



Wednesday, 1 April 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I wrote to you in September last year announcing our new Governance framework, a structure that encourages us to be synodal in all we do.

Since this time, we have invited our Diocesan and wider community to join us on this journey by offering Expressions of Interest to participate in our new Councils and Advisory Boards.

I was heartened by the number and the quality of applicants, who reflect the diversity of our Church. This process continued through to the end of 2025 and into the new year with a formation program and the formal establishment of our new governance groups.

The role of these Councils and Boards is to steward our Diocese across the many important areas in which we serve and deliver our mission – our parishes, education and community services. The members provide experienced oversight of our work supported by a sustainable, safeguarding culture.

The layers and structure of our Advisory Boards and Councils are interconnected. They operate in a synodal way, a collaborative way, that allows all to be heard in their areas of expertise and providing advice to the Bishop and Trustees for critical discernment.

The new governance structure considers both civil and church law, and is designed to foster greater collaboration, transparency and synodal leadership.

You can read more about our [synodal framework and the new Councils and Advisory Boards](#) as well as our [member appointments of the Diocesan Pastoral Council here](#).

All Advisory Boards and Councils have held their first meetings for 2026, and I am inspired by the curiosity, insight, stewardship and commitment to the mission of the Church these groups now bring to our Diocese. This process is most encouraging as we breathe new life into our pastoral priorities and strategic direction, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Our Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) plays a particularly central role in driving the priorities and pastoral life of a diocese. This group touches most specifically on the mission of the Church, representing the structure of participation required by Church law. Forming this group presents as a key component in assisting me, as the bishop, in engaging others in pastoral life, essentially driving the mission of the Church and the intention of our Diocese.

As we now embark together on this renewed path of shared mission, I wish to express my gratitude to all who have generously offered their time, wisdom and prayerful discernment throughout this process.

Our clergy, our parishioners, our staff - our whole Diocesan community, have led with a spirit of generosity and openness in engaging in this synodal journey. This unity strengthens our communion, deepens our commitment to the Gospel, and ensures that our mission remains vibrant and responsive to the needs of our people.

May we find both stability and growth through our new structures and continue to walk forward together, listening attentively to the Holy Spirit and to one another, confident in a hopeful and grace filled future.

With every blessing,

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the letters 'M' and 'K' in a cursive style.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

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