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## **NEW ASSOCIATION TO SUPPORT CATHOLIC DEACONS IN AUSTRALIA**

**A new association has just been established to support the growing number of ordained deacons in the Catholic Church in Australia.**

The Statutes for the new Australian Catholic Deacons Association (ACDA) were approved by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on May 3.

ACDA has emerged from the National Association of Deacons, which was part of the National Council Priests (NCP).

President of ACDA, Deacon Tony Hoban, from the Diocese of Paramatta, said this was significant moment in the life of the diaconate in Australia.

“We are grateful for the support we have received from the NCP over the past 22 years,” Deacon Tony said. “But the time has come for our deacons to have their own, independent association to champion our vocation, to provide collegial support to deacons and their wives and those in formation, and to offer benefits to members such as conferences and webinars that assist and inspire them in their vocation and various ministries.

“Deacons are often misunderstood by many in the Church. We are neither glorified altar servers nor mini priests. We are, in the words of the most recent Church Synod, servants of the mystery of God and the Church, through charity, the word, and the liturgy (§73).”

Ordained deacons Baptise, conduct funerals, are celebrants of marriage, proclaim the Gospel in the liturgy, preach the homily, and participate in sacramental programs. As servants of charity ordained deacons can be chaplains in hospitals, prisons, universities, armed services and visit the sick.

The executive committee of the new association comprise Deacon Tony as President and representatives elected from the membership in five regional groups of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Adelaide, Deacon Tim Grauel; Brisbane, Deacon Chad Hargrave; Melbourne (with the addition of the Archdiocese of Hobart), Deacon Michael Hangan; Perth, Deacon Bruce Talbot; and Sydney (with the addition of the Archdiocese of Canberra - Goulburn), Deacon Anthony Gooley.

Membership of the association is open to deacons of the Catholic Church and Eastern Churches. Lay people can join as associate members.

Anyone interested in being part of the new association can join via: [www.ausdeacons.asn.au](http://www.ausdeacons.asn.au)

The first formal correspondence of the new association was a letter of congratulations and prayerful support to Pope Leo XIV.

In Australia, the first 'permanent' deacon, Vincent Dowdy, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn on 6 August 1972 at St. Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra.

Since then, the vocation has developed gradually in many Australian dioceses.

Today there are more than 200 deacons in Australia in the Catholic Church.

The patrons of the Association are St. Stephen, St Lawrence, St Ephraim and St Francis of Assisi.

# ENDS #

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