Temperature Control for Holy Rosary Church

Our Parish has a duty of care to provide parishioners and the general public who make use of Holy Rosary church with a comfortable and functional environment twelve months of the year. A significant volume of cross-flow air circulation was lost when protective Perspex screens were installed over the very valuable reconditioned stained-glass windows. Prior to this installation, vandalism was a significant contributor to the damage done to the stained-glass windows. The Parish Finance Committee has, over recent years, considered building cooling options such as:

- Specific landscaping;
- Heat extractors;
- Large fans suspended from the ceiling;
- Wall-mounted air conditioning units, and a
- Ducted air conditioning system.

The footprint of Holy Rosary church does not lend itself to landscaping which could add any significant cooling effect to the interior of the building. Heat extractors were installed several years ago but have proved to be relatively ineffective. Large ceiling fans were considered however, from an aesthetic point of view, there is considerable reluctance to use this option. Wall-mounted air conditioning units would be very unmanageable, noisy and could be classed as a “domestic” solution to an “industrial” problem.

Hence, for the past two years or more, your Parish Finance Committee has been working through a responsible decision-making process which is a protracted one, but, as a very wise friend once told me: “enjoy the process!” Your Parish Finance Committee has set a steady, but time-consuming discernment course regarding the possible ducted air conditioning of Holy Rosary church. Apart from the financial considerations, it has always been of prime importance to keep parishioners fully informed.

Over the past years, we have held at least two consultation meeting with parishioners regarding this project. The last opportunity for Parishioner feedback was at the open Finance Committee meeting in March this year. At that meeting, the support for the air conditioning of Holy Rosary was very positive. Since then, we have continued to consult with our project manager from Geared Project Engineering Pty Ltd. Tim Muller is the principal Mechanical & Electrical Engineer at Geared Project Engineering, and he has designed for Holy Rosary an air conditioning system using the latest cost-saving technology.

In parallel to this, we are consulting with GEM Energy regarding the possible installation of solar panels at Holy Rosary. GEM have installed solar panels at all major Diocesan Catholic Education sites over recent years, and this year they have been contracted by our Bishop’s Office to install solar panels on many buildings throughout

the Rockhampton Diocese. Our Parish solar installation at Rossolini Place was completed earlier this month, and is now feeding power back into the grid, and providing the Parish with much-welcomed savings on energy costs.

Part of our due diligence with the Holy Rosary air conditioning project is to take into account the electricity costs, which Geared Project Engineering have calculated to be $6,937 per annum. The solar panels we are considering for Holy Rosary will generate enough power to cover all energy consumption on the site. Annual maintenance costs of a new ducted air conditioning system are estimated to be $1,500.

The current status of this project is that our application for the expenditure approval is with the Bishop's Office in Rockhampton. While we are waiting for the Bishop's response to this application, we want to provide you with another opportunity to become fully informed and to provide us with your opinions. Please feel free to contact me on my email norm.whyte@rok.catholic.net.au with your feedback.

We will keep you fully informed as we continue to work through this matter.

Norm Whyte, Parish Business Manager