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 Auxiliary Bishop of Perth
 

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7 June 2018

Dear Fathers and Parishioners

Catholic Churches across Australia celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on the first weekend of July each year, usually coinciding with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day of Action (NAIDOC) Week activities across the nation (8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of July).

This year's NAIDOC theme is *Because of Her, We Can*. Women form the backbone of many communities across Australia. This is particularly true for Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministries. Women are at the forefront of these community driven organizations designed to meet the spiritual and physical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics. As a Catholic community, Mary has a special place within our hearts and I hope that this Aboriginal Sunday we can pray for the mothers in all our communities especially Aboriginal women.

For our Catholic Community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday is a day for us to acknowledge the stewardship that Aboriginal people have had for this land for thousands of years. It is also an opportunity to celebrate their contribution to the life of our Church and community, as well as reflect on our relationship with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, praying for the ongoing flourishing of their culture and our reconciliation as one people in Christ.

Last year it was wonderful to hear about many Parishes celebrating Aboriginal Sunday for the first time and I look forward to hearing about more Parishes in 2018. This year I strongly encourage Parishes to celebrate NAIDOC Week and Aboriginal Sunday by:

- taking the time to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday NATISCC & Perth Resources kit on Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Inside this resource is a variety of suggestions of how to acknowledge this Sunday within your celebrations.
- considering purchasing a Message Stick & plaque that acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people somewhere prominent within the Church grounds, if you have not already done so.
- using the 'Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country', which is included with this letter, at Masses held during NAIDOC week. This takes place before Mass begins and can be continued at Masses in the future when appropriate.
- attending a local NAIDOC Week event as a Parish community to learn more about the Aboriginal people and culture of your local area.
- attending the NAIDOC Week Mass at St Mary's Cathedral on Sunday the 22nd of July at 4.45pm.

In this Archdiocese, we are blessed to have the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM) working on behalf of the Catholic Church of Perth within the Aboriginal community and the broader Catholic community to bring the words of St John Paul II to life.

*'The Church here in Australia will not be the Church Jesus calls her to be until you have made your contribution and it has been joyfully received by others.'*

If you would like any assistance in any of the above aspects, please contact the Ministry.

I look forward to seeing and hearing about how Parishes across Perth celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday in 2018.

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Don Sproxton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Rev Donald Sproxton VG  
Auxiliary Bishop