

## This is your newsletter—can you contribute?

We would love to hear what branches have been doing so that we can share with each other.

Just a short summary of Who/What/When/How would be great

[amua.melbournedp@gmail.com](mailto:amua.melbournedp@gmail.com) or [elongford@sme.com.au](mailto:elongford@sme.com.au)

## How do we get MU publications now the shop has closed?

Margaret is still actively displaying wares via the "travelling suitcase" and happy to attend any gatherings and fundraisers with MU goods.

Please contact Margaret Dunbar, and she will organise what you would like: [newsletter@muaustralia.org.au](mailto:newsletter@muaustralia.org.au) (message will be forwarded onto Margaret)

Please let us know if you have any questions to ask next Newsletter - chances are, someone else needs an answer to the same question.

**Do check the Mothers' Union Website regularly** - for the latest news both local and overseas. [mumelbourne.org.au](http://mumelbourne.org.au)  
There is much to encourage us in our thinking about what MU is involved in. On the Australian site — there is the *Thought for the Week*, and you can also access the latest Mia Mia online.

Use all the tools available to help promote and further AMUA. If you didn't receive the latest Prayer Diary - download it from the website. It's the best way to stay up to date with what is happening. Or visit MU Australia website [muaustralia.org.au](http://muaustralia.org.au)

**Please continue to support the Karen Nursery School project.** Our Diocese is the only MU Group supporting this group — they can do so much with so little.



## Melbourne Diocesan Newsletter December 2023

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## From the President

December is upon us! Organising Christmas is in full flight. Our time is divvied up between Church commitments, our family life, and catching up with friends. It's a balance I find a bit of a juggling act all through the year, but especially in these days leading up to Christmas. Above all, my greatest challenge is keeping this time Holy, a time of waiting for the Messiah, amongst all the other demands on my time and concentration.

I do look forward to January, which has always seemed a time of rest. When most commitments are put on hold for a month, and I can catch up with all the things I have been putting off (hopefully!). I am not one for New Year Resolutions, but I do contemplate on what the new year will bring, what I need to commit afresh to, and how I can improve and refocus my direction.

This brings me to my first "port of call" relative to things to do - the President's MU Chair. I thought the most difficult issue would be finding it a new home, but it turns out to be me organising its transfer to its "new home", the Cathedral! I will be focusing on this task, with the help of Kaylene and her son Ian, and will ensure that it is installed in the Ascension Chapel by Lady Day (hopefully long before then).

Talks with Carol O'Connor about an MU presence in St Peter's Eastern Hill Bookshop, and what is required to make it work, have too, been on the "backburner" since our first discussions, but this too, will be a priority for me to put what is required into action, and have it functioning in 2024. It will be good to have a central point for MU wares.

Helen has received many Members' emails from the branches, for which we thank you very much, which is now enabling the sending of correspondence directly, rather than just to the branch contact person/s. I feel it's working quite well, but there are still 'glitches', so, if you are not receiving emails, or know of someone who is not, please contact Helen, by email is best: [office@mumelbourne.org.au](mailto:office@mumelbourne.org.au), or send it to me at [amua.melbournedp@gmail.com](mailto:amua.melbournedp@gmail.com).

I have changed the MU subscription Fee due date to the end of Feb 2024. Why have I moved the due date from the current end of April date? Firstly, because I have learnt that Fees should actually be collected by the end of December, being the end of the year, so we may then send the fees to Australian Council by April. Secondly, because most branches cease meeting in December and January, I felt that to change the Fee due date to December this year would certainly be, I think, pushing the boundaries of what changes are accepted from a new President! **Next year, 2024, I would like to aim for having the fees to be received by December, being the end of the year.**

I encourage you to think about the conversation we had at the October Council meeting, of the grouping of branches – discuss it with each other/other branches. It will not work for all branches/regions, but it may be possible for some, with a designated liaison/contact person. We would welcome this person to join us, either in person or zoom, willing to share feedback/requests/news, with Executive and to enable a broader view of our discussions, and to reach as many members as possible.

Holy Trinity Balaclava invited us to display an "MU Christmas Tree" at their Christmas Tree Festival this year. They also welcomed us to display MU information and brochures, so to this end, I have created a brochure specific to information relative to MU Melbourne Diocese. I will be presenting this at our Exec meeting, as a live document, one that can be updated when necessary, and available to branches for MU promotion within their parishes, and wider community.

Much of our discussions throughout this year have been about how can we encourage new membership in MU. Seven parishioners from my Church have subscribed to MU this year, who are now attached to St Aidan's Parkdale branch. Two new members have become regulars at our Branch meetings, however, the others will not/cannot attend meetings in person, but are totally committed to our MU objectives. The first thing people have said to me when I speak about MU is "I would be a member, but I cannot attend meetings", the simple answer to which is "you don't have to"!

This is why it is important, that when talking with people, we encourage them that being a member is not just about attending meetings. It's about what we do and who we are, that's what they will be supporting/subscribing to, and that they can be a part of MU without attending meetings. There will be opportunities where they will be able to join in MU gatherings, our projects and social justice issues, if they wish.

This is not in any way saying that MU needs to reform/change its current structure, that branches are obsolete or not valued, simply that we need to acknowledge that, for membership to grow, we need to acknowledge that people's situations are different in this current age, that they are often time poor, and fitting another activity/meeting into their already busy lives is not an attractive option for them.

You can contact me on [amua.melbournedp@gmail.com](mailto:amua.melbournedp@gmail.com) to discuss your suggestions/concerns/ideas, or I can give you a call.

Thank you for everyone's support, it has been so open and warm, and I appreciate it so very much. I wish you a wonderful Christmastide, and a safe and healthy New Year.

*Kären Hayden AMUA President, Diocese of Melbourne*

**Sharing Christ's love by encouraging, strengthening and supporting marriage and family life**