

## MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

### **Bringing it all together: 'Mission: one heart many voices' — Day 3 Wrap**

Australia's premier mission conference concluded today with Father Frank Brennan stressing the need for the Church to be more open, adaptable and inclusive.

Father Brennan's closing keynote tied together many of the diverse themes and elements of the 'Mission: one heart many voices' Conference held in Sydney this week, which included reconciliation, mercy, leadership for mission and Indigenous advocacy.

Earlier in the day, Professor Larissa Behrendt spoke of her work with the Strengthening Indigenous Communities program at the University of Technology, Sydney, where she lectures on Indigenous issues and law.

Professor Behrendt, a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman, shared her reflections on her work to empower Indigenous communities. Her speech was a timely answer to the question of how to apply some of the learnings of this year's conference, which strongly incorporated Indigenous spirituality and perspective.

'I have seen in areas like Menindee, Bourke and Lightning Ridge what I would call self-determination in action.

'To begin to change entrenched socio-economic conditions, it is crucial that communities are empowered and Indigenous people are involved in the policy making, as well as the design and the roll-out of development programs.'

Father Brennan then expertly united the many voices of the conference in the final keynote, calling for all present to take up the challenges presented by Ginn Fourie, Evelyn Parkin, Bishop Vincent Long, Cathy Ross, Sister Elaine Wainwright and Professor Behrendt, in order to become a more inclusive Church in the future.

Charged with the task of presenting a vision for the Church, Father Brennan reiterated Pope Francis' assertion that we will not in the future see the Church as a "perfect society". 'We are all members of a Church that has failed its most vulnerable,' he said. 'We are all in need of forgiveness.'

Fittingly, Father Brennan's way forward was a nod to those who had spoken before him: 'For us to be a Church of mission in 2030, we must provide a place at the table for all ... for Indigenous people, for women, for refugees and for the abused. We must be adaptable and open to change.'

The conference, organised jointly by Catholic Mission and Catholic Religious Australia, also saw the launch of *The Francis Effect III: The Mission of Love and Mercy* which can be purchased [here](#). For more information about the conference, visit [mohmv.com.au](http://mohmv.com.au).

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