



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Office for the Participation of Women



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **CATHOLIC WOMEN ON A MISSION** *Hopes high for leadership program*

A reinvigorated leadership program for Catholic women aged 25 to 35 is expected to deliver greater opportunities for women in the life of the Catholic Church.

Newly appointed staff of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Andrea Dean and Rachelle Smith, discussed details of the leadership program when they met with Bishop Michael McCarthy in Sydney recently.

The two year program, a blend of online learning and residential experiences, is a project of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in partnership with Catholic Mission and Australian Catholic University to cultivate future women leaders.

Rachelle Smith, who comes to the position of coordinator of the Leadership for Mission program with extensive experience in youth ministry and event coordination in Tasmania, said: "I'm thrilled to part of this visionary initiative and I look forward to working with the candidates over the next two years."

Bishop McCarthy is enthusiastic about the Office for the Participation of Women being fully operational again following a period of part-time support. "The ACBC is aware of the challenges that confront the Church at this time," he said.

"This leadership program recognizes that the Church of the future will be a Church that provides greater opportunities for women in leadership and decision making."

Andrea Dean was appointed Director of the Office for the Participation of Women and Office for Lay Pastoral Ministry in August.

"Having a background in formation and leadership, I am 100% committed to developing and making space for women leaders in Church and society," she said.

"Already we have had enquiries from across Australia and I'm heartened to think that we will have a strong field of potential candidates willing to participate in theological study, faith formation, leadership development and mission engagement."

Upon completion, the participants will receive a Graduate Certificate in Theology from ACU. Accommodation, travel and tuition are subsidised to encourage national enrolments. Participants contribute to a portion of the overall costs.

Details of the program are available on the Office for the Participation for Women website. <http://www.opw.catholic.org.au/> Applications will be accepted until November 26, 2017 with the program commencing February, 2018.

For further information contact Andrea Dean [director.opw@catholic.org.au](mailto:director.opw@catholic.org.au) or 0487388873.

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