



*Joining the dots*  
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*Mothers' Union  
Diocese of Bunbury  
Autumn 2026  
Wanyarang*

*Distributed as a  
supplement to the  
'Mia Mia'*



*Welcome to 2026 ! And joining the dots .....*

By the time this reaches you we will be nearly a third of the way into 2026. I don't need to say - 'time flies', because I am sure that most of you are only too aware of that.

There are some wonderful reports from the branches in this issue. Thank you all for contributing. I have included 2 rather longer-than-usual obituaries because these ladies were truly salt-of-the-earth. I think you will find their life stories inspiring.

Recently, during our Lent Bible study, we were reading the story of the raising of Lazarus. I happened to be using a New Living Bible, and verse 33 was translated - 'When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.'

Nearly all the other translators say something like - "He was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved'. (NRSV) Whichever version you are using there is no doubt that Jesus was very, very affected by the whole episode. Somehow we don't like to think of Jesus being 'angry', but he must have been. Think of the time when he overturned the tables of the money changers and the men who sold doves and told them that they were making the Temple a 'robbers den'. He must have been deeply angry to use physical violence.

So - are you joining the dots here? The anger or deep emotion that Jesus felt moved him to **action**. Do we ever feel deeply disturbed or angry about something, but NOT do anything about it? I know I do.

The monthly prayer for March in our Prayer Diary is very clear:

*Called by God to be a global family of prayer, action and service, may God bless us with:*

- *Hands to comfort*
- *A holy anger at oppression, seeking justice*
- *A restless discomfort with easy answers, so that we can seek the truth boldly*
- *Enough foolishness to believe that we really can make a difference in this world.*

*So, we are called with God's grace, to **do** what others claim cannot be done. Amen*

*Priscilla (mubunburymt@gmail.com)*



## *From our Diocesan President*

To all the members spread far and wide over our Diocese, greetings to you! I have had the pleasure over the past week of catching up with many of you as I have travelled to celebrate Lady Day in both Albany and Bunbury. Both services were true celebrations and also an opportunity for us to re-commit ourselves to the objective and ethos of MU. In Albany we presented Jeanette Minchin with her 30 Year Membership Certificate; an achievement that some of us newer members will not receive, having joined MU later in life.

We have also had our first Executive Meeting and were able to make a plan for the distribution of the MiaMia and Mustard Tree. Sometimes your edition may take slightly longer to reach you, but it will arrive. Many thanks to Rev'd Justine and the Dunsborough Branch for taking on this challenge.

I also have some dates for your diaries. July 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the date of our Friendship Day and it will be held in Donnybrook. The programme has yet to be finalised but it will include some crafty card making. Country Rally will be held in Dunsborough on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October.

If the situation in the Middle East continues to affect our fuel prices we may need to review these dates later on, but we hope and pray that peace and common sense will prevail in that part of the world.

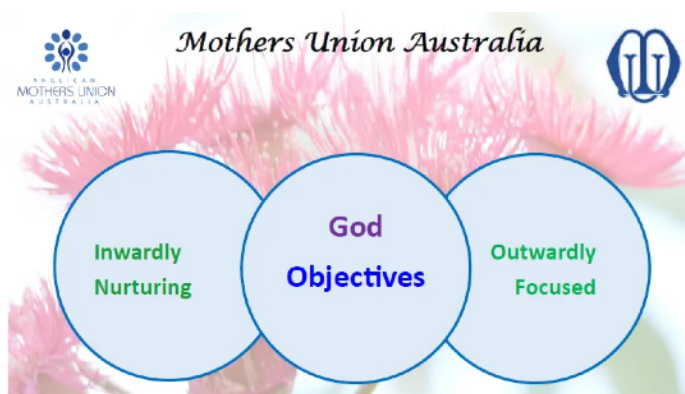
2026 is the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MU and I wonder if you are planning any special celebrations or events? Mary Sumner Day actually falls on a Sunday this year, so it gives us a special opportunity to ask for some time at our congregational services. There is a celebratory video available by Robin Ray, our National President and I will forward that on to all branch leaders.

Remember, our theme for this year is 'Joining the Dots' – in other words, recognising where our community and congregational links are to be found. Mary Sumner calls us to support families in all kinds of situations, so we need to keep alert to find openings for the prayers and work of MU.

I look forward to keeping in touch with you – my dots! – and listening to what is happening in your areas. Remember to wear your badges because that might open up a conversation for you. We take up the challenge to be articulate, visible, and active around the place. This is our concern in the community and we Christian women have a very important role to play.

I wish you all the very best for the coming MU years and I look forward to sharing in your endeavours and celebrating 150 years with you.

*Isobelle*



## *From the branches - Katanning*

Farewell to a wonderful lady and MU member for nearly 60 years

Val Philpott, a much loved member of the Katanning branch, died on 24th November 2025 after a long illness suffering Parkinson's disease.

She was born Valmae Cope in Perth on January 13th 1936, but from the age of 5 lived all her life in Katanning. She went to school here until she was 15 and worked in numerous businesses and volunteered in many more organisations and sporting bodies. She was a MU member for almost 60 years.

Val married Vic Philpott in 1954 and had 5 children. They divorced in 1980.

Bob, her partner, built their forever home on a huge block where she established a beautiful garden. She was devoted to her family and was a gifted home-maker, loved cooking, sewing and cleaning, providing a happy and safe home.

She enjoyed travelling and often took grandchildren with her. Val's other hobbies included china painting, music and service; she was generous with her time and talents. Val was treasurer at St Andrew's, a parish councillor and pianist. She also served on local government for 4 years and was a lifetime member of St John Ambulance and Police and Citizens Youth club. Her faith was her strength, and her courage and bravery an inspiration.

She will be remembered for her beautiful smile and kind and loving heart - not forgetting her Christmas puddings and cakes, a huge draw-card at the fete!

Her funeral was a tribute to her love of family and Church, and when the congregation was invited to receive Communion, all her children, plus 11 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren went forward.

*A beautiful moment! Thank you Val.*

This interesting photograph was taken in 1959 with the Katanning MU Banner at the Church of St Elizabeth of Hungary in Broomehill.

On the left is Nola Coventry, then Valmae Philpott and Norma Philpott.

The Banner was made by the Sisters of St Elizabeth of Hungary before they left for the United Kingdom. It hung in St Andrews Katanning for many years before being replaced by a new banner of a similar design. The original banner is kept in a special cabinet in the Library room of the church with this photograph.



*Sylvia Spicer - Secretary*



13 January 1936 - 24 November 2025

## *From the Branches - Albany*

In November the Albany Branch members of the Mothers' Union met for lunch at a local hotel. It was lovely to catch up with some previous members as well as current ones and we were joined by Denmark's sole member. Much chat and great fellowship!

We did not meet again until 18<sup>th</sup> February, when we joined the St John's Church Ash Wednesday service. There were several members of the wider congregation also at the service in the church. We then adjourned to the Dorothy Wood hall where we conducted our meeting and listened to our guest speaker, Joanna, who spoke of her personal spiritual journey which has culminated in her becoming a school chaplain. She has offered to return at another date to talk about her actual role in this position.

Plans are in hand for the Albany celebration of Lady Day on 20<sup>th</sup> March. We look forward to welcoming our new Diocesan President, Isobelle Shortreed, who will be the guest speaker after the service, which starts at 10am. We also expect to have the company of Bishop Ian. There will be morning tea available in the Dorothy Wood Hall before the service and lunch there after the service. All welcome.

*Wendy Minchin - Secretary*

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## *Bunbury*

Our MU year began on February 5<sup>th</sup> with a Eucharist in the Chapel followed by our meeting with 15 members present. Our special guest was Rev'd Carol Reid who talked on 'Spirituality and Gratitude'. It was a both stimulating and reflective session and we were all most grateful to Carol for sharing her time and knowledge. We also celebrated Birthdays & Anniversaries that had occurred over the Christmas break.

March is looking to be a very busy month indeed. Our Meeting was on March 5<sup>th</sup> when, after our service led by Dean Daryl in our beautiful Chapel, we celebrated Margaret Rennick's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday for March 11<sup>th</sup> complete with a purple and white cake, as Margaret is not only a Life Member of MU but a very keen Dockers supporter!

March 6<sup>th</sup> is the World Day of Prayer and several members are attending at the Catholic Church in Australind. We then have Mothering Sunday when Simnel cake is handed to the congregation; this is made by a kind parishioner every year, but we as a branch slice and wrap it including a sprig of rosemary. It's always delicious.

We are looking forward to joining Busselton members at the Anglican Campsite, Vasse on the 19<sup>th</sup> for their meeting, then of course it will be Lady Day. It will be an opportunity for everyone to see the previous MU Banner framed and installed at the back of the Cathedral, looking splendid.

*Val Duff - President*



*Margaret and her purple and white cake*

## SOCIAL ISSUES AND ACTION

I was fortunate enough to attend Lady Day at Bunbury Cathedral, a beautiful service, lunch and fellowship at its best. I am taking a part of Diocesan President Isobelle Shortreed's speech for the theme of this newsletter - COMMUNITY.

Oxford Dictionary definition (short version) of COMMUNITY

1. a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common

While thinking about community and the role of MU as per Isobelle's speech, I came upon the following article on VOLUNTEERING by Ann Cunningham, Social Issues & Action Coordinator Diocese of Sydney (found on the Australian MU web site).

As a volunteer myself I have never thought about my volunteering in the context of being an MU member; or what being an MU member gives to the organisation and what I, as an MU member, receive from volunteering. One thing I do know, volunteering does take us out into the community, and another thing I know is we are never too old to consider going out into the community and spending time with the people there.

Thank you, and enjoy Ann Cunningham's article.

*Ann Busch - Diocesan Social Issues and Action Coordinator*

+ Volunteer with Bunbury Mission to Seafarers

### **To volunteer ... when & where & why**

Just recently I have been thinking through what it means to be a volunteer.

In thinking through this topic I found some surprising results and along the way have been encouraged and MU Activities challenged. I believe Christians have much to offer in terms of volunteering and MU is a wonderful organisation to volunteer with. Importantly it is an organisation that can easily add depth to church communities.

So to answer my questions I looked up various university studies and results from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I found that volunteering ranges from informal acts like looking after a family member through to trained positions like surf lifesavers.

Volunteering is incredibly valuable. The University of Adelaide estimated the value of volunteering to be more than \$200 billion per year

1. Of course, this is just the monetary value. Many MU members can testify to the profound impact serving morning tea at court can have on distressed people.

2. The number of volunteers isn't, as I imagined, declining. It isn't increasing in great numbers, but at least it isn't going backwards. Given that a lot of the people who volunteer are employed and middle class. It made me wonder how volunteering happens. My guess is that it is often situation-driven. For example, your son plays soccer so you join the committee.

Perhaps unexpectedly, the act of volunteering brings blessings to the volunteer. God in his kindness has designed us so that when we volunteer the brain registers this in the same way as when we receive rewards or pleasure.

Researchers have shown that volunteering results in increased skills, improved health and fitness, increase in mental alertness and social connections.

3 Volunteering has also been shown to help develop resilience in children by building social networks.

Why do we as Christians bother? Fundamentally we bother because our time is not our own. Our thoughts, words and deeds belong to the sovereign God who created us, made it possible to be in a right relationship with him and continues to work in us for his good purposes.

So how do we decide if we are to spend some of our pressured day volunteering? How are we to discern which activity or organisation we should volunteer with? There are so many wonderful activities and groups - both Christian and secular.

Ultimately each person needs to determine how he or she will use his or her time each day.

Some factors to consider when determining what you will do with each day are:

**Humbly come before God** - acknowledging what he has done for us and our need to live under his rule and authority.

**Repent** - of any thoughts or desires which may be stopping you from carving out time with an activity that may seemingly give no reward.

**Consider** - your circumstances, your resources (both you and your skills and what God has blessed you with).

**Have a look around you** - what opportunities are in your church and community?

Consider that we need to be active in Christian groups but we also need to be involved in our secular community.

I find MU a great balance - it is a well established, biblically based, prayer-supported organisation.

It seeks to build up and encourage Christian marriages and families. It is also outward looking as it seeks to support those families under stress. I suspect that all families today could benefit from some TLC and all families need to know that God's plan for marriage and family is the best plan.

I would encourage you individually and collectively to have a constructive look at how we are using the many resources God has blessed us with. Imagine how God could use us if we are willing to spend some time volunteering in what is going on around us.

Compiled by

*Ann Cunningham*

Social Issues & Action Coordinator

Diocese of Sydney

1. <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news55621.html>

2. [https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general\\_article.jsp?articleId=4983](https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general_article.jsp?articleId=4983)

3. <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news55621.html>



## *From the Branches - Busselton*

March 19th - On a very hot and 'muggy' afternoon 15 Busselton MU members, 7 Dunsborough members and 7 Bunbury members gathered under the shade of the peppermint trees (close to the ocean) at the Anglican Campsite.

It was a great respite from the weather, with welcome shade and a sea breeze!

Busselton President Eleanor welcomed everyone and prayed for our 'War-torn Earth' and especially the innocent people who are displaced, mourning lost relatives and their former life.

Eleanor also prayed for the leaders of the 'invading' countries to put an end to the destruction and loss of life by using negotiation instead of warfare to finish the wars in the world. She then led us in devotion by using Form 3 of our MU Worship & Prayer book - 'The World Around Us'.

Priscilla led us in the Prayer for the Global Call to Prayer for Peace.

We all enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea, catered for by the host branch, Busselton.

Members were encouraged to go and look at, and in, the 'New' MU caravan as there were no occupants that day. It is a fabulous upgrade from the last van, to which everyone agreed.

When we were all back and seated again, Priscilla and Leann led us in singing our MU Theme Song for 2026 - 'The Lord is my Shepherd and I want to follow'.

Eleanor thanked the Busselton members for their contributions for the day, and the Dunsborough and Bunbury members who travelled to join us and help make it special.

After a time of fellowship, we said the Grace together and departed to our respective homes.

It was a lovely afternoon, and it seems to get better each year.

*Lesley Hooper - Secretary*

## *Also from Busselton -*

Our February and March meetings were largely taken up with planning!

Significant effort went into the planning of the World Day of Prayer which our church hosted this year. In fact - the MU hosted it! The service was led by Eleanor with MU members and representatives from other Churches doing the readings. About 55 people were present.

It was very moving and made us familiar with many of the huge burdens born by the women of Nigeria.



*Eleanor Lewin puts her best foot forward to speak to members at the MU campsite*



## *Boyanup Branch news*

Currently there are only four members who are keen to keep meeting monthly as usual. Our first meeting held at the Dardanup Shire Office was in February.

Two members will attend Lady Day. As Dardanup is more convenient to our homes we will continue meeting there. Only two members were able to attend the meeting in March. Our meetings open with a service from the Prayer and Worship book, followed by any business needing to be discussed and then morning tea. *Meryl Jarvis - Treasurer*

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### *From our Chaplain - Reverend Cathie Broome*

Blessings to you all,

It has been wonderful to start the year with gathering together, at branch meetings, Lady Day celebrations and the executive meeting. It's a joy to catch up with friends and to have the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

The fellowship that we enjoy when we come together is something quite special and we should all be proud of being a part of Mothers Union. It is a global Anglican organisation, with over 4 million members across 84 countries, and in our own diocese we are a group of Christians reaching out to others across the diocese. In the year ahead we will have more opportunities to connect and to support not only each other, but those in need in our communities.

As Holy week is upon us and we ponder our own personal journeys towards the cross with our Lord and Saviour, it is important to stop and reflect and pray for those who do not yet know Him. Easter is a profound invitation to move beyond knowing about Jesus, to truly knowing Him personally, recognising that His resurrection is a living relationship, not just a historical event. It is a time to witness the Risen Christ in daily life, transforming the "empty tomb" from a mystery into the foundation of hope and personal rebirth.

**1 Peter 1:3** is a verse for hope and rebirth, **"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."** It highlights God's mercy in providing new birth, a secure hope, and salvation based on Jesus' resurrection.

Other powerful verses include **Lamentations 3:22-23** **"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"** and **Isaiah 40:31** **"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint"**. These verses offer profound encouragement regarding God's unwavering faithfulness, mercy and renewal.

As we walk together, support one another, offer hope and reflect on God's faithfulness, let us reach out to those in need by providing practical assistance, emotional support, and spiritual encouragement.

My prayer for us all is that we may embrace the invitation to move beyond knowing about Jesus, to truly knowing Him personally. Amen.

*With God's Grace and Blessings, Cathie*

## *Dunsborough News*

Last December Rev'd Justine ran a Quiet Day at St George's during the time of our 16 Days of Activism against Family and Domestic Violence. It was a peaceful way to enter the Advent Season. Our ladies hosted and provided refreshments.

We finished the year with collating and distributing the Parish Christmas Bags. This year we delivered 9 double and 36 single Bags.

In February we held our Planning Meeting for the year and our monthly "Cuppa On The Verandah" mornings resumed. They continue to be popular with the regulars and Op Shop customers.

In March we hosted The World day of Prayer Service at St George's. In addition, most of the ladies were heavily engaged with our annual Fete, held on the 7th March. On the 19th March we attended a combined meeting, hosted by Busselton Branch, at The Anglican Campsite. Seven of our members attended and viewed the MU Caravan.



Collating Christmas Bags ready for distribution



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*How will your Branch or Diocese celebrate the 150 years since Mary Sumner founded the Mothers' Union in 1876?*

We look forward to hearing how you intend to celebrate this MU milestone.

(From the AMUA website)

## *News from Boyup Brook*

MU members hosted the recent World Day of Prayer at St Saviours. The service was written by the Christian community of Nigeria with the theme "I Will Give You Rest: Come".

We chose "Come as You Are" as the theme song and "Brother Sister let Me Serve You" as our concluding song. We involved members of other churches in our town who presented each of the short testimonies of three women of Nigeria, and MU members lead the prayers of intercessions between each story. Life in Nigeria is not easy of women and girls and the same situation exists in many of the African nations. We enjoyed great fellowship over a cuppa after the service.

2027 will be the centenary of World Day of Prayer so we are now searching for the history of WDP services held in Boyup Brook. No one at this year's service could remember when we first celebrated it, just that we have been doing it for a long time! *Jan Ritson*

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## *Hello from our Branch in sunny Mandurah*

2026 is scooting along and our Mother's Union Branch has been busy planning our yearly program. I'm proud to report we have an interesting year ahead with hands-on activities as well as Guest Speakers.

A special thank you to my dear friend and Vice-President of MU, Robyn Chalk, who has been my Rock. We are going along slow and steady.

At our meeting this week we worked on Joy Bags There was good energy and lots of laughter. We received a lovely card from a recipient thanking us for her Joy Bag. It sounds such a simple activity but the Joy it brings is just so important. The thank-you card was a timely reminder just how much joy and love they bring.

We have 6 ladies attending Lady Day in Bunbury. It is always fun travelling with other ladies from our group. Lots of laughter and fun.

Members made Posies of Rosemary for Mothering Sunday.

We are working with a group, "Homemade Cards for Seniors" who distribute cards to residents in Aged Care Facilities in Mandurah and also through Meals on Wheels to bring a smile to those who may not receive any love at Christmas and Easter.

In December last year we made and gave away 600 cards.. We had a card-making day already this year and invited parishioners from Christ Church to join us. Robyn Chalk coordinates this project and prepares the items for this fun-filled project. Perhaps we might even get some new potential members. The card making group asked if they could make cards more often so there will be a lot more cards to deliver this year.

That's all from Mandurah till next time.

Keep smiling and God Bless. *Maggie Goss - President.*



Joy Bag day!

## *Boyanup - Vale Mary Kitchen*

Rhonda Mary Kitchen (known as Mary) was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1929 at Gwindinup farm on the banks of the Preston River. She began her schooling at the Boyanup Primary School before attending Bunbury High School during the years of WW2. She shared stories of completing drills in the sand hills where children would run to the dunes for cover as quickly as possible.



She was dubbed the fastest runner at Bunbury High and had an accomplished career playing hockey, later taking up a coaching role. Fishing was a pleasure she enjoyed from a young age. She grew up helping on the family farm, balancing school with domestic duties and commercial responsibilities, learning from an early age what it meant to contribute. From picking, grading and packing a variety of fruit from the orchard to working with her horse mustering cattle and helping in the small dairy. Being a capable driver Mary went for her licence and walked out with not only her car but also truck licences.

At the conclusion of the war Mary met Jack, a dairy farmer from Joshua Brook. They were married in 1951 at St George's church. In the following years they achieved their ambition of growing a dairy herd together - and welcomed 5 children, 2 girls and 3 boys.

The milestones Mary achieved during her life include:

- Beginning a dairy stud in 1959 and travelling to South Australia to purchase quality cattle.
- Entering the first Agricultural Show in 1964 with their own cattle,
- The first bull sale of their own bulls in 1965 and
- Embracing continual change as farming practices modernised, from a walk-through dairy built in 1954, to a herringbone in 1966 and eventually to the current rotary dairy built in 1999.

Mary embraced any job where she could be helpful and active. Even in recent years she could be found at the dairy during milking, spraying cows on their way off the platform, and storing test flasks during monthly herd testing ensuring each flask was clean. She had a particular interest in calf rearing being patient while teaching calves to feed.

Together with Jack they travelled to many parts of the world. They liked to travel in groups and meet new people. Mary kept meticulous records of these trips in her scrap books.

At home her interests were practical and generous, making jams, scones, relishes, sewing, knitting and repairing things. Among other hobbies she kept records of family history, the stud and machinery creating 28 various scrap books. In addition she also maintained an extensive collection of stamps.

Mary took great enjoyment contributing to the community, and over her years served and supported many organisations, including: the Anglican Church, Mothers Union for 68 years, Boyanup Primary and P & C, Milk Industry Liaison Committee; the Anglican Op Shop; the Sale yards Kiosk where many thousands of her scones have been served; the Railway Museum; the Boyanup-Dardanup branch of the Liberal Party and Liberal Women; and hosting many guests, such as Vet students for extended periods, to support their education.

Mary and Jack's dedication to the community was recognised with the naming of the 'Jack and Mary Kitchen Community Centre' in Boyanup in 2000. Her contribution to the dairy industry was recognised through Life Membership of Holstein Australia. Her commitment to local history has also supported archival and oral history work with the Shire of Capel.

Mary will be sorely missed by her 4 remaining children and partners, 13 grandchildren and partners, and 20 great grandchildren.

*May she rest in Peace.*

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Diocese of Bunbury</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">2026 Events and Dates of Importance</h3>		
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March	19th	<b>Mustard Tree contributions to Editor</b>
	22nd	<b>Lady Day - Albany</b>
	23rd	Executive meeting Bunbury
	24th	<b>Lady Day - Bunbury</b>
		<i>Public School holidays April 3rd -19th</i>
April	5th	Easter Day
	30th	<b>Annual membership fees to Branch treasurers</b>
May	15th	Annual membership fees due to Diocesan Treasurer
	21st-23rd	Wave of Prayer (Prayer Diary p 43)
June	19th	<b>Mustard Tree contributions to Editor</b>
	22nd	Executive member reports to all executive
July		<i>Public School holidays July 3rd -19th</i>
	1st	Executive meeting by Zoom
	2nd	<b>Friendship Day Donnybrook</b>
August	9th	Mary Sumner Day
	13th	Notice of AGM and request for agenda items to branches
	19th	<b>Mustard Tree contributions to Editor</b>
September	21st	Branch annual reports to Diocesan Secretary
	21st	Executive annual reports to Diocesan Secretary
	25th	Agenda items for AGM to Diocesan Secretary
		<i>Public School holidays September 25th - October 12th</i>
		<i>Synod October 2nd -3rd</i>
October		<b>Branch annual meetings to be held this month</b>
	5th	Annual report book to be distributed (electronic copy)
	12th	AGM agenda to all branches and executive
	14th	Executive meeting Dunsborough
	15th	<b>Country Rally Dunsborough</b>
	19th	<b>Mustard Tree contributions to Editor</b>
November	25th -Dec 10th	<b>16 Days of Activism</b> (Prayer Diary p 95)
	30th	Branch annual returns to Diocesan Secretary
December		<i>Public School holidays commence December 18th</i>
	25th	Christmas Day (Friday)
	31st	Financial year ends for branches.