



*Loreto Sisters
Engagement with*

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

by Denise Desmarchelier ibvm



LORETO

Australia & South East Asia



COVER

*Myrene Erdman and Pottery Class
in backyard, Broome, WA.*

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DISCLAIMER

The intent of this article is to give an overview of the range of IBVM-Loreto engagement with Australia's First Nations Peoples and does not include the involvement of Loreto schools. The focus is on mission. The Sisters who are part of each mission are named in the Appendix, and sources are listed for further information. The article includes names and images of people who have died. "Aboriginal" includes Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This publication attempts to enumerate and describe the multiple ways in which IBVM have engaged with First Nations Peoples. In addition to the following:

- *The Province Office and communities display recognition plaques acknowledging the lands on which we live.*
- *Formal gatherings start with acknowledgment of country.*
- *The Province Fund makes contributions to agencies such as the Open Doors and Aurora Foundations.*
- *MWIA provides funds for projects based on their needs and merits.*
- *Individuals actively support Reconciliation initiatives and activities.*
- *The JPIC Committee advocates for and initiates action on First Nations issues.*

The impressive engagement of Loreto Schools with First Nations Peoples is a chapter to be written by others:

- *Strong enrolments in supportive environments, with Aboriginal mentors and staff.*
- *Curriculum initiatives, cultural activities and awareness-raising programs.*
- *Liaison and partnership with First Nations Communities and organisations.*

*It has been an impressive journey since 1875, a journey that is still on the way.
Today's responses are in answer to the International IBVM Call of 2022:*

"We acknowledge our own vulnerability and brokenness and desire to encounter people on the peripheries with mutuality and respect".

Denise Desmarchelier ibvm



Ballarat beginnings

"It is very rare to see a black native in the town, we have not seen one yet".

M. Gonzaga Barry's 1875 diary entry is not surprising. The early squatters and settlers occupied the Buninyong area from 1838. The size of the settlement can be gauged from the establishment in 1848 of a cheap boarding school for the children of shepherds and others in the bush, and the presence of a permanent church minister in 1847 who noted that First Nations Peoples came to the Manse for food.

Although they were comparatively numerous in 1840, they were driven from their traditional way of life by sheep and cattle grazing and kangaroo hunts, exacerbated further by the discovery of gold in 1851.

Twenty years later, Ballarat had 40,000 inhabitants, 56 churches, 3 town halls, 477 hotels, large public buildings including a district hospital and orphan asylum, made roads and footpaths, a rail service, main water pipes and gas mains.

Small wonder that First Nations Peoples were not seen in the town, although the early members would surely have been aware of the 1896 obituary in the Ballarat papers for William Wilson, King Billy, whose "handsome black coffin" was on view in the hospital and whose burial was officiated by the Wesleyan Archdeacon.

KING BILLY AND HIS WIVES,
BALLARAT 1878 - STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA



Portland presents a different story

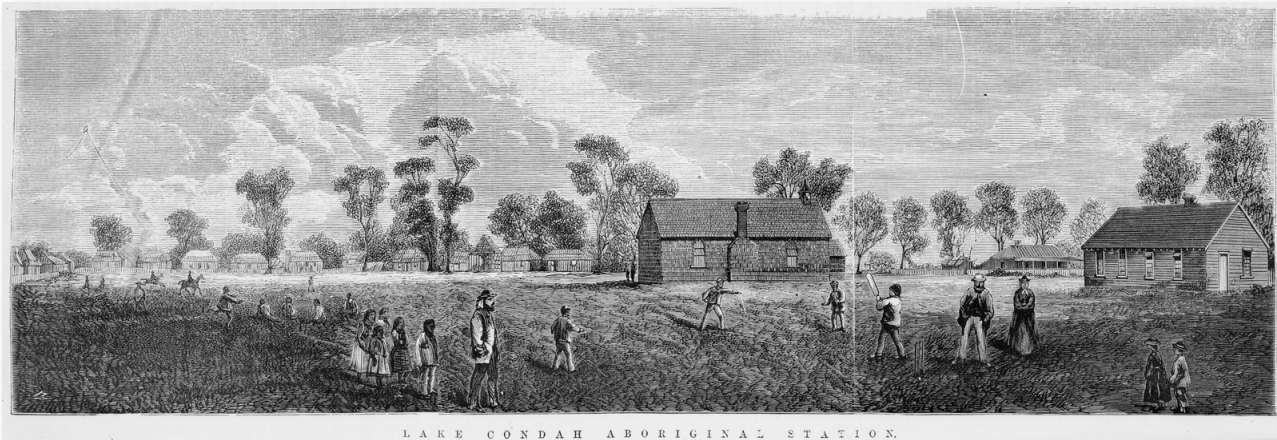
The bay was named in 1800 and soundings taken in 1802. Sealing was so well established that the rookeries were depleted in 1831 and whaling became the main industry.

There is a named grave dated 1828 and another 1829. Because of the sealing and whaling crews, by the 1830s there were few Aboriginal Peoples in the bay area, although a number lived inland.

William Dutton came to Portland in 1828 for whaling, built the first permanent residence the following year, and in 1833 established a whale fishery with a large permanent workforce.

Edward Henty's permanent arrival in 1834 was with a view to moving inland for grazing. When the settlement was officially recognised in 1836, there were 224 European inhabitants. Four years later there were 10,292.

LAKE CONDAH MISSION, EBENEZER AND DAVID SYME 1874 - STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA



Five years later again, GA Robinson, Protector of Aborigines, wrote: ... *only a venerable old man and his son remained of the bay area tribe, and two young men from a neighbouring tribe.*

When the Sisters arrived in Portland in 1883, local Aboriginal Peoples were living and grazing sheep at Lake Condah Mission which had been established in 1867. The Sisters would doubtless have been aware that in 1888 the government evicted half-caste Aboriginal Peoples below the age of 35, although they might not have understood the underlying grab for land and the inevitable consequence of the Mission's closure in 1918. It was from Lake Condah that an Aboriginal man and woman met with M. Michael Corcoran, Superior-General, when she visited in 1903. M. Gonzaga had arranged that they give an exhibition of singing and of boomerang and spear throwing, and they presented M. Michael with a boomerang, nullah and spear. The account in the Portland Guardian names the two as Billy Hewitt and his niece, Kitty Wallaby.

PORTLAND CONVENT LOOKING TOWARDS THE LIGHTHOUSE



A pupil in Portland in the late 1910s and early 1920s relates that Aboriginal Peoples from Condah would come to Portland for weeks and make their home under the Norfolk pines on the cliff opposite the convent. They were friendly and would sometimes come to the convent for food.

A Sister living in Portland in the early 2020s was told similarly by an Aboriginal Elder that the nuns were an important part of the Aboriginal story when they were camped at the lighthouse because they knew that they could always go to the convent for food.

Founding mission in 1875

The word “missionary” usually carries the connotation of a religious mission to promote Christianity in a foreign country. The word “mission” has a more general meaning of promoting faith and providing services such as education. The second meaning describes Teresa Ball’s foundations and the request for Loreto Sisters to go to Ballarat.

Teresa Ball, 1794-1861, introduced the Institute to Ireland in 1822 with the foundation in Rathfarnham, Dublin. She named the foundation Loreto, the name adopted by successive foundations.

The centre of the Rathfarnham foundation was to promote the instruction of youth in piety and learning. The quality and training of the members quickly established the high reputation of Loreto schools and the acceptance of Irish-born Catholic nuns by British colonial families – India in 1841, Mauritius and Gibraltar in 1845, North America in 1847, Manchester and Spain in 1851.

Typical requests of Teresa Ball: in India a Catholic school for the high classes, as well as day schools and poor schools; in Mauritius education of infancy and Catholic youth; in Gibraltar the improvement of the female children; in Toronto the provision of schooling to both wealthy and poor; in Spain taking over an established College for ladies.

TERESA BALL



The Loreto foundation in Ballarat was no different.
Bishop O'Connor wrote to M. Scholastica Somers, Superior General:

Now there is a very large section of Catholics of my diocese who are very well to do in the world and who after a very short time would send their children to your Nuns' Boarding School. I have no doubt that as your Nuns are so well known at home and are known too as the Nuns that educate the higher classes, that your establishment would have more application for admission than perhaps could be granted.

Of course the Nuns when they come out, that I hope will be at once, may begin with a day school and that day school must be open for all. At present the Government are making strenuous efforts to take education out of our hands and we must do all in our power to withstand and oppose all such attacks. Now there is no better way of keeping these people with us in the battle than by bringing our religious here to take charge of the education of their children.

When they see that we give them the means of educating their offspring properly they will give no countenance to any Government scheme. Judging then from my own observations as well as the opinion of all the Priests I consulted, there is no doubt that a Convent of Loretto Nuns established would be productive of the greatest possible blessings and would in every way be a great succour.

MELVILLE ISLAND CHILDREN AT TOORAK, 1942



Engagement with First Nations People

The first direct engagement with First Nations Peoples was in 1942, when Loreto was asked to accommodate the Sisters and girls from Melville Island when the Japanese attacked. The Loreto Toorak Junior School building provided accommodation. One Sister in particular was so appreciated for her kindness and deep interest in their wellbeing, including making clothes for the children, that several later named their children after her.

The key Province engagement with First Nations Peoples was its presence in Broome and subsequently Lombadina. It differed from engagement elsewhere, however significant, in that Loreto was invited by Bishop Jobst as a corporate entity, and Sisters could be missioned there in the same way as to schools elsewhere, with a rotating core placement for 4-5 years. Initially there were three or four Sisters in Broome; later there were two in Broome and two in Lombadina.

Other forms of engagement involved individuals responding to the need and request of a bishop, such as Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes, or were a personal response to a perceived need with the endorsement of the Province Leader. “Where one Sister is, there the Institute is”. Most enterprises were within existing agencies such as the Derby Community Health Services. Some were individual initiatives such as in Gnowangerup.

In the IBVM founding document, Mary Ward describes the mission to include “means congruous to the times”. The Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965, encouraged congregations of religious to return to their founding documents, and Minutes of the Australian Province Chapter and Assembly in 1971 include references to individual requests and a collective wish to work among Aboriginal Peoples. This coincided with the request of Bishop Jobst of the Broome Diocese for Loreto Sisters to staff St Mary’s Primary School.

As Vatican II changes became embedded, changes in enrolment numbers in the schools, the increasing proportion of lay teachers and the appointment in 1989 of the first lay Principal of a Loreto College, enabled the Sisters to address needs as they presented themselves.

Highlighting the needs of First Nations Peoples were: the visit of Pope Paul II to Alice Springs in 1986 and his address to First Nations Peoples; Prime Minister Paul Keating's Redfern address in December 1992 for the Australian launch of the 1993 International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples; the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in 1990 and the Reconciliation Council in 1991; the Mabo decision in 1992 and the report that year of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The Province responded to needs through "means congruous to the times".

Contemporary responses reflect the IBVM 2009 Constitutions, Volume II, Chapter 2, 2.8

In a world of inequality and oppression, we stand with those exploited in any way by unjust systems and structures.



Loreto Sisters engagement around Australia

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL BROOME, 1973



Broome and Lombadina

1973-1997

IBVM presence in Broome spanned twenty-two years, 1973-1995, and in Lombadina seven years, 1986-1997. The request of Bishop Jobst was to administer and staff St Mary's school, and subsequently Djarindjin / Lombadina Catholic School.

It was not an easy "ask" of the Sisters who were missioned there. They needed to be flexible given the vast distances; limited medical and other services; the social constraints of relative isolation; travel difficulties between Broome, Perth and other communities, and especially the 250km between Broome and Lombadina on a largely unsealed "corrugated" road; tropical conditions including physical and mental battles with mosquitoes and sand flies; cultural differences of food, dress, language, song, communication, pace, ways of thinking and perceiving, forms of behaviour, lore, law and lifestyles.

These factors were significant in providing apostolic experiences for Sisters in noviceship and tertianship formation.

LOMBADINA SCHOOL



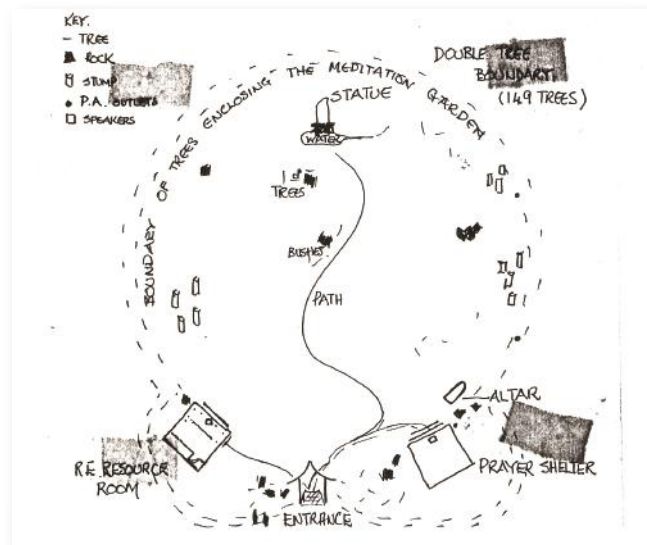
When the Sisters arrived in Broome, there was a school population of 250 children, predominantly Aboriginal, growing to 359 in 1994. The Lombadina enrolment also grew, from 32 in 1986 to 81 in 1996, including a small secondary component. Enrolment increase, curriculum expansion, alternative programs and local factors necessitated building programs in both schools, including St Mary's moving from three sites to one.

The first government grant was in 1974 for a centre enabling after-school engagement with parents and families, a focus that continued through a school-based pastoral outreach role that extended informally into parish, local community and diocese. Sensibility to culture was guided by Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants.

Other staff were predominantly young lay teachers and the Sisters' hospitality was an important form of support.

Sensitivity to community and cultural needs was illustrated in developing St Mary's Holy Place. As stated by the Sisters, there was need to tune into the mind, spirit and heart of those who belong, and into their style as a place of quiet to encounter the sacred.

PLAN FOR THE HOLY PLACE.
AN ENCLOSED GARDEN RATHER THAN A CHURCH CHAPEL OR BUILDING WAS PREFERRED BY THE FAMILIES.





Affirming Aboriginal Teachers and Assistants in positions of responsibility was a primary goal of IBVM presence. In announcing to the Province the missioning of two Sisters to Lombadina, the Province Leader wrote:

'Every effort has been, and will be made to understand the needs, rights and desires of the aboriginal people and we will go on the understanding that if and when they are ready and wanting to take over the work themselves, we will happily withdraw, our task having been accomplished'.

IBVM presence in Broome and Lombadina was formally reviewed in 1980 and 1994. Sisters who lived and worked in the Kimberley reflected on what they gained from their experience: love and appreciation of land and culture; commitment to be active in environmental and climate issues; support of Aboriginal Peoples to work in their own communities; helping to change attitudes and bring about reconciliation; hoping to influence other service providers and government.

One Sister reflected on the Kimberley connection to Mary Ward's spirituality of freedom, justice and sincerity.

- She described Aboriginal Freedom as all aspects of land and family forming the basis of relationship with God.
- She noted that Justice calls Mary Ward women to strive for what is best for the people in the light of the numerous justice issues they experience.
- She paralleled Mary Ward's Sincerity with that of Aboriginal Peoples who show themselves as they are; there are no "fronts".
- She observed that Mary Ward's "women in time will do much" is embodied in the Aboriginal women who are the resilient and dignified leaders and strength of community and family.
- She saw Mary Ward's "Felicity" or mirth embodied in their laughter and humour.

Later, in 2016, another Sister wrote an essay for her MA (Theol.) studies on *"Re-imagining Indigenous Christian Education in the Light of Mary Ward Spirituality"*.

She had previously taught for a year in the Blackstone Remote Community School in WA and revisited the community when writing the essay.

ANGELA SLATTERY AND GRADES 1 & 2 READING, BROOME



Looma and Derby

1980-1990

An IBVM presence in Derby was at the specific request of the Bishop of Broome and the Director of Health in the Kimberley, after hearing of the nutrition program that the Sister concerned had developed in India. She led an initial four-month trial of adult onset diabetes reversal, followed by nutritional programs with Aboriginal mothers and young children while living in the Looma Aboriginal Community.

At the Community's request, she revived a bakery with instructors from Perth, educated the older women and younger mothers on wholegrain food, and developed their interest in balanced foods, complemented by the school children's kitchen gardens. Moving to Derby, the Sister worked with the Pandanus Park Community in nutrition and alcohol rehabilitation programs, as well as spiritual care and wellbeing. Her presence in Derby spanned the greater part of ten years 1980-1990. Several Sisters were in Derby at different times for apostolic experience.

SR. PAULINE PRINCE AT DERBY WITH BAKERS



Kimberley Reading & Recovery

2008-2010

Another Kimberly initiative was through Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) that funds Loreto Sisters missions throughout the world in areas such as education, with particular focus on women and girls.

The Reading Recovery Program in the Kimberley, begun in 2006, operated out of St Mary's Broome. Three of the six participating schools are Broome, Lombadina and Derby. Others are Kununurra, Wyndham and Beagle Bay. The Program trains and mentors teachers in Reading Recovery principles to assist children who struggle with reading.

MWIA partnered with the Kimberley Land Council, the Catholic Education Office WA, and the Department of Education and Training, to provide financial support 2008-2010. An experienced Sister was seconded to St Mary's to assist in the Program, and two Sisters in Perth had an oversight role on behalf of MWIA.

READING RECOVERY PROGRAM IN ACTION



Gnowangerup

1978-1992

IBVM presence in Gnowangerup was a personal initiative. It was preceded by a long-held interest in Aboriginal Peoples and culture, a year meeting with Aboriginal Peoples and others involved in Aboriginal education, and sitting in on university anthropology lectures. It started as a six-month trial on a part-time basis, travelling each week from Perth and staying a few nights. It grew to a four year residency.

Home was open-house, with a constant troop of children and mothers. The house became the classroom each school morning for those who needed extra help. An extension became a craft room.

A keen focus was the battle with State Welfare, State Housing, State Government and the local Shire to close the squalid reserve where many of the Aboriginal families lived, and provide decent houses in the town. In 1982, only a few old people still lived there by choice.

There were battles with entrenched racism and discrimination. There were also willing hands for

ongoing house repairs and maintenance, the garden, the sourcing and transport of basic household items for families on the Reserve.

The Sister notes in her diary that the Province Leader “has legitimate worries about my mission”. A credit to both that, in the spirit of Ignatian spirituality and discernment, the mission continued while health allowed.

SR. PEG FLYNN AT GNOWANGERUP



Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne

1991 - 2003

Two Sisters were active with Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, one 1991-2003, the other 1992-1999.

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry responds to the challenge of Pope John Paul II in 1986: "The Church in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others."

The Ministry provides support, pastoral and spiritual care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, while educating the wider community and working towards achieving real and lasting reconciliation. The Sisters' involvement entailed net-working with other community organisations and schools, presenting workshops on reconciliation, and fund-raising.

The Sister who finished in 1999 went to Perth where, between 2000 and 2004, she worked as a teacher aide in Culunga Aboriginal Community School and as a volunteer in the Day Dawn Advocacy Centre,

supporting and advocating for the housing needs of Aboriginal Peoples. She had previously engaged with Aboriginal Peoples at St Kilda Sacred Heart Mission in Melbourne, 1985-1988.

FROM LEFT: SR. ANGELA KENNEDY (CULUNGA & DAY DAWN),
WITH SR. MARY ROARTY & SR. FRANCINE ROBERTS (LOMBARDINA)



Cairns, Tiwi Islands, Daly River, Balgo, Wiluna, Santa Teresa, Three Springs, Wilcannia-Forbes

1990 - Present

The form of a mission starts with a person's interests and gifts; how it develops might depend on happenstance and being in the right place at the right time. A workshop in Canberra drew the attention of the World Council of Churches, and its request to offer workshops in Cairns, the Kiwi Islands and Darwin for a national banner project. Workshops in Darwin came to the attention of a Loreto contact and led to an ongoing invitation to Daly River and Balgo. Another Loreto connection led to an ongoing invitation to Santa Teresa.

Subsequent Loreto connections led to workshops with First Nations Peoples in Three Springs and Wilcannia-Forbes.

A presence in an Aboriginal Community is always at the invitation of the Community. Respecting the culture and the people means teaching technique, in this instance how to do silk painting, and not what to paint. In Santa Teresa there was additional assistance to choose the style of cross that the women in the Art Centre paint as a fund-raising project. These workshops and others are ongoing.

SR. SUSAN DAILY, SANTA TERESA





Mount Isa, Santa Teresa, Alice Springs

1992 - 2014

An advertisement at the end of 1991 led to work with Indigenous students at the Christian Brothers Mt. Isa Catholic School in the Aboriginal Support Unit / Learning Resource Centre, beginning a four-year placement.

The next four years, 1996-1999, were as ESL and Literacy teacher in Santa Teresa at the Ltyentye Apurte Community Education Centre. Living in the Community meant having an open door and constant contact with local people.

In 2000, an invitation from the Education Department led to one term relieving in Maningreda at the Top End, and several weeks in Mulga Bore, Utopia, on the Sandover Highway

The return to Alice Springs began an involvement with the Irrkerlantye Learning Centre that provided educational opportunities: mainstream education for the children, Art for the women, Horticulture and Construction for the men. Work in the Centre entailed driving a bus to the camps to bring students to the Centre and driving them back after school. There was also attendance at court hearings and Sunday Church Services on a rotational basis at the jail.

A casual remark led to employment by Charles Darwin University to offer remote education Certificate Courses at the invitation of the community, usually for one term. On occasion the Mobile Adult Learn Unit, with classroom and accommodation, was brought into the community. Otherwise classes were taught in whatever space was available, and accommodation was improvised.

An encounter in Alice Springs fostered the initiative to establish a short-term safe house for young Arrente girls and women until the return to Brisbane at the end of 2014 closed the chapter on this level of engagement with First Nations Peoples.



Hay

1995 - 2004

Australia experienced an economic depression, 1990-1991, that was part of a global depression. High interest and mortgage rates led to bankruptcies; the removal of tariffs affected agriculture; the fall in asset prices after the 1980s meant that loans were not repaid, leading to the collapse of financial institutions. Disruption and economic distress meant that consumer confidence was at an all-time low. Anecdotally, the Principal of a Loreto boarding school approached day-scholar parents to arrange a petrol fund and offer accommodation so that boarder parents could visit their daughter or attend medical appointments.

A number of Sisters came from rural areas and were sensitive to the plight of the rural sector. Independent approaches to the Province Leader led her to establish a Rural Interest Group, 1993-4, to explore possibilities. An approach was made to the Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes, one of the country's largest and poorest dioceses. The offer of IBVM

Mildura

2005 - 2006

presence was to address needs determined by the bishop, especially spiritual needs, and Hay was nominated.

An IBVM presence there commenced in 1995. Hay was 100+km from the nearest towns, and often farther from a town with a resident priest. With Hay itself without a resident priest for stretches up to six months, the Sisters regularly led liturgies and performed Baptisms and conducted funerals.

Their engagement with indigenous peoples was through parish, hospital and funeral ministries. Their house was the centre for the St Vincent de Paul Society, more familiarly known as Vinnies, with Aboriginal requests usually for food or petrol.

Mildura has a large Aboriginal population, 4.6% of the total against 1% of Victoria. As in Hay, engagement with the Aboriginal people was largely within Parish ministry and outreach. There was incidental engagement in subsequent parishes.

Three Springs

1999 - 2014

The Bishop of the Geraldton diocese was formerly the priest in a parish with a Loreto community and school, hence his asking the Loreto Sisters to help with pastoral work in Three Springs and the three surrounding towns. One Sister was there 1999-2004. A second later joined her and continued in the Three Springs mission with a Good Samaritan Sister until 2014.

The Three Springs area is largely farming, with a scattering of First Nations Peoples. As in Hay, engagement with them was within the parish pastoral context.

In 2008, Loreto supported an initiative to establish a community garden and chicken run, primarily for First Nations Peoples, to develop training, responsibility and budgetary skills. Aboriginal women largely formed the planning committee.

GARDEN PROJECT AT THREE SPRINGS





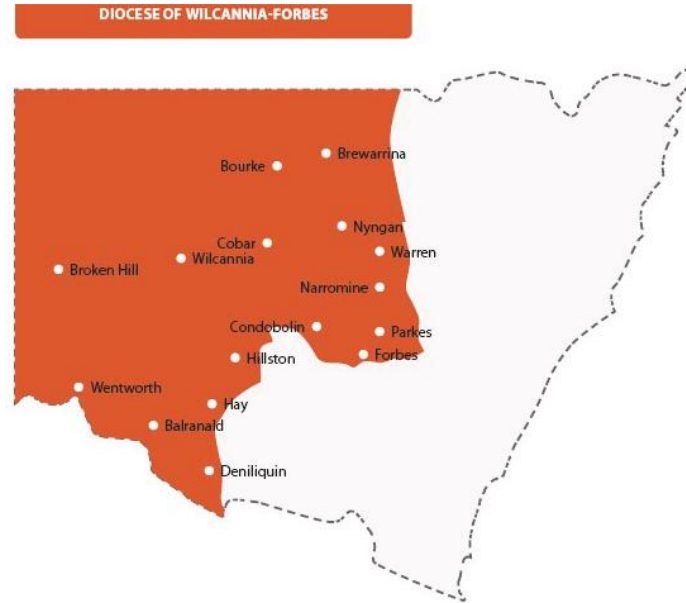
Wilcannia-Forbes

1996 - 2011

At the end of 1995, the Loreto Province Leader heard the Bishop of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes asking for help to establish a CatholicCare service to support families and communities struggling with stress and depression within his diocese which covers 52% of NSW. In response, a Sister who had worked as a psychologist with Centacare Melbourne was asked to move to the diocese to establish a social support service for its many rural and remote communities.

A storeroom with an old school desk and chair served as the first office in Forbes and included a second hand typewriter with five keys missing. Fifteen years later, following endless hours of submission writing to government departments and other charitable funding bodies, she had a budget of \$15m and a staff of 125, 20% of whom were Aboriginal.

Because of distance, a 'hub and spoke' organisational model was developed, with branches providing services to communities within a 200km range.



A driving principle from the beginning was that CatholicCare would provide services to all members of communities of the diocese, including Aboriginal Communities and, wherever possible, Aboriginal Peoples would be employed and supported to provide culturally sensitive services to their Communities.

Programs supporting Aboriginal Communities were: mentoring youth referred by the justice system and supporting men to engage with greater confidence within family and community; the Strong Young Mums program offering groups for young mothers in many communities to increase nutrition awareness, parenting skills and confidence to re-engage in education; and the Manage Your Life, Manage Your Income program which trained and employed Aboriginal Staff as accredited financial counsellors to enhance financial literacy within Aboriginal Communities, including confidence in dealing with financial organisations and government

agencies. It was estimated this assisted 4,000 Aboriginal Peoples each year.

The Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs praised CatholicCare for its potential to create systemic change and break the generational cycle of poor health, poor educational achievement and family violence in Aboriginal Communities.

As with others whose mission included walking with First Nations Peoples, CatholicCare and its CEO greatly valued a deepening appreciation of Aboriginal culture and issues, the privilege to be trusted by their Communities to work with them to enhance their quality of life, and to share friendship and a deeper understanding of the struggles and joys of our First Nation Peoples.

Parramatta Diocese Sydney

1999 - 2009, 2016 - 2018

Two Sisters worked in the Parramatta Diocese which has a large population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, living especially in the Mount Druitt Parish.

One Sister was Co-ordinator of Social Justice in the Diocese, 1999-2009. Her role was to raise awareness of unjust situations, advocate for people suffering injustice, and to provide formation, support and opportunities for social action. Every effort was made to ensure that First Nations Services were collaborative partnerships and culturally aware.

The other worked in Mount Druitt Parish 2016-2018 and was involved with Baabayn Aboriginal

Corporation. The Corporation was established by Aboriginal Elders as a place of healing where people could connect with culture, have a sense of belonging, recover from past trauma, regain self-esteem and realise their potential. The Elders were women and the service was for women and children. Activities included Family Gatherings, Homework Club, Young Mums and Bubs that offered empowerment and early childhood education experiences, and Speak Up Sis for teenage girls to connect with culture, build friendships, build skills and engage in a primary drug and alcohol prevention program.

BAABAYN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION





THE 150 YEARS LOGO DESIGN
WAS A COLLABORATION
BY TWO ARTISTS:
EVIE DAVIDSON
(LORETO STUDENT AND
DJA DJA WURUNG WOMAN)
& LUA PELLEGRINI
(WIRADJURI WOMAN).

The 150 years artwork design includes the blue waters of Lake Wendouree where the traditional owners of the land are the Wadawurrung people.

The clusters of stars (Pleiades Seven Sisters) represent the sisters who accompanied Mother Gonzaga Barry to Ballarat in 1875.

The flowers from the eucalyptus tree recall the name of the first Loreto Newsletter begun in 1886 called Eucalyptus Blossoms.

The symbolic songlines dotted with yarning circles depict the shared journey of all Loreto students and the Open Circle of Mary Ward and her companions.

The Sisters Place

2006 - 2016

The Sisters Place in Perth, with eight beds, offered overnight accommodation to women experiencing domestic abuse or homelessness. At least half the women were Aboriginal. The Place provided meals, hygiene packs, shower and laundry facilities, and the Sisters who were there overnight offered friendship and a listening ear. Involvement in the Sisters Place included driving around the streets in the early evening, preparing meals, cleaning the house and making beds for the next night.

Cana Communities

1990s - 2024

Cana Communities is a not-for-profit charity working with men and women who have experienced homelessness, addiction or mental illness. The Community offers hospitality, a place to belong and supportive relationships. Four Sisters have been/are associated with Cana Community WA, companioning those on the margins. The engagement of one with Aboriginal Peoples has extended to their Kwinana WA Community. The Sydney association included advocating for young offenders.

Prison Chaplaincy

1997 - 2025

The three Sisters in prison chaplaincy in Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria engage with First Nations women within their ministry. This includes presence and availability, conversation on the woman's initiative, conducting Ecumenical Church Services, and assisting on occasions such as International Women's Day.

Appendix

Loreto Mandeville 1942 *Turruk* people

Lua Byrne

1942 Melville Island students

Broome WA, 1973-1995 *Yawuru* people

Myrene Erdman

1973-1977 St Mary's teacher

Mary-Ellen McCormack

1973-1981 St Mary's teacher, 1977-1981 Principal

Angela Slattery

1975-1980 St Mary's teacher

1983-1989 School/Parish pastoral role

1991-1995 Parish/Diocesan pastoral role

Mary Murray

1978-1984 St Mary's teacher, 1982-1984 Principal

Mary Prunty

1981-1985 St Mary's teacher

Mary Roarty

1981-1987 St Mary's teacher

Sandra Perrett

1985 Broome two months apostolic experience

Marg C Honner

1985 Broome short-term Acting Principal

Claire Gardiner

1985-1990 St Mary's Principal

Marg Hill

1990 St Mary's pastoral role replacement

Cynthia Wright

1991-1995 St Mary's Principal

Lombadina, WA 1976-1998 *Bardi* people

Mary Prunty

1986-1987 Lombadina Principal

Francine Roberts

1986-1998 Lombadina teacher; 1988-1998 Principal

Margie Bourke

1987-1990 Lombadina teacher

Mary Roarty

1991-1997 Lombadina

1998 Mirringki Spirituality Centre,
Kalumburu school catechetics

Maria Bongiorno

1988 Lombadina two weeks replacement

Mercia Richards

1988 Lombadina two months apostolic experience

Anne Muirhead

1989 Lombadina two months apostolic experience

Maureen Burke

1990 Lombadina two terms Acting Principal

Selvi Adaikalam

2016 Blackstone Remote Community
School, WA

Kimberley: Derby WA, 1980-1990, Reading Recovery 2008-2010 *Mowanjum* people

Pauline Prince

1980-1990 Derby, Looma, Pandanus Park

Geraldine Ryan

1985 Derby two months apostolic experience

Jane Kelly

1987 Derby two months apostolic experience

Anna Gaha

2009 St Mary's, Broome Reading Recovery

Gnowangerup WA, 1978-1982

Goreng Noongar people

Peg Flynn

1978-1982

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne, Vic.,

1991-2003; Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung

WA 1992-2004 *Noongar/Bibbulmun* people

Marg Hill

1991-2003 Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Angela Kennedy

1985-1988 Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda, Melbourne

1992-1999 Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

2000-2004 Culunga Aboriginal School,

Day Dawn Advocacy Centre Perth

Cairns QLD, *Gimuy-walubarra yidi*; Tiwi Islands,

Tiwi; Darwin *Larrakia*, Daly River *Malak Malak*, NT;

Balgo *Wirrimanu*, Wiluna Martu, Santa Teresa

Ltyentye Apurte, Three Springs *Amangu*, WA;

Wilcannia-Forbes *Wiradjuri* NSW

Susan Daily

1990-present

Mount Isa Kalkadoon QLD, Santa Teresa *Ltyentye*

Apurte WA, Alice Springs *Arrente* NT, 1992-2014

Helen Parer

1992-1995 Mt Isa Catholic College Aboriginal Unit
and Parish

1995-1998 Santa Teresa ESL

1999-2014 Alice Springs Irrkerlyantye Program
Charles Darwin University remote
communities
Alice Springs Safe House

Janet Palafox

2011 Alice Springs

Hay Wiradjuri NSW, 1995-2005

Mildura *Ladji Ladji* VIC, 2005-2006

Frances Browne

1995-2005 Hay Parish and St Vincent de Paul

Helen Salter

1995-2005 Hay Parish

Helen Murphy

2005-2006 Mildura Parish

2006-2012 Cohuna;

2014-2017 Beaufort

Three Springs WA, 1999-2004 *Amangu* people

Francine Roberts

1999-2004

Mary Roarty

1999-2002

Ellen Moran

2003-2004, 2006-2014

Wilcannia-Forbes NSW, 1996-2014 *Wiradjuri* people

Margaret Mary Flynn

1996-2011 CEO, Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Care

Janet Palafox

2012-2014 Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Care

Parramatta Diocese NSW, 1999-2009, 2016-2018

***Dharug* people**

Libby Rogerson

1999-2009 Diocesan Social Justice Coordinator

Sandra Perrett

2016-2018 Mount Druitt Parish,
Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

The Sisters Place WA; Cana Communities

***Noongar/Bibbulmun* WA and *Gadigal* NSW; Prison**

Chaplaincy *Noongar/Bibbulmun* WA, *Kombumerri*

QLD. and *Wadawurrung* VIC.

Bernadette Ziesing

1997-2004 Youth Detention, Brisbane

2007-2017 Youth Detention, Adelaide

Marg Finlay

2006-2016 The Sisters Place, Perth

2012-2018 Cana, Perth

2004-2012 Bandyup Women's Prison, Perth

2012-2018 Boronia Prison, Perth

2018-2020 Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, VIC

Margie O'Sullivan

2006-2016 The Sisters Place, Perth

2012-2018 Cana, Perth

Trish Franklin

2018-2020 Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, VIC

Elisabeth Keane

1990s Cana, Sydney

2000-present Numinbah Women's Correctional
Facility, QLD

Jwan Kada

2023-2024 Cana and Streetscape, Sydney

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