

# Statement of Mission Purpose for the Future Governance Entity

## Context

The Future Governance Working Party commenced its task with the development of a *Statement of Mission Purpose for the Future Governance Entity*. The purpose of the statement is to guide the working party's deliberations towards a recommendation to the Institute Leadership Team. If the latter moves to establish a new entity, it is envisaged that the *Statement of Mission Purpose* would guide the several processes required to establish a new canonical and civil entity, including a discernment process to develop a Mission Statement for the new entity.

## Statement of Mission Purpose

Since 1846 ministries in the tradition of Catherine McAuley have brought the "gift of mercy"<sup>1</sup> to our region. During that period the Sisters of Mercy have responded prophetically to the signs of the times "to ensure that God can be Mercy for others",<sup>2</sup> including through the recent establishment of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. Lay collaborators, in responding to their baptismal call to ministry, have been an integral part of realising the Mercy mission.

The Institute's 2017 Chapter envisaged a new era of stewardship of the Institute's incorporated ministries. This statement seeks to articulate the mission purpose of the future governance entity. The mission into the future builds on the rich heritage of the Institute and its predecessors. As the charism, the "gift of mercy", is taken resolutely into the future, it will find new expressions of service in contemporary and future communities in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

In moving forward, we remind ourselves that Mercy-inspired ministries:

- Continue the ministry of Jesus,
- Are works of the Catholic Church,
- Evolve the Mercy tradition of Catherine McAuley,
- Respond to Jesus' call to apostolic service.

Currently, in Australia and Papua New Guinea, the Mercy mission is expressed through the Institute's ministries in:

- Health
- Education
- Aged Care
- Community Services
- Community Development
- Advocacy
- Spirituality

In moving to a new governance model for the incorporated ministries, the Institute entrusts lay canonical leaders with this heritage and empowers them to develop new expressions of the "gift of

---

<sup>1</sup> Mercy International Association website: [www.mercyworld.org/](http://www.mercyworld.org/).

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea website: [institute.mercy.org.au/](http://institute.mercy.org.au/).

mercy". They must ensure, as faithfully as Catherine McAuley and her sisters, that they are attuned to the signs of the times so that Mercy ministries are responsive to need and flourish into the future.

In the new era for Mercy ministries, canonical stewards, directors, executives and management continue to embody the compassion, hospitality, integrity, care, justice, practicality and service which characterise the Mercy heritage; they are contemporary channels of Mercy. Through ongoing formation, they deepen their understanding of "the passion of Catherine McAuley"<sup>3</sup> to serve those at the margins.

Mercy ministries have a commitment to excellence and innovation, to collaborations for the sake of the mission, and to *communio* within, across and beyond the ministries. Leaders of Mercy ministries use their prophetic voice to seek justice within the Church, but also in the wider society to address poverty, exclusion, inequality and vulnerability.

Mercy ministries promote confident, courageous and dynamic leaders ready to go to the margins to respond to the needs of the vulnerable, "to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".<sup>4</sup> Across the ministries, staff will be offered formation opportunities to support them in their roles and potential leaders supported to undertake theology, scripture, ethics and leadership studies, and other professional learning. Importantly, as exemplified by Catherine, the ministries will champion female leadership within the Church and the wider community.

---

<sup>3</sup> Mercy International Association website: [www.mercyworld.org/](http://www.mercyworld.org/).

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis (2015) *Encyclical Letter, Laudato si'*, n.49; accessed at [w2.vatican.va/](http://w2.vatican.va/).