



**uniting  
church**

in Australia,  
Synod NSW & ACT

## **TRANSCRIPT OF THE MODERATOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2013**

The Prime Minister's announcement that the troops in Afghanistan would be home for Christmas strikes a chord in all who have experienced separation from family and friends at important times.

Ironically, this happens a time when many are experiencing the opposite of homecoming. These include those who have lost their houses in the bushfires, the homeless on our streets and in cheap motels, and refugees whose homes have been made unlivable by conflict or persecution. Nor should we forget the wild creatures of the earth, losing their habitats to the rapacious drive to dig, strip and exploit the natural environment for human profit.

Jesus and his family knew the acute discomfort of a "no vacancy" sign on the inn at the end of an arduous journey, and the plight of the refugee as they fled to Egypt to escape persecution at home.

We all value deeply the safety and security of home, and in this fortunate land, most are able to enjoy these advantages. What a great Christmas it would be for all if we were to soften our hearts and open our communal purse strings, creating more places for the homeless, welcoming refugees into the community, and learning to say 'no' to the ongoing destruction of our natural world.

Wherever you are, may you share the rich blessings of a Christmas at home in the heart of God.