



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

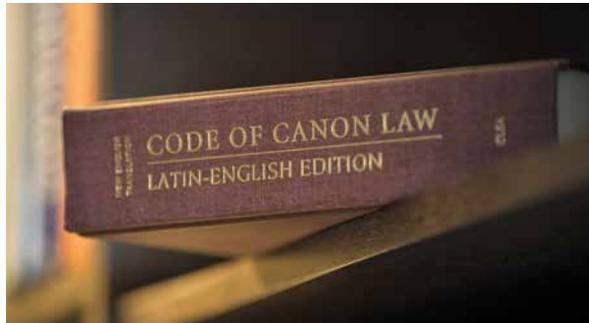
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CANON LAW AND MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

As Australia's first religious congregation of women, the Sisters of Charity arrived from Ireland in 1838. The Sisters provided religious instruction and offered pastoral care for hundreds of women and children who lived in degradation and poverty in Australia's penal colony. They cared for the sick and poor as well as visiting people in government hospitals, orphanages, schools and goals. To this day, the healthcare, education and social service ministries founded by the Sisters continue to bring Christ's love to many Australians, particularly to those who experience poverty in its many forms.

In 2007 the Sisters of Charity petitioned the Holy See (the Vatican) for a new and separate governance arrangement for their highly esteemed ministries. There were several reasons for this request. The Congregation predicted that there would be fewer Sisters available for their ministries in the future, and the demands and complexity of the ministries would continue to grow. The Sisters wanted these vital ministries of the Church to flourish into the future with lay governance and leadership. This intention echoed the call of the Second Vatican Council to religious institutes to more fully share the leadership of their ministries with lay colleagues.

In 2008 the Holy See approved the petition by the Sisters of Charity for a new and separate legal entity in the Australian Church, Mary Aikenhead Ministries (MAM). In canon law, MAM is a *public* juridic person (PJP) that resembles a civil law corporation. It is *public* in that the ministries in health and medical research, education and social outreach are "Catholic works". The ministries have a *public* ecclesial identity as they represent the Church and they operate in its name. The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries meet each year with the bishops of dioceses where the ministries operate.



These meetings are mutually beneficial for sharing information, and discussing plans, priorities, challenges and advice regarding the various ministries. In contrast to *public* juridic persons, there are also *private* juridic persons in the Church. They are often described as the "work/s

of Catholics". Unlike a *public* juridic person, the property of a *private* juridic person belongs to its members and not to the Church. There are relatively few *private* juridic persons in Catholic healthcare and education worldwide.

When Mary Aikenhead Ministries was constituted in 2008, the Sisters of Charity reserved several canonical powers and duties to the Congregation. This has been common practice for religious institutes when petitioning for new ministerial PJPs. The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity has reserved the right to define and authenticate the philosophy and mission of the ministries; to approve the Constitution of MAM and any amendments; and to approve any alienation of goods/property owned by the Congregation that were not transferred to MAM. The Congregation currently appoints between five and nine Trustees to govern and oversee Mary Aikenhead Ministries. In addition to any applicable civil legislation, the governance of the ministries is exercised according to the Statutes and Constitution of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

We have seen increasing interest in Australia for more collaboration between these 'new' ministerial public juridic persons in the Church, and for establishing strong and effective relationships with peak church bodies such as the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia.

Michele Hugonnet
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

PLAQUE CEREMONIES

FEMALE FACTORY PARRAMATTA

On Wednesday, 18 November Sisters of Charity, Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and staff from Western Sydney Local Health District, now based at the Female Factory in Parramatta, gathered to honour the Sisters' first Australian site of ministry. With the agreement of the Congregation, the Trustees had arranged with the Local Health District to have a 175 year plaque honouring the Sisters placed on the Sisters of Charity plinth already at the Female Factory. Prior to installing the 175 year plaque, the Local Health District generously cleaned the somewhat weathered plinth. With temperatures close to 40°C, those gathered at Parramatta reflected on the conditions that the five pioneer Sisters of Charity would have endured in arriving at the Female Factory in January 1839.

[Gabrielle McMullen AM](#)
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



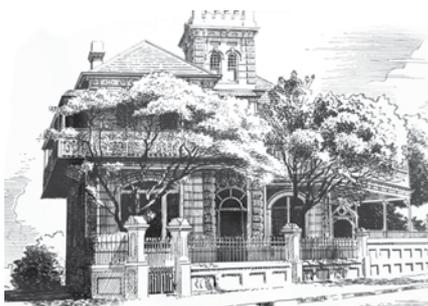
Attendees at the Parramatta Female Factory 175 year plaque ceremony

PADDINGTON

The Sisters residing currently at Paddington recently hosted Trustees Mr David Alcock, Sr Helen Clarke rsc and Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM to a delightful afternoon tea to commemorate and recognise the Sisters of Charity who previously ministered there at St Patrick's Ladies' College and Commercial College. While both Colleges are no longer in existence, their site is now the Sisters' residence in Paddington.



The Sisters residing at Paddington host the Trustees



The 175 year plaque installed at Paddington will be a permanent reminder of the ministry of the Sisters in these two Colleges.

[Raff Del Vecchio](#)
Executive Officer, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

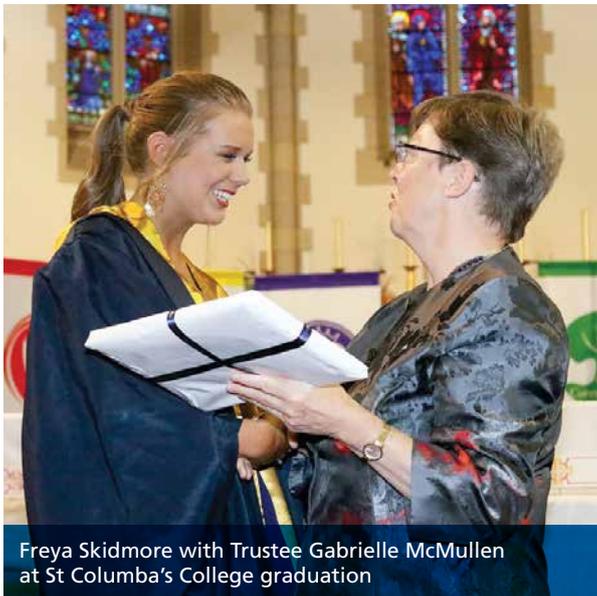
MAM SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARDS 2015

These awards are presented annually in each of the Mary Aikenhead Ministries Colleges by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. In the spirit of Mary Aikenhead and her Sisters of Charity, the students who receive these awards must have a demonstrable commitment to the service of others, especially the poor and marginalised. They are to be critically aware of issues of justice and actively seeking to challenge injustice. Their involvement in the life of the respective College will include a commitment to serving others, especially those on the margins of society.



Rachel Bennett and Sophie Webb with Trustee Gabrielle McMullen at Catholic Ladies' College

Trustee Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM attended the final assembly at Catholic Ladies' College on 16 October where Rachel Bennett and Sophie Webb jointly received the 2015 award. On 21 October Professor McMullen then joined Year 12 students and their families for the St Columba's College Graduation Mass and awards ceremony for the presentation to Freya Skidmore.



Freya Skidmore with Trustee Gabrielle McMullen at St Columba's College graduation



Principal Mrs Anne Fry with Sophie Burton-Clark of St Vincent's College

At the Mt St Michael's College Celebrates evening on 5 November, Trustee Michele Hugonnet conferred the award jointly on Taylor Ferguson and Isabella Negus. The St Vincent's College award was presented on behalf of the Trustees by Principal Mrs Anne Fry to Sophie Burton-Clark at the College graduation ceremony on 15 September.



Taylor Ferguson and Isabella Negus with Trustee Michele Hugonnet and Principal Alison Terry at Mt St Michael's College

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries congratulate these students on their outstanding commitment to social justice and service in the tradition of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity.

Gabrielle McMullen AM
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

A PILGRIMAGE TO HOBART

A pilgrimage holds a special place in our Christian tradition. And to be a pilgrim impelled by Christ's love is central to Mary Aikenhead Ministries today. In October 2015, eleven pilgrims from our ministries across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria gathered in Hobart for two days to retrace the steps of the Sisters of Charity who began their ministry in Tasmania in 1847. We were deeply touched by the stories of courage and love of the Sisters. They brought great comfort and practical assistance to those who suffered tremendous poverty and disadvantage, especially in the early years of the penal colony.



The Tasmanian Pioneer Sisters

Our pilgrimage began by recalling the mission that was given by Mary Aikenhead in Ireland in 1838 to our first five Sisters. She sent them to love and serve people who were poor. At Hobart wharf we commemorated the arrival of the Sisters in Tasmania 1847. We then visited the Cascades Female Factory where the Sisters made daily visits between 1828 and 1856 to bring solace to thousands of women, most of whom were harshly punished while awaiting assignment to their colonial masters. Our journey continued to Cornelian Bay Cemetery to pray at the graveside of three of the first five Sisters of Charity in Australia. Our pilgrimage culminated in the heart of Hobart at St Joseph's Church.



Cornelian Bay Cemetery

The Sisters lived alongside this Church for 110 years, before moving to Sandy Bay. We received a very warm welcome to St Joseph's Church by Archbishop Adrian Doyle (Emeritus Archbishop of Hobart). He is a long-time pastor and friend to the Sisters of Charity. Archbishop Doyle presided at the Eucharist when we thanked God for the Sisters of Charity who ministered so lovingly, especially during times of extreme hardship for the people of Hobart. While the Sisters also made a significant contribution to Catholic education in Tasmania, time did not allow a visit on this occasion to schools where they had ministered.

Our pilgrims were immensely grateful to spend some valuable time with the one remaining Sister of Charity in Tasmania, Anne Turner. Anne is engaged as a library assistant in Hobart.

We thank Fr Darryl Mackie for his wise assistance and guidance at all stages in our pilgrimage. His pastoral care for us is always highly valued. We are deeply grateful to Srs Helen Clarke and Maria Wheeler rsc for organising and leading such a memorable pilgrimage to Hobart. They gift us with great expertise, generosity and love.

Michele Hugonnet

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

As we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries wish you and your loved ones blessings for Christmas and the New Year.



**MARY
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