



434 St Georges Road (PO Box 1088)  
Thornbury, Vic 3071  
Phone: 9480 3849  
Fax: 9480 2163  
E-mail: [acmvicki@optusnet.com.au](mailto:acmvicki@optusnet.com.au)  
ABN: 68 374 296 945

14<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

## Custodians Gathering: May 16<sup>th</sup> 9:30 – 3:00 at Avila College

Dear Message Stick Custodians and other interested people,

It is nearly two years since the first custodians of Aboriginal Message Sticks were commissioned and there are now well over two hundred message sticks being cared for in churches, schools and other communities around Victoria. It is time for us to gather and celebrate. Time to share our stories of success and our tales of difficulty as custodians (yes, we have heard that it's not always easy), and to extend our use of Aboriginal symbols. We feel it is opportune also to provide future custodians with some idea of custodianship.

So! ACMM and CFAR invite you to join us on Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> 2009 from 9.30am till 3:00pm, at Avila College (35 Charles St. Mount Waverley, VIC 3149 Melways 70F1, easy access via Eastlink or Monash Freeway, 200m walk from Mt Waverley Station). Light lunch is provided (let us know of any relevant allergy needs). The cost of the day is \$15 per head to cover cost of food & materials (pay on the day). **RSVP by 8<sup>th</sup> May.**

This will be an experiential and interactive day during which we will unpack what it means to be custodian of an Aboriginal Message Stick. Our keynote speaker will be Bishop Christopher Prowse, who has responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in the Melbourne Archdiocese. He will speak about the importance of bringing Aboriginal perspectives into our lives and liturgies and of knowing how to do this effectively. To show what is possible some examples of successful liturgical use will be discussed. Then, the core of the day will be spent in small groups sharing what has and hasn't worked, where the difficulties and delights lie and then discussing this among the whole group.

We look forward to seeing you there on this day when you will be able to talk about protocols, fears, difficulties, reactions from your community and so on. It should be a day of great joy as we continue to implement what Pope John Paul II asked of us when he said:

*"You (the Aboriginal People) are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others. .... Above all you are called to open your hearts ever more to the consoling, purifying and uplifting message of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died so that we might all have life, and have it to the full (cf. Jn10;10)*

Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs, 29<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1986 (Concluding section)

Yours sincerely,

Vicki Walker  
Coordinator  
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne

Charles Balnaves and Sherry Balcombe  
Co-chairs, Catholics for Australian Reconciliation  
(A working group of ACMM)

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**RSVP by 8<sup>th</sup> May: Fax: (03) 9480 2163 or Email: [cfar@passiton.org.au](mailto:cfar@passiton.org.au)  
"Attn. Chrystabel"**

Community Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number coming: \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of those coming: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you custodians of a Message Stick Already? Yes / No

We are interested in becoming custodians of a Message Stick. Yes / No