

3 September 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

167 Years On, Bells Arrive at St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta

History will be made this Tuesday 8 September when, after 167 years of planning, a ring of eight giant church bells are blessed at historic St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta in a ritual dating from the 16th century.

Six of the giant bells are over 100 years old and have travelled from the UK to their new home at St Patrick's Cathedral. The other two have been specially commissioned. The heaviest weighs in at 405kg.

On Tuesday, the Bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, will bless the bells in a medieval ritual dating back to Pope Clement VIII in the late 1500's. Bishop Vincent will anoint each bell with oil, and fill each bell's cavity with incense.

Getting to this stage has been a story involving dedicated people from around the world, passionate about bringing the dream of the pioneers of 1800's Parramatta to life.

Fr Peter Williams, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, co-ordinated the project with the Australian and New Zealand Association of Bellringers, from tracking down suitable bells internationally, to working out the logistics of hanging them and who will ring them.

"Since 1853, the people of Parramatta have been waiting to hear the peal of bells, which, in the early days of our colony would remind them that it was time to attend church" he said.

"This is not only a rewarding project for the parishioners of Parramatta, but, given our parish dates from 1803, it's an historic moment for the whole of Australia.

"These bells finish off our Cathedral which was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1996. They symbolise persistence, hope and regeneration" he said.

The event will be livestreamed on <https://www.facebook.com/events/629520781290788/>

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Media information: The invitation-only ceremony commences at 6pm. Due to our COVID Safety plan, please contact Christina Gretton in advance on **0439 594 726** if you wish to attend.