RESPONDING PASTORALLY TO
THE AGEING POPULATION:
WITH A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR CLERGY AND LAY PASTORAL WORKERS

This thesis is presented for the degree of
Research Masters (with training)

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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ABSTRACT

The increased longevity in contemporary western society is impacting on many service and caring organisations in that they are needing to find ways of responding to the increasing number of older persons who need support. The Church is not immune from this as statistics demonstrate that the age demographic within the Church is rapidly changing to include many more older persons. However, evidence is strong that the Church to date has not been as alert as it could have been to the implications of the ageing population, nor has it been awake to the potential available within adult ministry. Therefore scholars and gerontologists are strident in their attempts to wake the Church from its slumber with respect to responding to the ageing population.

The impetus of this research was to determine how alert the Anglican Diocese of Perth is to this rapidly increasing age demographic, and how well equipped its clergy and lay pastoral workers are to respond to the increasing number of older persons both within the Church and within society. To achieve this, a survey was conducted amongst a selection of clergy and lay pastoral workers in the Diocese of Perth. As part of the survey, comments were sought from participants on how important they believed training in ministry to older persons was for them, and what factors would enable and encourage them to attend training in this area.

The literature reviewed for this research, the survey results, and the ensuing discussion combine to underline the need for ministry to older persons to be taken seriously by the Church. As a way of stimulating interest, and equipping clergy and lay pastoral workers, in the area of pastoral care of older persons, this thesis provides the structure of a training programme that it is envisaged will be offered to the Anglican Diocese of Perth.
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