

Centre for Spirituality of Care and Community

Annual Report for year ending 31 December 2020 for the Second Annual General Meeting Sunday 30 May 2021

2020 was one of the most challenging years for the world since the end of the Second World War 75 years ago. Unlike wars, the COVID pandemic happened so suddenly. Within a few months, we were experiencing situations that most of us who were born after the War had not encountered before, restrictions, lockdowns and economic stress. We had to adapt in order to continue with life and work.

The work to develop the Centre for Spirituality of Care and Community continued with its committee meeting monthly, usually on a Sunday afternoon online through Zoom. Looking back, it was a remarkable effort, especially through those four months of lockdown over the winter months. For many of us, it was a rare opportunity to catch up a little, socially. We did get a lot done through those most difficult of circumstances.

We held a successful AGM online through Zoom during October, with more than thirty in attendance. The formal business proceeded quickly and smoothly. All members of the committee were returned to their positions and we warmly welcomed Shirley Nash as a new committee member. While Shirley could join the committee as a Foundation member in her own right, she will act as a representative of the Association for Supervised and Clinical Pastoral Education of Victoria (ASACPEV). Our other organisational Foundational member, Australian and New Zealand Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ANZACPE) was represented by Stephen Delbridge, and we hope that they too will have a representative on the committee soon.

There was a lively discussion on the future development of CSCC and the vision for a range of seminars and discussion groups beyond the Roy Bradley Oration was supported by all present. We were informed at the AGM by Andy Calder of the possibility of contributing to National Disability Strategy. I am pleased that we were able to respond quickly to this opportunity. We were surprised how well everyone adapted to the online meeting and this gave some encouragement for the prospect of conducting the Oration online.

We were most honoured and grateful for the Rev. Tim Costello to accept our invitation to deliver the second Roy Bradley Annual Oration 2020 on 'Leadership in Times of Personal Risk'. Tim set us all at ease with his usual warm and friendly manner as he proceeded to elaborate on the close friendship between his parents and Roy and Margaret Bradley since their youth. In so doing, he set the scene for one of his core messages for this challenging time: the importance of relationships, and community. Indeed, the pandemic is confronting us with the need to look beyond ourselves for the greater good of all. The other key message that stayed with me was on the need for self-sacrifice. He highlighted how many young people did adhere to the strict lockdowns and sacrificed their freedom to protect the older people while knowing that they themselves are the least affected. Tim suggested a spirituality of care that embraced self-sacrifice. While self-sacrifice was quite apparent when we looked at the frontline workers who have faced the risk of exposure to the virus, I was

left pondering on what it might mean in terms of the spiritual experience of caring and life as a community.

Perhaps, we could have a small group discussion on this topic.

Helen Austin, a member of the committee, has been working hard over the past year in gathering a few experts in Age Care to contribute to a seminar of the Spirituality of Aging that was to be held in February. Unfortunately, this interactive workshop had to be postponed due to the reintroduction of COVID restrictions. We believe that this is an important issue, especially in light of the recent Royal Commission into the Age Care sector. We have postponed this important seminar to later in 2021.

Our mind is now turning to the next AGM to be held on May 30th, which might sound somewhat soon as the last AGM was only six months ago. The 2020 AGM was an anomaly, delayed because of the pandemic. The timing of forthcoming 2021 AGM is in accordance with the requirements of the Association Act.

Looking forward, we will continue to grow the organisation. As 2020 came to a close, we had begun the process of creating a logo and building a new website with the aim of creating a stronger online presence. We have learnt from this year of the pandemic how we can create useful virtual spaces for people to come together to support each other and to share ideas.

We can see the numerous possibilities ahead, including how we can create opportunities for discussions on the spirituality of care and community in range of settings such as schools, aged care and disability care. We are, however, still a small organisation limited by our resources. At the end of 2020, we have 23 Foundation Members and 20 Friends or Associate members. We have over 150 people on our mailing list. We encourage all our Foundation Members and Friends to introduce others to the activities and events of CSCC and, perhaps some of them will join the organisation.

Eugen Koh
Chair, on behalf of the Committee