

ASA PRESIDENT FIONA GODFREY

SPEECH TO OPEN THE 2015 ASA CONFERENCE

EMERGENCE: TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH FAITH AND EDUCATION

9.45 am

8 AUGUST, 2015

HOTEL REALM

CANBERRA

The President delivered her annual report at the Opening of the 2015 Conference. The transcript reads:

Good morning, a (hopefully!) warm welcome to Canberra and the 2015 Anglican Schools Australia Conference.

I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting and pay respects to the Elders of the Ngunnawal Nation, both past and present.

Given the national significance of Anglican Schools Australia's (ASA's) work, I cannot quite believe that this is the first time our annual conference is being held in the nation's capital. Over the next few days I hope that in addition to some rewarding work, you will all have the opportunity to enjoy some of the wonderful spaces that those of us who live here are lucky enough to visit on a regular basis. There will be no shortage of local delegates prepared to help you find some inspiration in our beautiful city.

Acknowledgements

I would particularly like to welcome our special delegates:

- The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia
- The Most Reverend Dr Jeffrey Driver, Archbishop of Adelaide
- The Right Reverend Stuart Robinson, Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn
- The Right Reverend Allan Ewing, Bishop of Bunbury
- The Right Reverend Stephen Pickard, Bishop and Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
- The Right Reverend Dr Matthew Brain, Assistant Bishop and Director of Synergy and Youth, Canberra

Apology

I would also like to pass on to you all an apology from ASA's Executive Officer, The Reverend Peter Laurence, who I did not think would ever miss one of our conferences. The unthinkable has happened – but it has taken

heart surgery and a 'no go' from his surgeon to stop him from being here. I am sure you all join me in wishing Peter a speedy recovery.

Living the conference theme

Conferences like this provide a wonderful opportunity to renew long-standing acquaintances. But I would urge everyone to set themselves the goal of connecting with a person or group of people they haven't met before. I think that's where we might find some valuable insights and fresh ideas to reflect upon when we return to our regular surroundings. From these new connections we might identify further opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

This is what the next few days are really all about Emergence: Transforming the World Through Faith and Education. Some might say it is an ambitious theme. They are absolutely right. Is it overly ambitious? I don't see how it could be.

Because if we don't embrace the opportunities presented to us here and now - to learn, to lead and to transform lives, then who will? We come together because we realise that the more we share knowledge, the more we have. We come together in a spirit of open-mindedness, because we aspire to be better than we are.

As Charles Mackay, the 19th century Scottish poet, journalist, author, anthologist, novelist, and songwriter said:

"Of all the offspring of Time, Error is the most ancient, and is so old and familiar an acquaintance, that Truth, when discovered, comes upon most of us like an intruder, and meets the intruder's welcome."

So as we set the compass for the next year, to avoid Error and find Truth, to find a better way, let me quickly reflect on what ASA has achieved in the past 12 months.

ASA's Achievements in 2015

- Entered into an agreement with the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies at the University of Cardiff in Wales (in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong) which will see Australian school chaplains having the opportunity to study for their Master of Chaplaincy Studies in Wales, Hong Kong and Australia.
- Actively engaged with school groups and other Anglican agencies outside Australia
- Negotiated a new, discounted travel agreement for Anglican schools throughout Australia with Virgin Australia
- Established and fostered a network of school chaplains
- Published regular e-bulletins ... and could I take a moment to thank Wendy Hillman for her tireless work. It is not easy chasing, wrangling, cajoling and organising contributors from right around the country. I think you would all agree that the end result is a slickly produced publication, which tells the ASA story in an engaging way to its members and those outside the organisation. Thank you Wendy.

Could I also thank all of the members of the ASA Management Committee for their continuing support and hard work.

This year the Committee welcomed a new Chaplains' Representative, The Reverend Andrew Mintern, from St Peter's Woodlands in South Australia. He joined Mr Gareth Leechman, representing New South Wales; Assistant Bishop Dr Matthew Brain, representing the ACT; Dr Mark Sly from Queensland; Mr Christopher Prance from South Australia; Mr Alan Jones representing Tasmania; Mrs Lynne Thomson from Western Australia; and Mr Jim Laussen from Victoria. And of course, The Reverend Peter Laurence, who has been instrumental in leading, developing and promoting ASA.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Mr Garth Wynne, who had to resign from his position as President Elect and as a Committee member during the year. Similarly, I thank The Reverend Kim Cruickshank, who left the Management Committee last year, for her work for ASA.

Conference Committee

This conference is the result of much hard work by the Canberra Conference Committee comprising Assistant Bishop Dr Matthew Brain, The Reverend Richard Browning, The Reverend Nikolai Blaskow, The Reverend Christopher Welsh, Mr Steven Bowers, The Reverend Paul Harris, Ms Tanya Stevenson, Mr Bernie Brown, Mr Ian Hewitt and Mr Alex Abecina. I thank them for making this event possible.

Now, more than ever, the world needs a virtuous cycle of learning and leadership. And so as we seek to transform the world through faith and education I wish you all good fellowship, challenge and inspiration.