

History of the Australian National Prayer Breakfast

The first Australian National Prayer Breakfast was held in Canberra in 1986.

The Australian National Prayer Breakfast is based on the leadership taken by the USA. At the end of World War II, the incumbent US President Dwight Eisenhower joined with the Members of the Congress and Senate to invite men and women from all walks of life to gather for the first National Prayer Breakfast. This Washington Prayer Breakfast has been held every year since. It is hosted by each incumbent President and supported by a multi-party group of Members of both the Congress and the Senate.

The original idea behind the Washington Prayer Breakfast was a simple one: that people who exercised national leadership needed to be reminded of both their responsibilities and privileges before God. In addition, the founders of the Breakfast shared a conviction that the problems of the world were growing increasingly complex and that they needed the help of Almighty God more than ever.

Over the years men and women from around the world have travelled to Washington D.C. for the Breakfast and have returned home inspired. Consequently gatherings of concerned people around the world have grown out of the original seed planted in Washington D.C. and today there are Prayer Breakfasts held in over fifty nations of the world.

The Prayer Breakfast Movement is not organised or controlled by a particular doctrine or set of rules. The simplest description of the hope can be found in these words of Jesus when asked what was the greatest command:

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
(Matthew 22:37-40 NIV)

The Australian National Prayer Breakfast seeks to affirm the importance of this singular hope: *that the problems of the world can only be solved as we genuinely learn to love our neighbour.* Jesus' teaching on the Good Samaritan illustrates to us that our neighbour is everyone we meet who is in need, whether they share our particular conviction and values or not.

When we pray, we are reminded of our own frailties, our need for forgiveness and of the solemn responsibility of using power for the benefit of others. The hope of the National Prayer Breakfast is that men and women in public service will discover a new strength through the friendship and

care of the followers of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that they will know God's wisdom and strength in all their work.

For almost a decade, the organisation of the National Prayer Breakfast was undertaken by a team led by Jock Cameron, supported by a bipartisan group of Members and Senators. Throughout this period, the Prayer Breakfast has grown to a significant event, attracting more than 500 participants in the welcome service, the breakfast and seminars.

The first Parliamentary Chaplain, Rev Peter Rose, has supported the Prayer Breakfast for over 15 years. Peter's wisdom and insight has been invaluable in keeping the Prayer Breakfast vital and alive in the midst of the parliamentary cycle. In 2016, Rev Eric Burton commenced as the Parliamentary Chaplain. Eric's support and participation in the Prayer Breakfasts and Ecumenical Services for the commencement of parliament have been greatly valued.

Since 2016 Leon Hribar has been supporting the Prayer Breakfast which has for the first time become simultaneously live streamed across Australia. Leon commenced as Parliamentary Chaplain in 2023 and chairs the National Prayer Breakfast Organising Committee.