



# Summary of NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JULY 2023

National Council met on 8 July 2023 via videoconference. Below is a summary of matters discussed.

## Congress 2023+

National Council received an update on Congress 2023+ and were advised that registration information had been sent out to each State and Territory, with SA and National Council due to receive information on 4 July 2023. The National Council were urged to encourage all delegates to register and book their travel as soon as possible to assist in keeping costs to a minimum.

They were notified that the first **Congress 2023+** workbook had been created and was to be circulated early in the week commencing 11 July 2023.

Further, Listening Forums have been established as part of the pre-Congress activities. The Forums are another way for all Society representatives to engage with the Congress process and to share their insights. The Listening Forum dates have been set for:

- **Tuesday 29 August, 10:00** (AEST)
- **Saturday 2 September, 15:00** (AEST)
- **Wednesday 6 September, 12:00** (AEST)
- **Thursday 7 September, 19:00** (AEST)

The National Council Members were encouraged to register themselves in these forums and to ensure that communications go out to their Members with advice that the Forums are open to all not just conference delegates.

## Strategic Plan 2023-27

National Council considered a final draft of the **Strategic Plan 2023-27**. The Strategic Plan will include a preamble that sets out the environment in which National Council's Strategic Plan will be implemented. It will make clear that National Council works in solidarity with State and Territory Councils to facilitate and support the work of members and local Conferences and will acknowledge that on matters of national importance to the Society National Council is the competent authority to make decisions.

It was agreed there would be five core pillars as follows:

1. Vincentian Spirituality
2. Our People
3. Good Works
4. Leadership, Governance and Sustainability
5. Advocacy.

Each pillar has a visionary statement and a number of deliverable objectives. Outcomes will be reported on a six-monthly basis.

National Council is working towards publishing its next Strategic Plan by mid-August 2023. We are indebted to Mr Chris Smith from Hobart for his professional facilitation of the preparation behind the strategic plan and for the significant generosity he brought to this task.

## The Rule Part III

National Council agreed to the next steps to move forward with the **review of *The Rule Part III***. A new small working group has been established to assist review Articles 14, 15 and 16.

It was noted that these particular proposed amended Articles were drafted for the purpose of clarifying the authority of higher councils including trying to make it clearer what the role of National Council is whilst articulating some boundaries that would establish transparency to subsidiary councils.

It was also recognised that these particular Articles seek to codify the role of National Council and reflect the reality that since the 2012 edition of *The Rule* was published, the Society in Australia has found itself operating in a very different regulatory environment with particular challenges coming from the establishment of companies limited by guarantee which interact with *The Rule*.

The deliberations of this working group will be forwarded to the Rule Review Committee in the coming weeks for its further consideration.

## SVdP Oceania Partnership Program

A governance framework that involves all the National Councils from Oceania, CGI personnel, our own Overseas Partnership Program and our State and Territory Councils was explored and signed off.

The National Council Secretariate was asked to start dialogue with the State and Territory Councils entering into new twinning arrangements with overseas Councils about how we proceed together.

This is a truly exciting new chapter in Australia's history of overseas twinning! It attracted attention from other National Councils at the recent International General Council meeting held in Rome.

## New Indigenous artwork



This striking image was commissioned by the Society was painted by Budda Connors, a Ngunnawal artist from the Canberra region, who explains the meaning of the artwork as follows:

- The Centre piece represents a meeting place for all six states and the two territories where the Society's members and services work.
- The three big white circles with the coolamons represent the three cups (vessels) the hand of Christ blesses the cup; the hand of love offers the cup; and the hand of suffering receives the cup.
- The seven light blue circles represent our seven key values.
- The handprints represent strength, unity and belonging.
- All the small white dots represent the healing that is circulated throughout our country.
- The small blue dots represent the people.

The Society's logo featuring three hands around a cup was created by well-known Australian sculptor the late Tom Bass, who was a member of Ingleburn Conference, and a graphic artist friend. The design was adopted in 1976 by the National Council to represent the Society Australia-wide.

**Mark Gaetani**  
National President