

## THE RIGHT REVEREND BARRY RUSSELL HUNTER

### Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)

Mr Chancellor, I commend to you the Right Reverend Barry Russell Hunter for the award of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Barry Russell Hunter has given outstanding service over more than 40 years to parishioners of the Anglican Church and Associated communities as an innovative and active priest. Much of his time has been in areas where he could best be described as an “outback” priest. For 21 of those years he served as Bishop of the Diocese of Riverina, during which time he forged a partnership of vision and care with Charles Sturt University.

Barry Hunter was born in Brisbane, Queensland, in August 1927 and received his early education at Kaimkillenbun State School and the Toowoomba Grammar School.

From 1943 to 1949 he was employed with the Justice Department at Toowoomba and in private businesses in Toowoomba and Warwick. He then took up studies to lead him to his pre-eminent role in the Anglican Church, studying for ordination at St Francis Theological College in Brisbane. In 1952 he gained his Licentiate in Theology with First Class Honours, was made Deacon on 2 February 1953, and was ordained a priest on 21 December of the same year.

His first ministry was as Assistant Curate in the Parish of Sherwood, Brisbane from 1953 to 1956. He then became a member of the Bush Brotherhood of St Paul and Priest in Charge at Cunnamulla, serving an area of 115,000 square kilometres in the south-western region of Queensland until 1961. Ministries in other parishes of rural Queensland followed and at the same time he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Queensland in 1966.

After serving as Archdeacon of the East, Diocese of Rockhampton, from 1969 to 1971, Barry Hunter was elected Bishop of Riverina in August 1971. He was consecrated Bishop at St Andrew’s Cathedral Sydney, on 30 November of the same year and enthroned as the Bishop at Hay on 8 December, 1971.

As the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Riverina, Bishop Hunter served a diocese covering approximately 300,000 square kilometres over two-thirds of western New South Wales until he retired in 1992. In the same year he was awarded the Australia Medal for service to the community. Today, Barry Hunter continues his service as priest in charge, *locum tenens*, of the parish of Cudal in the Diocese of Bathurst.

Bishop Hunter’s service to Riverina takes on added significance in the light of the nature of the Diocese. Covering a large area of outback New South Wales, the Diocese contains about 23 parishes, many of which have encountered problems in attracting priests because of limited resources and isolation. However, early in his time as bishop, Barry Hunter set about developing a greater sense of belonging among the parishioners of his Diocese.

In a book published in 1979, author Laurel Clyde has told of Bishop Hunter's work towards this goal - arranging meetings, beyond the parish level and encouraging people to attend Diocesan conferences for youth, clergy, women and lay helpers. The book states: 'He established a diocesan newsletter Four Rivers', encouraged a television programme, and began the Diocesan Thanksgiving Programme which involves all church people in the Diocese more fully in the collection of church finances, and helps to make the diocesan finances more secure. All have contributed to a new feeling of unity and 'belonging' in the Diocese.

This unity established, Bishop Hunter went on to build a new Diocesan Registry, establish a Cathedral at Griffith, introduced a programme of lay leadership and ministry, and to further the opportunities for people to study theology and ministry by the appointment of an Education Officer and the introduction of theological study by extension throughout the Diocese.

Bishop Hunter's recognition of the challenges and opportunities afforded by Charles Sturt University led him to propose two major initiatives which have enhanced the life of the University.

In 1989 he appointed an Anglican Chaplain to the University to ensure a focus of care and pastoral concern for students and staff. Not only has this Anglican chaplaincy provided ministry to the Wagga Wagga campus of Charles Sturt University but has led to the establishment of chaplaincy at the Albury campus.

He was instrumental in the establishment of St Martin's Residential College, which took in its first students in 1992. Administrators are now working towards the extension of the college to meet the growing needs of students and the community. St Martin's College, with its emphasis on Christian values as part of the University community, has assumed an important role on the campus.

These two initiatives have laid the foundation for a lasting partnership between the Anglican Church and Charles Sturt University. They exemplify Bishop Hunter's contribution to the welfare and development of the Riverina district and Australia, and his commitment to the provision of opportunities for the people of this area.

Mr Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting the Right Reverend Barry Hunter for the award of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

**Dated this Sixth Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Five**