

## From the National Chair

The  
universe  
is a  
communion  
of subjects,  
not a  
collection  
of objects.

Thomas Berry



In March last year I was studying in Chicago. Spring was on its way. Buds were sprouting from beneath the melting snow. I was so looking forward to Easter in the northern hemisphere where it seems to make sense. However, due to the global pandemic, I returned to Australia before then.

Spring is upon us now. There are so many signs in life that remind us to give thanks. In my every day life, sometimes I forget to look and to trust in the kindness of God and the reminder comes through Psalm 52, on the first day of Spring.

*“I trust in the kindness of God forever”.*

We move around noticing the ways in which God is showing us kindness – in the gesture of a friend, in the phone call from a family member, in the peace after a time of meditation or prayer – the budding forth of the blossoms are all around us.

It is a time of change for CSD Australia too. We thank Katherine Blyth for her service as Secretary since February 2020. She finished in her role in August 2021.

With every blessing,

Rita Malavisi

National Chair

CSD Australia

Daffodil photo taken by Rita during one of her “photography as a spiritual practice” sessions.

# CSD Australia News: Membership

## Renewals Update

- Congratulations to all members who responded with the renewal of their memberships. We've had a more than 90% renewal rate which is great.
- The membership renewal period closed at the end of August with only two members being deleted due to a lack of response.
- Others responded to say they have moved into other fields of ministry or are no longer practicing spiritual direction for various reasons.
- Five long term members who have recently retired are now honorary members.

## Member Benefits

### New Information on the Renewal Declaration Form

About 60% of those who paid their membership renewal have so far returned the Renewal Declaration Form. The information provided on the **front** on this form is important following our transition to the new website and a new data storage method.



**NEW Find a Director listing:** This is a feature on the **new** website so information given in the past needs to be confirmed and updated.

This is a listing available for the public to use to find a director, or for us to use to help find a director for someone else, and a resource to point others to. I recently used it to successfully help find a director for an interstate friend.

About 70% of members who have responded have chosen to be included in this listing. View the listing at <https://csdaustralia.com/find-a-director/>



**FUTURE Supervisors listing:** We hope to create a similar listing on the website for Supervisors as we currently have for Directors. Through this form we are gathering information about which of our members are supervisors and details of their accreditation.

This is a service for spiritual directors, including our members, who are seeking a supervisor. In this way we are also promoting the work of our members who are supervisors.



**Group Insurance Policy:** This section is asking whether you are interested in joining the group policy which CSD Australia has for Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. This is an option available to members who may not be covered by another policy.

The current policy expires on 31st October. Those who are interested will be invited to renew or join the new policy. Details will be sent early in October once I receive the information from the insurance company.

## REQUEST

If you have not yet done so please return the **Member Renewal Declaration Form** during the month of September. If you choose to be included in the **Find a Director** listing, please ensure you provide the information noted on the form: **LOCALITY** within your state, **MODE** by which you are available (in person or on-line or both), and a **PHOTO** of yourself suitable to be cropped into a square. If you'd prefer not to have a photo please let me know and I can add the CSD logo instead.

Please contact Bernadette, the Treasurer, with any queries at [treasurer@csdaustralia.com](mailto:treasurer@csdaustralia.com)

# CSD Australia News: Collaboration and Support

## Chair Chats

To capture the giftedness of members, Rita Malavisi offered a number of online small group *Chair Chats* in August. These provide an opportunity to meet members and develop an understanding of how we may collaborate in supporting each other in our ministries, and how members can support the work of CSD Australia. Rita asked members to “Have a think about what you would like CSD Australia to do, be, dream, and how you can participate.” The questions below came out of these chats.

More *Chair Chats* will be organised soon. Keep an eye on your email for details of times and dates.

## Questions to consider

Are there ways you can support other members, especially our newer members, in the ministry of spiritual direction? Here are a few questions to consider:

- If you are not taking on new directees do you refer new enquirers to another member?
- When you retire how do you support your existing directees to find a new director?
- How do you find new directees? Any tips for our new members?

**Is anyone interested in forming a new peer supervision group?**

Please contact Rita [chair@csdaustralia.com](mailto:chair@csdaustralia.com) who will put you in touch with interested others.

## Honorary Members

Long term members of CSD Australia who have retired from the ministry of Spiritual Direction but would like to keep in touch have the option to become Honorary Members. They receive email correspondence and are invited to make an annual donation at the time of membership renewals.

### New Honorary Members since July 2021

Sr Catherine Heffernan QLD; Revd Ann Watson NSW; Sr Patricia Naughton NSW;

Sr Bernadette Gauthier VIC; Mrs Sue Hyslop TAS

We thank these members for their contribution to the ministry of Spiritual Direction and to CSD Australia. They were invited to write a brief reflection on their ministry. Below is Patricia Naughton's contribution.



*My time as prayer companion extends over many enriched and grace-filled years on the retreat team at St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre (Douglas Park). I was also privileged to walk with people, on their faith journey to God, in our home here in Sydney.*

*It is difficult for me to discontinue this ministry but the Holy Spirit has prompted me to acknowledge it is now time for me to “let go” – after “preaching” letting go for so many years!!*

*Every ongoing blessing for CSD. Patricia Naughton S.Sp.S.*

## Newsletter contributions

All members are invited to send in contributions to the bimonthly newsletter. This may be some personal news to do with your ministry, a reflection on an experience or something you read, a short commentary on an article you'd recommend for others, other possibilities you may imagine!

The next issue will be sent in early November so please send your contribution by Friday 15 October.

# CSD Australia Professional Development

Save the dates for monthly professional development sessions via zoom September to December 2021

You are welcome to join all or any of the monthly sessions planned for 2021. There is no need for members to book and no cost. A zoom link will be sent to all members in the preceding week.

Non members are welcome to join and book through the trybooking link for each session. Cost is \$20 per session for non members. <https://www.trybooking.com/BTTQJ> They will be sent a zoom link upon booking.

## Images, Storytelling and Spiritual Direction

Saturday 18 September 9.30am till 11.00am *with Peter Malone*



We know that storytelling is key to our experience of spiritual directing and direction. Those in direction sometimes reference books and stories they have read or draw on writings of spirituality authors in the process of *Lectio Divina*. But reading is a diminishing activity these days. Images on screen and streaming have gained significant influence. References can be made to films and television, social media. There is also a place for “spiritual watching”, “Visio Divina” as part of our ministry.

## Spiritual Accompaniment Among the Fringes

Saturday 16 October 9.30am till 11.00am *with Elizabeth Lee*



Elizabeth Lee has a passion for fostering human connection through deep listening and for being a listening presence among the fringes.

Liz has a diverse professional background. In recent times she has had the privilege of offering pastoral care among those living with homelessness. She will share with us some of her experience and learning along the way.

Liz is a Spiritual Director/Pastoral Supervisor and a member of CSD Australia.

## In conversation with Charrisa Suli – President Elect, Uniting Church, Australia

Thursday 18 November 5.00pm till 6.30pm



Charrisa Suli is the youngest person ever elected and the first person of colour to serve as President-elect, and the second ordained woman. She is second generation Tongan Australian. In her response to the announcement Charissa said: “This is the Uniting Church I have come to know that has given me the space to grow and be challenged, the opportunity to try new things, to call me into mission and to exercise my discipleship and affirm my gifts as a leader, even if I looked different or did things that were different from the status quo.”

## Advent Prayer

Wednesday 8 December 7.00pm till 8.30pm *with Carole Carmody*



Carole Carmody will lead us in a time of prayer and reflection at the beginning of the season of Advent.

Carole is a supervisor at Heart of Life. She is Sister of Mercy with a passion for the contemplative approach to spiritual direction, prayer, formative processes and retreats. She’s also a member of CSD Australia.

Please join us for this pre-Christmas event, that last one for 2021.

## Profile of a Member

### Madeleine Barlow RNDM



I am a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions – and feel that I have been working in the area of Spirituality almost all my life – a long time. I started ministry as a primary school teacher but was soon called to the ministry of Formation in my Congregation. After gaining a Masters in Formative Leadership at the Institute of Formative Spirituality, Pittsburgh, USA, I took up Novitiate work for our young Sisters from Samoa, New Zealand (included Maori women) and Australia. Working across cultures has always had a special attraction for me – a consequence of belonging to an international missionary group of Sisters.

Parish ministry and Spiritual Direction gradually became my main focus of ministry. Completing studies in Theology in the 1990s I joined with two MSC priests offering adult faith formation and parish missions across many parishes. I lived in West Sunshine and was privileged to work in pastoral ministry among immigrant women – an extremely rewarding experience that greatly enriched me even more than I was able to be for those courageous women. However, I soon learnt that I needed to develop qualifications in Counselling as well as Spirituality to fully meet their needs. I studied with the Gestalt Institute gaining a Graduate Diploma in Social Sciences (Gestalt Counselling) and then finally after several years I completed a Master of Arts by Supervision in Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy.

I love working alongside people who search for the energetic Spirit of God in their lives and finding their way to flourish.

Currently I work part time in a supportive role in the Mission and Ministry team of a Catholic Secondary College in Melbourne and part time in Spiritual Direction.

**Favourite scripture:** The story of the young Mary visiting her cousin, Elizabeth: a special time of two women supporting each other in difficult but wonderful faith filled times.

**Favourite book:** I just read it recently and it is thought provoking: *Bila Yarrudhanggalngdhuray* by Anita Heiss. This Indigenous title is translated to mean River of Dreams. It is a fictional story based on historical

fact about Indigenous life around the Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai in 1870s. The story is told from the Indigenous point of view and local language is scattered throughout the book. There is a helpful glossary at the back of the book.

**Favourite movie:** *The Sting* – an old movie that I saw years ago with my dad not long before he died. We laughed so much together!

**A memorable moment:** A mother loon carrying her young chick – seen during a quiet moment on retreat.



## Tribute

### Brother Peter Francis COE cfc



Passed away peacefully,  
20th August 2021.  
Aged 71 years.



#### Vale Br Peter Coe cfc

Peter Coe, Christian Brother, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in mid-August. A resident of the Clayfield community in Brisbane, he had been on his weekly visit to the Archer Mountain Community, near Woodford, Queensland when, during the night, Peter suffered a fatal medical event and was found dead mid-morning the next day.

Peter had worked in various Christian Brother schools in NSW and Queensland from the early 1970s to the 2000s. He was also in the Tiwi Islands in the 1990s and spent time in Timor Leste (2012 - 2018). Peter was a very practical man who could turn his hand to most manual tasks which proved invaluable in the missionary ministries. Peter became adept with computer technology and was sought by many to assist with installing or setting up programs, usually a lot of troubleshooting.

As regards CSD, Peter was called on to develop the first CSD website and invited back to tweak the system when needed. He loved helping people and enjoyed assisting those flustered by technology. He gave up this role with CSD when he moved to Timor Leste.

Peter was a slow talking, tall man with a large frame who had simple tastes and liked plain talking and being with others socially. Peter's sudden death has left many of his fellow Christian Brothers, family and friends dismayed. However, while smoking his pipe, Peter with his practical nature, would find a way to put those present at ease and remember the many wonderful experiences that he has been part of throughout his very productive and full life.

May the God of generosity recognise the generosity of Peter and welcome him home with outstretched arms.

Tim Moloney cfc

## Book Reviews

### Phosphorescence by Julia Baird

*Winner of the Australian Book Industry BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD 2021*

Reviewed by Clare Shearman, Spiritual Director and Manager of *The Cliffs Retreat* in Shoreham, Victoria.

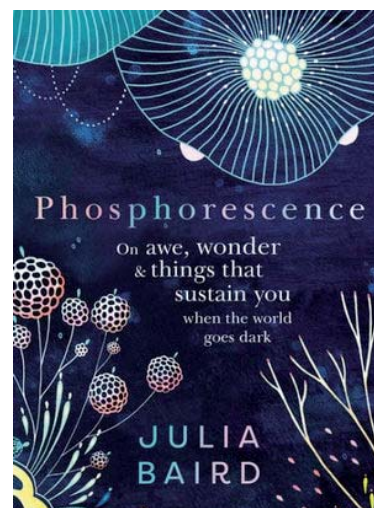
The regard with which I hold this book is evidenced by the fact that I bought four copies for me and seven copies for friends. I loved the book so much that I wrote to Julia to see if she would come and run a quiet day here at *The Cliffs*. She was too busy to come but replied personally to my request – I was delighted.

Her book speaks to a very human journey. Julia has a Christian background and the book was written between two bouts of cancer. It charts her search for “awe, wonder and things that sustain you when the world goes dark.”

Increasingly I listen to spiritual seekers who find it hard to connect with a traditional church centric journey of faith. The book offers reflections and suggestions, pointing the reader to alternative ways of accessing the divine. Ultimately it is a book about love. Appropriate for people of all faiths and none, this is a must read for all spiritual directors.

Buy a few copies because you will always want to have it on your bookshelf and you will often feel the call to give it away.

Published by HarperCollins Australia (2019) Best price \$24.50



### Songs from my Soul: Wisdom and Spirituality in the Great Sandy Desert

*A book of verse by a Townsville Sister of Mercy*

#### Marie Leonie Williams RSM

Reviewed by Margie Abbott RSM

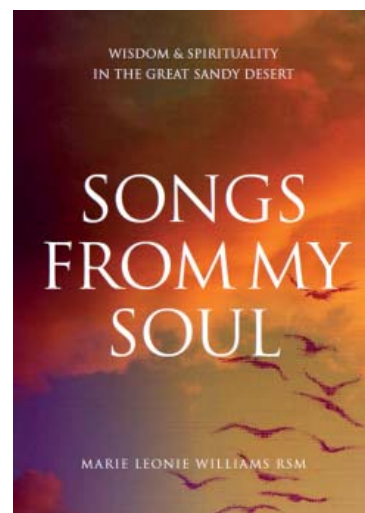
Deep inside each of us and every part of the universe is the living well of Divinity. Poetry is one way to open ourselves to this incredible fact. This poetry book gives us a glimpse of what it means to be born of the land, to live on the land and to know that land is part of us and we are part of land.

These poems help us to contemplate the connection that we have with all that is. So often in *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis reminds us to listen to nature “for the believer to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a silent voice. There is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night.” (LS 85)

Whenever I open Marie’s book I experience my soul singing with her. I cannot recommend this book for spiritual director’s highly enough.

Published by Coventry Press, Melbourne, in 2020. Available to buy on-line, or order a copy from the St Vincent de Paul Book and Gift Shop in Townsville NQ. Cost \$24 including postage.

*Marie Williams is an honorary member of CSD Australia, having retired from active ministry as a spiritual director. She currently ministers part-time offering retreat days at the Townsville House of Prayer.*



# AECSD News

## Communion in Diversity Gathering

The AECSD gathering was held in July with around 130 participants. A good number of CSD Australia members were present for the gathering “Communion in Diversity”.

Many enjoyed the conversation between the foundation members of the Council on the first evening of the gathering.

It was a gathering of spiritual directors from all the Associations in Australia, as well as others who joined from parts of Asia.

The time during the gathering for contemplative spaces were critical, after the many input sessions.



*Original art by Farshad Sanaee entitled 'The Guardian'*

Margaret Wiseman writes about the Gathering:

I am grateful that I have received the grace of graces, through each speaker, of being grounded and rooted in my awareness of Communion in Diversity connecting my ministry from inside prison to outside.

I work with women who are marginalised, broken, have mental illness issues, people of all different faiths. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jewish people, atheists, agnostics or none. Transgender from male to female, same sex relationship – all on the inside.

I crossed a threshold this weekend from inside to outside and received a gift from each speaker connecting me to their ministry and not feeling alone. We are not in the same boat but we are in the same storm. I was moved by the line in Marlene Marburg’s poem “Stop theologising – Love God.”

I am grateful for my formation as a Spiritual Director fostering contemplative listening.

Recordings of the gathering are available for a nominal fee. Email: [info@spiritualdirection.org.au](mailto:info@spiritualdirection.org.au)

## Call for Nominations for New Council Members for AECSD

The Council is seeking to discern four new members from the spiritual direction community to join the Council for a four-year term, commencing February 2022.

Are you, or is someone you know:

- Involved in the practice of Spiritual Direction?
- Committed to contemplative discernment?
- Feeling a call to be involved in shaping the future of the Spiritual Direction community in Australia.



For more detailed information on what is involved and how to nominate, go to the AECSD website <https://spiritualdirection.org.au/>, or alternatively, contact Rita.

Nominations need to be returned by 8 October 2021. The Council will then discern the new members of the Council at its Council meeting on October 25-26, 2021.



# AECSD News

## Leaders of Spiritual Direction Networks

Every eight weeks, the leaders of the various Spiritual Direction Associations meet together online. One of the main purposes of gathering together is to enable a wider and deeper perspective of the Spiritual Direction community throughout Australia. These leaders are:

Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD)  
Maria McCormack (current President)

Australian Network for Spiritual Direction (ANSD)  
Beth Robertson (current National Chair)

Companions in the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (CMISE)  
Mary McInerney (outgoing Chair)

Conference of Spiritual Directors Australia (CSD)  
Rita Malavisi (National Chair)

George Warren who is a former president of AECSD also is part of this group, and his main task is to carry forward the initiative and ongoing work of the funding provided from the Patrick and Anthony Wright Formation and Education Fund (PAWFED) to explore a National Register of Spiritual Directors, Supervision and the Unity in Diversity of the Spiritual Direction Community.



### Working Group

With the suggestions from the Leaders of Spiritual Direction Networks, George has gathered together a working group from representatives from the Networks.

Brianne Falconieri has kindly agreed to be the representative for CSD Australia. Brianne is the current co-ordinator of the House of Prayer in Townsville. We thank Brianne for her acceptance of this commitment for the wider Spiritual Direction community throughout Australia.

The first communication from the working group to the Networks follows:

### *Discerning through Dialogue*

As Spiritual Directors we are called to be present to God in every place and person. We are listeners, open to hear the gentle invitation to embrace an unknown future with trusting hearts.

A Working Group, responsible to the National Associations will be facilitating a series of Contemplative Dialogues in early 2022. We will be engaging spiritual directors in a discernment process to explore two significant matters for the future of our practice.

The first is the possibility of establishing a National Register of Spiritual Directors and the second is continuing the discernment about what Community in Diversity means for spiritual direction formation and practice.

We encourage you to stay in touch with your association and look out for opportunities to be actively engaged in these important discernment dialogues.

Engaging in contemplative dialogues will be a wonderful way to be involved and to be actively engaged in the wider spiritual direction network in Australia. If you are experienced in facilitating contemplative dialogues, please let Rita know.

## Other News

### University of Divinity – Seeking Supervisees

The University of Divinity's Professional Supervision Program is offering an opportunity to members of the University's alumni network who wish to participate as supervisees.

Are you interested in being professionally supervised? On zoom, at a time that suits you, and free of charge? To express interest or for more information please email: [asmith@divinity.edu.au](mailto:asmith@divinity.edu.au) Amanda Smith, Professional Supervision Program Committee.



### Australian Network for Spiritual Direction (ANSD) Symposium

#### What's Rising? Current issues in our practice of Spiritual Direction September 17-19, 2021

Online registrations are open now. Click the link below to register.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ansd-symposium-2021-whats-rising-online-event-tickets-159038230629> Cost \$110 plus booking fee.

There will be nine presentations sharing the experience of their spiritual direction practice and what is rising for them. Presenters: Pamela Richardson and Denise Stephenson, Di Shearer, Lucy Tierney, Barry Donaghue, Penny Jones, Cath Connelly, Lisa Coles, Cathie Lambert, Rachael Litchfield.



### WellSpringCentre: Professional Development

#### Mental Health First Aid in a Spiritual Direction Setting

(Relevant for non-spiritual directors also!)

Date: Tuesday 23 AND Tuesday 30 November, 9am to 5pm (Rescheduled)

Facilitator: Marcel Koper

Location: WellSpring Centre, 10 Y Street Ashburton (in person only)

This two-day workshop is adapted for spiritual directors from the Mental Health First Aid Course. Participants will gain an understanding of mental health conditions and how to identify them in a spiritual direction setting, and learn how to assist without providing direct care for the person. Special cost: \$205 for two days, including a comprehensive manual.

If COVID restrictions mean we can't meet in person the workshop will be moved to 2022.

People can book through this link <https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au/book-pay/2021-general-bookings/>



### Heart of Life: Emmaus Supervision Training Program

The Emmaus Supervision Program has been developed in response to demand for professional supervisors for those in individual ministry – clergy, Religious Sisters and Brothers, chaplains, spiritual directors, spiritual health workers, pastoral carers etc. It is a program for the formation of competent, experienced professional supervisors.

Emmaus is studied part-time over eighteen months. It can be studied in-person or via Zoom. The program comprises of a number of four-day intensives (in the Victorian school holidays), and 2 x 14-week seminars, followed by monthly gatherings to continue supervision input and practice.

The program begins in February 2022 and concludes in June 2023. Applications close on 30 November 2021. More information available on the Heart of Life website.

