



The
Carmelites
Australia & Timor-Leste
PRAYER • COMMUNITY • SERVICE

28 SEP 2023

Dear Supporters of the Carmelite Library,

FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE CARMELITE LIBRARY

As you would be aware the Provincial Council has been considering the future of the Carmelite Library for a number of years. Recent decisions have included a reduction in the library's operating hours from the start of 2021, and the appointment of an Interim Library Board to determine the optimal pathway forward.

Whilst funding remains an issue of concern, of greater interest to the Council is the need to repurpose and reactivate the Library so that this significant resource might better serve the spirituality scholars and seekers of the future, wherever they might be located.

I am writing to advise you that, following long consideration, the Interim Library Board has advised the Provincial Council that the Carmelite Library is not sustainable in its current form, and has recommended that the current library campus at Middle Park be placed into the care and operational oversight of the University of Divinity.

The University has allocated a staff team who will manage the Carmelite Library from OCT 2023 until DEC 2024. During this time the University team will work with the Carmelite Library Interim Board to collaboratively develop recommendations as to the most appropriate long-term structure for the library operation. This ongoing and evolving discussion will include consideration of the following key issues:

- "Right-sizing" the collection by removing materials that are not part of the three key focus areas of the Carmelite Library (Spirituality, Mariology & Carmelitana)
- The appropriate protection and housing of the rare books collection
- The potential role of digitisation in preserving and extending access to library resources
- The most suitable long-term home for the core collection (i.e. that is compatible with the Carmelites' vision for this ministry, is cost-effective, professionally managed, secure and highly accessible).

For clarity, I note that:

- The Carmelite Library collection remains, at this stage, the property (and spiritual patrimony) of the Province.
- The long-term disposition of the collection is subject to ongoing discernment during this process, but may include: The University of Divinity, other Australian Catholic institutions, other international Carmelite libraries, the current site and/or Timor-Leste.
- Maintaining access to the collection for Carmelites, scholars, students and members of the public is acknowledged as a key priority moving forward.

LIBRARIAN ROLE

Our current Librarian, Philip Harvey, has served the Carmelite Library for over 18 years, and has been a great resource for visitors to the Middle Park campus. The Province is exceptionally grateful to Philip for his thoughtful leadership of this important Ministry over these years, and wishes him well in his future endeavours.

Details for Philip's farewell will be communicated separately.

LIBRARY ACCESS MOVING FORWARD

In order to allow time for the University Library team to prepare for this next stage, the Carmelite Library will be closed to the public from THU 28 SEP 2023 until the end of January 2024.

If you wish to BORROW resources during this period, you can arrange to do so by emailing librarian@carmelitelibrary.org with the details of the requested resource. Resources can be provided by post or can be picked up from the Mannix Library (278 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne).

If you wish to RETURN resources during this period, you can hand-deliver to the Provincial Office (75 Wright St, Middle Park) or you can hand-deliver (or post suitably wrapped and protected materials) to the Mannix Library (278 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne).

Further announcements in respect of ongoing access arrangements will be announced prior to the Library re-opening in February 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS

Should you wish to communicate with the new library management team the best option would be via the existing email address librarian@carmelitelibrary.org

Should you wish to discuss any element of the current project, including future long-term possibilities, these conversations can be directed, in the first instance, to the Provincial Business Manager, Mr Joe Konynenburg at businessmanager@carmelites.org.au, or 03 9699 1922.

IN CLOSING

I thank you for your interest in, and support of, the Carmelite Library to date, and I hope that you are able to join us on these important next steps in the life of this significant asset of the Australian Catholic community.

Yours gratefully,



Bruce Clark O.Carm
Prior Provincial