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Most Reverend Christopher C. Prowse

By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See

Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn

**Decree Erecting the Parish of *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, West
Belconnen in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn**

The diocesan bishop may erect, suppress and alter parishes after hearing the Council of Priests, for a just cause (CIC 515 §2).

Having considered the situation of the extant parishes of St John the Apostle Parish, Kippax and St Thomas Aquinas Parish, Charnwood in consultation with the parishioners and pastors who have been assigned the care of souls in these parishes; having further consulted my key advisors and the Council of Priests, I established the elements of just cause to discern the future needs this portion of the People of God within the Archdiocese.

On 1 July 2025 I communicated these foundational elements to Fr Tru Nguyen MSC, the Moderator of the Parishes:

1. The contemporary connections between the Parishes and distinct community of West Belconnen created through transport, educational and community intersections which were not the case 50 years ago at the formation of these parishes;
2. That both parishes are currently being under the pastoral care of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart;
3. Altered patterns of mass attendance in both current parishes while there is also burgeoning growth in population, Catholic school enrolments, as well as alterations in the profile of parishioners suggest a new pastoral model of living communion, participation and mission-orientation is warranted;
4. Existing strong pastoral collaborations within the communities of the parishes, for example in the St Vincent de Paul Society Conference, the Catholic schools within the parishes, and shared parish staff;
5. The financial situation of the parishes individually and together is on a trajectory which is not viable in the longer term;



6. That a synodal ecclesiology suggests the exploration of new pastoral models to more effectively serve the pastoral needs of the faithful and to become more truly evangelising communities.

I requested that Fr Nguyen commence a more formal consultation process within the existing parishes in order to best hear from the People of God in these areas, and to, subsequently, present me with a report on the proposal.

After receiving Fr Nguyen's report and following my own prayerful discernment, I brought the matter to the Council of Priests (11 September 2025) that I might hear their wisdom.

Having heard the Council, the Pastors and the Faithful, further having determined that a new parish structure with modified financial and staffing arrangements as advised by the Archdiocesan Financial Administrator and the Parish Support Team will be able to provide for the support of the clergy and the proper maintenance of the temporal goods of the Parish, I have determined that the mission of evangelization and the care of souls requires the creation of the new parish of *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart West Belconnen* in the Australian Capital Territory within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Having observed the requirements of the law, the custom of the Archdiocese and having provided more suitably for the care of souls, invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, I, Archbishop Christopher Charles Prowse, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn exercising my ordinary power and authority, in accord with Canon 515 §2, erect the Parish of *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart West Belconnen* in the Australian Capital Territory within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, with all the prerogatives, rights and obligations granted to it by the law.

The geographical boundaries of the new parish will be the combination of those of the current parishes of Kippax and Charnwood. The parish is assigned to the Northern Deanery of the Archdiocese. The new parish will be under the care of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the manner prescribed by agreement between the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn and the Provincial Superior of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.



Each current parish is, to the extent possible, ensure that all debts and obligations able to be discharged prior to the date of effect of this Decree have been so discharged. The new parish will thence take on the patrimonial goods, rights and obligations pertaining to each of the current parishes from the date of establishment. It is noted that the intention of all donors and founders (CIC 122, 1° - 2°) must be respected.

This Decree is to take effect on 1 January 2026. It is now to be communicated to all interested persons according to the norm of law.

Given at the St Christopher's Pastoral Centre Fourth Day of December in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.

Archbishop Christopher C. Prowse
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn



Dr Patrick McArdle
Chancellor