

AGM 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity of reflecting on this past year for CLC Australia.

We continue to believe that God calls us as a national community to be a sign of hope and love in our world. So where and how have we done that during the past year?

As an Executive, I feel we have been very blessed by a hard- working and committed group. Debbie dela Paz has continued as our efficient and good humoured secretary and managed our membership data base, Steve Game as Treasurer, has been working hard to review our financial systems and put in place sustainable systems, Ann Hoare has produced beautiful quarterly editions of Annotations and has also acted as Assistant Treasurer, Anna Munari (Vice President) Paris Huffman and Marj Morrissey have contributed in a variety of ways (Marj wrote the script for our Ecology video)and Iain as our faithful EA has done an amazing job leading retreats for CLC in the regions. James O'Brien also joined us as an ex-officio member (as a member of WEXCO). So a warm thank you to this great team.

We met four times and only one of those was face to face at Power St. We thank the Fr Quen Vu and the Jesuits for allowing us to meet there and use their facilities.

EXCO's- Thank you also to the members of EXCO in each of our regions. I know you worked hard to discern and lead CLC in your region.

5 Regions- I have taken a highlight and a challenge from each of the regional reports:

- Queensland- held a very successful retreat just last weekend, their main challenge is aging and few new members.
- NSW/ACT-enjoyed a visit to the Reconciliation Church at Botany Bay, and issues to do with Guides are their greatest challenge-Groups being led by people who haven't had Guides training; Groups falling apart without a new Guide and Guides being overstretched and covering multiple groups.
- Victoria- produced a great little newsletter, their Visit to the Catholic Aboriginal Ministry in Thornbury was very important and they continue to find it hard to get members to join EXCO and to share the load.
- SA-faces aging members and difficulty getting new members. They enjoyed a Reflective walk and retreat this year and they are buoyed by having a new Chair -Dr Petranel Ferrao.
- WA-held a great retreat recently, have a thriving young people's group and had several ecology events eg reflective walk, tree planting and clean up on Australia Day. Lack of guides for new groups is also a challenge in WA.

NEXCO'S work -Positives-

We have had a focus on updating as an organisation-

- a) new membership Data base-we are part way through setting this up ready for next year.
- b) Use of Google Drive for docs-will roll out to regions.
- c) Review of our Finances;

- d) Marketing Sub Committee have been preparing groundwork for a plan and new pamphlet.
- e) Updating of our website underway. (have a look)

Identification of some key issues- lack of Guides, lack of members willing to step up to leadership roles eg EXCO's;

Lack of financial commitment.-so far 135 renewed (or new members) for 2023-24, 49 renewed 2022-23 yet to renew this year and 120 in Lapsed -havn't renewed for 2-4. Yrs.

Priorities

In our previous National Assemblies we discerned three Priorities. The 3 priorities are:

1.To Develop Lay Leadership and Spiritual Formation

- The tertian Program and the CLC Retreats come under this priority. - 2023- five Tertians with CLC co-givers led FSE retreats.
- Sadly the tertian program will not be continuing in 2024 and will be taking a new direction.
- Every region held a retreat.
- Guide Formation-2 national sessions held .
- Keystones Program for CLC is currently underway.
- Group reflections provided- 4 focussed on preparation for World Assembly, 3 focussed on Season of Creation.
- National Formation Framework for CLC and evaluation of that framework. *In progress*
- Review of Praying the principles-first section draft completed.
- Thanksgiving Service for Fr Patrick O'Sullivan held on the first anniversary of his death.

2.To Work for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation

- Several regions made an effort to begin to form relationships with First Nations People. (This is new for us and very important.)
- Most regions participated in the Walk for Peace.
- We advertised support for the Uluru Statement of the Heart on our website.
- Individual members were involved in a variety of different community needs.

3. To Care for all Creation

We have an Ecology Working group (a Sub group of NEXCO) very ably led by Noreen Nicholson and includes Debbie Dela Paz (NSW), Helen Cantwell (SA), Judy Haines (Q), Chris Gardner (WA).

2022

- National Events: Season of Creation 'Listen to the Voice of Creation', Viewing of the film 'The Letter' and Launching of CLC in Australia's LSi Action Plan
- Registration of CLC in Australia as an Earthcare organisation

2023

- Creation of 4 (or is it 3 as seen on the website) Laudato Si Reflection material for Laudato Si Week
- June and October issues of Annotations focused on Laudato Si and Season of Creation
- Received Earthcare Certificate Level 3
- Website **has been** updated with a LSi page which contains information and resources
- National Event: Season of Creation presentation by Sue Martin on Ecological Spirituality
- Created Ecology Video for the World Assembly (we will show you today).

Worldwide CLC

- The World Assembly of CLC was held in Amiens, France in August of this year. We sent 3 delegates- Anna Munari, Ann Hoare, Fr Iain Radvan SJ.
- We supported CLC New Zealand as they completed their application to take full membership of CLC in 2023 and presented them to the World Community.
- We contributed to the World Assembly by proposing the General Principles be reviewed in the light of Laudato Si and this was passed by the Assembly.
- James completed his term on WEXCO and chose not to re nominate. Thank you James for your contribution as a member of the WEXCO particularly during the recent World Assembly. James facilitated the election process and was involved in writing the final report. That was a huge contribution James. Well done. The report is substantial and we will be finding ways to disseminate this and encourage you to read it.
- Asia-Pacific Link -James O'Brien has continued to be our link with the Asia-Pacific CLC community and been involved a number of Zoom sessions encouraging connection and support amongst the CLC Communities in the Asia Pacific region. They led a beautiful Prayer service for World CLC Day.

Ongoing and Future Challenges

- ▶ Aging of our members.
- ▶ LACK OF GUIDES.
- ▶ Deepening our commitment to our priorities.
- ▶ Encouraging and offering formation for leadership within CLC. Also finding ways of sharing the responsibilities of leadership more widely.
- ▶ Encouraging our younger members to develop and grow CLC among younger people.
- ▶ Ongoing management of our administration and the new database.
- ▶ Collaboration with Jesuits (JISA) and other organisations.
- ▶ To tread ever more lightly as an organisation-.

Future:

- **National Assembly** -Planned for July 2024. (Not a Gathering. We initially thought about combining the two events but found it was too expensive and too complicated.)

- **Focus more on formation and the Spiritual Exercises.**
- **Working with the church to create a culture of synodality-we can contribute to this.**
- **Open our events to others -invite others in.**

It has been both a challenge and a gift to me to lead CLC in Australia in the past year and I thank God for your support and commitment. I particularly wish to thank the members of NEXCO, my family and my CLC group for their support and encouragement during this past year.

Dr Jennifer Gardner

Date: October 2023