

TENTH BIENNIAL AMSSA CONFERENCE

‘The blessing of unity dwelling amongst us is the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us.’

Catherine McAuley

The Western Australian Mercy Schools and the Western Australian Sisters of Mercy Congregations welcomed one hundred and fifty delegates and forty student delegates from Mercy schools across Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia for the Tenth Conference at Santa Maria College Perth.

In the Opening and Closing Ceremonies participants were led in ritual, dance, song and story by Elder Noel Nannup and members of the Nyoongar People. The Conference theme, of the flowing on us of the spirit of Mercy, was captured in Noel’s story and in prayer that the life-giving spirit of Christ may flow to all. Keynote speakers were Sr Mary Duffy, Sr Sophie McGrath and Anne Kelleher, and Conference Weaver was Anne Fox.

Day 2 of the Conference included the staffs of the Western Australian Mercy schools, who heard Anne Kelleher’s second keynote address, and took part in one of the forty forums which offered spiritual nourishment and inspiration for the work of Mercy educators, as well as a hypothetical panel discussion during which Conference Weaver Anne Fox led the three keynote speakers and Tim McDonald, Assistant Director of Catholic Education WA, Elena Douglas, Convenor, Centre for Social Impact at UWA, and Michelle Carrick, from the staff of Santa Maria College, in considering what Mercy Education might look like in 2031, two hundred years after the beginning of the Mercy Congregation.

Sister Ursula Frayne and her band of founding Mercy Sisters were brought to life as delegates became pilgrims on a boat cruise up the Swan River retracing the journey of the first Sisters, and in scenes from the early history of Mercy in Perth reenacted by the staff and students of Mercedes College. The Conference Eucharist was celebrated by Archbishop Hickey in the newly restored St Mary’s Cathedral. The Conference dinner speaker was Professor Celia Hammond, Vice Chancellor of Notre Dame University.

The parallel conference for students enabled them to take part both in some AMSSA Conference sessions and in workshops designed specifically for them. The inclusion of the students in the Conference was a first for AMSSA, and there was widespread recognition that the student Conference was a success, and that their contributions to the AMSSA Conference were an enriching part of Conference proceedings.

The 2011 Biennial General Meeting was held during the Conference. The Executive members for 2012-2013 are Jane Holloway (President), Kathleen Deady (NZ), Kitty Guerin (NSW), Sr Mary Moloney rsm (Vic), Lee-Ann Perry (Qld), John Konopka (SA) and Rosa Speranza (WA).

Thanks to the Conference Planning Committee and to the WA schools for their contributions to all aspects of the Conference, and to the Conference sponsors, Catholic Church Insurances, Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund, Catholic Church Development Fund, InterOil, Selectus Salary Packaging, Chapman River Olives and Programmed Property Services.