

**LAY CANOSSIAN
AUSTRALIA REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TEAM
REPORT 2000 - 2006**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings from the vast sunburned Continent of Australia! Land of the Holy Spirit or as Magdalene referred to as the 'Land of the Wales'.

Nominated as Regional coordinator and formator at inter-regional assembly in Albuquerque in 1998, myself and my wife Anne Josiah returned to Australia, reach and enthused by the new mandate presented to us.

This was to assist with the coordination and formation, to support and encourage the region. This region included: Australia, Timor-Indonesia and the three provinces of India.

The task seemed quite daunting, but again enthused by the charism of charity we began to correspond with those Countries. After sending so many letters with no reply it became apparent that the task facing us was to become difficult to say the least.

It soon came to light the difficulties confronting us; language, culture and distance. In simple terms most areas English was not widely spoken, this made it impossible to communicate.

Another problem that became apparent is the huge cultural differences between the Countries and the political problem made that task of communication almost impossible. Distances also contributed to our problems. The vast distances to travel along with the high cost and limited time due to work and family commitment.

After much prayer and discernment it became clear to us that the role of regional coordinator and formator could not function within these areas as they could be fully represent themselves at the international level.

Even within Australia the role overlaps with the function of the National Coordinating Team who travel and visit the various group. Therefore we, as the Lay Canossians in Australia agreed that the Regional Role was not necessary as we have a fully functional National Team who could represent us at the International level.

NATIONAL REPORT

This report will span the six years since the last International conference in 2000 and our last National conference in 2001.

At the National Conference, held in Oxley in September 2001

During the last six years Lay Canossians in Australia have journeyed together in prayer linked by the charism that is the foundation of the Canossian family. Because great distances separate the groups in Australia it is very difficult for us to meet on a regular basis. In order to address this challenge the National Leader in 2002 travelled to visit all the groups. This involved an around Australia flight of thousands of kilometres but resulted in a deep spiritual experience for all.

We will also have the opportunity to attend a National Conference this year planned for October 6th – 8th. This event will enable the International delegates to share the proposals and insights obtained from the International Conference.

I will give a brief update on each group covering their current numbers and pastoral involvements.

Port Macquarie - NSW

As there are no Canossian Sisters present in Port Macquarie, the National Team, in dialogue with the local Group Leaders, decided that a visit every 6 months would be beneficial to share the charism, welcome new members and direct retreat days. This is an 8 hour car journey or 1-2 hrs if you fly. These days have brought blessings to all of us. Currently there are about 20 members with 2 people under initial formation. Port Macquarie members meet every week and are heavily involved in parish life and offer support services to the wider community eg Pregnancy Help.

Vincenzia – NSW

In a beautiful spot on the southern NSW coastline and new “fire” has been light. Deidre Sedman who commenced the group in Port Macquarie moved to Vincenzia, NSW about 1-2 years ago and has been inviting people to come and learn about the Canossian charism. Currently there are four ladies under initial formation and hopefully they will make their promise at the National Conference in October. The National team will continue to support the new group.

Trebonne – Ingham -QLD

This is beautiful sugar cane country in North Queensland. The Trebonne group has about 25 members with no new members under formation at this time. This group meets monthly and follows an animation program based on the National Spiritual Theme. The Lay Canossians here are very much involved in Church ministries and local community affairs. Also two of the Lay Canossian are entrusted to direct and administer the Canossa Aged Care facility. One as Clinical Director and the other as Administrator while other members are serving in the clinical area. Similar to Oxley, (Canossa Hospital and residential care) this proved to be so beneficial because of the ample opportunities to share the charism of charity in an open and direct manner and dialogue. They communicate with the National team to offer support and feedback when requested. The Trebonne group has also sent contributions to the Canossian sisters in East Timor.

Darwin – Northern Territory

The Darwin group, like all groups, has faced many challenges over the past six years. Numbers have decreased for various reasons but a core group continues to meet monthly and they are committed to their parish and family life, pastoral care of the sick, Eucharist minister, Sacramental Program and Catechesis. Darwin is a beautiful place of great hospitality.

Adelaide – South Australia

There are two groups in South Australia, one in Salisbury and the other in Adelaide. Together there are 24 members. These two groups are also very committed to parish and community services including, Adult Faith Education, Parish Pastoral Council, Sacramental Program, Refugees pastoral care, special ministers to the sick and visiting the elderly in hospitals and nursing homes. Adelaide is known as the city of churches and the Lay Canossians certainly reflect a deep spirituality and understanding of the Canossian charism.

Oxley - Queensland

The Oxley group has also experienced fluctuating member numbers over the years. Some members moved away as family but kept regular contact with the Lay Canossian Association and by renewing their “Promise” every year. We have always maintained a core number of a maximum 25 members who meet monthly for animation but more recently these numbers are again on the increase, while another 9 members are under initial formation. The Oxley group members come from several Brisbane parishes and they are involved in a number of ministries within those parishes. Other members are involved in pastoral care, nursing and as managers at Canossa Care Services of Oxley. Members are also involved in differing community services on voluntary basis including the refugees with TPV (temporal provisional visa). As Oxley is also the National Centre for Australia we will be hosting the National Conference this year in October. Planning has commenced and your prayers will assist us in this process.

Sr Concetta Coppe
National Sister Animator

Denise Bartlett
National Coordinator