

Dear friends,

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Gaius Trust as we seek to support ministry amongst aboriginal people in New South Wales. In this letter, we have a report from Martin Leech on his visit to Australia, and a brief report from Robert Strivens who was also in Australia on behalf of the Banner of Truth at their recent conference. We also have updates from David Cox and Stephen Bignall in New South Wales.

We now have a WhatsApp group on which we post occasional items for news and prayer. If you would like to join the group then please open this link on your mobile phone:

[Click here to join Gaius Trust's WhatsApp group.](#)

With Christian greetings,

The Trustees

From Martin Leech

My trip to NSW, postponed from last November, went ahead as rescheduled in March. We wrote at some length about the reasons and purposes for it in our previous newsletter ([available on the website by clicking here](#)). I arrived in Dubbo on 4th March and spent most of my time with Dave and Rose Cox, staying at their home and travelling to Condoblin with them. We had to make changes to the planned itinerary because I contracted Covid on the outgoing journey and was 'confined to quarters' for several days in the first week. Nevertheless, we still had a full programme, travelling many hundreds of miles!



- Thursday 2nd – depart UK
- Saturday 4th – arrive Dubbo
- Sunday 5th – am/pm worship at Dubbo Christian Family Church (DCFC)
- Monday 6th – with Dave and Rose in Dubbo; visit friends from Dubbo Presbyterian Church
- Tuesday 7th-Thursday 9th – Dubbo, recuperating from Covid; attended Bible study at DCFC
- Friday 10th – trip to Geuring and Wellington to visit former aboriginal mission stations
- Saturday 11th – Missions Conference at DCFC
- Sunday 12th – am preach at DCFC; attend pm service
- Monday 13th – Dubbo
- Tuesday 14th – visit Mt Foster region; travel to Gulargambone
- Wednesday 15th – visit Coonamble Public School with SB; Gulargambone; travel to Wee Waa
- Thursday 16th – Wee Waa; return to Dubbo
- Friday 17th – Dubbo; meeting with elders and deacons of DCFC
- Saturday 18th – Dubbo
- Sunday 19th – travel to Condoblin; worship at Freedom in Christ Ministries church (DCFC elders visit to preach in this mainly aboriginal church with a Pentecostal background)
- Monday 20th – return to Dubbo; meeting with Ross Trumble (pastor in Parkes) en route
- Tuesday 21st – depart Dubbo
- Wednesday 22nd – arrive UK

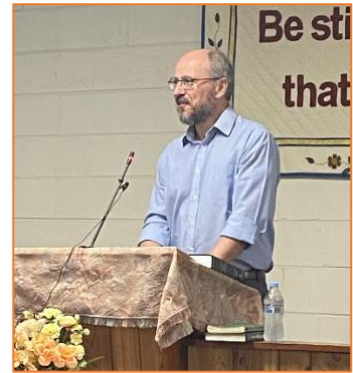
The Gaius Trust is a Registered Charity (no. 1152819) registered in England and Wales. We aim to support training and ministry among aboriginal people. If you would like to contribute to our work, you can do so through [give.net](#) accessible via our website, or by **cheque** to Gaius Trust, sent to 15 St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1DA.

I was able to spend plenty of time meeting with many people, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, and in fruitful conversation my kind hosts and others. We achieved the objectives for the visit and, as hoped, we developed some concrete ideas for the future. There are no aboriginal men who are immediate candidates for Gaius to support in ministry and so, as we look to the longer-term, we see supporting the training and preparation of men for service in the church as being crucial. It was heartening to see, both in Dubbo and Condoblin, mixed congregations with a majority of aboriginal people. It lies within our aims to work with churches/ministries that are actively seeking to minister to and reach out to indigenous people – even if not exclusively so.

The **Missions Conference** in Dubbo was encouraging, particularly as there were several young men present who are keen to be more



involved in their local churches and, potentially, some who could enter ministry. Links to the talks will be posted on the Gaius Trust website.



The Missions Conference



We shall write more about developments in our support of training in forthcoming newsletters. We are all grateful to everyone who was praying with us both before and during the visit.

From Robert Strivens

I visited Australia in February. The main reason for going was to speak at the Banner of Truth conference in Sydney. This went very well and I met Stephen and Dave as well as Jerkye Goolagong who were all attending the conference. It was good to see brothers and sisters from Baptist and Presbyterian churches enjoying fellowship together in the doctrines of grace and in Christian love and unity. I then took the opportunity to spend some time with Dave and Rose in Dubbo and with Stephen and Fiona in Wee Waa and discuss the work of the Trust, which proved beneficial and encouraging.



Jerkye, Robert, Stephen and David

From David Cox in Dubbo

Greetings again from Dubbo, Australia. I was delighted to be able to go to the Banner Conference with Jerakye Goolagong. It would seem that this time and this conference has proven to be pivotal in the personal development of Jerakye. I have noticed a marked and renewed spiritual vigour since his return to Dubbo. I think the key was the general atmosphere which he drank in, and of being with other like-minded men in a setting that was not too large and allowed for many fruitful conversations. Jerakye was also able to leave with a nice cache of books. It was a worthwhile time, and an encouragement to me as his Pastor, as well as personally.

From Stephen Bignall in Wee Waa

I received much encouragement in recent months by the separate visits of two UK ministers and Gaius Trustees: Robert Strivens [February] came to speak at the Banner of Truth Conference in Sydney on the Book of Romans “Not ashamed of the Gospel”, and a number of us from out in western NSW were able to attend. Both the 3 talks and consequent company together conversing as a group were deeply refreshing. Great to see so many good books available too.

In early March Martin Leech came specifically to see the aboriginal situation in communities and churches in the central west of NSW. Despite illness, his addresses at the Dubbo Mission conference were challenging and comforting as well as fuelling practical proposals for the way ahead.

In our remote situation these gatherings with two gifted brothers ministering were beyond price.

The Bignalls are transitioning back to the Gulargambone region this year, and by year’s end Steve will have laid down the pastorate in Wee Waa after six years (at the age of 62). The intention is to take a productive “working break” (sabbatical) after 25 years of full-time church-based ministry (in UK & Aus).



He is now serving 4 days a week in Wee Waa and two full days in a primary school in Coonamble as a chaplaincy and well-being worker, this is near Gulargambone (30 miles away) - there are over 200 students of which 95% are aboriginal.

There are no evangelical churches in Coonamble (a town of just under 3000) but Steve has been welcomed by staff, pupils and community. He hopes to take on more schools' work in the region in 2024, God willing.

Coonamble Public School chaplain

Your prayers for he and Fiona in this next planned stage of life and ministry will be of great value. Significant work needs to be done to renovate their old home in Gular also. Road travel will be cut by 60-70% a week which after 13 years of long journeys outback will be welcome.

Please pray...

- Giving thanks for the recent visits by UK Trustees Robert Strivens and Martin Leech to NSW
- For David and Stephen, their families, and their respective churches and wider ministries
- For Stephen and Fiona as they anticipate transitioning back to Gulargambone towards the end of the year
- For Jerakye, in his training, as a deacon, for his future and for his family
- For the progress of plans for setting up a training programme based at DCFC and involving others in the region
- For aboriginal men to be raised up for training and ministry



N E W S O U T H W A L E S



Gulgambone

300km (approx.)