

Spiritual Care Australia launched in NSW



Comrades in Arms:

Catherine Dawe (left) Leeton
(Area Liaison Chaplain Western Sector)
Barbara Hall (right) Goulburn
(Area Liaison Chaplain Eastern Sector)

Barbara Hall, GSAHS Coordinator Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care Service (Goulburn) reports on the launch of Spiritual Care Australia, an historic event that has very positive implications for Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care in GSAHS. Significantly, Barbara adds, it coincides with the soon to be signed off Spiritual/Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure for GSAHS.

The conference and launch was organised from across the State of NSW reaching from Leeton and Wagga in the west, to the Far South Coast (Tilba Tilba), through Goulburn, Sydney and up north to Newcastle. Barbara was involved as the Registrar for the Conference and says that she was delighted to meet so many people from different faith groups who were enthusiastic about coming together to share a common purpose - the spiritual care of others.



Spiritual Care Australia

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Spiritual Care Australia has been established to oversee the growing interest in interfaith (sometimes called multifait) chaplaincy and pastoral care across the whole community, including health, corrective services, education, armed services, welfare, emergency services, industry and sport.

religious traditions. Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, even Humanist chaplains are united within **Spiritual Care Australia** through their common commitment to care for others emotionally and spiritually through sensitive listening and awareness of people's inner life and resources."

Spiritual Care Australia had its national launch in Melbourne last February and its **NSW launch** at Parliament House in Sydney on 21 June. Tony Kelly, Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Lands, representing the Premier, Kristina Keneally, launched Spiritual Care Australia in New South Wales. The day was hosted by Adrian Piccoli, Member for Murrumbidgee. The NSW Government is a major sponsor of chaplaincy and pastoral care in the State through the **Civil Chaplaincies Advisory Committee**.

The centrality of spirituality in life was highlighted by the keynote speaker, the

Revd Dr Stephanie Dowrick, herself an ordained interfaith minister and author of many best-seller books. Dr Dowrick offered her heartfelt congratulations to all those who had made **Spiritual Care Australia** possible and noted the courage such a venture involved, not only in bringing different traditions to work together in a common cause, but in recognising that much of this work is now needing to be conducted amongst people with little or no formal spiritual tradition. The old assumptions and presuppositions that once guided this work no longer necessarily apply.

"It's an exciting day. This initiative of the NSW Continuing Committee was brilliant! The energy in the room; to see the breadth of chaplaincy and the people working in the area of spiritual care, in both a paid and voluntary capacity, was amazing! The program was brilliant and the ability to get politicians and practitioners and others together has been outstanding."

A crowd of some 160 people packed the beautiful Strangers' Lounge, Dining Room overlooking the Domain to hear of the work of chaplaincy and pastoral care in institutions and communities throughout the State. In her address Rev Cheryl Holmes, President of Spiritual Care Australia said, "That this work has reached a point where chaplains and pastoral carers from all religious traditions and none can work within the same professional organisation under the same standards and code of ethics was rightly heralded as a great triumph, paving the way for other cooperative ventures between reli-

Members of the SCA NSW Continuing Committee who organised the Conference and Launch:

Back row: **Leo Tucker** (Pastoral Care Manager, St Vincents Hospital Sydney); **Catherine Dawe** (Pastoral Care Co-ordinator Leeton District Hospital); **Dexter Duncan** (Muslim Chaplain Sydney) **Jeffrey Cohen**, (Jewish Rabbi Sydney) **Mary Ringstad** (Pastoral Care Co-ordinator Mater Newcastle)
Front row: **Jenny Washington** (Pastoral Educator St Vincent's Hospital Sydney) **Barbara Hall** (Co-ordinator Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care, Goulburn Health Service) **Jeannie Smith** (Pastoral Care Co-ordinator Blacktown Hospital Sydney) **Peter Oliver** (Uniting Church Chaplain Newcastle)
Absent: **David Oliphant** (Pastoral Educator Far South Coast) **Fiona Brown** (Buddhist Chaplain Goulburn) **Leonie White** (Pastoral Care Co-ordinator Wagga Wagga Base Hospital)

