



...s on Thursday Island this weekend during his visit to Australia.

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Thursday Island off the coast of North Queensland this weekend to meet with Torres Strait Islanders.

The visit started the final leg of Archbishop Justin and Mrs Welby's Australian tour in North Queensland, which includes a visit to the Aboriginal community of Yarrabah tomorrow. They are being accompanied by the Anglican Bishop of North Queensland, Keith Joseph.

The Archbishop is visiting Australia to meet with First Nations people and communities affected by climate change, as part of a visit hosted by the Church of Australia that has seen the Archbishop visit the dioceses of Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Grafton and North Queensland.

Arriving on Thursday Island on Saturday, the Archbishop and Mrs Welby received a Welcome to Country by the traditional owners of the land and paid their respects to its elders past, present and emerging.

On Saturday evening they were hosted by local Elders Auntie Pauline and Auntie Jennie at a welcome feast attended by Islanders from Thursday Island and across the Torres Strait. The evening concluded with traditional song and dance.

This morning the Archbishop and Mrs Welby planted a tree in the grounds of the Anglican Old Cathedral of All Souls and St Bartholomew, before joining the congregation for Holy Eucharist where the Archbishop preached the sermon.

The service was attended by around 250 people from Thursday Island and across the Torres Strait, including local elders, Torres Strait Islander clergy, Melanesian Brothers and local dignitaries.

On leaving Thursday Island, the Archbishop said: "It was an honour to be welcomed to Thursday Island by the people of the Torres Strait Islands. I give thanks for the generous hospitality we received and the worship we shared. I'm especially moved that people travelled from other Torres Strait Islands to be with us.

"Although this was only a short visit, the Islanders I met taught me lots: about their profound connection to the land and sea, their deep sense of community and caring for one another, their faithfulness to Christ and their joy in the Lord. I will remember these lessons and give thanks for them in my prayers.

"At the same time, this was a chance to hear the concerns and challenges of First Nations people in the Torres Strait - especially the impact of the climate crisis, which threatens Indigenous peoples in Australia and elsewhere. The world must urgently listen to the voices of Indigenous people: they are not only living with the impacts of climate change, but have much to teach us all about living in harmony with the natural world.

"As I leave Thursday Island, I do so with hope and joy in my heart at our friendship in Jesus Christ - and an ever-deepening commitment to stand alongside our First Nations sisters and brothers. My message to the people of the Torres Strait Islands is this: we will pray for you and support you. Please remember us in your prayers and we will remember you in ours."

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