The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD
The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The Centre is unique in Australia. It began in 1998 as an ecumenical venture for engagement with Australian culture and the issues of the day. It was established through a partnership between Charles Sturt University and the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. It is situated at the eastern edge of the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra (green shading on photo) on a 99 year lease to the University which currently provides the major source of its funding.

Prayer for the Centre

God, powerful and gentle,
You love this southern land
And all its peoples, old and new.
As the cross shines in the heavens
So may Christ bring light to our nation,
As the waves encircle our shores
So may your mercy enfold us.
May the God who fashioned our southern land
Be for us a rock and strength.
May the God who rules our southern seas
Keep us safe from every storm.
May the God who made the southern skies turn
Our darkness into light.

As Canberra is a meeting place
Central to the Government of Australia,
So may this Centre be a true meeting place
Where all God’s people may gather in a spirit of prayer,
A spirit of unity of minds and hearts; and
Where we may share in the very Communion of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Archbishop Francis Carroll

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Welcome to the Centre

From deep roots in Christian faith the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture exists for the well being of the spiritual life of the nation. This intent is captured in our vision of ‘wisdom for the common good’. Central to this vision is the importance of maintaining and respecting Christian wisdom concerning how we should live and what we aspire to be as a community and society.

We live in times of significant transition with many challenges facing Australia and its neighbours. In this context the Centre works to re-orient people’s spiritual hunger and reconnect them to God’s ways with the world. This involves engaging faith with the issues of the day. We also put great emphasis on hosting new conversations across boundaries that often divide people. Our intention is to recover a spirit of justice, friendship and compassion that moves us beyond self-interest and cultivates a sense of gratitude and trust.

To further these concerns the Centre has initiated two major dialogues. The Christianity and Islam dialogue signals the Centre’s commitment to inter-religious dialogue and witness as a contribution to the flourishing of society. The dialogue concerning indigenous reconciliation is a core business of the Centre. A major task is to be attentive to the voices and aspirations of indigenous Australians. We have much to learn from the First Peoples of this country. In particular we are engaged in understanding the depths and wellspring of indigenous spirituality and the insights this offers to a renewed Christianity.

Fostering and celebrating a sense of the divine in the world is an important part of the Centre’s work. One way in which we do this is by investing in the arts and culture through exhibitions, seminars, public events, as well as film and religious poetry prizes.

From its inception the Centre has hosted forums and public conversations on matters of national importance for civil society, institutional life, public theology and ethics.

The Centre is at an exciting and creative time in its life. This brochure will give you a glimpse of its activities, programs, and future plans. We believe that Christian faith is meant to be a public faith and involved in the issues of the day. This brochure is one way we seek wisdom and work for the common good. I hope you can join us in this vital work for a better, fairer and compassionate Australia.

Visit our website (www.acc-c.org.au), become a subscriber to our regular e bulletin, join the Friends of the Centre and find out how you can be involved.

Grace and peace,

Rt. Rev’d Professor Stephen Pickard
Executive Director
Vision

Our vision is to be the ‘go to’ place for new engagements between Christian faith, Australian society, landscape and cultures, and indigenous peoples. We nurture a broad and inclusive place for conversation across differences and divisions, a place where all voices can be heard, a place to seek fresh wisdom.

In a time of great challenges for our country, when people’s spiritual hunger remains unquenched, the Christian faith offers a way of life and meaning that builds hope and community. It is a faith and theological tradition that draws upon deep wisdom for life from ancient times. It has a remarkable capacity to enable people to creatively respond to the needs of the times and contribute to a fresh and resilient wisdom for society.

At heart the vision for the Centre is ecumenical; a single house that embraces the great diversity which is and always has been, the Christian faith. The Centre operates at the interface of the academy, the church and the public space.

From this place we seek a fresh engagement of faith with culture so imaginatively stated many years before by a former Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Ernest Burgmann:

‘I want the great things of abiding value… thoroughly baptized into the Australian scene, blown through by Australian winds, and even coated now and then with Australian dust’.

This vision, grounded in the good news of God’s love in Christ, calls Australians into deeper reconciliation with our indigenous people. It embraces people of all faiths and none. We look to the horizon of the common good and the well being of the spiritual life of the nation.

Purpose

• From deep roots in Christian faith the Centre exists
• For the spiritual life of the nation
• Through fresh engagements, dialogue and reconciliation between indigenous Australians, cultures and society, religious traditions and public theology
• Promoting wisdom, creativity, resilience and peace
• In the life of churches and other communities of faith
• The arts and sciences; institutions and leadership
• Civil society & public life

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Civil society & public life

In all these areas the Centre bears witness to God’s love and wisdom at work in the world.

Faith

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture is an ecumenical body and its basis of faith reflects that of the National Council of Churches of Australia. This faith is based on a common confession of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, witnessed to in Holy Scripture, expressed in the ancient Apostles’ Creed and embodied in the life and mission of the Church. From deep roots in the Christian tradition animated by faith in Jesus Christ the Centre promotes a creative and critical engagement with Australian culture.

Culture can be broadly understood as that diverse reality embodying the values, beliefs, expressions in art and all its forms; customs; and ways of life of any given society. Through it God’s transformative work can occur.

The Centre undertakes its work in four key areas:

• encounter and dialogue between Christians and those of other faiths and no faith
• pursuit of creativity in the arts and sciences
• promotion of institutional resilience and ethical leadership
• fostering of wisdom in civil society

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Vision, Purpose and Faith

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Profile of the Executive Director

Stephen Pickard is Executive Director, The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and Professor of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, Australia. He is also an Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.

Stephen grew up in the Hunter Valley of NSW. He worked in Industrial Relations at BHP Newcastle, completing a B.Commerce, Newcastle University in industrial law and economics; and a B.Divinity, Melbourne College of Divinity prior to ordination in the Anglican Church. His PhD from Durham UK is in systematic theology. He has served in a range of ministerial appointments (parishes & chaplaincy) and academic positions in theological education over three and half decades in Australia and the United Kingdom (most recently as Visiting Professorial Fellow, Ripon Theological College, Cuddesdon and member of the faculty of theology, Oxford University). In Australia he served for seven years as a lecturer in theology and evangelism at United Theological College, North Parramatta where he was appointed Vice Principal; nine years as Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre, and Head of the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Adelaide, parish priest in a Canberra parish; and CEO of Anglicare in Canberra & Goulburn.

He is Deputy Chair of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order, and a Six Preacher, Canterbury Cathedral, UK. He is Chair of the Ministry and Mission Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia, Chair of the Public Issues Commission, the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and a Teacher of the international journal of Anglican Studies (CUP). He spent over a decade as an Anglican member and then Co-Chair of the Anglican/Uniting Church National Dialogue. He has been a committed participant in all things ecumenical throughout his ministry.

As a bishop of the Anglican Church, Stephen is a theologian and scholar of international standing and a leader in theological education. Of his recent book, Seeking the Church, the Dean of Christ Church Oxford, the Very Rev’d Professor Martyn Percy said: 'a major book on the nature of the Church for our time, and by one of our wisest and most creative scholars'. Stephen combines his scholarly work with an abiding love of teaching and preaching. He is the author of 4 books and numerous publications in the area of church, ministry, mission and culture including: Liberating Evangelism (Trinity Press International 1998); Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry (Ashgate 2009); In-Between God: Theology, Community and Discipleship (AFT 2011); and Seeking the Church: An Introduction to Ecclesiology (SCM, 2012). He is currently writing on the subject of public theology and the common good.

Professor Pickard replaced one of Australia’s leading theologians and churchmen, the Rev Professor James Haire AC, who received Australia’s highest award for his work with the Centre. The Board chose Stephen as its Executive Director because it believed that he would embrace the vision for the Centre through his profound understanding of the Christian message and its implications for bringing about a better community and society; his openness to engage in genuine non partisan dialogue; his understanding of the importance of culture in shaping identity and self understanding; his leadership style based on empowerment, hospitality and good humour; his capacity to lead theological research and his insights into building communities which embrace the vision and message of the Centre and can transform and build a better and more spiritual Australia. This vision is now articulated in the Four Pillars.

Stephen is married to Jennifer with three adult children, daughters and sons in law, and two grandchildren.
### Founding Vision

The idea for an Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture was succinctly stated in 1994 by the then Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, George Browning. He said, ‘Australia needs a spiritual centre, a focus for the expression of its religious and Christian heritage, a place for major national religious state occasions and a centre to celebrate and develop our religious identity and unity. The national Church Centre to be located in Canberra adjacent to the Parliamentary triangle will meet this need, and provide an expression of the spiritual insights of Australians and spiritual hope for our nation.’

And so it was that our history is interwoven with that of Canberra, the national capital of Australia.

The Centre was developed from a vision for a national ecumenical centre and a place to promote reconciliation. Three key people were involved: Bishop George Browning; the Governor-General at the time, Sir William Deane; and aboriginal leader Lowitja O'Donoghue AC.

A natural partner for this vision was Charles Sturt University (CSU) with whom the Diocese had established a School of Theology (based at St Mark’s National Theological Centre in 1995).

The formation of the original ACC&C had three key elements:

- **The need for a national meeting place in the Australian capital for significant national ceremonies and events that would express shared Australian experiences and values. Such a meeting place requires a Great Space for 3,000 people (together with galleries and exhibition spaces).**

- **The promotion of dialogue, public theology and engagement within Christianity and between Christianity and other faiths; between Christianity and indigenous Australians; and between Christianity and the broader Australian community.**

- **An Ecumenical Christian leadership and witness through hospitality in providing a national meeting place, facilitating fresh dialogue, developing innovative liturgical expressions and promotion of Australian religious and theological expression in arts, music, literature and dance.**

We seek in all our ventures and collaborations the spiritual life and well-being of the nation.
**Brief History**

The Centre is located on land originally allocated to the Church of England (now the Anglican Church of Australia) in 1927. The site was dedicated for St Mark’s National Anglican Cathedral, however it was never built due to lack of funds. This is one of Canberra’s most magnificent sites. The Centre entered into agreement with other Christian churches in Australia to develop the site together in consultation with the local indigenous community. A dedication ceremony was held on 4 November 1995 and the foundation stone was laid in 1996. A Tent of Meeting (now the Place of Meeting) was erected focusing on a simple campfire and three sculptured poles depicting different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christianity.

On 2 June 1998, the Centre was established under the authority of Charles Sturt University in collaboration with the Anglican diocese and with the approval of the National Council of Churches in Australia. In 1999, the Reverend Dr. David Millikan was appointed the first Executive Director. The Centre for Ecumenical Studies and its Director, the Rev’d Dr Ray Williamson, whose longstanding leadership in ecumenism is well known in Australia and internationally. The ACC&C also hosts the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS) and its Director, the Rev’d Dr Ray Williamson.

In 2000 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planted the first tree of reconciliation, along with Aboriginal elder and leader Lowitza O Donoghue, AC. The previous Executive Director Rev Professor James Haire AC, was involved in such dialogues at local, national and international levels, including negotiations to end violence in areas of conflict. As a Presidential Front of Indonesia and his work with the Centre over 10 years was seen by the Australian Government as of such significance to award him a Companion of the Order of Australia for his eminent achievement.

The present Executive Director is involved in international commissions in the Anglican Communion concerned with ecumenics and theology.

From the beginning, it was envisaged by the founders of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture that this national spiritual place for dialogue and reflection on national religious and ceremonial occasions and a centre to celebrate and develop our religious identity and unity. In fulfils the original vision the Centre has become a place for reconciliation, for dialogue, for hospitality, for prayer, and for faith exhibitions and other faiths. This genuinely ecumenical centre has deep roots in Christian faith and engages with the significant issues impacting on Australian society. It celebrates the arts and their contribution to the common good. It offers a prophetic voice within the National Capital and celebrates the presence of Christianity in shaping our history, society and values.

Our work today is more important than ever given the many challenges and tensions that confront us daily as a nation. The Centre works for a wise response, mature and inclusive approaches in responding to the challenges of the times. The practice of shared values in a democratic society like Australia requires a new wisdom that works for the common good.

We need a fresh wisdom that works for the common good beyond self-interest and the hollowing out of cherished values.

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The Four Pillars

Peace through new religious engagements

The 'Four Pillars' provide a platform for the Centre to fulfil its vision of engagement and contribution to the public life of Australia and foster the spiritual life of the nation.

The Four Pillars

Peace through new religious engagements

This pillar focuses on religious engagement, dialogue and reconciliation; all vital tasks at this time in Australia. This work is undertaken in a spirit of hope and generosity as a counter to fear and negativity in society. From its outset the Centre has embodied the aspirations and hopes of the universal Church of God; genuinely ecumenical rather than denominationally based. Accordingly it was called the ‘Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture’. In this sense the Centre seeks to give voice to the wisdom and diversity of the Christian tradition. The make up of the Board and our Ambassadors is intended to reflect this. Given the origins of the Centre the identifier ‘Christianity’ is critical. And it is of the essence of the Centre that it offers hospitality from its own ‘home’, as it were, in the Christian faith.

In a time when the churches have become overly preoccupied with their own internal concerns the Centre offers a unique way for the churches to act as one church and engage with Australian society and the issues of the day. In this context mutual respect and attentive listening is an imperative for all including the Christian community.

Wisdom for Civil Society

This pillar concerns issues to do with social ethics in Australia. It focuses on the liberal democratic tradition and its undergirding values. Given the increasing multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of our society, the emerging tension between secular and post secular accounts of Australia, and the significant issues before us, we now need more than anything a fresh wisdom. The Centre’s work is to foster a wisdom that is intellectually robust, relevant to civil society and practical in its application. In short a wisdom that ‘stands at the crossroads’ of life (Proverbs 8).

We have identified issues that we want to focus on:

- Indigenous Peoples of Australia
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Global Warming and environment
- Charities, Welfare and not-for-profit sector
- Children in our Society
- Democracy and Freedom of Religion
- Aid & Development
- Ageing and Pastoral Care
- Leadership and Ethics
- Security and peace studies

The Centre is well placed to continue to host, initiate, promote and contribute to discussion on such matters in Australian public life. For example a recent Public Forum at the Centre on Asylum Seekers attracted 350 people from the churches and beyond. Our involvement in global warming issues with other faiths is a significant commitment. The Centre partners with Christians for an Ethical Society in offering an annual public lecture program to promote Christian social values and matters of social justice in Australian society.

As a special project we are committed to the appointment of an ACC&C Indigenous Fellow to develop new strategies in reconciliation, nation building and nurture emerging leaders.

The Culture banner provides a broad area that encompasses many concerns including other faiths and indigenous traditions. Critical to the Centre’s work is its commitment to inter-religious dialogue and witness. The religious traditions of Australia are diverse and their adherents number over 14 million. Mutual respect and appreciation of the gifts of others are key elements in dialogue. But it goes further than this. Inter-religious dialogue is not simply a dialogue across the faiths. It is also a dialogue between different religious traditions and issues confronting public life in Australia. The Centre has an important role to play in fostering and initiating such activity.

The Centre is well positioned to promote the cause of inter-religious dialogue and engagement for the common good. The most significant issue on the agenda is the relationship between the Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The Centre is recognized as a place in the National Capital where there can be effective dialogue between the faiths to promote peace and understanding. We work closely with the Canberra Interfaith Network as well as local and federal government.

The commitment to a national dialogue between Christianity and Islam is a key current project of the Centre. We are also working towards the appointment of a leading Jewish and Muslim scholar at the Centre as a contribution to a national dialogue between the Abrahamic religious traditions in Australia.

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Creativity through the Arts, Sciences and Culture

This pillar recognises the importance of creativity and imagination in human life and society. Over the years the Centre has promoted these themes through music, religious poetry, drama, and liturgical experimentation. The Centre is well placed to be a venue for art exhibitions. In 2016 the Centre held its first art exhibition entitled Home: Between Here and There, depicting the work of 8 Asylum Seeker artists. Further art exhibitions are planned in coming years and we are preparing the Chapel to be a site in 2018 for the prestigious touring Blake Prize for religious art.

The newest development is the establishment of the national Religious Short Film Prize. This prize has attracted seed funding of $25,000 from some generous donors.

The Centre provides a home for the Canberra-based Chorus of Women. It has been a delight to welcome the African Gospel Choir to sing at the Centre. In 2015 the Centre established a new position, Associate Director Liturgy, the Arts and Spiritual Care to assist in developing these programs.

The site lends itself to performance and from 2017 the Centre will host an annual Blues and Blessing Festival as well as continuing to work with the Canberra Music Festival. We are excited about providing a facility for a strong focus on outdoor events. With this in mind we are working towards the construction of an outdoor amphitheatre as the next stage towards the building of the Great Space, a concept central to the original vision for a national meeting place.

The interface between the sciences and religion/theology is a highly creative area of interdisciplinary endeavour. There are already links (through our present and past Executive Directors) with the Templeton Foundation and the Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences in the USA (CTNS). Scholars associated with the Centre have for many years been part of international dialogues exploring the relationship between the sciences and theology.
Resilience in Institutional Life and Ethical Leadership

This pillar focuses on ethical leadership and resilience of leaders and institutions in Australian society. This seems to be the right framework in which to explore particular concerns regarding leadership today. Such a focus connects the Centre to other scholars and groups in Charles Sturt University and beyond who focus on ethics, leadership and institutional life.

This pillar draws attention to the need for ethical leadership in the Churches and society. But the focus is broader and concerns the wellbeing of institutions in which leadership takes place. Building resilience in personal life, in institutions and leadership is vital in times of transition and stress. This pillar is an avenue for the development of leadership programs that invite perspectives from Christian theology and from a variety of disciplines relevant to leadership and institutional life. These programs will target church, political and industry leaders and emerging leaders among the young.

Over the coming years the Centre will offer a new program of annual consultations, seminars, workshops and week-long programs for leaders and emerging leaders in church, not-for-profits and public service. Though we need to establish further funding, seed funding of $25,000 has been received from the generous support of The Mundango Charitable Trust in the A.C.T.

The Four Pillars provide a strong basis for the development of the programs of the Centre for the future. The pillars enable the Centre to connect with society, make an impact and help the churches of Australia to engage in a robust public theology. To further this end we are actively developing a cohort of Centre Scholars who can contribute to the public intellectual life of the nation on matters pertaining to the Four Pillars. In all these activities the Centre provides an example for the churches of Australia to engage in an open, generous and prophetic way with society.
A Place for Pilgrims

The Centre occupies 5 and a quarter hectares on the eastern edge of the Parliamentary Triangle. The design of the buildings and the contours and layout of the land reflect an unpretentious and respectful sympathy with the land and surrounds. The site is meant to be walked on, explored, pondered such as a pilgrim would conduct a journey across sacred ground. In the heart of Canberra the site offers a place so central and well suited for quiet reflection, spiritual renewal and nourishment. This is one of the purposes of the Centre and the site is now enjoyed by an increasing number of people, particularly young people from the schools.

The present day site consists of the Chapel, designed by one of Australia’s leading architects, James Grose. It seats 250 people and is extensively used by the Canberra community. It is a wonderful place for the display of art. The Upper Room of the chapel is multipurpose for seminars, prayer and hospitality. The Prayer Room just off the main Chapel entrance is a special place for quiet meditation, prayer and worship for all people.

Adjacent to the chapel is the Mural Wall. This impressive structure (30 mtrs by 5mtrs), depicts in ceramic tile design, the indigenous theme of ‘The Holy Spirit in Our Land’ (a replica of a painting by East Kimberly Aboriginal artist, lawmaker and elder Hector Jandany presently displayed by our near neighbour, the National Gallery of Australia).

It is almost impossible not to see the Great Cross erected at the highest point of the site and visible for some distance from the Centre. At the base of the cross is a flowing pool of water that reminds the pilgrim of the refreshment of the Spirit of God at the heart of faith.

Weaving its way around the perimeter of the Centre is the Pilgrim Walk. The walk begins on the south side via a row of splendid English oaks and Australian gums that remind the pilgrim that Christianity only becomes genuine as it enters sympathetically into the local environment and culture. To the right of the tree lined avenue is George Browning House, the administrative and academic heart of the Centre.

The Pilgrim Walk leads you by the Place of Meeting, a circle of stones with a campfire. This place is an original feature of the Centre signalling its commitment to dialogue and reconciliation. The walk continues to the spur of the site where the 3 sculptured and painted Pilgrim Poles depict different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christianity. The poles reach 20 metres towards the sky. Winding along the northern boundary you come to a grass and pebble Labyrinth with a 2.8billion year old rock from the Hamersley Ranges set at the center. The Labyrinth is an ancient symbol of journey into wisdom. People can be found walking the Labyrinth at any time of the day.

The walk leads you further to the Bible Garden. This remarkable garden designed in the shape of a Jewish menorah contains most of the plants mentioned in Holy Scripture. It is quite unique and is visited by many people including hundreds of school children. The Bible Garden Trust was established with a generous donation from the Robinson Family. A beautiful book has been produced to provide a meditative introduction to the garden’s spiritual gift.

Beyond the garden overlooking Lake Burley Griffin is an impressive Humanitarian Aid Workers’ Monument dedicated in 2013. The memorial is ‘in honour and memory of all deceased Australians and members of Australian Aid Organisations who served in International Humanitarian Work’.

The walk brings you past St Mark’s National Theological Centre the brainchild of Bishop Ernst Burgmann in the 1950s. Adjacent to this is the new Ross Chambers Pavilion, a state of the art facility for hospitality and seminars.
Engagement with the Australian churches
The Centre has been instrumental in drawing church leaders and theologians together through its Centre for Ecumenical Studies. We have seen the strengthening of communication amongst churches by hosting Heads of Churches meetings; conducting annual ecumenical Stations of the Cross; liturgical celebrations to mark significant occasions in the life of the nation; and gathering the national Bible Society archive and collection. In 2017 the Centre will host the Fourth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism.

International ecumenical and theological engagement
The Centre is a founding member of the Global Network of Public Theology; provides leadership in international church dialogues; and provides an important forum for building a public theology in Australia.

Interfaith Dialogue and Witness
ACC&C is host to the Canberra Interfaith Network along with the annual Commonwealth Day Multi-faith celebration and numerous interfaith liturgical events to mark significant occasions for celebration, mourning and lament. The Centre joins with Muslim friends in hosting an annual Iftar meal during Ramadan.

In 2015 the Centre initiated a major project on national Christian/Muslim dialogue with seed funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Centre provides interfaith programs for the Australian Federal Police; and interfaith discussions with leaders and visitors from other countries.

Partnerships and collaborations
The strength of the ACC&C requires the development of quality networks and partnerships. In this respect developing ACC&C chapters in capital cities will be an important focus for the future. In recent years the Centre has formed strong links with a number of groups and organisations both nationally and internationally including: Christians for an Ethical Society; Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre, Charles Sturt University; Global Network for Public Theology; Canberra Chorus of Women; the Centre for Ecumenical Studies and the Centre for Aging and Pastoral Studies.

Increasingly the Centre works with other organisations in loose networks of cooperation who share the vision for the common good e.g. Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, Faith Based working Group for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Micah Challenge, Common Grace, Australians Together.

Growing the Vision for the Site
We designed and built the Chapel as first stage of the vision for a Great Space. We also established the remarkable Bible Garden, the Pilgrim Walk, the Place of Meeting, Labyrinth, Pilgrim Poles, and Mural Wall, Humanitarian Aid Workers Monument; new Ross Chambers Pavilion Hospitality Centre; and the George Browning House for scholars and administration.

Engagement with Culture and Civil Society
The Centre has recently established a national Religious Short Film Prize as a way to bring the religious spirit alive through the arts. We particularly want to encourage young and emerging filmmakers to experiment in new ways to connect faith, life and the future. In 2016 the winning entry was, The Forgotten Tree; a film combining elements of Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious traditions through the eyes of two young women.

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
The Centre truly needs to work towards a comprehensive strategy for ministry and mission. This requires a thorough audit of the Centre’s strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, and an evaluation of the Centre’s impact. The Centre’s goal is to foster a creative and inclusive society that promotes the common good and respects and celebrates cultural diversity.

Impact and brief history
The Centre’s impact over its brief history has been significant in some key areas:

Indigenous Reconciliation
The Centre is host for ‘Sorry Day’ and the annual David Hunter Memorial Lecture dedicated to the theme of reconciliation. We have established the annual Nes Grant lectures at the Centre and have initiated an Independent Indigenous Churches project to record and celebrate aboriginal Christian heritage and culture. The next phase of the Centre’s work is focused on emerging indigenous leaders in church and society. We are actively engaged with key indigenous bodies in Australia to promote reconciliation.
Recognition of Donors

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture will be pleased to receive any gift or sponsorship from individuals, companies, community supporters, and Trusts and Foundations. Donors are invited to spread their support over a three to five year period to support programs on an ongoing basis. Donors will also be encouraged to direct their support to a specific program of interest if so desired.

The fundraising efforts will be directed to selected individual benefactors, trusts, corporate partners, friends of the Centre and others associated with the ACC&C. Fundraising is directed towards the expansion in the range, scope and reach of the Centre’s activities through the Four Pillars. Because of the generous funding support provided by CSU (for salaries, grounds and administration) your donation goes directly to support the programs and activities of the Centre.

The gift may be for support of particular programs or flexible that we might choose to fund activities in order of importance.

All gifts over $2 will be tax deductible.

Recognition of donors includes the following:

- Sponsorship (naming) rights for some of the dedicated programs at the Centre
- All individuals, companies and organisations contributing to the programs of the Centre will be recognised by having their names inscribed on a special Benefactors Board that will be displayed in a public area at the Centre.
- Promotional coverage and publicity will be available to recognise all gifts within Centre publications and on the website.
Friends of the Centre

The Friends of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture assist the Executive Director and the Board to develop a community and network of people committed to the vision and mission of the Centre to support its programs, activities and work. This includes being available to welcome, provide advice and hospitality, help with catering, assistance with administration etc. for worship services, eumenical and interfaith events, art exhibitions, escorting visitors to the Bible Garden and conducting tours of the Centre.

Friends have a special responsibility to enhance the life of the Centre through developing a community of prayer to undergird its activities; to assist with fundraising events and to act as advocates and publicists in churches, community organisations and groups.

Promoting the Centre

To become a Friend of the Centre means a person has a sympathy and excitement for the vision of the Centre and embraces its motto, ‘Wisdom for the Common Good’. Friends bring many gifts not least being that of hospitality. Friends are encouraged to offer their own particular expertise or area of interest in the service of the work and vision of the Centre. An annual friends dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the work of the Centre, encourage one another and introduce others to the Centre’s work and vision and discuss new developments.

Governance

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture was established on 2 June 1998, under the authority of Charles Sturt University in collaboration with the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, and with the approval of the National Council of Churches in Australia. The Centre is governed by a Board (under delegation from the Council of Charles Sturt University) consisting of members of the Christian churches. The Vice Chancellor of the University and the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn are ex-officio members of the Board. The Board, together with the Executive Director, has oversight of the activities and strategic development of the Centre. The Board is chaired by Dr Lawrie Willett AO, former Chancellor of Charles Sturt University.

Board members comprise leaders and members of Christian churches and active Christians prominent in many fields of society: law, business, academia, social welfare, indigenous education, media, military, strategic advice and government policy and administration. The Board is supported by an active Executive which meets regularly to look at all aspects of the Centre’s life. The governance and accountability structures work well to ensure any donations are appropriately and carefully stewarded to maximise their impact.

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Rt’d), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Centre Ambassadors

The ACC&C also has Centre Ambassadors. The Rt Rev’d Dr George Browning, former chair of the Board and instrumental for the Centre, is an ambassador of the ACC&C. The Ambassadors comprise eminent persons prominent in Australian life and society whose role is to promote the Centre’s vision, ideals, programs, life and mission. Centre Ambassadors assist, promote and support the work of the Centre by, interalia, using their good offices, contacts, networks and standing in the Australian community to open doors, facilitate meetings for the purpose of presenting the funding needs of the Centre and extend its activities and programs.

“I want the great things of abiding value… thoroughly baptized into the Australian scene, blown through by Australian winds, and even coated now and then with Australian dust.”

Bishop Ernest Henry Burgmann
Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn