



Pastoral Research Online

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The Australian Catholic Community: what has changed in the last 20 years?

Catholic population ¹	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Total population	17,752,089	18,767,249	19,855,287	21,507,719	23,401,892
Catholic population	4,799,090	5,001,624	5,126,862	5,439,267	5,291,834
Per cent Catholic	27.0	26.6	25.8	25.3	22.6
Median age ² (years)	33	34	37	38	40
Aged 0-14 (%)	23.0	22.3	21.1	20.5	19.8
Aged 65+ (%)	10.9	12.0	13.2	14.1	16.6
Males per 100 females	94.6	93.5	92.4	92.1	90.6

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996-2016.

1. All figures refer to Catholics only, except for Total population.

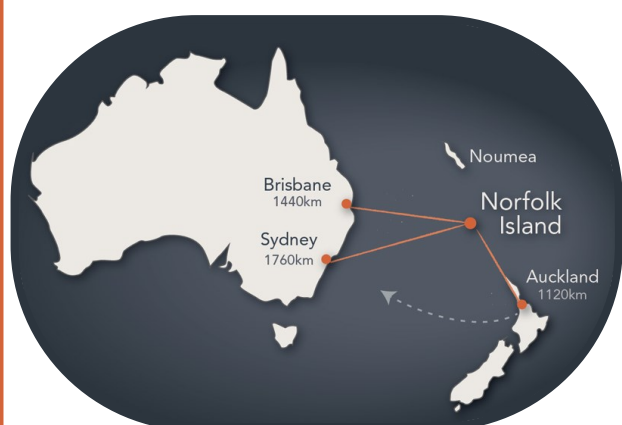
2. Median Age: Half of the Catholic population are above this age, half are below it.

- Between 2011 and 2016, the number of Catholics decreased by 147,400 people (or 2.7%), the first time in Australia's 105 year Census history there has been a decrease.

- Catholics now account for 22.6 per cent of the Australian population. In 1996, Catholics made up 27 per cent of the population.

- Since 1996, the Catholic population in Australia has increased by around 10 per cent. The Australian population overall grew by around 32 per cent.

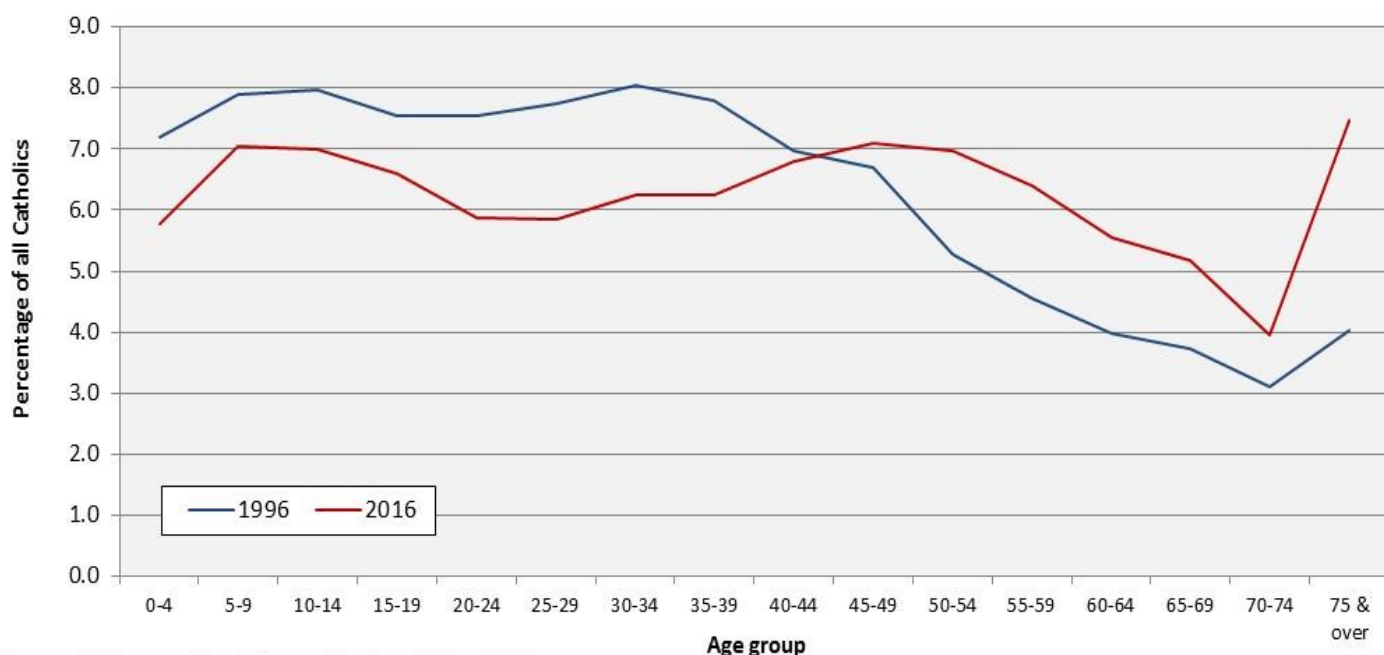
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Did you know?

Norfolk Island, the 35km² external territory around 1,400 kilometres east of the Australian mainland, participated in the Australian Census for the first time in 2016. While the closest mainland town is Ballina, in the Lismore Diocese, Norfolk Island is canonically a parish of the Sydney Archdiocese. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2016, thirteen per cent of Norfolk Island's 1,748 population identified as Catholic.

Age profile of Australian Catholics, 1996 and 2016



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996 and 2016.

- Between 1996 and 2016, the number of Catholics aged 75 and over more than doubled, from 194,000 to 395,000. In 1996, four per cent of Catholics were aged 75 and over. In 2016, 7.5 per cent were in this age group.
- In 1996, fewer than 1 in 5 Catholics (19.4%) were aged 55 or over. In 2016, 28.6 per cent were of the same age.

Birthplace, Indigenous Status and Language ¹	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Born in Australia (%)	74.6	74.1	74.7	74.7	73.6
Born overseas in English speaking country ² (%)	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.7	5.6
Born in non-English speaking country (%)	18.9	17.9	17.6	17.9	19.1
Indigenous Australians	81,265	94,556	101,113	124,610	133,528
Speak language other than English at home (%)	20.2	19.2	18.6	19.0	20.4
Not proficient in English ³ (%)	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.6

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996-2016.

1. All figures refer to Catholics only.

2. English-speaking countries refer to New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, United States, Canada and South Africa.

3. Percentage of all population who reported that they spoke English not well, or not at all.

In the news

The Director of NCLS Research, Dr Ruth Powell, was interviewed on the ABC's *Religion and Ethics Report* about the latest findings from the 2016 National Church Life Survey.

Listen to the audio here at: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/the-new-face-of-the-australian-church:-multicultural-and-female/8993562>



Image: (Amer Ghazzal / Barcroft Images / Barcroft Media via Getty Images, 2017)

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NATIONAL PASTORAL LEADERS & PLANNERS CONFERENCE

VINE & BRANCHES: YEARNING TO BELONG

4-7 SEPTEMBER 2017 • RYDGES ON SWANSTON, CARLTON



Report from the National Pastoral Leaders and Planners Conference

As the first joint conference initiative between members of the National Pastoral Planners Network, Pastoral Associates and other leaders from the Church throughout Australia, the National Pastoral Leaders and Planners Conference provided a positive forum in which to catch-up and engage with other planners and leaders, but also to listen to top-quality keynote presenters and a diverse range of workshop facilitators.

Thanks must go to the amazing team of conference organisers who left no stone unturned to ensure, not just a successful event, but one which provided an opportunity for open and honest dialogue for all in attendance.

To watch the keynote presentations from Professor Richard Gaillardetz, Hugh Mackay, Dr Maeve Louise Heaney, Geraldine Doogue and Archbishop Mark Coleridge, go to <https://nplpconference.com/>

New book:

Educating for Purposeful Living by Philip Hughes

In this book, Philip Hughes draws on his vast experience of survey and interview research with many thousands of students from Catholic, Independent and other schools around Australia to propose a very thoughtful and comprehensive approach to education that assists young people to develop a sense of purpose in life. In what Pope Francis has called a change of era, and not simply an era of change, all faith-based schools, indeed, all teachers in those schools, will do well to avail themselves of Dr Hughes' wisdom and insight.

– Dr Bob Dixon, Foundation Director,
ACBC Pastoral Research Office



To order a copy of the book or other resources from the Christian Research Association, go to: www.cra.org.au/products