

CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

Newsletter September 2026

From the National Chair

Renewal

Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of connecting with each of you through the rhythm of membership renewal. While attending to finances is, in truth, one of my less loved tasks. I have come to cherish the quiet connections it makes possible: a simple hello, a reply received, a brief moment of checking in.

There is something unexpectedly sacred in these small exchanges. Each one feels a little like a gentle turning towards the light: a reminder that beneath the visible structures of our organisation is a living community. We are not held together simply by membership, professional development, meetings or calendars, but by the attention we offer to one another, the willingness to pause, to notice, and to say, "I am here."

At the same time, I have been seeking speakers and shaping plans for next year's professional development gatherings. I look forward to sharing dates with you soon and to welcoming voices with lived experience of spiritual direction. My hope is that these voices will open fresh windows onto our practice and invite us again into the deep listening at its heart.



There is always a measure of uncertainty in this planning process. Yet again and again, something more than we could have planned seems to arise. A word that lands at the right moment, a shared silence, an experience named by one person that gives language to another. These are small signs of renewal.

This season has left me with a deepened sense of the giving and receiving that sustains us. Each of us brings something: our presence, our questions, our wisdom, our weariness, our longing. Together, these gifts form something more vivid and life-giving than any of us could create alone.

Renewal is not always dramatic. Sometimes it is as quiet as a returned message, as steady as the work of preparing a place at the table, or as gentle as discovering we are still connected to one another. May we continue to make room for these life-giving encounters, and in them, be renewed in hope, belonging, and in the sacred work we share.

With every blessing in your ministry
Karen Englebretnsen
National Chair

Image: *The Sun* by American glass artist Dale Chihuly.
It was part of *Chihuly in the Botanic Garden* at the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 2025.

CSD Australia News

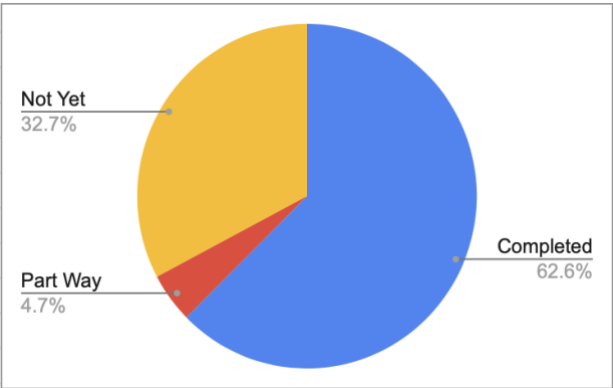
Membership Renewal

With heartfelt gratitude, we thank everyone who has taken the time to renew their CSD membership. We know the renewal form takes a little time to complete and may involve looking through records to provide the requested information.

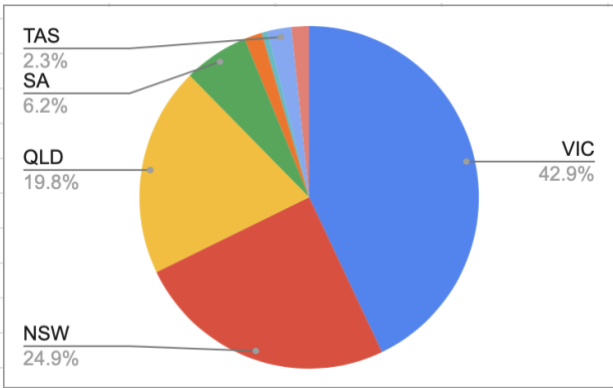
We deeply appreciate the care and effort you have given to this process. For those still yet to complete, please find the form [here](#) or simply reach out to [Karen](#).

It is a wonderful expression of your connection to our CSD community, and we are delighted to share a snapshot of our membership with you through the following statistics.
(Note these are true of middle August, possibly changed a little by time reading this)

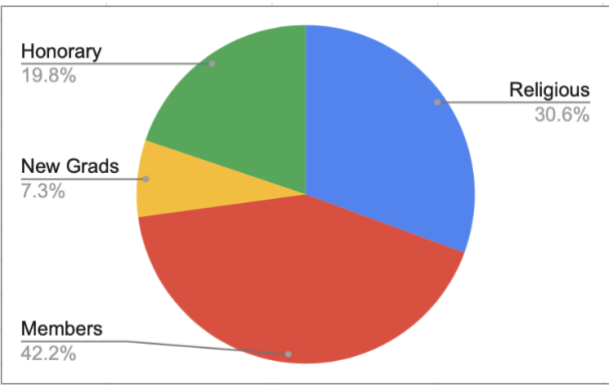
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS 2027



GEO-GRAPHICAL AREAS

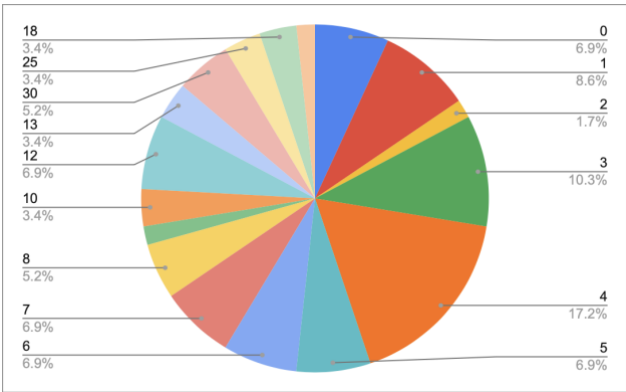


MEMBERSHIP CONSIST OF



NUMBER OF DIRECTEES

(from submitted shared Stats on form)



Find A Director

Thank you to those who have let us know you can welcome one or two new directees. We're often contacted by people seeking spiritual directors across Australia, and this helps us connect seekers with available directors.

If you have a Find a Director profile, we'll share your details so the person can contact you directly. If not, we'll contact you first for permission.

While we can make introductions, a match isn't guaranteed—finding the right spiritual direction relationship is a thoughtful process. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.



The image shows a web form titled 'Find a Director' under the CSD AUSTRALIA logo. It includes a 'Name contains' text input field, a 'State' dropdown menu, and a 'Mode match any' section with four radio button options: 'In person & online', 'In person & telephone', 'In person only', and 'Online only'. A blue 'Search' button is at the bottom.

2027 Professional Development Dates

Our 2027 Professional Development Calendar is taking shape—thank you to everyone who suggested topics and speakers.

We've secured a wonderful mix of international and Australian presenters, with engaging topics planned for the year ahead. The full program will be announced soon.

We aim to confirm the 2027 dates by October, so you can add them to your calendar early. We'll email you as soon as they're finalised.



Reflections Magazine Submissions

It's time to begin creating our CSD Reflections Magazine—a members-only space to share wisdom and reflections.

This year's theme is “**Shared Humanity.**” We warmly invite contributions in any form: reflections, poems, artwork, photography, book or film reviews, and more. Please share whatever speaks to you of our shared humanity.

Submissions close: **Sunday 27th September 2026**

Magazine Release: October

You can submit here or by emailing [Didier](#)



Melbourne in Person Gathering

The final gathering for this year is in October, save the date.

Date: Monday 12th October

Time: 1.45pm cuppa, with the gathering beginning at 2.15pm

Venue: Mary MacKillop Spirituality Centre, 362 Albert Street,



We look forward to seeing those in Melbourne present at our final gathering for 2026

CSD Representative to AECSD

We are seeking a member to represent us on the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD)

AECSD supports the flourishing of contemplative spiritual direction across Australia. It brings together spiritual direction associations and formation programs, promotes ethical practice and accountability, and supports the recognition of formation programs.



This is a valuable opportunity to bring CSD Australia's voice to the wider spiritual direction community, while contributing to conversation, connection and collaboration across the sector.

If this sounds like something that you are interested in doing, or would like to know more, please contact [Karen](#).

CSD Constitution

The CSD Reference Group recently came together to review and update our Constitution.

A constitution is the guiding document for an organisation. It sets out our purpose, how we are governed, how decisions are made, and the rights and responsibilities of members.

It is an important foundation for the life and future of CSD Australia. We warmly invite all members to read the updated Constitution and become familiar with the framework that supports our shared work and community.



1. NAME OF ASSOCIATION

The association is called Conference of Spiritual Directors, Australia hereafter referred to as CSD. It is a voluntary unincorporated not-for-profit association of persons within Australia and Oceania engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction. Its origin and its philosophy stem from the contemplative approach to spiritual direction formerly practised and taught at the Centre for Religious Development in Cambridge, MA, USA.

2. PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASSOCIATION

The philosophy of the Association is grounded in the following principles:

- a) The ministry of spiritual direction assists individuals in their human experience of the Divine, through contemplative listening and wise accompaniment.
- b) The spiritual journey is unique to each person who may present as a member of any one of a number of spiritual traditions.
- c) Spiritual direction is more about experiencing God rather than engaging

The document is available [here](#). If you have any questions or feedback please get in touch.

The Story of CSD Australia

We are currently gathering and compiling the history of CSD Australia, honouring the people, vision and journey that has shaped our community.

Once it is brought together in an accessible format, we look forward to sharing it with members as a way of reflecting on where we have come from and the direction we are now taking.

Watch this space with exciting

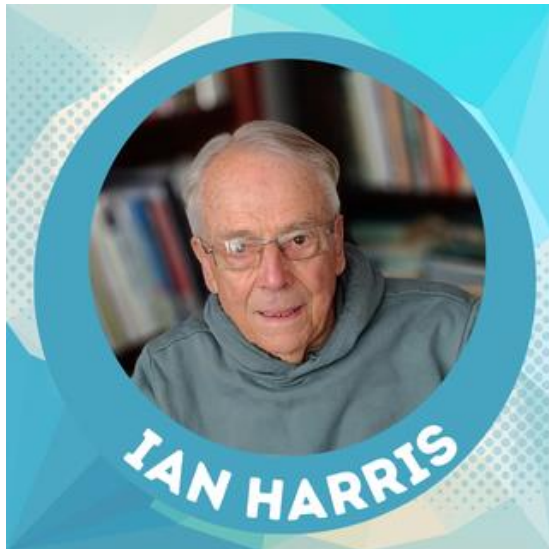


CSD Australia Members

Voice of New Members

We would like to introduce you to the new members who have joined our CSD community recently, placing a face to the names.

A very warm welcome to all our new members, and to those returning to the community after a period away. Welcome back! It is wonderful to have you with us once again.



CSD Australia Professional Development

There is no cost or need for members to book. A zoom link will be sent to all members in the preceding week. If you would like a friend to join, who is a non member - please see the trybooking link below or on our website for upcoming Professional Developments.

“Dear ~~God~~ Claude” guided by Clare Shearman

Saturday September 12th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly shaping the way we live, communicate, and engage with the world. As these conversations continue to unfold, including the recent reflections of Pope Leo XIV, they also invite us to consider the opportunities, questions, and challenges AI presents for the ministry of spiritual direction.

Join us for a thought provoking morning with Clare guiding us through exploration, conversation, and shared reflection. Together, we will consider how spiritual directors might faithfully engage with these emerging realities, remaining grounded in presence, discernment, and the sacredness of the human encounter.



Clare Shearman (introduced to Claude in late 2025), a spiritual director and professional supervisor who runs The Cliffs Retreat in Shoreham Victoria with her husband Artie.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register [here](#).

NOTE - A change of Topic for Novembers Professional Development

Self Compassion and Spiritual direction guided by Andor Vince

Saturday November 7th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Self-criticism, shame, perfectionism, disappointment, and spiritual struggle are familiar themes in spiritual direction conversations. Self-compassion can play an important role in how these experiences are held and understood, raising an important question: how might spiritual directors nurture self-compassion in directees while remaining faithful to the distinctive practice of spiritual direction?

Drawing on insights from positive psychology and Christian spirituality, this workshop combines reflection, discussion, case studies, and a practical framework for exploring that question.



Andor Vince brings a wealth of experience as a spiritual director and Positive Organisational Psychologist. Andor's current work explores how insights from positive psychology may contribute to spiritual accompaniment while remaining grounded in the principles and practices of spiritual direction.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register [here](#).

Book Review

The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul

by Connie Zweig

Connie Zweig's *The Inner Work of Age* is a wise, substantial companion for the spiritual terrain of later life. Drawing on Jungian psychology, shadow work, contemplative practice, and the testimony of contemporary elders. Zweig invites readers to see aging not simply as decline or loss, but as a profound developmental and spiritual passage: a movement from the roles that once defined us toward a more spacious relationship with soul.

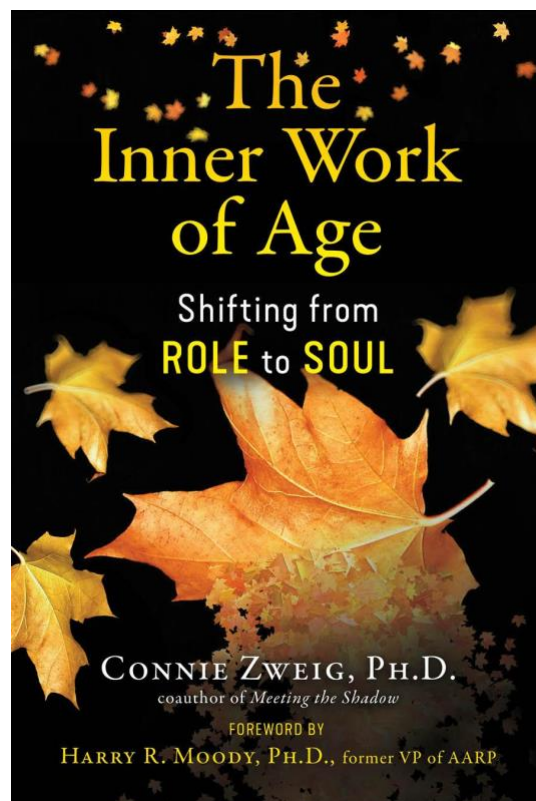
This is not a book that sentimentalises aging. Zweig gives serious attention to the particular resistances that can arise as we grow older: attachment to youthfulness, the loss of familiar roles, unfinished emotional and spiritual business, diminished purpose, fear of death, and internalised ageism. She names these as “shadows of age” not faults to be eliminated, but dimensions of ourselves that ask to be brought into awareness and met with compassion.

For spiritual directors, this is perhaps the book's greatest gift. Zweig offers language for experiences that directees may struggle to name: the grief hidden beneath retirement, the shame accompanying physical change, the disorientation of becoming less productive, or the persistent question, “Who am I now?” Her central invitation is not to solve these experiences quickly, but to attend to them as thresholds. What if the loosening of an identity is not merely an ending, but an opening? What if mortality can become a teacher rather than only a threat?

The book is practical as well as reflective. Zweig includes questions, exercises, life-review practices, and invitations to engage dreams, creativity, reconciliation, service, and legacy. These should not be used as a prescriptive programme for every older person; spiritual direction rightly resists turning another's interior life into a project. Yet they offer rich possibilities for accompaniment when introduced gently and discerned in relation to a person's tradition, capacity, and present circumstances.

Zweig's use of “Elder” is especially compelling. She distinguishes chronological aging from elderhood, presenting the latter as a vocation rather than an automatic achievement. An Elder is someone who has undertaken the work of becoming more real: less defended by image and achievement, more available to truth, relationship, service, and the generations to come. This vision offers an important counterpoint to a culture that often values older people only when they remain youthful, independent, or economically useful.

Some readers may find the book's Jungian vocabulary or its broad interspiritual range more congenial than others. Its approach is psychologically rich rather than rooted in one particular theological tradition. For Christian spiritual directors, this can be an invitation to receive its insights in conversation with practices of discernment, surrender, forgiveness, vocation, and preparing for a holy death. The book's deepest questions are recognisably spiritual ones: What must I release? What remains unfinished? What is mine to offer now? How might I live truthfully in the presence of death?



The Inner Work of Age is warmly recommended for spiritual directors, for older directees, and for anyone accompanying people through retirement, bereavement, illness, changing capacities, or the search for renewed purpose. It does not offer easy reassurance. Instead, it offers something more durable: a compassionate map for meeting the realities of aging with honesty, courage, and a growing availability to the soul.

CSD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2027

The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul guided by Connie Zweig

Saturday February 13th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Connie Zweig has expressed willingness to come join our CSD PD in 2027, leading a workshop touching on her book. Let's heed Carl Jung's warning: Whoever carries over into the afternoon of life the law of the morning must pay for it with damage to the soul. This webinar teaches you how to shift your identity from midlife Hero to wise Elder, or from role (what we do) to soul (who we truly are). It explores how to move through late life as a rite of passage, releasing past forms, facing the unknown, and emerging renewed as an Elder. You can deepen your self-knowledge and eventually shift from denial to awareness, self-rejection to self acceptance, obligation to flow, and distraction to presence. This is the deeper dimension of age, the universal journey of individuation, even the unfolding of advanced stages of human development, which are described in every spiritual tradition as the purpose of late life.

Connie Zweig, Ph.D. is a retired Jungian therapist and author of [Meeting the Shadow](#) and [Romancing the Shadow](#). Her award-winning book, [The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul](#), extends Shadow-work into midlife and beyond and explores aging as a spiritual practice. Her book, [Meeting the Shadow on the Spiritual Path: The Dance of Darkness and Light in Our Search for Awakening](#), extends shadow-work into religion and spirituality. Her podcast, Dr. Neil's Spiritual Awakening to Non-Duality, can be accessed [here](#). Along with livestreams and new writings found here. Plus her [website](#) for more information.



Other News

Conference for ANSD - Australian Network for Spiritual Direction

18 -20 September 2026

The 2026 Conference is in NSW at The Hermitage.

Unearth the wisdom in the room through listening, conversation and creativity. Three input sessions will comprise panels in which representative members of the network delve into questions about spiritual direction in this time and place such as 'What is emerging in the spiritual direction world?'. 'How can spiritual direction be a communal space?' and 'How is spiritual direction prophetic?' Add to the wisdom in the room through your presence and engagement in small group conversations, artmaking, and connections created by the retreat space.

Woven through the weekend will be music of artist-in-residence John Coleman. The days will include opportunities to help John craft song inspired by our experiences of the ANSD community.

[For more information](#)



Heart of Life

Returning to the Heart: Contemplative Refresher Course for Spiritual Directors

Facilitated by Apryl Huglin, Leslie Hanger, and Kathleen Ward

In Person - Monday to Wednesday 21, 22, 23 September, 9am – 4pm

Over three transformative days we invite spiritual directors to step away from daily demands and immerse themselves in renewal and deepening practice.



Siloam Program - Open for 2027 Applications

The internationally renowned Siloam program for the formation of spiritual directors continues to guide candidates from Australia and around the world along the path of contemplative discernment, following the way of the heart. Applications now open for 2027

[For more information](#)

Kardia

Memory to Meaning: Spiritual Storytelling in the Context of Global Upheaval with Margaret Silf

8th October - 11th November 2026

We are delighted to offer this new reflective retreat with renowned author

Margaret Silf. This retreat is designed to engage the kardia—bringing together head and heart—and will be guided by Margaret's deep

wisdom and experience. A widely respected spiritual explorer, Margaret travels extensively, accompanying fellow pilgrims through her writing and the retreats she leads.

Each week, participants will gather online on Wednesday evenings with Margaret Silf at 7.00 pm (AEDT), where she will offer guidance and reflections to support engagement with personal story and spiritual journey. Retreatants will also be invited to join a weekly small sharing group meeting which will run for one to one-and-a-half hours, facilitated by a trained spiritual director.



[For more information](#)

WellSpring Centre

Wild Creature Mind

9th October 7:30pm - 9:00pm

The neuroscience breakthrough that helps you transform anxiety and live a fierce and loving life, in a collapsing world.

This simple, practical seminar/workshop introduces right brain methods for finding aliveness, releasing anxiety, and connecting in a collapsing world.



The New Manhood: Love, Freedom, Spirit and the New Masculinity Steven Biddulph

11th October 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Be challenged in ancient and modern to be the happiest, free-est, and most life affirming men we can be. In a more intimate setting, Steve will tell two stories. These sessions will be gentle, slow and perhaps even wobbly, but a change to hear an educator and explorer who has affected our world, and still hopes it can be turned around.

[For more information](#)

From Eremos Institute:

Intensive Journal Workshop : Our lives are vast, multifaceted and profound



Intensive Journal workshops hosted by the Eremos Institute are offered online and in person. The Intensive Journal helps connect us with this vastness and depth by engaging the process created by Dr Ira Progoff.

See upcoming workshops, including our newest offering, *Introducing the Intensive Journal*, a 3 hour online workshop [here](#).

[For more information](#)

Contemplato

Loving in Abiding Silence

Monday 5 July - Friday 9 July 2027

A five day online directed silent retreat. This intimate silent retreat invites us into a loving that opens into sheer silence. Grounded in abiding oneness, we will enter the silence of the divine heart, the hidden womb of Love from whom all life is born. You may make the retreat in your own home or withdraw to a beautiful, quiet place that nourishes your prayers. Apart from our morning gathering and individual spiritual direction, the days will be held in contemplative silence.

[For more information](#)

