



OFFICE OF  
**BISHOP WILLIAM WRIGHT**

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Thursday, 2 November, 2017

To: All staff of the Diocesan Offices, CatholicCare, Catholic Schools Office, Schools and St Nicholas Early Education

Dear Staff,

Many of you may have read the story in yesterday's Newcastle Herald about the Newcastle Christian Library.

The Herald article does not include all the information that we provided in response to queries from the journalist who wrote the article.

For this reason, I would like to provide you with the full details of our response which reads as follows:

First, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is completely committed to carrying out the wishes of Father Kennedy and it is also completely committed to finding a new home for the Resource Centre at St Laurence O'Toole. This centre is currently home to both the Newcastle Christian Library (NCL) and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Resource Centre.

Ahead of the closure of the St Laurence Resource Centre on Friday 27 October, there has been consultation with all relevant stakeholders about finding a new home for both the Newcastle Christian Library (NCL) and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Resource Centre.

This consultation helped inform our proposal - to rehome both the NCL and the CSO Resource Centre at the Parry Street buildings behind the Bishop's Chancery – that was put to and subsequently approved by the NCL trustees.

Second, the CSO is preparing a development application (DA) to redevelop the Parry Street buildings to enable the Newcastle Christian Library and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Resource Centre resources - currently at the St Laurence O'Toole Resource Centre – to be rehomed at these Parry Street buildings. Our aim is to submit this DA to Newcastle City Council as soon as we have completed the plans.

Our application if approved will enable us to provide users of these services with better access – the Parry Street buildings are closer to public transport and there will be improved parking facilities – and also to enable us to bring other bequests, such as book collections from other priests, under one roof.

To this end, we will use one of the buildings for the safe and secure storage of all the resources that currently reside at the Resource Centre at St Laurence O'Toole until such time as the new home is ready.

Depending on how long it takes for Newcastle City Council to approve the development application, our aim is to start construction work in the new year.

If all goes to plan - in terms of the development application and construction plans - the new Resource Centre will be open around Easter 2018. Once opened, this centre will also be a home to the Diocese's team of archivists.

Third, with reference to some of the information with which you have been provided:

- a) Given the above, it is far from accurate to suggest that the future of the Newcastle Christian Library is unclear
- b) It is correct to say the Newcastle Christian Library does not belong to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. That said the partnership between the Catholic Schools Office and the Newcastle Christian Library is such that the two parties have worked together collaboratively since approximately 2010 to make available - to the community at large - the Christian resources accumulated by Father Kennedy. Further, because the Newcastle Christian Library was unable to add much to the existing resources of Father Kennedy, the CSO agreed to allow it to operate jointly at the Broadmeadow Resource Centre.

This allowed the Newcastle Christian Library trustees to sell the real estate owned by the estate of Father Kennedy and to invest the proceeds in interest-bearing deposits which then generated income to allow the library to substantially improve the resources it was able to provide.

Neither the Diocese nor the CSO has any authority over this money or over the interest earned – only the Newcastle Christian Library trust. The Newcastle Christian Library trust is allowed to invest only the income generated on resources for the library such as literature. So it is not the CSO that contributes to the library's collection - it is the interest earned on trust funds.

Given this information, the comment that the CSO has not contributed to the library collection since 2010 is untrue. Furthermore, the CSO does contribute to the running of the library as it pays the librarian's salary. The CSO also contributes to the running of the library by providing financial support to the Newcastle Christian Library by paying for the operating costs of the Resource Centre.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Most Reverend William Wright  
**Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle**

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