



The Encourager



Print Post 10003358 Summer 2023 - Number 116 Magazine of the Newcastle Cursillo Movement



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



SECRETARIAT DIRECTORY

DIOCESAN CO-LAY DIRECTORS:	Lorraine Phillips Email: lorraine.phillips@bigpond.com	0419 277 294
	Geoff Wooden Email: geoff.wooden@bigpond.com	0417 678 433

DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR	Reverend Mark Cooper Email: markcooper1969@hotmail.com	0409 828 006
--------------------------------	---	--------------

DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL ADVISER	Reverend Judy Walsh Email: brianjudywalsh@gmail.com	0417 434 686
-------------------------------	--	--------------

CONTACT INFORMATION

ROLL COORDINATOR	David Marsh Email: vortexmaster@bigpond.com	0417 064 990
------------------	--	--------------

EDITOR	Susie Foster Email: encourager@cursillonewcastle.org.au	0478 633 766
--------	---	--------------

CURSILLO WEB	www.cursillonewcastle.org.au	
--------------	--	--

CURSILLO WEBMASTER	Jim Warland Email: jbee@bigpond.com	02 4957 6060 0408 291 395
-----------------------	--	------------------------------

PALANCA COORDINATOR	Robyn Timp Email: rctimp9@gmail.com	02 4363 1282 0408 253 461
------------------------	---	------------------------------

NEWCASTLE ANGLICAN CURSILLO ADDRESS	PO Box 174 WARATAH NSW 2298	
---	--------------------------------	--

SECRETARY	Lyn Wickham Email: lynjwick@gmail.com	0423 671 377
-----------	--	--------------

TREASURER	Nicole Sargent Email: hunterbookkeeping@outlook.com	
-----------	---	--

FOURTH DAY/ APPLICATIONS/ PROMOTION	Liz O'Sullivan Email: liz266@gmail.com	02 4952 3963 0419 485 511
---	---	------------------------------

SERVANT COMMUNITY COORDINATORS	Sue Royal Email: suroy60@bigpond.com	
	Wendy Sneddon Email: twoseddons@hotmail.com	

PRAYER CHAIN COORDINATOR	Reverend Alison Wooden Email: alisonwooden@bigpond.com	0418 630 856
-----------------------------	---	--------------

PROCTOR/ COPYRIGHT COORDINATOR	Brian Taylor Email: btay8438@yahoo.com.au	0433 662 468
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FROM OUR DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

FR MARK COOPER



In the Victorian times fairy tales and Shakespearean plays were edited to take the more risqué parts out. I often think that over time our portrayal of angels has received the same treatment. Our images of angels in art and story are often of a beautiful ethereal winged female figure or strong armoured winged male figure.

This strikes me as contradictory to biblical encounters with angels. Invariably the first words out of their mouth to the person they are sent is “Do not be afraid”. This might be for one of two reasons. They might look so terrifying that they need to reassure the person that they need not fear, or they know the next words out of their mouth will strike fear into the person’s very soul. Maybe it is a combination of the two.

The angel that the shepherds on the hillside encounter that first Christmas day starts with the, now very common, “Do not be afraid” and then tells them of the birth of the Messiah nearby in a manger.

This encounter is unconventional up for many reasons. A manger is no place for the Son of God to be born and shepherds are the last people to hear important news yet this is how Jesus starts his life on earth. It really is a matter of “Start how you mean to proceed”.

Jesus whole life then is one of subverting human expectations and favouring those that society pushes aside as worth less than the rest. Jesus constantly calls for justice for the weak and for us to beware of putting our trust in positions of power and privilege. His teachings are full of warnings that in the Kingdom the first will be last, and the last, first.



As we approach Christmas when we celebrate that birth that the shepherds from the hills came to witness we need to be mindful that we are the new angels of our community bringing the message that a baby born over two thousand years ago came to bring peace and justice for all.

De Colores

Fr Mark Cooper



MONTHLY CURSILLO PRAYER DIARY

Pray everyday for Bishop Peter
along with our Assistant Bishops Sonia and Charlie

- Day 1 National Lay Director - Lew Hitchick
- Day 2 National Secretary - Leanne Doyle; (National Secretary Elect - Kay Self)
- Day 3 National Treasurer - Margaret Brodie
- Day 4 National Episcopal Advisor - Bishop Ian Palmer
- Day 5 National Spiritual Advisor - Reverend Lee Weissel
- Day 6 National Webmaster - Shirley Tongue
- Day 7 World Cursillo Community
- Day 8 Diocesan Co-Lay Director - Lorraine Phillips
- Day 9 Diocesan Co-Lay Director - Geoff Wooden
- Day 10 Diocesan Spiritual Director - Reverend Mark Cooper
Diocesan Spiritual Advisor - Reverend Judy Walsh
- Day 11 Diocesan Secretary - Lyn Wickham
- Day 12 Diocesan Treasurer - Nicole Sargent
- Day 13 Fourth Day/Applications/Promotion - Liz O'Sullivan
- Day 14 Prayer Coordinator - Reverend Alison Wooden
- Day 15 Servant Community Coordinator - Wendy Sneddon
- Day 16 Servant Community Coordinator - Sue Royal
- Day 17 Diocesan Proctor and Copyright Coordinator - Brian Taylor
- Day 18 'The Encourager' Editor - Susie Foster
- Day 19 Palanca Coordinator - Robyn Timp
- Day 20 Central Coast - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Noeline Darcy
- Day 21 Lake Macquarie - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Brian Taylor
- Day 22 Maitland - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Reverend Wendy Brack
- Day 23 Paterson - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Cheryl Cooper
- Day 24 Manning - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - **Position vacant**
- Day 25 Upper Hunter - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Tony Farmer
- Day 26 Newcastle - Clergy, Servant Community; Deanery Contact - Fr Chris Bullock
- Day 27 Lay Director - W51 & M51 Lyn Wickham
- Day 28 Prayers for combined Cursillo man's and women's weekend
- Day 29 Prospective Sponsors and Potential Candidates
- Day 30 Fourth Day Community
- Day 31 Kairos, Torch and Kairos Outside/Inside/Juvenile

 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."
Colossians 4:2



Merry Christmas



FROM OUR DIOCESAN CO-LAY DIRECTOR

Noelene Lentfer

It has been my joy and pleasure to serve our loving God in this wonderful ministry as Co-Lay Director of Newcastle Diocesan Cursillo over these past 4 years.

When I commenced this position I was feeling very much out of my comfort zone but with much prayer and God's help I pray that I have served you well.

We have been challenged over this period with Covid, increasing costs and illness but we have come out the other side enjoying again face to face fellowship.

I give thanks to God for all the support I have received from my fellow members of Secretariat and Servant Community which enables Cursillo to work effectively.

I have enjoyed working along side two Co-Lay Directors Bill Nicole and Geoff Wooden during these four years and I offer my best wishes to Geoff and my replacement Lorraine Phillips for the tasks ahead.

Please pray for them as they serve Cursillo as Co-Lay Directors that the Holy Spirit will uphold them and give them vision as we move forward into 2024.

May the Holy Spirit continue to work within us as we support and encourage each other in Cursillo.

In Psalm 149:4 we are told that God takes great pleasure in His people of faith.

May all we continue do in Cursillo be pleasing in God's sight.

Many Blessings

De Colores

Noelene Lentfer

W 10



I was looking through past *Encouragers* for inspiration for this chat.

This is what I found:

**When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect
My flaws are all too visible
But God believes I'm worth it.**

And we are.

As we enter the secular silly season leading to Christmas it is worth remembering that. And that we are called to be a people of Hope, finding ways to share that hope with the silly season sufferers.

You are veterans and God's love has hit you between the eyes (well that was my experience of Cursillo, anyway). In your 4th Day journey, you have the opportunity to share that love, that hope—and the world today surely is a bit short on both.

Alison, in her Sermon for Advent 1 carrying the theme of Hope concluded that you never know what a smile or a wave might mean to someone. It occurs to me: "Naturally, because God is behind it".

De Colores and a Hopeful Christmas to all.

Geoff Wooden

NB: For the curious, the quote above comes from the Summer Encourager, 2014. Credited as thoughts by Carol Wimmer (Shared by Jim Warland).



Merry Christmas

Advent

THE SEASON OF HOPE AND EXPECTATION

1st: 3 December
2nd: 10 December
3rd: 17 December
4th: 24 December



Diary Dates for 2024

Men's and Women's 51: Lay Director: Lyn Wickham, August 22, 23, 24, 25,
Venue: Catalina

Commissioning Date: 25 May, Venue TBC

Training Days: 15 June, 19 June, 13 July, 27 July, 10 August @ Cardiff

Welcome Day: 14 September, Venue TBA

Secretariat Meetings New Lambton @7pm

6 February, 5 March, 2 April, 7 May, 4 June, 2 July, 6 August, 3 September, 1 October,
LD W/M 51 to attend 5 November,
Bishop attends 3 December for Christmas Tea.

Diocesan Events 2024

Men's Weekend: TBA

Women Celebrating our Faith: TBA

Diocesan Ultreya: National Conference, 26 and 27 October 2024. Details to follow.

Ultreya Dates 2024



These will be organised by the Servant Community and published in the next Encourager.



Other Dates

Easter: 31 March 2024

Long Weekend: 10 June 2024

FROM OUR
DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL ADVISER

REVEREND JUDY WALSH

Christmas Message

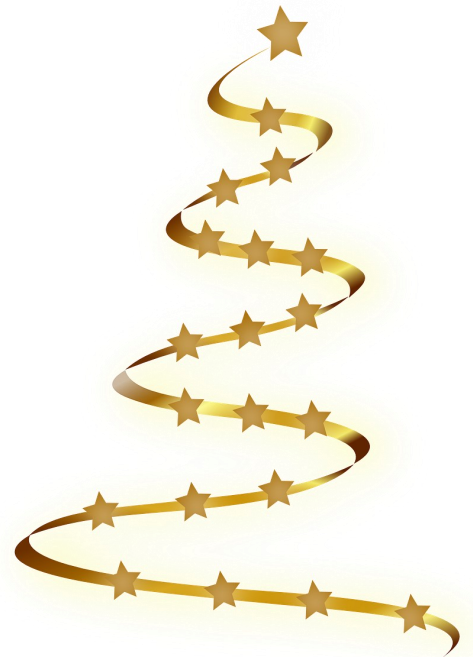
As one writer put it *“you don’t need candlelight and fireside glow to make Christmas happen—It’s HIM!”*

A parent attended a confirmation class for a teenage son. It was the fourth Sunday of Advent, so the teacher began the class with the lighting of the Advent wreath. After explaining that the fourth candle stands for Jesus, the teacher asked a boy to light the candle. Next a girl read, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.” Suddenly snickers came from the class as the flame started to go out.

The teacher prayed, “Lord, don’t let that flame go out. The symbolism is too important for these young people.”

All eyes watched as the flame slowly reversed itself and burned brightly.

What can I do to make the light of Christ burn more brightly in today’s darkness?





DIOCESAN ULTREYA REPORT 2023

The Diocesan Ultreya was held on the 4th November 2023 at St. Andrews Anglican Church Mayfield. 67 Cursillistas were in attendance.

The morning started with a cuppa, warm fellowship catching up with fellow Cursillistas. Father Mark welcomed everyone to the Ultreya. Bishop Peter also joined with us on this occasion and was welcomed and shared his message with us.

The Diocesan Co-Lay Directors Geoff and Noelene presented their Annual Report on the years activities. Included in this report were the outcomes and suggested changes discussed by National Secretariat. Noelene and Lorraine Phillips attended the meeting in Melbourne in October.

Bishop Peter spoke to the Ultreya before De Commissioning Noelene Lentfer as Diocesan Co-Lay Director and Colleen Read as Diocesan Treasurer. He thanked both for their service to Cursillo over the past 3 years.

Bishop Peter then Commissioned Lorraine Phillips as the new Diocesan Co-Lay Director, Sue Royal and Wendy Seddon as the incoming Servant Community Co-ordinators.

Lyn Wickham was Commissioned as Diocesan Lay Director of Men's and Women's 51 Cursillo.

Group Reunion followed and was a very talkative time. It was wonderful to see everyone engaging in the conversation.

To finish our time together Bishop Peter, Fr. Mark and Rev. Judy Walsh celebrated the Holy Eucharist.

We give thanks to John Hales for his wonderful leading with the music and to all who assisted in making the day the success that it was.

We now look forward to 2024 with excitement for what lies ahead.

Many Blessings

Noelene and Geoff

Co- Lay Directors

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Susie Foster

Dear Readers,

I hope this new issue finds you all well. As you may remember Noreen has resigned her position as Editor of *The Encourager* and I have volunteered to fill this role. I have big boots to fill and hope you will bear with me as I find my way.

I enjoy all the wonderful contributions each issue and hope that you will keep these coming. Any ideas for input to this publication: photos and reports from Ultreyas, book reviews, personal testimonies, prayers, poems and other items of interest are most welcome and I encourage you to share these with me.

As Noreen described *The Encourager* recently “This publication is for Cursillistas across the Diocese to encourage one another in their Christian faith and daily walk with Jesus. Sharing one another’s stories enables us to give praise to God in the joys and challenges, and to pray for one another in all circumstances”.



With this year drawing to a close, I wish you all some deserved rest and relaxation among all the festivities and last minute things to-do. I hope you will all have a lovely Christmas, regardless of how you celebrate, rejoicing in the wonder that is Christ’s nativity.

*Merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year*

Both ***The Encourager*** and the ***Newcastle Cursillo Guidelines*** are available on the Newcastle Cursillo Website www.cursillonewcastle.org.au

Receive your copy of *The Encourager* via email or by accessing the copy on the website.

Email the Editor, with news items or Deanery updates you wish to be included in *The Encourager* by emailing encouragr@cursillonewcastle.org.au.

Are your **contact details** correct? Email the Editor with any updates.



ULTREYA

KOTARA SOUTH 13 OCTOBER 2023

What a blessing Kotara South Ultreya was to the 25 people who attended (including folk from Medowie & Central Coast).

The singing and music on the night was led by Steve's IHS (In His Service) Band and was enthusiastic and worshipful.

An amazing witness talk, which was given by Eduardo Hernando, was followed by moving discussion and wise words from Fr Peter Anderson. Ed shared how God had been working in his life over the last few years. Business challenges (particularly through COVID) had been resolved, his business had been diversified, and he was very passionate about starting Scripture teaching in a local Primary School. (He, and his guitar, have proved most popular with the kids.)

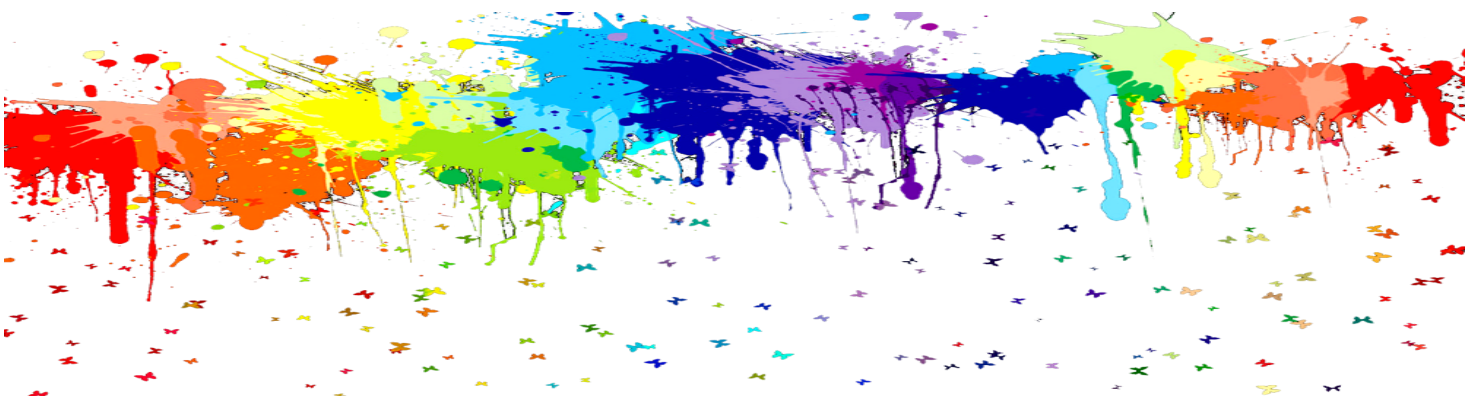
Probably the most significant part of his sharing was the knowledge of God's presence, His peace and the opportunity to witness to staff during a time in hospital because of a serious illness. We were inspired that Ed could praise and witness to God through it all.

He quoted the story of the talents from Matthew 25:14-29 and urged us not to be like the third person who was given one talent and who buried it in the ground. We must be trustworthy and use our talents for God's glory.

As is custom with our Cursillo functions, there was plenty of food and fellowship.

Praise God!

Jim Warland



Women Celebrating Our Faith September 9th 2023



Women Celebrating Our Faith was held on Saturday 9th September at All Saints A New Anglican Church New Lambton. It was a great day of fellowship and praise. Bishop Sonia was our guest for the day, which were all truly blessed by her presence.

There were 71 women from around our diocese. What a great witness the women made to our Lord through music and singing. Our Guest speaker for the morning session was Susan Ashley—Brown. Susan is a very talented musician and Music therapist, and has a private practice in Warner's Bay that offers music and art therapy.

Susan loves seeing music make a difference in people's lives, and shared with us the gift of music and how we can celebrate and sing with praise and thanksgiving through Dancing, movement, singing and praising our God. There was lots of chatter and singing and praising. Susan was assisted by the talented Donna McCann and Sarah Hardy.

Lunch was a great time of fellowship, meeting old and new friends. The afternoon session was another guest speaker Dorothy Tom. Dorothy shared with us how leadership in music has allowed her to see amazing changes in the lives of people.

Praising God releases God to do the work in the lives of His people. As we care and pray over the team, we are seeing God do amazing things in the lives of those around us.

We have seen healings, confidences being built, and an eagerness for God as their faith in God grows.

I would like to share the 7 Benefits of Praising God:

- Praise lifts your spirit
- Praise helps you sense God's presence
- Praise enlarges your perception of God
- Praise reveals solutions we can't see
- Praise helps us remember God's blessing
- Praise enlists God's protection
- Praise breaks chains and opens doors

Praise God for a wonderful day spent in the presence of our Lord and Saviour. Tentative date for WCOF 2024 is 7th September

Blessings Cheryl Cooper

**DIRECTORY OF DEANERIES,
DEANERY CONTACTS
&
PARISH CONTACTS**

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*Please notify
Diocesan Co-Lay Director's
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NEWCASTLE

DEANERY CONTACT Fr Chris Bullock Email: cbullock2@bigpond.com	4920 9787
Adamstown	POSITION OPEN
All Saints ANew Noelene Lentfer Email: noelenelentfer@bigpond.com	0410 798 562
Cathedral Kevin and Cath Claydon Email: claydonc@bigpond.com	4969 8368
Cooks Hill Noel Herbert Email: noelherbert2@bigpond.com	4969 3653
Hamilton Jenny Whiteman Email: jennifer.whiteman47@outlook.com	4968 3336
Kotara South Jim Warland Email: jbee@bigpond.com	4957 6060
Lambton Gail Iles Email: ddmgk@bigpond.com	4952 8002
Merewether Rosemary Allen Email: rjallen@exemail.com.au	0408 215 940
MICA Fr Mark Cooper Email: office@micaministries.com	49681620
Wallsend Neil McGregor Email: littlethertonneil@bigpond.com	4955 5487

MAITLAND

DEANERY CONTACT Reverend Wendy Brack Email: wbrack05@gmail.com	0409 045 202
Beresfield/Thornton Gail Orchard Email: ddglo@bigpond.com	4966 4450
Branxton/Lochinvar Sheila Turnbull Email: swildwoman@bigpond.com	0402 390 706
Cessnock Liz Meizer Email: anemeizer@bigpond.com	0435 941 266
Maitland	POSITION OPEN
Morpeth Elizabeth Archer Email: elizabeth.archer1983@gmail.com	4933 6980
Mt Vincent and Weston	POSITION OPEN
Telarah/Rutherford	POSITION OPEN
Wollombi Valley	POSITION OPEN

PATERSON

DEANERY CONTACT Cheryl Cooper Email: jimcheryl@bigpond.com	0412 140 296
Clarence Town Judy Schmitt Email: jschmitt6@bigpond.com	4988 6222
Dungog Margaret Jones Email: margaret@hvss.com.au	4992 1729
Gresford/Paterson	POSITION OPEN
Medowie/Mallabulla/Williamstown Sue Royal Email: suoy60@bigpond.com	4982 4058
Nelson Bay Cheryl Cooper Email: jimcheryl@bigpond.com	0412 140 296
Raymond Terrace Lorraine Phillips Email: lorraine.phillips2@bigpond.com	0419 277 294
Stockton Lynette Shrubbs Email: lynette.shrubbs@hotmail.com	4928 4130
Stroud	POSITION OPEN

MANNING

DEANERY CONTACT

POSITION OPEN

Bulahdelah/Tea Garden

POSITION OPEN

Forster/Tuncurry

Jennifer Paff 6555 7565

Gloucester

Gary Yates 0427 724 967
Email: garyjohn1968@gmail.com

Harrington/Coopernook

Roxanne Patterson 6556 1832
Email: roxann.patto@gmail.com

Taree

Kim and Peter Bussey 6550 1948
Email: kbussey@bigpond.net.au

The Camden Haven

POSITION OPEN

Wingham

POSITION OPEN

LAKE MACQUARIE

DEANERY CONTACT

Brian Taylor 0414 338 476
Email: btay8438@yahoo.com.au

East Lake Macquarie

Lesley Byrne 4947 0794
Email: bartbyrne@hotmail.com
Ruth McFarlane 0491 200 265
Email: ruthmcfarlande41@gmail.com

Cardiff

Lyn Wickham 0423 671 377
Email: lynjwick@gmail.com

Glenrock

Brian Taylor 0433 662 468
Email: btay8438@yahoo.com

Southlakes

Joe Barr 4917 6325
Email: jbarr40ster@gmail.com

Toronto

Bess Hunter 4959 2705
Email: aafuller1935@gmail.com

UPPER HUNTER

DEANERY CONTACT

Jan and Tony Farmer 6573 1150
Email: t.farmer3@icloud.com

Singleton

Jan and Tony Farmer 6573 1150
Email: t.farmer3@icloud.com

Denman

Toni Cummings 6547 5138
Email: antonia.cummings@activ8.net.au

Merriwa

Deidre Peebles 6548 2068
Email: deidre.peebles@bigpond.com

Murrurundi

Barbara Morgan 6546 6467
Email: bmo89264@bigpond.com

Muswellbrook

Jeanie West 6543 3116
Email: jeaniew1938@gmail.com

Scone

Jean Keeping 6545 2878
Email: jeankeeping@bigpond.com

CENTRAL COAST

DEANERY CONTACT

Noeline Darcy 0411 202 739
Email: n.darcy@bigpond.com

Bateau Bay

Cate Ewin 0419 463 780
Email: catheine.ewin@health.nsw.gov.au

Gosford

Reverend Val McDonald 4322 3689
Email: melbeth1@bigpond.com

Kincumber

David Marsh 0417 064 990
Email: vortexmaster@bigpond.com

Lakes Anglican

Noeline Darcy 0411 202 739
Email: n.darcy@bigpond.com

Terrigal

Libby Harvey 4325 4568
Email: lharvey@tpg.com.au

The Entrance

Reverend Don Grace 4332 7670
Email: donaldgrace@bigpond.com

Toukley

Ann Watt 0419 249 082

Woy Woy

POSITION OPEN

Wyoming

Joan Christie 4325 4176
Email: fj.christie@bigpond.com

Wyang

Leonie Toovey 0400 382 439
Email: leonie.toovey6@bigpond.com



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or approximately one (1) page, if typing use simple formatting.

The Editor: encourager@cursillonewcastle.org.au

WEBSITE

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