement in global warming issues with other faiths is a significant commitment. The Centre partners with Christians for an Ethical Society in offering an annual public lecture program to promote Christian social values and matters of social justice in Australian society.

As a special project we are committed to the appointment of an ACC&C Indigenous Fellow to develop new strategies in reconciliation, nation building and nurture emerging leaders.



Stations of the Cross at the annual Good Friday service at the Centre.

Creativity through the Arts, Sciences and Culture

This pillar recognises the importance of creativity and imagination in human life and society. Over the years the Centre has promoted these themes through music, religious poetry, drama, and liturgical experimentation. The Centre is well placed to be a venue for Art exhibitions. In 2016 the Centre held its first art exhibition entitled *Home: Between Here and There*, depicting the work of 8 Asylum Seeker artists. Further art exhibitions are planned in coming years and we are preparing the Chapel to be a site in 2018 for the prestigious touring Blake Prize for religious art.

The newest development is the establishment of the national Spiritus Short Film Prize. This prize has attracted seed funding of \$25,000 from some generous donors.

The Centre provides a home for the Canberra based Chorus of Women. It has been a delight to welcome the African Gospel Choir to sing at the Centre. In 2015 the Centre established a new position, Associate Director Liturgy, the Arts and Spiritual Care to assist in developing these programs.

The site lends itself to performance and from 2017 the Centre will host an annual Blues and Blessing Festival as well as continuing to work with the Canberra Music Festival. We are excited about providing a facility for a strong focus on outdoor events. With this in mind we are working towards the construction of an outdoor amphitheatre as the next stage towards the building of the Great Space, a concept central to the original vision for a national meeting place.

The interface between the sciences and religion/theology is a highly creative area of interdisciplinary endeavour. There are already links (through our present and past Executive Directors) with the Templeton Foundation and the Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences in the USA (CTNS). Scholars associated with the Centre have for many years been part of international dialogues exploring the relationship between the sciences and theology.



The Vice Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, Professor Andrew Vann presents the inaugural award for the national Religious Short Film Prize to the winner, Elizabeth Cooper for her film, *The Forgotten Tree*.

Resilience in Institutional Life and Ethical Leadership

This pillar focuses on ethical leadership and resilience of leaders and institutions in Australian society. This seems to be the right framework in which to explore particular concerns regarding leadership today. Such a focus connects the Centre to other scholars and groups in Charles Sturt University and beyond who focus on ethics, leadership and institutional life.

This pillar draws attention to the need for ethical leadership in the Churches and society. But the focus is broader and concerns the wellbeing of institutions in which leadership takes place. Building resilience in personal life, in institutions and leadership is vital in times of transition and stress. This pillar is an avenue for the development of leadership programs that invite perspectives from Christian theology and from a variety of disciplines relevant to leadership and institutional life. These programs will target church, political and industry leaders and emerging leaders among the young.

Over the coming years the Centre will offer a new program of annual consultations, seminars, workshops and weeklong programs for leaders and emerging leaders in church, not-for-profits and public service. Though we need to establish further funding, seed funding of \$25,000 has been received from the generous support of The Mundango Charitable Trust in the A.C.T.

The Four Pillars provide a strong basis for the development of the programs of the Centre for the future. The pillars enable the Centre to connect with society, make an impact and help the churches of Australia to engage in a robust public theology. To further this end we are actively developing a cohort of Centre Scholars who can contribute to the public intellectual life of the nation on matters pertaining to the Four Pillars. In all these activities the Centre provides an example for the churches of Australia to engage in an open, generous and prophetic way with society.



The Labyrinth, an ancient symbol of journey into wisdom, with a 2.8 billion year old rock from the Hamersley Ranges at the centre.

A Place for Pilgrims

The Centre occupies 5 and a quarter hectares on the eastern edge of the Parliamentary Triangle. The design of the buildings and the contours and layout of the land reflect an unpretentious and respectful sympathy with the land and surrounds. The site is meant to be walked on, explored, pondered such as a pilgrim would conduct a journey across sacred ground. In the heart of Canberra the site offers a place so central and well suited for quiet reflection, spiritual renewal and nourishment. This is one of the purposes of the Centre and the site is now enjoyed by an increasing number of people, particularly young people from the schools.

The present day site consists of the Chapel, designed by one of Australia's leading architects, James Grose. It seats 250 people and is extensively used by the Canberra community. It is a wonderful place for the display of art. The Upper Room of the chapel is multipurpose for seminars, prayer and hospitality. The Prayer Room just off the main Chapel entrance is a special place for quiet meditation, prayer and worship for all people.

Adjacent to the chapel is the Mural Wall. This impressive structure (30 mtrs by 5mtrs), depicts in ceramic tile design, the indigenous theme of 'The Holy Spirit in Our Land' (a replica of a painting by East Kimberly Aboriginal artist, lawmaker and elder Hector Jandany presently displayed by our near neighbour, the National Gallery of Australia).

It is almost impossible not to see the Great Cross erected at the highest point of the site and visible for some distance from the Centre. At the base of the cross is a flowing pool of water that reminds the pilgrim of the refreshment of the Spirit of God at the heart of faith.

Weaving its way around the perimeter of the Centre is the Pilgrim Walk. The walk begins on the south side via a row of splendid English oaks and Australian gums that remind the pilgrim that Christianity only becomes genuine as it enters sympathetically into the local environment and culture. To the right of the tree lined avenue is George Browning House, the administrative and academic heart of the Centre.

The Pilgrim Walk leads you by the Place of Meeting, a circle of stones with a campfire. This place is an original feature of the Centre signalling its commitment to dialogue and reconciliation. The walk continues to the spur of the site where the 3 sculptured and painted Pilgrim Poles depict different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christianity. The poles reach 20 metres towards the sky. Winding along the northern boundary you come to a grass and pebble Labyrinth with a 2.8billion year old rock from the Hamersley Ranges set at the center. The Labyrinth is an ancient symbol of journey into wisdom. People can be found walking the Labyrinth at any time of the day.



The Pilgrim Path winds through the Centre's 6 acre site.



School children on a retreat day at the Pilgrim Poles.

The walk leads you further to the Bible Garden. This remarkable garden designed in the shape of a Jewish menorah contains most of the plants mentioned in Holy Scripture. It is quite unique and is visited by many people including hundreds of school children. The Bible Garden Trust was established with a generous donation from the Robinson Family. A beautiful book has been produced to provide a meditative introduction to the garden's spiritual gift.

Above the garden overlooking Lake Burley Griffin is an impressive Humanitarian Aid Workers' Memorial dedicated in 2013. The memorial is 'In honour and memory of all deceased Australians and members of Australian Aid Organisations who served in International Humanitarian Work'.

Beyond the garden the walk follows the perimeter of the Centre through a forest setting and curves south to bring you an exquisite Outdoor Chapel with a large tree trunk for the communion table. This chapel is used for worship including weddings. From the chapel you can survey the 3 hectares of Native Grasslands preserved in perpetuity.

The walk brings you past St Mark's National Theological Centre the brainchild of Bishop Ernst Burgmann in the 1950's. Adjacent to this is the new Ross Chambers Pavilion, a state of the art facility for hospitality and seminars.

Impact and Influence

The Centre's impact over its brief history has been significant in some key areas:

Engagement with the Australian churches

The Centre has been instrumental in drawing church leaders and theologians together through its Centre for Ecumenical Studies. We have seen the strengthening of communication amongst churches by hosting Heads of Churches meetings; conducting annual ecumenical Stations of the Cross; liturgical celebrations to mark significant occasions in the life of the nation; and gathering the national Bible Society archive and collection. In 2017 the Centre will host the Fourth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism.

International ecumenical and theological engagement

The Centre is a founding member of the Global Network of Public Theology; provides leadership in international church dialogues; and provides an important forum for building a public theology in Australia.

Interfaith Dialogue and Witness

ACC&C is host to the Canberra Interfaith Network along with the annual Commonwealth Day Multi-Faith Celebration and numerous interfaith liturgical events to mark significant occasions for celebration, mourning and lament. The Centre joins with Muslim friends in hosting an annual Iftar meal during Ramadan.

In 2015 the Centre initiated a major project on national Christian/Muslim dialogue with seed funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Centre provides interfaith programs for the Australian Federal Police; and interfaith discussions with leaders and visitors from other countries.



National Unity Day 2015, Parliament House.

Indigenous Reconciliation

The Centre is host for 'Sorry Day' and the annual David Hunter Memorial Lecture dedicated to the theme of reconciliation. We have established the annual Ces Grant lectures at the Centre and have initiated an Independent Indigenous Churches project to record and celebrate aboriginal Christian heritage and culture. The next phase of the Centre's work is focused on emerging indigenous leaders in church and society. We are actively engaged with key indigenous bodies in Australia to promote reconciliation.



A campfire conversation with an indigenous elder at the Place of Meeting.

Partnerships and collaborations

The strength of the ACC&C requires the development of quality networks and partnerships. In this respect developing ACC&C chapters in capital cities will be an important focus for the future. In recent years the Centre has formed strong ties with a number of groups and organisations both nationally and internationally including: Christians for an Ethical Society; Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre, Charles Sturt University; Global Network for Public Theology; Canberra Chorus of Women; the Centre for Ecumenical Studies and the Centre for Aging and Pastoral Studies. Increasingly the Centre works with other organisations in loose networks of cooperation who share the vision for the common good e.g. Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, Faith Based working Group for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Micah Challenge, Common Grace, Australians Together. We value our close association with our neighbour, St Marks National Theological Centre, the founding institution of the School of Theology of Charles Sturt University.

Growing the Vision for the Site

We designed and built the Chapel as first stage of the vision for a Great Space. We also established the remarkable Bible Garden, the Pilgrim Walk, the Place of Meeting, Labyrinth, Pilgrim Poles, and Mural Wall, Humanitarian Aid Workers Monument; new Ross Chambers Pavilion Hospitality Centre; and the George Browning House for scholars and administration.

Engagement with Culture and Civil Society

The Centre has recently established a national Religious Short Film Prize as a way to bring the religious spirit alive through the arts. We particularly want to encourage young and emerging filmmakers to experiment in new ways to connect faith, life and the future. In 2016 the winning entry was, *The Forgotten Tree*; a film combining elements of Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious traditions through the eyes of two young women.

ACC&C hosts conferences and consultations on science, technology and religion; environment and theology; religious diversity and democracy; forums on religious freedom and inter-religious themes, and asylum seekers and refugees.



2016 Seminar on 'Foreign Aid, strategy, charity and national interest' with Dr Helen Zsoka, CEO Oxfam in the new Ross Chambers Pavilion.



Recognition of Donors

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture will be pleased to receive any gift or sponsorship from individuals, companies, community supporters, and Trusts and Foundations. Donors are invited to spread their support over a three to five year period to support programs on an ongoing basis. Donors will also be encouraged to direct their support to a specific program of interest if so desired.

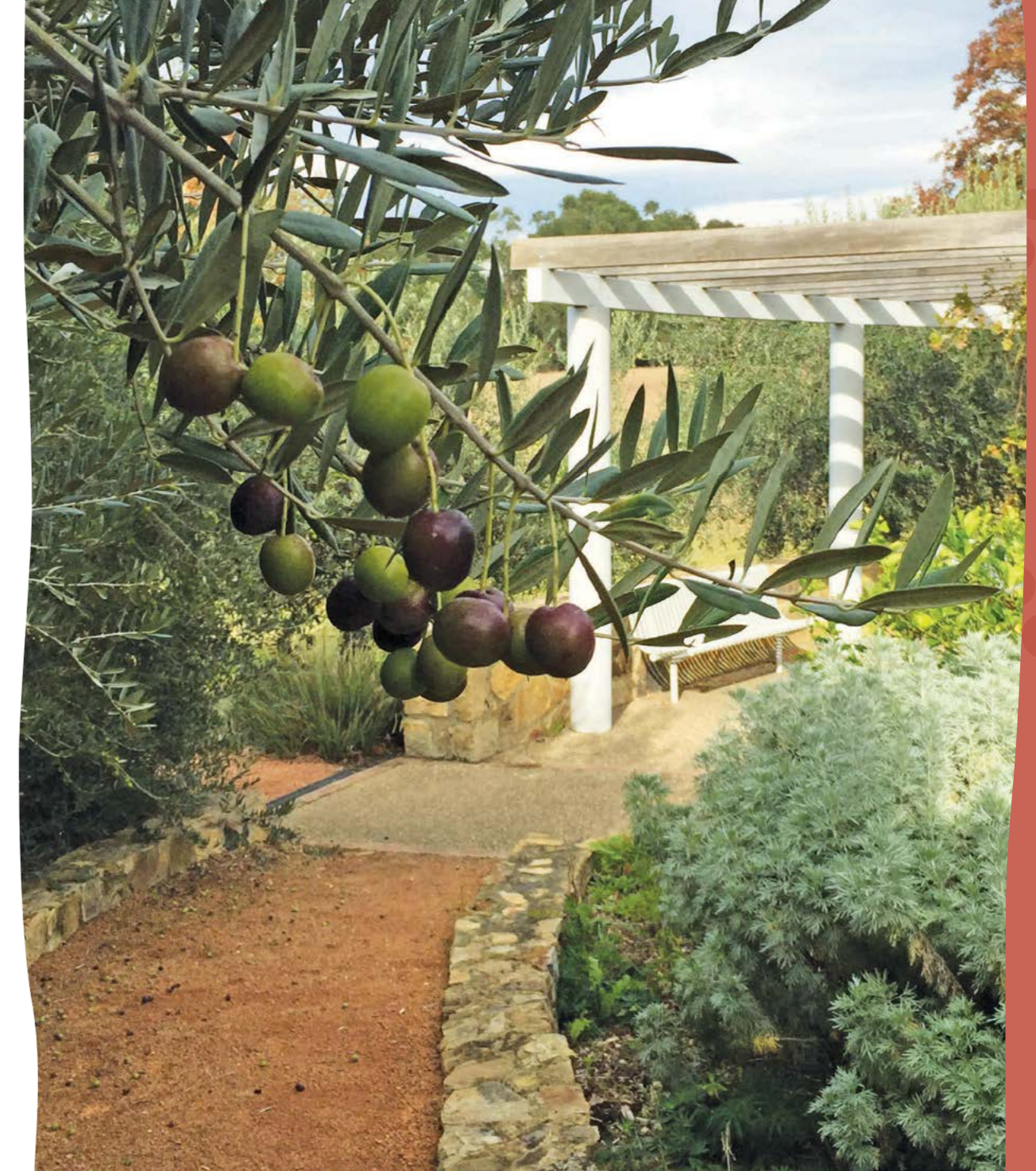
The fundraising efforts will be directed to selected individual benefactors, trusts, corporate partners, friends of the Centre and others associated with the ACC&C. Fundraising is directed towards the expansion in the range, scope and reach of the Centre's activities through the Four Pillars. Because of the generous funding support provided by CSU (for salaries, grounds and administration) your donation goes directly to support the programs and activities of the Centre.

The gift may be for support of particular programs or flexible that we might choose to fund activities in order of importance.

All gifts over \$2 will be tax deductible.

Recognition of donors includes the following:

- Sponsorship (naming) rights for some of the dedicated programs at the Centre
- All individuals, companies and organisations contributing to the programs of the Centre will be recognised by having their names inscribed on a special Benefactors Board that will be displayed in a public area at the Centre.
- Promotional coverage and publicity will be available to recognise all gifts within Centre publications and on the website.



Olive grove at the Bible Garden.

Friends of the Centre

The Friends of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture assist the Executive Director and the Board to develop a community and network of people committed to the vision and mission of the Centre to support its programs, activities and work. This includes being available to welcome, provide advice and hospitality, help with catering, assistance with administration etc. for worship services, ecumenical and interfaith events, art exhibitions, escorting visitors to the Bible Garden and conducting tours of the Centre.

Friends have a special responsibility to enhance the life of the Centre through developing a community of prayer to undergird its activities; to assist with fund raising events and to act as advocates and publicists in churches, community organisations and groups.

Promoting the Centre

To become a Friend of the Centre means a person has a sympathy and excitement for the vision of the Centre and embraces its motto, 'Wisdom for the Common Good'. Friends bring many gifts not least being that of hospitality. Friends are encouraged to offer their own particular expertise or area of interest in the service of work and vision of the Centre. An annual friends dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the work of the Centre, encourage one another and introduce others to the Centre's work and vision and discuss new developments.

Governance

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture was established on 2 June 1998, under the authority of Charles Sturt University in collaboration with the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, and with the approval of the National Council of Churches in Australia. The Centre is governed by a Board (under delegation from the Council of Charles Sturt University) consisting of members of the Christian churches. The Vice Chancellor of the University and the Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Canberra & Goulburn are ex-officio members of the Board. The Board, together with the Executive Director, has oversight of the activities and strategic development of the Centre. The Board is chaired by Dr Lawrie Willett AO, former Chancellor of Charles Sturt University.

Board members comprise leaders and members of Christian churches and active Christians prominent in many fields of society: law, business, academia, social welfare, indigenous education, media, military, strategic advice and government policy and administration. The Board is supported by an active Executive which meets regularly to look at all aspects of the Centre's life. The governance and accountability structures work well to ensure any donations are appropriately and carefully stewarded to maximise their impact.

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Rt'd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Centre Ambassadors

The ACC&C also has Centre Ambassadors. The Rt. Rev'd Dr George Browning, former chair of the Board and visionary for the Centre, is convener of the Ambassadors. The Ambassadors comprise eminent persons prominent in Australian life and society whose role is to promote the Centre's vision, ideals, programs, life and mission. Centre Ambassadors assist, promote and support the work of the Centre by, inter alia, using their good offices, contacts, networks and standing in the Australian community to open doors, facilitate meetings for the purpose of presenting the funding needs of the Centre and extend its activities and programs.



Above: Patron of the Centre, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove with Sri Lankan dancers at the 2015 Commonwealth Day Multi-faith Celebration.

Right: Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.



"I want the great things of abiding value... thoroughly baptized into the Australian scene, blown through by Australian winds, and even coated now and then with Australian dust."

Bishop Ernest Henry Burgmann
Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn

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