

Adelaide hosts church leaders from across Australia and New Zealand for Registrars Conference

More than 50 senior leaders responsible for the business of the Anglican Church gathered in Adelaide this week for the 2026 Anglican Registrars Conference, hosted by the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide from 16 to 19 November.

Registrars, general managers, finance managers and development fund managers travelled from 27 dioceses across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, joined by representatives of the General Synod offices of both churches, for four days of learning, shared practice and fellowship.

The conference was convened by Adelaideâ??s Diocesan Registrar and Secretary of Synod Joe Thorp.



Moira Were, Mayor of Onkaparinga, delivering the opening dayâ??s keynote speech

In his welcome note to delegates the right Reverend Dr Mark Short, Primate of The Anglican Church of Australia, noted that seizing the opportunities for Christian mission in contemporary Australia will require wise use of resources and a culture of collaboration and partnership between Anglicans across our nation. That is why your work and your commitment to engaging with each other is so vital to the well-being and impact of Christâ??s church.

In his welcome to delegates, Mr Thorp noted that the conferenceâ??s program was built around three core elements: equipping and developing leaders; sharing best practice; and exploring models for long-term operating and commercial sustainability.

â??The Anglican church whilst episcopaly led and synodically governed, must be professionally managed to deal with the commercial and regulatory complexities of our age and to ensure we can sustainably meet the needs of mission into the future,â?• Mr Thorp said.

Faith, care and civic life

The conference opened on the Sunday evening with Evensong at St Peterâ??s Cathedral, followed by dinner in the cityâ??s West End.

Each morning began with Bible study led by Archbishop Bradly Billings focussing on Acts 15: The Council at Jerusalem. In his welcome to delegates, Archbishop Brad described the Diocese as entering a season of renewed vision and strategic planning, and said gatherings like this remind us that â??we are co-labourers in the mission-field, each having our respective role to play.â?•



Gillian Harrex, General Synodâ??s Honorary Treasurer

The Revâ??d Cameron Burr, Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council, gave the Acknowledgement of Country, before Mayor of Onkaparinga Moira Were AM delivered the opening keynote, How Faith and Care Becomes Civic.

Leadership and sustainability

Across three sessions, leadership consultant Rosslyn Cox worked with delegates on psychosocial safety, leading from the â??second chairâ?•, and leading and managing change.

Other sessions tackled the practical realities facing diocesan administrations. Michael Brennan of SV Partners shared lessons learned from receivership and how organisations can prepare for financial sustainability. General Synod Secretary General Juliet Wenden led a debrief on diocesan structures following the 19th General Synod, and Jenny Dawson, Chair of the Diocesan Financial Advisory Task Force, explained the task forceâ??s work. Honorary Treasurer of General Synod Gillian Harrex presented on proactive strategies for diocesan structures and led a workshop on cooperation between parishes, dioceses and provinces.



Delegates also heard updates on insurance, investment and risk from the churchâ??s partners, including the launch of an Anglican mutual, and a session on navigating sensitive claims. Tasmanian Registrar James Oakley led a discussion of the legal landscape, including the joint parliamentary inquiry report on the National Redress Scheme.

A program of roundtable discussions covered AI policy and practice, property management, alternative redress arrangements, remuneration structures and GST.

â??Every Diocese in Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia shares similar obligations, challenges and opportunities â?? so it makes sense that we meet, learn, and collaborate,â?• Mr Thorp said.

Time together

The program also made room for the relationships that sustain the work. On the Tuesday afternoon, delegates travelled into the Adelaide Hills, in the Diocese of The Murray, visiting The Cedars and the new Heysen Gallery at the Cedars in Hahndorf before wine tastings at Shaw + Smith and dinner at Howard Vineyard.



Registrar Joe Thorp presents Danielle Casamento with a gift of thanks after her presentation.

On the Wednesday evening, delegates dined at The Adelaide Club, where Diocesan Archivist Dr Sarah Black offered a View from the Archives, drawing on the Dioceseâ??s long history of firsts in Anglican governance, among them the first modern Anglican synod with fully enfranchised lay members in 1855.

The conference closed on Thursday morning, with delegates invited to join the regular Eucharist at St Peterâ??s Cathedral.

â??Iâ??m very grateful to God for this time of learning and growth together. Knowing each other better facilitates understanding and builds relationships so that that we can rely on each other for help throughout the year,â?• Mr Thorp said.

The conference was made possible by the support of principal sponsors Ord Minnett and Ansvar, supporting sponsors AIRS Limited, Anglican Funds Management, and Finity Consulting. Mr Thorp also thanked the convening committee of Sarah Crutch, James Gale and James Oakley, and Susan Wilkins, Executive Assistant to the Registrar and Secretary of Synod, for her work in organising the event.

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