

Provincial Chapter 2011 News

April No. 2

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2011

October 24-28

Melbourne



Reflections are going on all over the Australia New Zealand Province in preparation for the October Provincial Chapter.

Each month a Chapter e news is distributed around the network and it will be followed by a Reflection which we hope people will take into their communities, workplaces, or alone and reflect on the stories and questions provided.

Here's some feedback from the March Reflection, which focussed on the theme of **Enduring Story**:

In Melbourne at the GSA NZ staff reflection session, the organisation's new business manager, Wayne Gorst, said he had done a lot of reading about Good Shepherd before taking the job and had been 'struck by pioneering nature' of the Good Shepherd Sisters over the years. Others were amazed at the courage of the four young Sisters who arrived in Australia in 1863 and began the work that continues today.

Interestingly, several staff commented that it was Good Shepherd's courage and conviction to walk beside marginalised women and children that attracted them to the Good Shepherd organisation in recent times.

Sr Noelene White said Board members of Rosemount Good Shepherd Youth & Family Services in NSW used the reflection at a recent reflection/planning day.

"We took the Chapter Reflection on "Enduring Story" to gather us and centre our time together. It led to a wonderful sharing on what attracted and retained us in Good Shepherd and focused us for the following day's work."

"The Sharing around each person's journey to becoming involved with Good Shepherd, with all the zig zags, the 'what have I got myself into' moments, and the attraction of 'strong women doing strong things', created a shared understanding of the journey we are on together as Good Shepherd Board members. We acknowledged that we continue this journey knowing it will never be a straight road but we are committed to it whatever. Humor is also a wonderful gift in our group and we are energized by this enduring story."

If you would like to share a reflection contact Rosie Hoban at

rosieh@goodshep.com.au

or join us on Facebook –

[facebook.com/goodshep](https://www.facebook.com/goodshep)



Good Shepherd: An Enduring Story... A New Future!

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Planners of the 2011 Provincial Chapter



Who's Who?

Back, from left: Sr Pamela Molony, Michael Yore, Rhonda Cumberland & Jo Thitchener.
Seated from left: Sr Naomi McClements, Sr Monica Walsh, Julie McQueen & Jill McCorquodale.

The Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand Provincial Chapter is being planned by a Committee, representing all parts of the Good Shepherd network. As well planning practical aspects, they also have great hopes for the Chapter. Here they share their hopes ...

Jill McCorquodale

Facilitator and consultant for the Good Shepherd pre-Chapter and Chapter Process & Discernment.

My hopes for this time are that all who are grabbed and inspired by the Good Shepherd Charism will, through the interactions and deliberations of our conversations and gatherings, continue to be energised by this compelling movement of life, wisdom and love for our world and cosmos.

Sr Pamela Molony

Province Leader

In 2009 the Good Shepherd Sisters held their Congregational Chapter in Angers, France. The Direction Statement from that Chapter calls us to "respond to the anguish of the world".

What a powerful call that is. Many of us in Good Shepherd are in touch with the anguish of the world through the lives of people with whom we work.

*My hope is that this Chapter will be a **deepening and connecting** experience for all who engage with the process, and will result in our responding more compassionately and more effectively to the anguish of the world.*

Julie McQueen

Manager, Organisational Development at GSY&FS in Victoria. I work on organisational strategies which build the capability, vitality and sustainability of the organisation. My role also includes HR, industrial relations, quality, safety and equal opportunity.

Past chapters have provided a clear vision, sense of direction and guidance for our work on the ground. I hope that continues, along with a confirmation and renewal in a more spiritual or philosophical sense too, for professional and inner sustainability and resilience.

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Michael Yore
Director for Mission & Justice

The one thing I would like to come out of the Chapter is a renewed commitment to continuing the journey we have all embarked

upon to build a strong, resilient Good Shepherd into the future in genuine partnership.



Sr Monica Walsh

A counsellor and facilitator working both within Good Shepherd and in the wider community.

Monica responds to issues relating to former residents of Good Shepherd institutions. She is also on The Trading Circle

Board, on the Strategy & Agency Partnerships Committee of GSANZ, on the Policy & Services Committee of the GSYFS Board and on the Resident Care Support Committee.

I hope that the Provincial Chapter process will foster a new consciousness between sisters and lay partners of our identity as Good Shepherd, enabling us to grow together as companions on the journey, making a real contribution to healing and fullness of life for all.



Rhonda Cumberland
Chief Executive Officer
Good Shepherd Australia
New Zealand

The one thing I want to get out of the chapter is a deeper understanding and

experience of co responsibility.



Jo Thitchener
Executive Assistant to the
CEO, Rhonda Cumberland.

I support the CEO, the Management Leadership Team, the GSANZ Board and the PLT around Board

and Committee Meetings. I also contribute to the Office Leadership Team and driving organisational development to achieve our Strategic Priorities.

I am also working on GSANZ's application for membership of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and AusAID accreditation.

I feel very privileged to be a part of the Chapter planning process and I hope that out of the 2011 Chapter will come a shared understanding of the part that everyone plays in the Good Shepherd story to where we are today; and a shared enthusiasm and zeal for the part that we will continue to play in the emerging future of Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, as a vibrant organisation, building on the mission and spirit of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, to make a significant and demonstrable contribution to the lives of women and girls.



Sr Naomi McClements

Naomi is a member of the Leederville Community in WA. As a Social Worker she is engaged in advocacy and support for former residents, pastoral care of Sisters in

aged care facilities, The Trading Circle and she is a WA Committee member of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans).

I hope that the coming Provincial Chapter will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on deeper values of the Good Shepherd story which will impact on them personally and on all future ministries.

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Sr Pamela Molony (pictured) has been the Province Leader of Australia New Zealand for almost six years. This Q & A with Pam will run in every Chapter E News leading up to October. If you would like to ask Pam a question please email the Communications Committee at rosieh@goodshep.com.au. Thanks to the staff at GSY&FS in Melbourne for submitting this question.

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Pam, Can you tell us a bit more about how the Chapter fits within the decision making and structures of the Catholic Church? Do all orders have a chapter? What sorts of decisions are made?

All religious orders hold Chapters – an important and ancient governance structure. For a religious order to operate officially within the Catholic Church, its constitutions must contain certain essential elements and these include the process of holding Chapters.

Every province within the international Congregation of Sisters of the Good Shepherd (there are more than 30 provinces throughout the world) must hold a Provincial Chapter at least every six years. While the Provincial Chapter is in session (in this province: 24 – 28 October 2011) it is the highest governing body in the province and it reviews the past, and plans for the future.

Chapters can be tedious, legalistic endurance tests.....or, they can be energising and deeply engaging experiences. Ideally, a Provincial Chapter brings about renewed energy for the Spirit and Mission of Good Shepherd. Each six years, the Chapter elects a new Province Leader and Team to carry forward its directives. Effective Chapters set directives which are about “big” matters. They set directives which are clear, but which leave scope for flexibility and changing circumstances.

Chapters can be really important in blazing new trails. For example in 1970 the Sisters in Australia were almost totally engaged in institutional care of women and girls. The resolutions of the Provincial

Chapter of that year set out the path for the next stage of the journey. They called for:

- ✦ Seminars for senior staff [sisters] of the institutions, with professional experts in attendance.
- ✦ Exploration of new methods of working with girls and women outside of institutional care.
- ✦ Employment of lay staff.
- ✦ Review of the sisters’ communities.
- ✦ Sisters to have at least one full free day per month. (!)

These and other Chapter resolutions led to the phasing out of institutional care and, over time, new organisations developed, such as Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service in Melbourne, Rosemount in Sydney, and St Clare’s School in Perth.

Another example was the Provincial Chapter of 2005 which brought about the changes which we see happening now. The Chapter directed the establishing of a Stewardship Committee as an advisory group to the Province Leadership Team, with the possibility of this committee becoming a Stewardship Board with executive powers.

At an (interim) Provincial Chapter held in 2008 the Province Leader reported that the Stewardship Committee was operating very effectively, and the Chapter authorised the next step. This led to the restructuring of the Stewardship Committee as an executive body, named Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand.

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As a young girl Carmel McFaull dreamt of the day when she would be married and her brood of nine or ten children would be gathered around her in a house full of laughter and love. Save for the husband, life turned out as she wanted, though never in the way she intended.

As a Good Shepherd Sister Carmel has spent a good chunk of her life as a mother to dozens of children who were orphaned or relinquished into the care of the Good Shepherd Sisters.

“At every stage of my life, in each new role that I was asked to do as a Good Shepherd Sister, I think it has been the best stage of life for me. I really have been so lucky,” Carmel said. “My work has always been with those who are marginalised, especially women and children - and that is what Good Shepherd is all about.”

In recent years her commitment to the community has been honoured with a 2005 Australian of the Year nomination and an Order of Australia in 2007. These honours recognised in particular her 20 plus years of service to cancer sufferers in the Southern Peninsula area of Victoria. Carmel’s life, whether it was with children, or with those battling cancer, has always involved reaching out to people who are isolated, and always with a strong sense that God is at work.

Carmel was educated by the Sion Sisters in Box Hill for several years in the 1940s, before training to be a Mothercraft Nurse. Her mother had died when she was 10 and her father and two brothers were in the Army during WW11. So Carmel spent time with her much older sister (Sr Francis of Assisi) who had joined the Good Shepherd Sisters years earlier.

She worked as a Mothercraft Nurse for the Grey Sisters when they opened their Mother/Child Centre in Canterbury in the late 1940s.

“God stepped in as usual and showed me a different way. Mother Help of Christians, who was in charge of a Good Shepherd hostel in Melbourne called Rosary Place, challenged me to stop



wandering around and actually do something to help the marginalised women and children, if that’s what I really wanted to do with my life. She took me under her wing and it was then I decided to join the Good Shepherd Sisters,” Carmel said.

Abandoning her childhood dream of a family was difficult, particularly when she saw the love and companionship that so many families enjoyed. Little did she know what was in store for her! After joining the Sisters in 1950 she was sent to the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne where she set up the first formal Kindergarten, known as St Joseph’s Class. For 12 years she watched hundreds of children come through the Kindergarten, before being sent to Bendigo in 1962 to St Aiden’s, a home for orphaned children.

Carmel’s stint in Bendigo came as religious congregations worldwide battled through some of the most radical changes that those in religious life at the time had ever experienced. At the same time Good Shepherd was in the midst of its own revolution, moving from larger institutions to

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smaller more intimate family groups. Carmel and the other Sisters at St Aiden's revamped the larger building from dormitories to smaller units. From there they moved to community houses with one Sister living as the house-mother to 10 children, with the aim of keeping siblings together. The Sisters also believe it would benefit the children to learn how to live in a family setting.

So it came to pass that Carmel got her brood! For many years she cared for two families of children in the family home in Bendigo and she recalls *them* also as the happiest days of her life.

"I got my ten kids. We lived as a family and I was the mother - in fact I was a working single mother because I was also travelling around the Bendigo area as chaplain of the YCW girls!!" she said.

To this day, Carmel's 'children' are still in touch with her and she is known by their children and grandchildren as Nanny Carmel. She attends the weddings, 21st Birthdays and many of the other family's milestones.

"These kids were so full of love even though life had given them some rough times," Carmel said.

The two families of children also witnessed the many changes that happened within religious life during the 60s and 70s. One day Carmel told the children she had a surprise. She walked into her bedroom wearing the full habit and stepped out in a simple dress and veil. The children were stunned and took a long time to adjust to the changes.

"There were incredible changes within the Church and society in that time. It was a bewildering time in lots of ways and you had to make a decision to go with the flow and trust that it was the right direction or become bitter about the changes. People felt really threatened, but like lots of things

in life, it is faith that got me through," Carmel said.

By 1976 most of the children in the house had grown up and some had left home and Carmel realised it was time to go before a new group of children joined the house. So she responded to a call to work as a pastoral associate at St John Vianney's Parish in Springvale North. She focussed on the women who were isolated and experiencing difficulty and set up a group for the young mothers.

It was in Springvale that she was asked to take the weekly Friday job of going to the Springvale Cemetery and burying the paupers; the people who ended their life penniless and alone. Looking back, Carmel considers it the 'greatest privilege' of her life. Every Friday she would go to the cemetery

and, watched by the bemused gravedigger, she would pray at the graveside and leave a flower on the graves of other paupers.

"Here were these people who God had loved into life and who had been loved by someone, at some time, maybe long ago. And yet here they were alone and being buried in an unmarked grave in a simple coffin with no one to cry for them," Carmel said.

"I just stood by their graves and I prayed *The Lord Is My Shepherd.*"

From the busy life of Springvale, Carmel moved to the beachfront cliffs of Portsea where she set up a respite house for women needing a break from the difficulties of their life. Carmel looked after the children while the women had a break. It seems she was never far from the noise and chaos of family life.

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"One visitor to the Portsea house was a mother who was undergoing treatment for cancer. Then I heard about someone else who had to drive up and down from the Peninsula to Peter Mac Cancer Hospital in the city every day for weeks," she said. Carmel co-opted a friend and the pair took turns driving this person to and from her treatment each day. Word got around and after a bit of local publicity the Southern Peninsula Cancer Support Group was formed. From that group a transport network was established and it is now an extraordinary service with 40 volunteer drivers.

"Before we started this more than 20 years ago, people on the Peninsula used to have to catch public transport or drive themselves 75km to Melbourne for treatment every day, day after day, sometimes for weeks," Carmel said.

"Now we have volunteer drivers who pick them up, wait for them at the hospital and take them home. It is so much more than just a driving service, it is companionship and support, and many of the people have become great friends over the years."

Carmel wasn't content with an efficient and friendly army of volunteers driving people to and from Melbourne for their cancer treatment. She wanted the cancer treatment closer to the people, so for years she, along with others, lobbied, talked, wrote and persuaded politicians and policy makers until the Peninsula Oncology Centre at Frankston Private Hospital was built.

Carmel, who turned 80 in February still oversees the Support Group, but she also works two or three days a week at the hospital offering support and friendship to any patients who are referred to her or who drop in. The 'pickerupera of pieces' is the title many of the hospitals' staff have given her.

"It is a great privilege to be able to be with people as they take this journey in their life. For many of them it is the final part of their life and for others life will go on. But for that time they allow me to be with them," Carmel said.

There are hundreds of Australians who can't imagine what would have happened if Carmel McFaull hadn't come into their life. And Carmel can't imagine her life without the intervention of God who has guided her through the many stages of her Good Shepherd life.

"So many people, especially other Good Shepherd Sisters pray for me and they have been my family throughout my life. They are a remarkable community of women," she said.

"And I am also sure that those men and women who were called paupers also pray for me now. Sometimes when something happens and I think that's a little miracle; I reckon it's because the paupers are praying for me. I always think that when my time is up, it will be the paupers who pull me into heaven!"

Carmel hopes that's some time away. "I still have a lot to do".



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An Enduring Story...A New Future!

If you would like to submit an idea or comment to this Chapter newsletter, please send it to rosieh@goodshep.com.au.

The Chapter Communications Committee members are:

Julie McQueen, Manager
Organizational Development,
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Sr Naomi McClements, Perth

Rosie Hoban, Communications,
Mission & Justice, Melbourne

Justice. Compassion.
Reconciliation. Respect.
Cooperation.
Creative partnerships.

Provincial Chapter 2011 Dates



In the lead-up to the Chapter there will be regional chapters around the Province which will involve Sisters, staff, volunteers, board members and associates.

The dates of the regional gatherings are:

Melbourne

9 June 2011 GSANZ and Sisters
10 June 2011 Sisters

Sydney

17 June 2011 GSANZ and Sisters
18 June 2011 Sisters

Auckland

27 June 2011 Sisters (morning and early afternoon)
GSANZ and Sisters
(5pm – twilight session).

Brisbane

21 July 2011 Sisters (morning and early afternoon)
GSANZ and Sisters
(5pm – twilight session).

Perth

23 July 2011 GSANZ and Sisters
24 July 2011 Sisters.

Note: GSANZ includes all boards, staff, associates and volunteers.

Note: Details about these regional chapters will be published in the May newsletter and will also be at www.goodshep.net.au/chapter2011/.

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