

Planning Document

of the

Australian Province

of the

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

18-22 November 2002

Preface

This document was achieved through a dedicated and rigorous process. The process began when the Oblates of the Australian Province met in nine small groups, each group meeting six times over a period of a year to deliberate on constructing and defining the vision and commitment for the Province for the next five years. The results of their deliberations produced a *Working Document*.

An Assembly of 29 men was convened to focus and refine the *Working Document*. In its deliberations, the Assembly attempted to remain faithful to the aspirations and expectations of the small groups. It dedicated its efforts to put the ideas into a workable and achievable context, so that a realistic strategy document could be produced.

The men generated the first attempt of a truly sustainable document, which was then submitted to a Drafting Committee, who were commissioned to refine the work of the larger body.

The work of the Drafting Committee was submitted to the Assembly for amendment. A Post-Assembly Committee produced a second draft, which was submitted to the Provincial and his Council for approval. In this document we are not only defining our mission but also attempting to capture the spirit with which we will undertake it.

A *Strategy Document* will be produced. This will outline the concrete steps the Province will take to achieve the objectives delineated below.

Goals

Rejoicing in the achievements and possibilities of the modern world and being aware of new realities and changing values in society, our methods of evangelisation are marked by an openness to new initiatives and approaches, in order to meet the real life needs of those we serve and those yet to be reached. The Province discerns such initiatives and encourages and supports them with its resources where appropriate.

We are blessed with the opportunity to reach youth and work with them in our Oblate Parishes, Colleges, Parish Schools, Rosies and other youth ministries. We dedicate ourselves to exploring, developing and extending these avenues to achieve greater scope and effectiveness in the future.

We place great value on the evangelisation of youth. We strive to know the young people with whom we come in contact, to listen to them, to journey with them, maintaining a respectful openness and approachability. We encourage young people to be lay leaders who can, in their own way, build true Christian Community.

Our involvement in education in Oblate Colleges is a special opportunity to touch the lives of young people. Urged on by the Oblate Charism, we, together with the staff, parents and students, evangelise and develop the faith of the school community.

Conscious that the Church is a presence of Christ in the world and that we are fragile, we rely on our confidence that God is with us. Knowing that we have something to give, we welcome and accept all people and offer them the opportunity to share our faith so that together we can grow to our full human stature. As a trusting community of believers, we celebrate Christ's presence among us in Word, Sacrament and Christian Service.

It is a priority for us to encourage, support and defend the traditional family while, at the same time, we respect and minister to those in other family relationships.

Our community life and prayer is vital to our lives and daily ministry. We are also strongly committed to personal prayer and holiness. We are dedicated to more authentic sharing and mutual support in our communities. Thus, each member of the community takes ownership of the shared mission.

We are committed to living Apostolic Community life. The mission to respond to the most urgent needs of the Church and the world is accomplished through our community life. In living this life, as expressed in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, we are united and energised.

The formation of Oblate missionaries is a life-long process. Initial formation is done by our formation community who prepare candidates to face the challenges of future ministry. For all Oblates, ongoing formation is an important priority.

Whilst respecting our current ministries, we review our priorities, keeping in mind the pressing needs of the people we serve.

Through consultation, shared leadership and appropriate structures, the people, as co-evangelisers, are empowered to take appropriate responsibility for the service of their community. We share our charism with them.

People are searching for an experience of God. We give our priority to the Word of God through the preparation of our homilies and liturgies. To enhance the proclamation of the Word, we avail of the increasingly wide range of modern technology where appropriate. The proclamation of the Word is also made evident in our diverse ministries and in our personal and Community Life.

We share our human and other resources in cooperation with all those who are spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in Australia and overseas. In this endeavour we try to share a vision of the wider Church and the universal call of Christians to be missionary.