

National Association of Deacons ***Chair Report***

It is with pleasure that I have this opportunity to present this report on behalf of the Executive of the National Association of Deacons.

I was elected as Chair of this Association in November of 2010. I nominated myself for this position as I felt that it was time that I contributed to this national body. Having been part of the NAD as a regional representative in 2007-2009, I knew that I wanted to continue the work that the Executive had begun. It has been a busy, eventful but very fulfilling 8 months.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the work of Deacon Peter Olsen as the outgoing Chair. Peter took over the Chair in very trying times, when the association was at the crossroads. The diaconate was becoming truly national and the committee that Peter inherited was only just coming to grips with having fair representation from across Australia. I would like to congratulate him on his achievements. He was able to lead the change to a national constitution that fully represented deacons across the country. He led the committee that organised an excellent conference in Pennant Hills in 2009 and took on many lead organisational roles in that conference. His final work was to get underway a new website in order to remain in contact and to help inform deacons and those interested in the diaconate across Australia. His time of chairmanship expired before he was able to launch the website himself however, the website is indicative of his leadership. On behalf of all deacons, I would like to thank Peter for his service and wish him well in his future endeavours.

As I mentioned in my preamble, it has been a busy 8 months since my election. The first item of business that needed to be addressed was the completion of the website. The Executive believed that it was very important to have at our disposal a website that served the purposes of educating and informing deacons across the country and at the same time, be used as a vehicle of communication. Deacon Anthony Gooley, who was at the time, the editor of the 'Ausdeacon News', was seconded on as the Executive's contact point for the design of this website. Along with Matthew from Afterglow media, a website was designed and launched which satisfied this brief. The website was launched earlier this year and has contained within it many articles that can assist with ongoing formation and with education. It also has the pen portraits of a number of deacons and I encourage all of you to submit something to your regional representative so that we can have a dossier of all deacons across the country. All deacons are also encouraged to submit articles of interest. These articles could be on a book that you have read, a researched position that you feel strongly about or a reflection on your ministry. As an Executive, we feel very strongly that if this website is going to remain relevant and alive, then deacons need to contribute to it.

Another feature of the website is the opportunity to be part of a forum whereby issues of interest can be discussed. Currently, we have had very limited response to the forum. I am hoping that through the exposure that the website has had over these few days, many of you will feel more inclined to contribute. Two new topics of discussion will go up shortly. The first will be your thoughts on this conference. These thoughts will go a long way in assisting us with planning the next conference in two years time. The second will be asking for your opinions on what you believe the National Association of Deacons should be about. It is important that the Executive gets a clear understanding of what you believe this association should do in order to support you in your ministry. I strongly encourage all of you to contribute to the forum in order for it be effective. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anthony Gooley for the outstanding work that he has done in coordinating and controlling the content of our website. He has taken on the responsibility of being the webmaster and carries out this responsibility extremely well. Please assist him with his task by contributing to the website regularly.

The second major work for the Executive was the organisation of this Conference. The initial work for this conference was the brainchild of Peter Olsen. Russ Nelson took over the organisation and he and his committee have done an outstanding job. I hope that you have found this conference useful as a means of ongoing formation and as an opportunity to socialise.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the work of the Executive. Thank you to Bruce Talbot representing WA, Tony Cunningham representing NT and SA, Jim Curtain representing Victoria and Tasmania, Mick O'Donnell representing the ACT and NSW, Ed Kostraby representing the Ukrainian Deacons and Paul Simmons as the National Coordinator of the Permanent Diaconate in Australia. They have worked hard to ensure that they have given sound representation however, their work can only reflect the support that you give them. If this association is to properly support deacons in their ministry, then it is very important that you talk to them.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for your attendance. You being here is a great show of support for the organising committee and the NAD. We look forward to doing our best to support you into the future by committing to organise a conference every two years. We will endeavour to advertise our next conference as soon as possible.

I hope that this conference has fulfilled your need for ongoing formation and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and to make new ones. I look forward to 2013 where I hope to be with in person rather than in spirit.

Deacon Mark Powell
Chair
National Association of Deacons
July 2011