

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday 21 March 2018

BISHOP EMERITUS PETER INGHAM HONOURED AT FAREWELL DINNER AT THE CUBE

On Monday 19 March 2018, Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham was honoured in style at *The Cube* (located at Campbelltown Catholic Club) with over 500 guests in attendance from around the Diocese and Peter's family and friends throughout Australia. One of the guests present, Sr Maria Casey RSJ (president of the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand), said of the evening, "There was an atmosphere of joy and celebration in spite of it being a farewell. What happened there at the Cube was a wonderful example of what it is to be Church—a community, faith-filled, joyous, supportive, able to work and celebrate together."

As guests entered The Cube—walking a red carpet flanked by large images from Peter's life—Peter made sure he was there to shake the hand and welcome every single guest.

Dean of St Francis Xavier Cathedral Wollongong, Fr Ron Peters, said grace; and guests were then treated to a beautiful three course meal prepared by celebrated Australian chef, Mr Peter Sheppard—director of culinary development at the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

Several amazingly talented students from Mount Carmel Catholic College Varroville provided the pre-dinner and dinner music on the night, with acclaimed former Varroville student, Miss Chantelle Santos, performing a special solo rendition of *Ave Maria*.

Former diocesan chancellor, Sr Moya Hanlen FDNSC, and current chair of the Diocesan Finance Council, Mr Kieran Biddle, delivered touching tribute speeches. Dame Kathleen McCormack AM presented Peter with a gift and cake to celebrate the wonderful contribution he has made as the bishop of Wollongong for the past 16 ½ years.

Peter then responded with a humorous and heartfelt speech of his own. During the speech Peter said, "I am often asked if I am any relation to the Inghams of 'Ingham's Chickens'. In my first parish in Rosebery, I was talking to a group and the question popped up and I said, 'If I was related to them, I would be driving something better than a Volkswagen Beetle!' ... Staying with the poultry context, in relation to my retirement, I've been joking that I have gone from being a rooster to a feather duster...."

"Tonight, I am here to thank you all for the terrific support and affirmation of my style of ministry. I have been absolutely blown away at the various farewells around the Diocese. I still have a lot of very touching letters to answer amid packing up and preparing to move.... I tend to only look at my mistakes, at what I have done badly, and what I have failed to do. But, you have all given me a preview of what people might say at my funeral! I think I have done nothing extraordinary except to keep being there...."

“My motivation [as a bishop] came from a phrase in the New Testament in the Acts of the Apostles—a phrase that jumped out at me from the reading at Mass not long before I was nominated a bishop—‘They [Paul and Barnabas] put fresh heart into the disciples encouraging them to persevere in the faith’ (Acts 14:22). It is my fervent prayer that despite my own shortcomings, I have, by God’s grace, put some fresh heart into people and encouraged them to hang in there as Catholic Christians.”

In true Peter style, he finished off his speech by focusing on his successor, the new bishop of Wollongong, Brian Mascord. He said, “So, Bishop Brian, what you see here tonight is a great cross-section of the potential and goodness our Diocese has to offer you. Can I say to you, the people of our Diocese, remember Bishop Brian has just been through a dislocating and painful experience in leaving a community he loved in Maitland-Newcastle and where he was well known and appreciated.... Let your new bishop be himself. What I mean is, Bishop Brian is not a replica of anyone else. Each of us is different and we see much further into the future when we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us.”

One of Australia's most loved comedians, Mr Vince Sorrenti, was a brilliant master of ceremonies for the evening—bringing the house down in fits of laughter with his wonderful sense of humour.

The night was topped off by a wonderful set performed by renowned Australian opera singer and local parishioner from Sydney, Mr Mark Vincent, and his band. Mark received a standing ovation for his encore performance of *Nessun Dorma*.

One of the highlights of the evening was a surprise slideshow presentation of over 100 photos from Peter’s life.

The Catholic Diocese of Wollongong acknowledges and thanks the following partners and donors for their enthusiastic support of this event: All Organs Australia Pty Ltd, Australian Catholic Superannuation & Retirement Fund, Campbelltown Catholic Club, Catholic Church Insurances, Catholic Development Fund Wollongong, Catholic Super, CEnet, Clearsafe Environmental Solutions, H.Parsons Funeral Directors, Harvest Journeys, Invocare trading as Guardian Funerals and Hansen & Cole Funerals, JDH Architects, KPMG, Makinson d’Apice Lawyers, McDonald’s Macarthur and Illawarra, Michelle Roffe Funerals, Primavera Flowers, Remac Fire Safety, Rydges Campbelltown, Steve Watt Constructions, St Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish, FAL Constructions, Figtree Cleaning, Paul and Margaret Wakeling, Pro Sound and Lighting, St Mary Star of the Sea College Wollongong and Stuart Barnes Venues and Events.

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You can download the official farewell dinner programme at <http://dow.sh/FarewellProgramme>

Images of the evening (and the slideshow video) can be viewed on the diocesan Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WollongongCatholic>.

Images for media can be downloaded at <http://dow.sh/InghamFarewellDinnerPhotos>. Photo credit: Alphonsus Fok.

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