

SNF 5.2 Article

Justin Lawman

Like every country and people group on earth Australia has its own culture. Culture is best understood as the attitudes we hold and actions we take without thinking about it. Our culture has some traits that are so wonderful it makes me proud to be an Australian. Giving everyone a fair go, treating everyone as equals despite their social status, etc. You get the idea.

But then we come to religion, Australian culture is not so helpful. Australia's cultural landscape is a fascinating paradox. While the nation is increasingly sceptical of organised religion, it holds a deep appreciation for community-driven initiatives that uplift and support its people. This dynamic is particularly evident in regional areas as has been demonstrated in recent times through the work being done in the SNSW Conference through Adventist Community Services (ACS), which has had a tangible impact on communities.

By aligning with Australia's secular yet service-oriented ethos, ACS demonstrates how faith-based organisations can thrive in a society that values action over dogma.

Australia's relationship with religion has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades. The 2021 Australian Census revealed that nearly 40% of Australians reported "no religion," up from 22% in 2011, while Christianity, once dominant, dropped to 44% from 61% in the same period. This decline reflects a broader cultural shift toward secularism, particularly among younger generations, who often view organized religion as rigid, hierarchical, or out of touch with modern values. It is our intention that ACS will change this perspective. That through the work we do with ACS we can show people how to have a relationship with a loving, caring God. The God of the bible.

SNSW Youth

Rangi Eiao

The autumn season has been a blessing for the SNSW's youth ministry.

In May our Adventures met in Wagga Wagga for Adventurer worship day to be reminded that Jesus is our lighthouse and that we can all be light house keepers pointing to Jesus.







Pathfinder Expedition

Also in May our pathfinders were challenged when they embarked on the Pathfinder expedition enduring through the night and day. The challenge reminded Pathfinders of how God wants to walk with us through whatever valley or parched land we are in. He is the spring of living water.







Western Youth Muster

The annual Western Youth muster was held over the June long weekend in Narromine. Our youth were reminded of the privilege we all have in sharing bible truth to others. We thank Brett and Leanne for allowing us to have a spiritual blessing on their property.

A big thank you as well to all local church leaders who journey with children and youth to prepare them for a life lived with Jesus.



L- R: NNSW Youth Ministries director Ashley Smith, NNSW Young Adults Ministries director Blair Lemke and SNSW Youth director Rangi Eiao







2025 Jindabyne Women's Retreat

Ruth Rawson (Albury SDA Church)



Albury ladies who hosted the event



All attendees of the 2025 Jindabyne Women's Retreat

On 30th May - 1st June, the ladies from Albury SDA Church hosted the 2025 Women's Retreat. Women from Queensland, South Australia and Victoria as well as over eighteen NSW locations met together to share, pray and worship. Ladies from all walks of life and other denominations including the Baptist Church, the Jewish Messianic Church and other faiths all joined in and were welcome additions to this spirit filled weekend.

The theme for this year was "Stillness in His presence" and the focus was on how to pray with power to our loving God. Guest speaker, Lindy Sperring, took a series of presentations to lead the ladies into a more meaningful prayer life.

This year's charity was for the Albury/Wodonga Carevan which helps to feed the homeless and disadvantaged. A silent auction took place on Saturday night with donated items and on Sunday a beautiful artwork painted by Albury Artist Judy Savage raised significant funds.

The weekend not only fed the soul but also allowed for creative interaction and relaxation. Various workshops included the making of personalised promised boxes, prayer journals, card making and scrapbooking. There was a hair tutorial, hand and neck massages and plenty of room to sit and chat. The musical concert on Sabbath afternoon was an extra highlight.

Already people are saving the date for the next retreat on May 29-31, 2026 which will be hosted by the Ladies of South Canberra church. Plan to come along and be blessed!



Speaker Lindy Sperring (left) and Artist Judy Savage (right)

Three SNSW Principals Honoured for Decade of Service

Chris Chapman

On May 13 -15, Adventist education leaders from across New Zealand and Australia gathered in Adelaide, South Australia, for a landmark educational leaders conference centred on the theme “Flourishing Adventist Schools”.

Three principals from the SNSW conference were recognised at this event. Over the past ten years, Debbie Robertson (Narromine Christian School), Bree Hills (Canberra Christian School) and Jodie McDonald (Border Christian College and Kempsey Adventist School) have guided our SNSW schools with care and consistency, with God's grace. Debbie Robertson and Bree Hills continue to lead their respective schools in SNSW, fostering environments where students and staff can thrive. Jodie McDonald, who left her SNSW principal role to take on new responsibilities in the NNSW conference, made lasting contributions during her tenure in Albury. Together, their efforts have strengthened SNSW schools, creating supportive spaces for mission, learning and growth.

Adventist Schools Australia noted during the ceremony that SNSW’s prominence in the awards highlights a culture of enduring leadership, setting a standard for others to follow.



L-R Jodie McDonald, Debbie Robertson and Bree Hills

Adventist Community Services

Kelli Thomson Jones

In May a group of 30 Adventist Community Services (ACS) volunteers from the SNSW conference travelled to Kempsey, Port Macquarie, and Taree to provide much needed assistance.

The volunteers came from all parts of the conference including Canberra, Albury, Bowral, Parkes, Orange, Griffith, Dubbo and other places, ready for the clean-up, bringing with them supplies which included tools for the clean-up, nappies, food and water.

Pastor Kyle Morrison commented that “The Adventist Church should be known as a community that loves, cares and shows up when it matters most. In South NSW we can be the change we want to see, and show up to assist other communities, churches and conferences in times of need”.

Pastor Jafi Mariner commented that “The need was great! I underestimated just how badly impacted they were. The very first house we visited, we found that the people had not eaten for a day”

One thing that is great about ACS is that there is a space for everyone to serve....not everyone can preach, not everyone can sing... but anyone can pick up a shovel and wear the banner of the Adventist church proudly.



Commitment to Child Safety

"He has shown you, O man, what is good;

and what does the Lord require of you but to act justly,

to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

—Micah 6:8

The Australian Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, at its recent Executive Committee meeting, reaffirmed its commitment to the Australian National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Grounded in the sacred calling of Micah 6:8, the Seventh-day Adventist Church remains focused on protecting the dignity and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable adult. This commitment is not only a legal or organisational duty—it reflects God's heart for justice, compassion, and humble leadership.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia aims to foster child safety by promoting transparent governance, risk management, education, and the empowerment of children and families, following the ten national principles. While the Church has been vigilant on this issue since 2000, this marks a clear step forward in creating a Church community where all are safe, heard, and valued.

Pastor Terry Johnson formally called on Conference Presidents, church leaders, executive committees, church and school boards to:

1. Sign the Statement of Commitment to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

2. Display the signed Statement of Commitment in the foyer or office of churches and schools.

3. Apply and integrate the principles throughout all aspects of church or school activities.

4. Promote a child safe culture within your church or school.

5. Remind first-time ministry leaders and individuals in child-related roles that they are required to attend Code of Conduct training. Others must renew their training every three years and sign the **updated Code of Conduct aligned to the national principles.**

For more information about signing the commitment for your church or school please visit the Adsafe website





Digital Media content creator

Hi everyone,

My name is Jahnneric Afele, born and raised in Penrith, Sydney.

I am currently creating content for the South New South Wales Conference and Adventist Community Services. My main scope is to present and curate external facing content on social media platforms for Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. For the next 6 months we are building content episodes to help the public see what we do as a church to be a blessing in the community.

If your church has anything to share please reach out to me at: nericafele@adventist.org.au.



SOUTHLANDS

South New South Wales Conference

President
Justin Lawman

Editor
Kelli Thomson

Want to read or share news from your local church or ministry?... because we want to publish it! Please send us an email so we can work at getting your articles and photos published in the next conference newsletter.

Email Soutlands Newsletter at
snswcomms@adventist.org.au

Southlands Newsletter
The Southlands newsletter is a publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (South New South Wales Conference).

Phone (02) 6249 6822
Website www.snswadventist.org
Email snswpresident@adventist.org.au
Office 3 McKay Gardens, Turner, ACT, 2612

Seventh-day Adventist Church
South New South Wales



Seventh-day Adventist Church™

South New South Wales

HELP FUND FULL TIME BIBLE WORKERS

Help us unlock a workforce of passionate people who are ready to enter full time ministry

BECOME A BIBLE WORKER

OR DONATE NOW

YOU CAN USE THE 'SNSW BIBLE WORKER FUND' IN E-GIVING OR CONTACT THE OUTREACH TEAM AT:

SNSWCOMMS@ADVENTIST.ORG.AU

www.snswadventist.org

(02) 6249 6822