

## *Greetings, sisters and partners in ministry,*

After more time than it takes to bring an elephant to birth, Mercy Partners has finally become a reality! We have now had two formal Council meetings and the official launch in Townsville on 25 March was our first public function. It really was a historic occasion.

As we begin our work as Councillors, we are conscious that we are standing in a tradition which goes back not just to the beginnings of Mercy ministry in Queensland, but ultimately to Catherine McAuley herself. I think that Catherine would very much approve our name – Mercy Partners. Partnership speaks of mutual understanding, of collaboration, and of support through good times and bad – all qualities which we see exhibited in the life and work of Catherine herself.

As Councillors, we are indeed grateful to the four congregation leaders and those who assisted them in bringing Mercy partners to reality. The prayer, hard work and decisions they made during the past several years have meant that we can concentrate now on the work that lies ahead, rather than having to worry about many of the formalities that come with setting up a new entity.

To the Congregation Leaders we say thank you for the trust you have placed in us. It has been a momentous step for you, and we will do our best to ensure that the Mercy tradition which has nourished and sustained your ministries throughout the past 150 years will continue to flourish and grow from strength to strength. To the ministries which will come under the sponsorship of Mercy Partners some time in the future, we say that we will do all we can to ensure that your transition from the Sisters of Mercy to Mercy Partners will be smooth, and that you will continue to enjoy the same good relationship with Mercy Partners which you have enjoyed with your founding Congregation. We ask your prayers that the wisdom of God will sustain us as we move to this new and exciting phase of Mercy ministry in the State of Queensland.

Anne Hetherington rsm  
Council Chair.

## *First Gathering of Council with Stewards*

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 the first gathering of the Council of Mercy Partners and the Stewards took place at the new offices of Mercy Partners in the McAuley Building at Banyo. It was quite a momentous occasion. Just a reminder to the reader, the Stewards are the four Mercy Congregation Leaders of Queensland. The last newsletter introduced to you the seven Councillors – Sr Anne Hetherington, Sr Berneice Loch, Mr Garry Everett, Sr Marie Melville, Sr Moira Truelson, Emeritus Professor Peter Sheehan AO and Mr Ray Campbell.

There was an afternoon tea when Br Tony White was thanked for the assistance he had given in overseeing the refurbishment of the rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and all the Councillors and Stewards inspected the premises.

The Stewards and Councillors discussed the Launch of Mercy Partners and decided that this would take place in conjunction with the Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program Retreat taking place in Townsville on the 25<sup>th</sup> March. Information about what happened at the Launch is on page 3.

At the first informal gathering there was a Ritual to celebrate this moment and the Stewards handed over to the Councillors a framed embroidered copy of the Logo as well as the painting of the logo done by Barbara Trevaskis, an aboriginal woman in Rockhampton who has been associated with the Sisters of Mercy there for many years. Both these were hung on the walls of the new offices.

The final moment of the Ritual was the singing of The Circle of Mercy. Everyone there felt the movement of the spirit of Catherine at that moment. Then the Stewards, who were not Councillors, left. There was a short informal meeting of the Councillors to select the first meeting date for the Council and other immediate matters.



# Launch of Mercy Partners



On the feast of the Annunciation of our Lord the Launch of Mercy Partners and a Eucharistic celebration were held in Townsville. This coincided with the Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program which was taking place there. Bishop Michael Putney and Bishop Brian Heenan, with four priests from the Townsville diocese, led the Eucharist after the Launch.

After the Councillors were commissioned by the Stewards of the four Congregations, they accepted by saying:

***"Empowered by God's spirit of mercy, we accept this commission entrusted to us by the Congregations of Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville. We acknowledge that leadership is both a privilege and responsibility. May mercy be at the heart of all we do."***

During Bishop Putney's homily he reflected on the role of the Sisters of Mercy. Like Mary at the Annunciation, the Bishop saw the sisters, not as an old woman handing over ministries, but as a young woman.

This young woman may be afraid but she has faith that the 'Holy Spirit is with her'.

She knew that 'nothing was impossible with God'. She is able to risk moving into the future saying, 'let it happen to me as you have said'.



## *The Wheel of Mercy*

*Song for Mercy Partners, written by Eric Marshall*

Turn the wheel of Mercy round to announce a liberation...  
Healing, caring, teaching, tending  
Life to free a nation... We know the mercy of God.

Turn the wheel of Mercy round to take the hands of compassion...  
Hands that heal those worn and weary  
Feel the touch of compassion ... We know the grace of God.

Turn the wheel of Mercy round to teach the ways of freedom...  
Searching, guiding, listening, learning,  
Deeper truths awaken ... We teach the ways of God.

Turn the wheel of Mercy round to hear the cry of justice ...  
Our voice speaks out for lost and lonely,  
Burn with fire of justice ... We live the justice of God.

Turn the wheel of Mercy round to bow before Creation ...  
Feet so gentle call the earth to  
Dance a new song of Creation ... We dance the wonder of God.



## Up-dates on Progress

### Mercy Partners Councillors



Ray Campbell, Sr. Marie Melville, Sr. Moira Truelson (Treasurer), Sr Berneice Loch, Garry Everett (Deputy Chairperson), Sr Anne Hetherington (Chairperson), Peter Sheehan.

### Responsibilities of Mercy Partners Council

The Statute approved by Rome state:

- 5.1 The Councillors of MERCY PARTNERS hold responsibilities in canon law for the ministries overseen by MERCY PARTNERS.
- 6.1 The powers and duties of the Councillors shall include, without limitation, the following:
  - a. To ensure that the purposes of MERCY PARTNERS are realised and fulfilled.
  - b. To ensure that the business affairs of MERCY PARTNERS are conducted in a manner consistent with the teachings, discipline and laws of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - c. To approve acquisitions, by gift, purchase, transfer or otherwise for MERCY PARTNERS in accord with canon law and the Constitution.
  - d. To approve the alienation of temporal goods belonging to the stable patrimony of MERCY PARTNERS, by gift, sale, transfer or otherwise for MERCY PARTNERS in accord with canon law.
  - e. To determine in accord with canon law the acts of administration which go beyond the limits and manner of ordinary administration.
  - f. To prepare the annual report to the Holy See required by Article 9.1 for approval by the Stewards.
  - g. Such other duties as set out in the Constitution.

One of the first decisions that the Council will need to make is in relation to the responsibilities it delegates to each of the Companies/Ministries that will come within its oversight. At present each Company eg Mater Health and Aged Care Central Queensland, Mater Health Services Brisbane, have their Constitutions with delegated powers from the Congregations. There is work to be done to identify what Mercy Partners Council responsibilities are best delegated to the Companies. This will be done in consultation with each of the Companies over the next few months. There will need to be some things that are common across all Companies to ensure that powers and obligations can be understood clearly by all parties who will be involved.

### Transfer of Ministries into Mercy Partners

The Timeline for transfer of ministries into Mercy Partners will take place when each Congregation Leadership Team in consultation with each individual ministry thinks it is time to approach Mercy Partners Council to consider taking over the Ministry. A step by step procedure will need to be developed to ensure that this transfer is the best decision for the Congregation, the Ministry and Mercy Partners.

This procedure is in draft form at the moment and will be finalised by the Council in the next few months. Some steps in that procedure may include:

1. Formal approach from the Congregation to the Mercy Partners Council regarding the transfer of a particular ministry. This approach will take place after sufficient consultation has been undertaken between the Congregation Leadership Team, the particular ministry and the sisters of the congregation.
2. Negotiation between Congregation and Mercy Partners of process and timeline needed.
3. Exploration regarding the Ministry's –
  - o Mission viability with Mercy Partners
  - o Financial viability
  - o Governance viability
  - o Management viability.
4. Long term sustainability for Mercy Partners – contribution from Ministry.

### Opening of new offices & meeting with the Councillors in Brisbane

The new offices of Mercy Partners have been set up. These are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the McAuley Building (old Emmaus), 131 Queens Rd, Banyo. The Renovations have been completed and the furniture is there now.

Mailing address is:  
PO Box 424, Banyo. Q4014.

The official Blessing of these offices and meeting with Mercy Partners Councillors will take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> May at 3.00pm. All Sisters, Ministry Leaders and Board Chairs are welcome to attend this gathering.

# Leadership Formation Program

## Townsville Gathering

The focus of the Formation Program in Townsville in March was Catholic Church Mission and Identity. Bishop Michael Putney was one of the presenters. One of the points he emphasised was the need for tangible signs of the Communion of the Church and Catholic Identity. Tangible signs of the Catholic identity of an organisation include: availability of the sacraments and the prominence of Christian symbols. Other signs of Catholic identity include respect for dignity of every human being; justice in all structures at all levels; relationships in accord with vision of Christ; exercise of authority as service; participation of all; co-responsibility of all; spirituality taken seriously; prayer and liturgy a normal part of life; happiness. BEING PART OF THE MISSION OF CHURCH WILL MEAN SOMETHING IN PRACTICE.

Without Catholic Health, education and welfare, the Church could not reveal Christ fully to the world of today. Others should find Him attractive because of Catholic ministries, especially because of the preferential options for the poor and justice for all. Ministries offer hope that only God can give.

Other presenters were Coralie Kingston (Catholic Social Teaching), Sr Mary Coloe (Biblical Foundations of Catholic Ministry) and Sr Mary Duffy (Catherine McAuley – Executive Leadership within the Catholic Church).

Two of the graduates from the Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program were Bob Campbell and Richard Marszalek from Holy Cross Laundry, Brisbane.



## June 18/19 - Mercy Partners Annual Gathering - Rockhampton

This will be the first of the Annual Gatherings of people who are involved in the Mercy Partners, particularly those who have been and are part of the Leadership Formation Program. It is envisaged that this will be an annual event in the Formation Calendar of Mercy Partners and will be held in different regions of Mercy Partners. The focus of these gatherings will be the strengthening of the community of people committed to Mercy ministries, to stretch our perspectives especially in relation to the Mission and Values of Mercy Partners, and to build the identity of Mercy Partners throughout the ministries, congregations and local communities.

This year's focus will be on the value of Justice. Sr Veronica Lawson, rsm will lead the group to reflect on this value as articulated in the Scriptures, Julie Morgan and Sr Rosemary Carrol will look at this value in the right of a Human Rights framework and practical responses through Mercy Works.

Mark it in your calendar and make contact with Sr Carmel Dwan for further information about enrolment.

## October 13,14,15 - Mission and Sponsorship Study Stream 2 - in Brisbane

The Study Stream – Mission and Sponsorship is being held in Brisbane on the 13,14 and 15th October. Sr Annette Schneider rsm, one of the speakers at this retreat, will offer the group reflections on the Theology of Mission in today's world as well as how do we know we are operating our ministries within the Mission and Values stated.

Again mark this in your calendar and make contact with Sr Carmel Dwan for further information about enrolment.

These Formation opportunities are a critical aspect of the on-going development of Mercy Partners. All Leaders in Ministries, Executive Officers and Board Members are encouraged to attend. All the Councillors of Mercy Partners are participating in the Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program.

Newsletter from Mercy Partners Council: Sr Anne Hetherington (Chairperson), Garry Everett (Deputy Chairperson), Sr. Moira Truelson (Treasurer), Ray Campbell, Sr. Marie Melville, Sr Bernice Loch, Peter Sheehan.