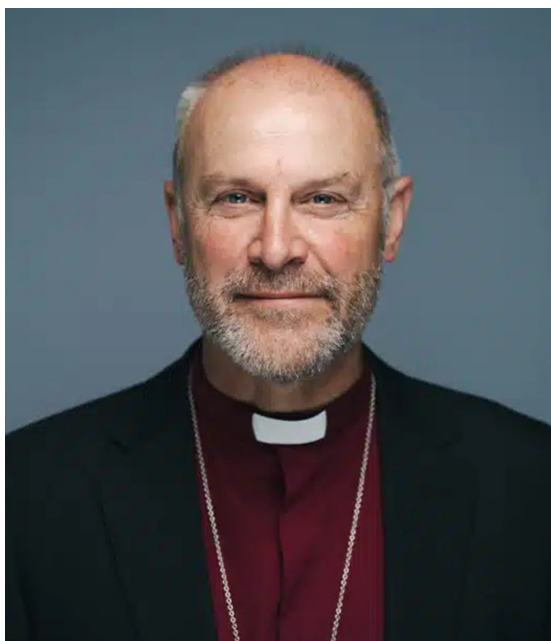## Primate welcomes election of new Melbourne Archbishop

The Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Geoff Smith, welcomed the successful election of the Right Reverend Dr Ric Thorpe as the next Archbishop of Melbourne.

"Clearly Synod was united in its discernment of the new archbishop," Archbishop Geoff said.

Archbishop-elect Ric currently serves in a special episcopal role as Bishop of Islington in the Diocese of London.

**Bishop Ric Thorpe**

It encompasses diocesan, national and international responsibilities, held together within the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication with a focus on church planting.

"Ric, with his church planting experience, will be beneficial to Melbourne and the Anglican Church of Australia," the Primate said.

Ordained in the Diocese of London, Bishop Ric did his undergraduate theological studies at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University and his doctorate through Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky United States.

In a statement to the Diocese, Bishop Ric said he and his family had come to love Melbourne over the years, "as we have served and ministered in the diocese, in other denominations, and across the nation".

His said his passion is "seeing the whole Church of God thrive, enabling churches to be healthy, new congregations planted, and struggling churches revitalised".

The Chair of the Board of Nominators, Dr Jenny George, described Archbishop-elect Ric as "an experienced and visionary leader. Ric has been personally involved in revitalising small or shrinking parishes and planting new churches. His commitment to developing future leaders is seen in his local and global training of church planters and other leaders."

He succeeds Archbishop Philip Freier who retired in February after serving 18 years in office.

Bishop Thorpe will be installed as Archbishop in St Paul's Cathedral later in the year at a date to be advised. Bishop Genieve Blackwell Blackwell will continue to serve as Administrator until that time.

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