

## **The Mission, Objectives, Values and Vision of the Australian College of Theology**

### **Mission**

The Australian College of Theology (ACT), as a cooperative partnership of the Anglican Church of Australia and Christian theological colleges, each with its own church and agency stakeholders, will

- (1) exercise leadership in providing programs of demonstrable quality in Christian theological education, and other disciplines related to Christian ministry, including undergraduate degrees and masters coursework and research degrees up to doctoral awards,
- (2) assist affiliated colleges to deliver those programs and to maintain and improve institutional academic quality,
- (3) support each affiliated college in the task of equipping students for the practice of Christian ministry,
- (4) facilitate each college's realisation of the full potential of its formational, educative and scholarly endeavour, and
- (5) foster a culture of research and scholarship across the ACT network.

### **Objectives**

The College has the following objects:

- (1) maintain, review, monitor and improve stated quality assurance procedures as stipulated in course submissions and the ACT's quality management system,
- (2) monitor each college's attention to quality improvement, provision of resources (especially library and IT) that support scholarly and research endeavour, and continued compliance with ACT institutional approval criteria, and monitor student and graduate satisfaction,
- (3) ensure that there are continued efficiencies built into the operation of the College in compliance with state and federal educational bodies, and that the ACT office, ACT boards and committees are held accountable for this,
- (4) support the network-wide brief of the Departmental Heads to foster collegiality and new research among the faculty of affiliated colleges, convene professional development workshops (especially on an inter-collegial basis), and promote a sense of partnership and cooperation in theological education and education for ministry on academic boards and committees, and
- (5) maintain and build on the resources required by colleges approved to deliver research degrees and monitor the quality of supervision necessary to mentor the next generation of Christian scholars, and provide financial support for faculty study leave, participation in conferences and publishable research.

### **Values**

- (1) Christian—in common with our founding denomination, the Anglican Church of Australia, the College affirms the Christian faith as professed by the Church of Christ from its beginnings and in particular set forth in the historic creeds, namely the Nicene, Athanasian and the Apostles' creeds, and upholds the authority of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.

(2) Cooperative—the College is an intentional fellowship of confessionally diverse Christian colleges united in the common cause of maintaining quality in theological education.

(3) Supportive—the College exists to enhance the work of affiliated colleges, providing through its academic boards, committees, conferences, and departments a context in which the more established colleges and the leading academics can provide mentoring and guidance to those less experienced.

(4) Economical—the College offers economies of scale by means of its commitment to maintaining the accreditation of its suite of awards, provision and maintenance of a centralised data base, the convening of its Ethics Committee, reporting of statistical data to DEEWR, and its status as a HEP for the receipt of FEE-HELP assistance for students enrolled in its awards.

(5) Academically free—the College is committed to open, independent intellectual enquiry by faculty and students in line with its educational philosophy, to the development and maintenance of a culture of sustained and published research, and to engagement in teaching and research informed by modern scholarly developments in academic and pastoral theology.

(6) Ministry oriented—whether for the ministerial professions or for more casual and informal settings, the College seeks primarily to prepare men and women to serve the church and to disseminate the fruit of scholarly endeavour to the church and the wider community.

(7) Quality assured—the College is committed to promoting academic policies, institutional approval criteria, systems and procedures that are in line with the best tertiary practice and to ensuring that all affiliated colleges enjoy a parity of esteem within the network in accordance with their level of award approval.

(8) Responsive—the College is committed to seeking and acting upon feedback from churches, mission and pastoral care agencies, schools and others employing graduates of the College's courses with respect to the suitability of the academic and formational equipping for ministry provided by the courses of the College and involvement in the life of colleges.

## **Vision**

### **(1) Academic Governance—**

The College's courses, academic policies, and quality processes will be regarded by its institutional peers, by ordaining and ministerial accrediting bodies, churches, mission and pastoral care agencies and other employers of graduates and by the public as comparable with best practice in the self-accrediting tertiary sphere.

### **(2) Quality Management System—**

The College's quality management system will be widely perceived as maintaining quality of the College's awards and inculcating a culture of commitment to improving quality within each affiliated college regardless of its level of award approval.

### **(3) Adding value—**

The ACT will add value to the operations of its affiliated colleges through (a) efficiencies with respect to its provision of a web-based data base, (b) the managing of the processes leading to the accreditation of new and existing awards, (c) compliance with the audits conducted by AUQA and state agencies, and (d) the reporting of statistical data to DEEWR via the HEIMS regime.

### **(4) Enrolments—**

Through its affiliated colleges, the ACT will attract (a) increasing numbers of students seeking both to be prepared for professional and informal ministries and (b) members of the general public desiring to be educated in the intellectual tradition of the church.

(5) Research—

The College will provide support for sustained research by the faculty of affiliated colleges approved to deliver the coursework and research degrees of the College, and will be known as a provider in which there is quality supervision and a high concentration of library and technical resources supporting critical engagement with scholarship.

(6) Institutional status—

The College will be in a position to secure self-accrediting status and modified university title in accordance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (July 2006).

Mark Harding  
CEO, August 2008



## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The College is a national, co-operative institution in which the College and its officers, the Board of Directors, the Academic Board and its standing committees and confessionally diverse affiliated institutions work together to prepare students enrolled in the College's academic awards for Christian ministry, and to promote the study of theology in the wider community. The College is committed to promoting academic policies, programs and procedures that are in line with the best tertiary practice.

The College recognises that Christians today live within a number of intersecting communities and that their education through the College should assist them to fulfil commitments to each of these communities.

First is their commitment to the community of Christians in all its variety. The College supports the view that, while adopting a point of view, students should have an understanding of other perspectives which Christians hold on topics which are taught. One prevailing presupposition is that the Christian world-view is not just a theoretical framework of beliefs but is something which is related to and guides all that we do.

Second is their commitment to the community of scholars. Students should work in accordance with those standards of critical scrutiny and academic freedom which guide this community. This involves looking critically at their own presuppositions as well as those of others.

Third is their obligation as members of our modern day society to understand that society and contribute to its well being.

Fourth is the commitment of students to a vocational or occupational community.

The College and its affiliated institutions are committed to:

- the importance of learning through interaction with teachers and other students so that teaching methods include lectures, class discussions, private research, and student presentations.
- making use of the most appropriate modern technologies in the delivery of each unit of study.
- the goal of student-oriented "life-long" learning and appropriate portability between institutions. Some courses especially those offered at Graduate level are designed so that a student can take subjects at different institutions if necessary.

## PREFACE

The Australian College of Theology is a national consortium of 19 Bible and Theological Colleges. It has a long and honoured history. It was established in 1891 by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania “to foster and direct the systematic study of Divinity, especially among the clergy”. Over 13,500 men and women have graduated with awards of the College, one-quarter of these in the last 10 years.

For many years, the main programme of study was the Licentiate in Theology, which was regarded as the basic theological requirement for ordination and was widely accepted in academic circles as a proven and useful theological qualification.

In a day of ever-growing religious pluralism, the College finds itself called to serve an increasingly diverse constituency, both denominational and interdenominational. The College is now able to offer a wide range of courses catering not only for the specialised needs of ministerial and missionary candidates but also for the needs of lay people interested in an understanding of the Christian faith and its implications for contemporary life.

The College is primarily an examining, not a teaching, body. Distance learning is available for the College’s diplomas and degrees through approved institutions. Private candidature is available only for the ThL, ThSchol, and Certificate in Theology (formerly known as the ThA). All other courses must be studied through one of the College’s approved institutions. The ThL, ThSchol, and the Certificate in Theology are non-accredited awards of the College.

The following courses—

- Diploma of Theology,
- Diploma of Ministry,
- Advanced Diploma of Theology,
- Advanced Diploma of Ministry,
- Associate Degree of Theology,
- Bachelor of Christian Studies,
- Bachelor of Ministry,
- Bachelor of Ministry Honours
- Bachelor of Theology, and
- Bachelor of Theology Honours

—are accredited by the following government departments and authorities: the New South Wales Department of Education and Training; Office of Training and Tertiary Education in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Victoria; the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology South Australia; the Queensland Office of Higher Education; the Department of Education Services, Western Australia; and the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority.

Candidates for the College’s courses are ordinarily required to be citizens of Australia or New Zealand (or persons resident in either country). Others may be admitted at the discretion of the Academic Board.

There are no denominational restrictions in relation to entry to the College’s courses and examinations.

The Dean will be glad to give advice and guidance as required. Please feel free to write.

Mark Harding  
DEAN



**Note:** In preparing this Handbook the College has used its best endeavours to ensure that the information contained in it is true and accurate. Prospective candidates should make their own enquiries to verify this information. The College accepts no responsibility for any errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misstatements contained therein and disclaims any liability in respect thereof.