

## Chair's Opening Address:

It is my great privilege and pleasure to be able to welcome you all here to the National Association of Deacons Biennial Conference here at St Leo's in Brisbane, my only regret that I am unable to be here in person. Unfortunately, my work precludes me from being with you at this time however, please be assured that my thoughts and prayers are with you during this time.

This conference is a time for you all to reflect upon the words that you heard or will hear from your bishop at the time of your ordination, 'Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you teach'. This conference has been organised so that you have opportunities to hear from quality speakers, reflect both individually and with a group on the words that you have heard and the opportunity to socialise and share with other deacons, candidates and aspirants from around Australia. My hope is that you find these 3 days very rewarding.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organising committee from the Brisbane diocese led by Deacon Russ Nelson. This committee had a collection of issues to deal with in getting this programme off the ground – the biggest one being dealing with natural disasters like floods and cyclones. Even through this, they have managed to pull together a conference that is both informative and educative. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Russ and his committee for their tireless efforts in sourcing speakers, meals, accommodation, tour trips, buses and the other issues that have been put before them. I am sure that you will join with me to thank them for their efforts.

This conference is also an opportunity to meet with the Executive of the Association. All are here to meet with you. You will notice them by their orange lanyards. I would encourage you to make contact with them when you see them. Talk to them about your experiences and how you see the National Association of Deacons assisting you in your ministry. The words that you speak to them will only help us to plan for the future of our Association.

I thank you all for attending and I look forward to hearing the many positive stories that I am sure will take place at its conclusion.