



*Pax, a Latin word meaning peace, is the motto of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia*

# The Chimes Newsletter

Special Rome Edition



August 2019

## Ramblings from Rome

On the evening of Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July I set out for Rome with two travelling companions Carmel Murray (Museum and Art Gallery) and Jody Burness (Group Accommodation and Education Centre) to represent New Norcia at the celebration of NAIDOC week at the Australian Embassy to the Holy See. Included in the event was the announcement of the winner of the third Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship for Indigenous Studies, Calle Nicholls. Calle (22) is in her second year of a bachelor's degree in social work at ACU Canberra and hopes eventually to work with incarcerated Indigenous people.

After the long haul via Dubai, we arrived at Fiumicino airport on the afternoon of Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July feeling rather dishevelled but excited to be in the 'Eternal City.' Carmel, who demonstrated her extraordinary skill of scanning a plane for better seats than those allocated – and succeeded – was still quite sprightly, so we thought it reasonable that she should shout the first round of Peroni Nastro Azzurro (did you know this Italian brewery was founded the same year as New Norcia?) while we waited for the *Leonardo Express* to Termini, Rome's central railway station. After settling into our rooms at Domus Australia – a very comfortable guesthouse established for Australian pilgrims – we went for our first of many walks through the streets, cobbled alley ways, and piazzas of Rome. Walking past San Ambrogio – the Curia of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation to which New Norcia belongs – through the Jewish Ghetto and across the Fiume Tevere (Tiber River) via the Ponte Garibaldi, we found

ourselves at Vespers hosted by the Sant' Egidio Community at one of my favourite churches in Rome, the Basilica Santa Maria in Trastevere, famous for its splendid mosaics. Jody then took us to dinner in the piazza where locals and tourists gathered to enjoy a typical Roman summer's evening of pasta, pizza, vino, birra, gelato and street performers. Now totally exhausted we opted for a taxi back to Domus. Most mornings began at 8.00am with a fine buffet breakfast in the courtyard of Domus, catching up with the Australian chaplain Fr John Boyle – who gifted us with rosary beads blessed by the Pope – and other Australian visitors to Rome. As well as the odd pizza and Peroni on the roof-top garden, we enjoyed some quiet moments in the beautiful chapel, which boasts a portrait of Salvado among other prominent figures of the Church in Australia.

### *Third Conaci Scholar Familiarisation Program & NAIDOC Event*

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July – our first full day in Rome – was spent participating in the familiarisation programme for Calle hosted by Ambassador Melissa Hitchman, Deputy Head of Mission Alison Edye, Public Diplomacy Officer Madonna Noonan, ACU Pro Vice-Chancellor International Chris Riley, and Abbot Emeritus Michael Kelly of the Silvestrine Benedictine Congregation. Meeting at the Embassy on Corso Vittorio Emanuele II we began by viewing an



*Abbot John and Jody Burness at Sant' Anselmo*

excerpt from the Sydney Archdiocesan production *Tell Me A Story*, a stage musical about Conaci's life, followed by a Q&A session. We hope to procure a copy of this fine and often moving performance. We left the Embassy for the Basilica and Abbey of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls where Conaci is buried via Palazzo San Calisto, the Abbey's summer house where Conaci is believed to have died, and the Pontifical



*Ambassador Melissa Hitchman, Chris Riley (ACU), Abbot Emeritus Michael Kelly OSB, Scholar Calle Nicholls, Abbot John OSB, Alison Edye (Embassy), Carmel Murray at St Paul's Outside the Walls*



Abbot Emeritus Michael Kelly OSB, Abbot John OSB, Scholar Calle Nicholls, Abbot Primate Gregory Polan OSB at Sant' Anselmo.

Benedictine House of Studies Sant' Anselmo on one of Rome's seven Sacred Hills, the Aventino where Conaci studied (although at a different location) and many New Norcia monks since. Here we enjoyed the gracious hospitality of Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, and look forward to returning that hospitality when he visits New Norcia in September.

We felt the spirit of Conaci at his final resting place at St Paul's Outside the Walls as we prayed a simple but poignant ritual of remembrance and strolled through the beautiful cloister where he stayed. Being the place where Salvado often stayed in Rome, and the place of his death, it was the first of several "goose-bump" moments during our adventure. The programme concluded with a delightful lunch back at the Embassy exploring all the connections, stories, experiences and hopes for the future – all stemming from the remarkable story of this Australian Nyoongar boy. After a siesta – in true Roman fashion – we spent the evening soaking up the atmosphere of Rome visiting the districts of Quirinal and Monti making a wish at the famous Trevi Fountain, and Piazza Della Rotonda with its breathtaking Pantheon. Meanwhile, Calle gave an impressive interview on Vatican Radio.

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July we were warmly

welcomed at the Ambassador's Residence on the Via di San Pantaleo for the official announcement of the third Conaci Scholar. With the arrival in Rome of ACU summer school students from all over the world, we had an instant crowd of about a hundred people. After Alison's introduction and an Indigenous prayer by ACU Vice President Fr Anthony Casamento, I was invited to give the following short address, but without mentioning Calle's name!

*It's great to be back in Rome to join you in celebrating NAIDOC week, and more specifically to congratulate and offer encouragement to the winner of the third Conaci scholarship.*

*This year, I'm very pleased to have the companionship of two other "ministers of encouragement" from New Norcia – our Visitor Services and Museum and Art Gallery Manager Carmel Murray, and our Group Accommodation and Education Centre Manager and Safeguarding Officer, Jody Burness. Like Conaci and the recipient, they are on a journey of discovery for their own professional development, to broaden their knowledge. To learn from reading, study and writing is one thing, but to*



Making wishes at the Trevi Fountain

*experience place, culture and story, and then impart this experience to others is something very different. These three women will do so in their own unique and valuable way.*

*This sharing of knowledge and experience was something Conaci so desperately wanted to do with his Yued mob when he returned to Western Australia, but sadly his dream was never realised. That's why this scholarship is so important – along with the recipient, it includes generations of Indigenous past, present and future – and perhaps even*



The Pantheon



Carmel Murray, Abbot President (Emeritus) Bruno Marin OSB, Abbot Emeritus Norberto OSB, Abbot John OSB and Fr Mauro Maccarinelli OSB

more importantly, what the recipient learns and shares may teach us 'white fellas' a thing or two as well.

Like the two previous Conaci scholars (Nathan and Kate) our present scholar's studies are all directed towards the building up of Indigenous communities. I'm sure you will all agree – we need more people like these to take up the task of Social Work, particularly in the service and care of incarcerated Indigenous people. We already know this present scholar will do this work with respect and empathy because of first-hand experience, knowing the consequences of one group of Australians thinking they have some kind of power and control over another.

All this is reflected in the theme of NAIDOC 2019: VOICE – TREATY – TRUTH – a theme distilled from the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' in which we hear the desire of our Indigenous peoples for all Australians to work together for a shared future.

The Uluru statement speaks of 'Makarrata' a word from the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land, capturing the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle, healing the divisions of the past. It is about acknowledging that something has been done wrong, and it



Crypt at Monte Cassino

seeks to make things right.

Although the statement is referring specifically to constitutional recognition, I think the concept can be applied to all manner of issues in which genuine reconciliation and subsequent action and policy is pivotal for the pursuit of truth, justice, healing and peace. The studies and future career of this scholar are one small but sure link in this chain of unity, of moving forward together.

So, we come from New Norcia to encourage this scholarship in honour of Conaci. We do so with two Nyoongar words of the Yued clan to which Conaci belonged: Kendjil and koort-kenyal. Kendjil means 'together' and koort-kenyal means 'of one heart.' We know that the inspiration behind this recipient's studies is to eventually work with Indigenous communities who are hurting so that one day all of us who live in and share the amazing home we call Australia may indeed walk together and be of one heart for a better future.

2019 being the year of Indigenous Languages, Jody will present the recipient with a copy of two

important publications from our Education centre: a Nyoongar Dictionary containing words from Conaci's place New Norcia, and Fr Bernard Rooney's book *The Way of the Boorna-Waangki – a tale of cultural endurance*.

And, to give this recipient some insight into Conaci's world before coming to Rome, and a taste of New Norcia as it is today, Carmel will present two books from the New Norcia Gift Shop: *The Salvado Memoirs* and the latest edition of *A Town like No Other*.

To the recipient, we present these gifts to both congratulate and to encourage you, and we do so in a spirit of gratitude for keeping the spirit of our Nyoongar brother Conaci alive. His spirit is here in Rome with you and we trust that like him you will apply yourself diligently to your studies and we pray that you will succeed in all that you do. Finally, we offer you our blessing:

May you awaken to the mystery of being here in Rome and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence. May you have joy and peace in the temple of your senses. May you have respect for your own



The Pietà at St Peter's



Statue of St Benedict at Monte Cassino in one of the eight cloisters with Maur and Placid



*Sacro Speco, the cave of St Benedict at Subiaco*

*individuality and difference. May you receive great encouragement when new frontiers beckon. May you respond to the call of your gift and find the courage to follow its path. May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame and anxiety never linger about you. May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul. May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention. May you be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul. May you experience each day of your time here in Rome as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder. May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride and expectation with which God sees you in every moment. (John O'Donohue, Benedictus – adapted)*

Proceedings continued with an address by the Ambassador, a screening of Conaci's story, and the formal announcement of the third Scholar by Chris Riley. After Calle's impressive response, Carmel and Jody presented her with gifts from New Norcia and we enjoyed the rest of the morning sharing refreshments and networking. The Ambassador finishes her term at the Embassy at the end of the year, so we presented her with a set of New Norcia Charles Gardiner placemats and coasters, and New Norcia nut cakes for the staff. I was so proud of Carmel and Jody who rose to the occasion, representing New Norcia with such enthusiasm and devotion.

### *The Vatican*

We began our formal professional development study tour by devoting two days exploring the Vatican. No trip to Rome is complete without negotiating Line A on the Metro with thousands of other pilgrims and tourists heading for Ottaviano San Pietro. On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> we had the rare opportunity of touring the Scavi, the excavations deep underneath the Basilica San Pietro, with a small group of twelve. We were taken into the necropolis – an ancient pagan and early Christian burial site consisting of exquisite mausoleums – eventually arriving at what is believed to be the burial site of Saint Peter (c.61) directly underneath the crypt and papal altar of the present day church. The only and appropriate response in the midst of such a sacred site was silence. This tour continued through the crypt – the resting place of the Popes, in which one can trace the history of the Church – and concluded by being let into the Basilica above (without the queues) where we spent several hours revelling in the marvellous art and architecture of Bramante, Raphael, Bernini and Michelangelo – the Pietà, the sculptured foot of St Peter, the magnificent baldacchino over the papal altar, and some time in prayer in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Afterwards we strolled through the Vatican precinct and souvenir shops, finishing our day in the delightful atmosphere of the Piazza Campo De' Fiori, a colourful market (c.1860) by day and alfresco restaurants by night. I had the dish of the day: linguini with crayfish.

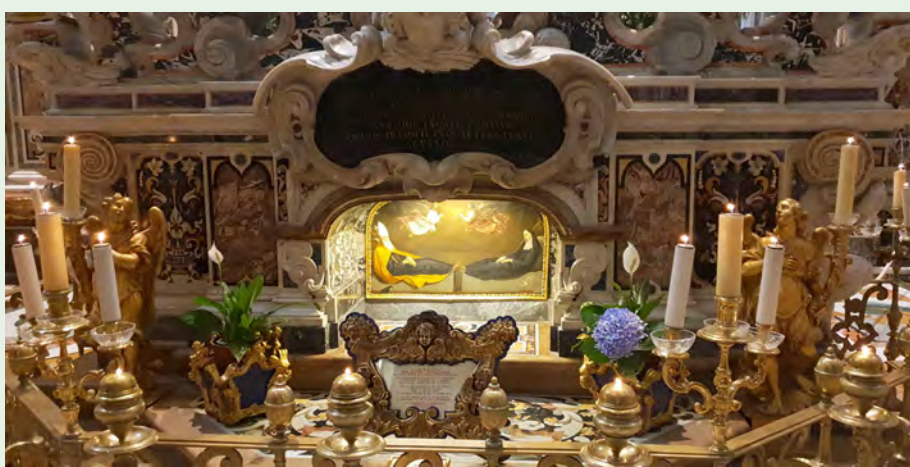


*St Benedict's, Subiaco*

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, our second day in the Vatican, was spent in the Vatican Museums. Thanks to our friend Fr Nicola of "Musei Vaticani, Reparto Etnologico" (which houses the New Norcia Aboriginal artefacts) who arranged special entry enabling us to skip the 2-5 hour queue. Carmel kindly hired English commentary headphones for us and we spent hours gazing in wonder at the marvellous galleries and exhibitions of Greek and Roman antiquities, along with Egyptian artefacts, again learning so much about not only the history of the Church but of the world. How thrilled we were to bump into Fr Nicola as we were making our way through the Raphael Rooms, an opportunity to thank him personally for his kindness. The highlight, of course, was the Sistine Chapel with its magnificent Michelangelo ceiling.

### *Free Day*

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> was a free day for walking, shopping, and eating. Back on the Metro A Line we alighted at Spagna climbing the Spanish steps for Mass at the church of Trinità dei Monti. The morning was spent gently strolling through the Villa Borghese, one of Rome's largest parks. It was my intention to show Jody and Carmel the renowned art collection in the Borghese



*The tomb of St Benedict and St Scholastica, Monte Cassino*

Gallery, but I was not aware that this, like so many sites in Rome, requires pre-booking. In the mood for more walking we walked all the way to Piazza Novona for yet another memorable meal...made extra memorable by Carmel's excessive consumption of garlic. Jody and I attempted to lose her for the rest of the day as we strolled through the Via dei Coronari, the historic centre of the antique trade, but she and the garlic kept catching up with us. Carmel and Jody clicked into Italian fashion mode indulging in some serious shopping along the way. In the evening we took the opportunity for some personal quiet time, although there is some evidence of Carmel and Jody being serenaded to in a local bar near the Domus.

### *Subiaco and Monte Cassino*

Integral to our professional development study tour were the two major Benedictine sites close to Rome: Subiaco and Monte Cassino, which we visited on two separate day trips. On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> leaving busy Rome behind, we negotiated Line B of the Metro to catch a coach to Subiaco from Ponte Mammolo. After a slight mishap of travelling in the wrong direction we ventured into the beautiful Italian country side eventually arriving in Subiaco in Lazio, central Italy, 40 kilometres from Tivoli alongside the river Aniene and were met by Antonella, our driver and private guide for the day. Upon arrival at Saint Scholastica's, the larger of two monasteries on this site, we were greeted by Dom Maurizio who joined us for the day. Beginning with an excellent display of ancient monastic manuscripts, including one of the oldest known editions of the Rule of St Benedict, we toured the monastic church (after the opulent churches of Rome, we appreciated its relative simplicity), the cloisters, and many areas of this monastery not usually opened to the public. We were pleased that Antonella and Dom Maurizio accepted our invitation to join us for lunch, which we enjoyed in a new hilltop restaurant overlooking the town of Subiaco specialising in local cuisine –

the handmade pasta and the local beef smoked at the table were delicious. After lunch we made our way to Sacro Speco, the monastery set into the mountain rock with the cave of St Benedict at its heart. Here we sat, read from the Rule of Saint Benedict and prayed for New Norcia. This was a significant moment for all of us – a sense of St Benedict drawing us into his presence. The tour continued with explanations of the beautiful painted murals throughout this monastic gem depicting the life and miracles of Saint Benedict. We particularly enjoyed being shown the unique painting of the Last Supper in the monks' original refectory, the cellar, and much besides. Overwhelmed by another full and rich experience we stayed close to Domus in the evening, dining in a neighbourhood restaurant full of locals.

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> – the feast of Saint Benedict – we took the train to Cassino 130 km from Rome in the Latin Valley of the Province of Frosinone, enjoying spectacular views of fields of sunflowers and various crops, rolling green hills, and little mountain top villages. Missing one of the three daily buses up to Monte Cassino, we took a taxi up the mountain and were once again met by a private tour guide who gave an excellent tour of this most significant Benedictine site – the splendid cloisters, the cell of Saint Benedict where he wrote the Rule, the spectacular church with over a hundred types of marble, the tomb of Saint Benedict and his twin sister Saint Scholastica, the museum and the breathtaking views. We were fascinated by the history of this monastery, which has survived and mostly rebuilt after several invasions, an earthquake, and a bombing. Perhaps this has something to say about the stability and the importance of the monastic tradition through the ages. We had the added



*The Place of Benedict's cell where he wrote the Rule, Monte Cassino*



*Benedictine monastery, San Giorgio, Venice.*



Venice

pleasure of being able to say hello to Abbot Donato, whom we spotted along the way. We spent our last evening in Rome at my friend Pietro's Ristorante Zeus on the Via Nazionale, and of all things, a Guinness at the Irish Pub.

### Venice

The final days of our Italian adventure were a source of pure joy in the romantic city of Venice, the capital of northern Italy's Veneto region. After another scenic four-hour train journey from Rome on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> we were met by Fr Mauro of Praglia Abbey (40 km from Venice), who spent five months in New Norcia last year. After taking us back to the island monastery of San Giorgio we had lunch (they are blessed with an amazing cook) and a laudate

with the community. Fr Mauro then took us on a tour of the site, much of which is now an Institute for the Arts. The abbey church was hosting an exhibition of contemporary Irish artist Sean Scully and we were given a special tour of the exhibition and each given a copy of the complete catalogue of his works. That evening we were taken to dinner in Venice to a stunning waterside restaurant by Abbot Norberto, Abbot Bruno and Fr Mauro. It is here that Jody had the dish of the day – dessert crepes flambéed at the table.

After joining the community for Lauds and Mass, the whole of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> was spent touring the narrow cobble stoned alleyways and canals of Venice. Fr Mauro showed us beautiful churches, including San Marco (the most famous),

many of which contain paintings of renowned Italian Renaissance painters such as Giovanni Bellini. We also visited galleries and the famous fish market, and enjoyed one of the best pizzas during our trip. Needless to say, we all fell in love with Venice.

When we latched the front door of San Giorgio on Sunday morning the 13<sup>th</sup> July we knew our time in Italy had come to an end. It was a time of learning and laughter, of enrichment and encouragement, of Aperol Spritz and gelato, of losing hats and missing trains, of food and friendship, of history and inspiration, of wonder and prayer, of gratitude and blessing.

TEXT: Abbot John Herbert OSB

PHOTOS: Jody Burness & Carmel Murray

## The Hotel all Powered-Up

The New Norcia Hotel had solar panels installed in July. With the installation of 66\* EGing 300w solar panels on its roof, along with a 15kw Mass energy inverter, the Hotel is the first building in the town to go GREEN. The project took two days to complete.

The work was completed by Continuum Solar from Canning Vale. Interestingly enough this company rents the solar panels to the purchaser for a period of five years after which time you own them, this is helpful as there are no set up costs. So far the system has reduced the Hotel's energy use by fifty percent! Any excess energy created is put back into the grid.



## Abbot Bernard Settled In

On 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 Abbot Bernard Rooney moved to the new purpose built retirement facility run by Little Sisters of the Poor, in Perth. Since being there he has started painting again. He is pictured here with his first pastel painting 'Still Life with Flowers'.

He has also been entertaining other residents and guests with his 20 song repertoire on the mandolin. Next month he will be receiving a hybrid instrument between the mandolin and banjo, which has a totally different sound that he is looking forward to sharing.



# New Norcia Writers' Festival – August 24<sup>th</sup>

Reading together. . . . At first glance, a writers' festival seems the very antithesis of the double act of reading and writing.

Where one is public and performative, the other is private and personal. Where one asks us to go forth into the world, the other asks us to retreat from it and reach inside ourselves.

Yet communal worship and private devotion have always been two sides of the same coin.

On August 24<sup>th</sup> at our fifth festival, writer and spoken word artist Stephen Scourfield and percussionist Steve Richter perform the deeply powerful *Elsewhere*, Steve Hawke talks about his eagerly awaited new novel *Out of Time*. Amanda Curtin discusses her highly personal take on the life and art of WA artist Kate O'Connor while Bindy Pritchard talks about her debut short story collection *Fabulous Lives*. Operatic baritone Robert Hofmann and pianist Tomasso Pollio present German art sung in the original and in English translation in their provocative presentation, *Lust in Translation*.

The irrepressible Jon Doust discusses the timely reissue of his classic memoir, *Boy on a Wire* and poet and essayist Annamaria Weldon performs and speaks about her poetry and the world that gave birth to it.

Dr Michael Levitt is in conversation with Dr Michelle Johnston,

discussing Levitt's popular guide to gut health, *The Happy Bowl*.

Come and share words and music across eight sessions running as two concurrent groups of four, in the atmospheric chapels, halls and other spaces of this beautiful community.

Enjoy a complimentary wine tasting by Bindoon Estate's Nick Humphry and either book a lunch at the New Norcia Hotel, purchase a picnic hamper, or bring your own picnic.

For more information and bookings go to [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au). However with only a week left to secure the remaining tickets – please don't delay!



A performance in St Ildephonsus' College Chapel at a previous New Norcia Writers' Festival

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## Annual Institute Day 2019

This year's Annual Institute Day presented a wonderful selection of unique insights and experiences to participants, and generated much lively discussion and deep reflection. Our first speaker, Fr. Araliya Jayasundara, OSB, a Benedictine monk from Sri Lanka, of the Sylvestrine congregation, examined the distinction between scholastic theology and monastic theology. In particular, he argued that monastic theology, based upon contemplation and willing to go beyond the limits of rational discourse, offered much that was relevant, and indeed necessary to, the modern Church and the modern world.

Our second speaker, Dr. Anna Silvas, a world authority on Greek and Syriac patristic studies, shared her own exciting adventures in searching for the physical site of St. Basil the Great's monastic retreat, in Asia Minor (or modern Turkey). Following a superb lunch, which was enriched by fine food and inspired conversation, there was a talk on the work of Padre Antonio Soler, a Spanish monk, composer and harpsichord virtuoso of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and a performance of some of his musical works. Overall, the day was enjoyed by all who attended, and generated a most enthusiastic response.



Fr Robert's recital at the Institute Day

# Roadhouse Upgrades

The Roadhouse welcomed an upgrade in recent weeks with the installation of a sub-soil drain last week across the rear of the building. The work was carried out by Pavemix, with the assistance of New Norcia's Maintenance and Grounds team.



The caravan parking area

The aim of the sub-soil drain is to stop water entering the Roadhouse once the surrounding ground is saturated from winter rains.

The project required a 50 metre long trench across the rear of the Roadhouse to a depth of 800mm by 300mm wide. A Megafluo Panel Drain System, manufactured by Geofabrics, was then laid in the trench, followed by 300mm of aggregate. A second layer of clean sand was then applied, followed by 150mm of crushed limestone and 25mm of asphalt.

The caravan parking area, directly north of the Roadhouse, was also upgraded with the laying and levelling of 50 tonnes of gravel from Bindoon. This work was completed by Pavemix while onsite. This work will greatly improve parking for caravans.



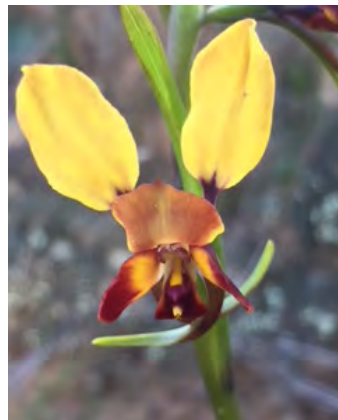
Sub-soil drainage

# Orchids Around Town

The orchid family is the largest plant family. It has a total diversity of over 25,000 species which equates to almost 10% of flowering plants. In Western Australia there are over 400 recognised species. Here are a few I have discovered this season around New Norcia. By Melanie George



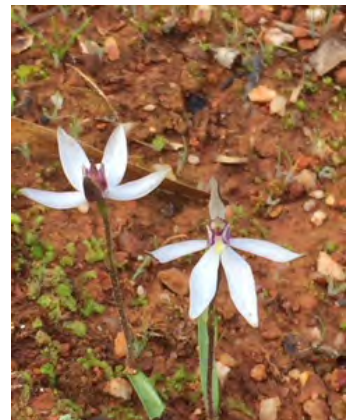
Blue Bearded Fairy Orchid



Donkey Orchid



Red Spider Orchid



Sugar Orchid

# 2020 New Norcia Calendar

Next year's New Norcia calendar is now available!

Each month is a glance into a locally made New Norcia product and includes fascinating information about its history.

The calendar includes liturgical dates, school term dates, public holidays and dates of importance - with plenty of space to add your notes.

It is available for \$12.00, with all proceeds helping to maintain, renovate and enhance New Norcia's heritage.

