



SERRA COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and the SOUTH PACIFIC

February 2017

SCANZSPAC Board Meeting:

The SCANZSPAC Board Members met at Vianey College, Wagga Wagga on Saturday 17th February.

The meeting was preceded by Mass in St Mary's chapel at Vianey College Seminary.

JOHN STEPHENS:

The members of the Board expressed their sadness at the news of the death of John Stephens, a member of the Canberra Club and the Foundation President of SCANZSPAC. John was elected President of the inaugural Board of SCANZSPAC at the First Biennial Convention of the Serra Clubs of Australia and New Zealand, held at Wagga Wagga in October 1996. The President of Serra International, Jack McLaughlin, was at this Convention.

John was President of the Canberra Club in 1986-87 and 2001-2002. John had been ill for a number of years as a result of a serious stroke.

Max Spencer, Past President and current Treasurer of SCANZSPAC mentioned that John Stephens, who completed the Camino Walk in Spain in 2003, was his inspiration to also take part in the Camino Walk, which was he did in 2005.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Anne Larkins read the Statement made by Francis Sullivan, CEO, Truth, Justice and Healing Council. The statement was made to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Case Study 50: Catholic Church authorities in Australia. The report was published on the Melbourne Archdiocese website and Anne sent a copy to all Board Members.

Without wishing to minimise the damage done by the perpetrators, Anne was concerned for all those excellent priests and religious who have been faithful servants for their whole lives.

Many of the (like the Melbourne Club Chaplain Father Gerard Dowling) are still working in their 80's. Father Gerard has been offering advice and guidance on Melbourne radio for over 40 years, assisting many in their times of need, some with suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Fr Kevin Dillon, of St Mary of the Angels Parish Geelong Victoria, is helping about 90 survivors of clerical sexual abuse. For years he has also been helping ex-soldiers suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and was made a life member of the Vietnam Veterans' Association for his services. His workload is enormous.

All Board Members will know priests who have been, and are, dedicated to their ministries assisting us in good times and in bad—baptisms, first communions, regular masses, funerals, visiting the sick and the aged, visiting those in hospital, anointing the sick.

The two Serra Club in Melbourne assisted at the Annual Mass for the Celebration of Religious Life that was held at St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne on 4th February 2017. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Denis Hart and about ten concelebrants. The Cathedral was almost two-thirds full (more than in previous years) with religious from Orders throughout Victoria. The Serrans provided the ushering and served morning tea after Mass.

The room was full of committed men and women who have been serving their God and their communities faithfully for many years. It was a great privilege to help. Serrans were thanked from the pulpit for assistance with ushering and serving morning tea. Anne felt that Serra should be thanking them. The Archbishop stopped to speak with Serrans at the morning tea, again thanking Serra for its work.

Anne suggested that Serrans should offer our good and faithful priests and religious especially strong support and friendship over the coming months, at a very personal level. Anne felt that, like Francis Sullivan, many are devastated by the findings of the Royal Commission and they would mourn the loss of trust from the wider community and, perhaps, from some Catholics as well.

Father Thomson drew attention to the fact that many of the transgressions dated from the 1950's. The Royal Commission found that 7% of clergy were responsible.

Some years ago, SCANZSPAC wrote an open letter to priests which was published in the Catholic Press expressing Serra's support as the Commission was commencing its work. Max Spencer, who was President at the time and who signed the letter, said that he received thanks from many priests. Perhaps the Board could give some thought to actions that Serra could take as a group to, again, offer support.

REPORT FROM VICE-PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS—

Steven Vella

Steven extended his thoughts and prayers to David Carson in regard to his health as well as to issues discussed in the President's Report regarding the Royal Commission. He thanked Board members for their informative reports and felt that it would be encouraging if the news could be distributed to all Club members in due course.

Since his last report Steven enquired about the Serra International Portal for Australia as it was considered reasonable that SCANZSPAC could use the International System to provide savings and to facilitate electronic communication between members, their Clubs and SCANZSPAC as well as for Club 31 and the Invisible Monastery. Four emails had been sent to Serra International without response.

Contacts were made with Frank McCulloch,, Anne Larkins, Andrew Kennedy, Dominique Morton, Father Peter Thomson CM, Jackie Ambler (Seminary Caterer) and the Astor Inn to facilitate the SCANZSPAC meeting and meals.

In addition to his role as Wagga Wagga Club VP Communications, Steven is now President-Elect for the Club.

Steven had received an email from Stephen Binz advising the availability of his book "*Saint Junipero Serra's Camino: A Pilgrimage Guide to the California Missions*". The book is dedicated to Serra International, in gratitude for its work in promoting vocations to the priesthood and to religious life.

Regarding the 75th Convention in Rome this year (22nd to 25th June), Steven wondered how SCANZSPAC could help promote the Convention which has a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis and a line up of excellent speakers. Could the SCANZSPAC region consider group bookings and airfares?

REPORT VICE-PRESIDENT PROGRAMME—Terry Scanlan

At the conclusion of Terry's presentation to the SCANZSPAC Convention in October, a small group study was completed by members to identify areas and ideas which, when implemented, could assist all to become more effective. The results were emailed to all Clubs with a request to report progress in adopting the ideas in each Club's annual report to the SCANZSPAC Board in June/July 2017.

NORTH SHORE CLUB—

Since Terry's last report, North Shore Club held its Annual "Celebration of Your Vocation" Christmas dinner at Magpies' Club at Waitara on 18th November which was very successful. Bishop Peter Comensoli attended along with the largest representation of Clergy, Deacons, Consecrated Men and Women and future seminarians (4). It was a new venue which proved to be excellent. The food was great and everyone had a most enjoyable time. The Club's final meeting of the

year was held on 1st December where Vicar General, Father David Ranson, celebrated Mass and was guest speaker.

EXTENSION—Central Coast

The first meeting of the Central Coast Club-in-Formation was held on 15th February. Father Leonard Macionczyk SDS celebrated Mass and was guest speaker.

Northern Beaches

No further activity has been undertaken.

Pennant Hills Parish

No further activity has been undertaken.

INVISIBLE MONASTERY

No further action since last report.

HUNDREDFOLD: A GUIDE TO PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY

A copy of “Hundredfold” will be made available at the Board Meeting.

REPORT—GOVERNOR DISTRICT 92—Andrew Kennedy

Andrew greatly appreciated Terry’s report which included a number of items from North Shore Club that were in the realm of the District Governor. He was hoping to visit North Shore and other Clubs this year.

Wagga Wagga Club was preparing for the resumption of studies at Vianney College which, this year, will have 25 seminarians.

SERRA MONSTRANCE –

The Monstrance is being returned to the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, having been in the Diocese of Armidale for the past few months. Father Francis Aru is the new Vocations Director for the Diocese of Armidale—he will be meeting with Wagga Serrans to discuss the formation of a Club in the Diocese.

SERRA AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION—

Neville advised that low interest rates are very much against the Foundation at present and donations are somewhat slow. One ex-Serran sends a donation twice a year and, upon checking through the books, it was found that he had donated \$2,700 since 2004—valued loyalty.

The Foundation has approved one grant of \$3,000 for the Melbourne Vocations Office. The Office is conducting a Camino (Spain) pilgrimage for young men who have

expressed some interest in a vocation. Pilgrims must provide for most of their costs. Assistant Vocations Director, Fr Nicholas Pearce is directing the pilgrimage and Fr Nicholas sought sponsorship to help to defray the costs.

The talk to the Canberra Convention yielded no results and the Trustees are now considering how they might engender more interest in the Foundation by members and how they might best develop a fund-raising programme.