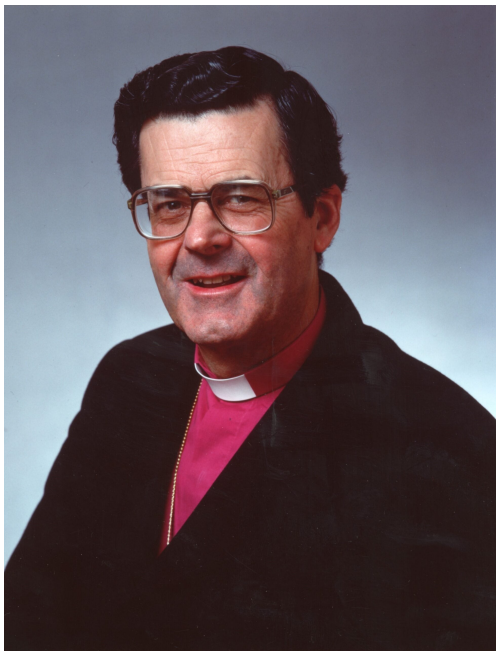




Bishop Keith Rayner dies, aged 95

Bishop Keith Rayner, a widely respected former Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, who served at the highest level around the country, including as Archbishop of Adelaide, died peacefully on Sunday 12 January, 2025, aged 95.



“A person of deep prayer and faith, Bishop Keith was an important influence on many people, both Lay and Ordained, during his life,” the current Primate and Archbishop of Adelaide Geoffrey Smith said. “I give thanks to God for his life and faithful ministry.”

Bishop Keith was ordained in the Diocese of Brisbane in 1953, and served curacies at Auchenflower and Dalby. Incumbencies followed at the Brisbane parishes of Sunnybank and Wynnum, during which time he also completed his doctoral thesis.

He was elected Bishop of Wangaratta in 1969, and was then Archbishop of Adelaide from 1975 until 1990.

His time in Adelaide included overseeing significant liturgical changes across the Diocese, and social commentary on many controversial issues of the day, including the re-marriage of divorced persons, homosexuality, euthanasia, indigenous issues, and uranium mining. His opinion was always respected.

He was installed as Archbishop of Melbourne in November, 1990, where he ministered until his retirement in 1999, on his 70th birthday.

Bishop Keith was Primate from 1991 until his retirement, having been the Acting Primate from 1989.



Bishop Keith with his family at Bishop's Court, Adelaide.

He was a key figure, both as Primate and as Archbishop of Melbourne, in the eventual Ordination of the first women to the Priesthood in Australia, leading the important National Bishops' Meeting in 1991, and chairing General Synod and the Melbourne Synod of 1992 which passed the necessary Canon to allow dioceses to ordain women to the priesthood.



Queen Elizabeth II and Archbishop Keith Rayner after the Order of Australia service at St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, 11 October 1981.

Photo: Advertiser Newspapers Ltd.

Bishop Keith chaired the newly-formed Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, established by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1980. He was an important contributor in the planning of the 1988 Lambeth Conference. He was also, after his retirement, a member of the committee which in 2000-2001 conducted a review of the See of Canterbury. His counsel was sought and valued at the highest levels, by a succession of Archbishops of Canterbury and other leaders within the global church.

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