

Pastoral Research Online

Issue 41

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The ACBC Pastoral Research Office is now the ACBC National Centre for Pastoral Research

Dear Readers,

*Of course, as many of you know, we've been around for 20+ years! In the last seven months however, our office has gone through many changes. Most prominent among these, is a change in the name and mandate of the office. We are now the **ACBC National Centre for Pastoral Research**. These changes were approved by the Bishops Conference at their plenary meeting in May this year.*

After a long hiatus, this newsletter is back to keep you updated on all the news, projects and happenings of the office. It continues to be available monthly and will remain the main source of information, apart from our website.

This month's bulletin features data from the 2016 Australian Census, news on NCLS Research and the 2016 National Church Survey, information on the new Plenary Council project and much more. We hope you enjoy reading it!

We're Hiring!

We have two positions vacant:

***Research Assistant, Plenary Council Project (part-time, maximum term)**

***Research Assistant (part-time)**

Applications close 5 pm on 20 August. Go to www.employmentrelations.catholic.org.au for further details.

The Australian Catholic Community in the 2016 Census

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) began its release of demographic data on the population from the 2016 Census in June last year. To date, we have received national-level data and some state-level and diocesan tables which allowed us to respond to a number of outstanding requests for Census data.

However, for the 2016 Census, the ABS changed their data confidentiality processes. This has affected the accuracy of the data we usually order from the ABS and has caused an extensive delay in the process of creating Catholic Social Profiles. We are in the process of researching alternate methods to analyse the data and are working with our ABS contact to pursue a resolution for us.

In order to ensure that our stakeholders receive the data as soon as possible, we have decided to work in reverse order this time around. We will produce the 2016 national *Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia* towards the end of this year. This will be followed by diocesan profiles early next year and parish profiles in late 2019.

Meanwhile, this newsletter will continue to be a source of information with selected tables from the 2016 Census. This month, we present some national figures of the Catholic community in Australia from the 2016 Census and the changes that have occurred in the Catholic population since 1996.

As we noted earlier last year, the 2016 Census was the first time in Australia's 105 year Census history that Catholic identification decreased in number. We also have a slightly older population with the median age now being 40 years as compared to 38 in 2011. There have been some smaller changes as well. Significant among these is the increasing number of well-educated Catholics. The results of the 2016 Census show that one in five Australian Catholics aged 15 and over have a university degree (20.6%). There are also a greater number of Catholics born in non-English speaking countries. In 2016, this number had increased to 19.1 per cent as compared to 17.9 per cent five years ago.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA (2016)

Total Population: **23,401,892**

Catholic Population: **5,291,834**

Catholics made up **22.6** per cent of the total population

Median age of Catholics was **40 years**

461,185 Catholics lived alone

1,304,993 Catholics were born overseas

136,360 Catholics did not speak English well

305,823 Catholics needed assistance with core activities

1,648,241 Catholics changed address since 2011

What has changed since 1996?

	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Catholic population	4,799,090	5,001,624	5,126,862	5,439,267	5,291,834
Median age (years)	33	34	37	38	40
Catholics aged 0-14 (%)	23.0	22.3	21.1	20.5	19.8
Catholics aged 65+ (%)	10.9	12.0	13.2	14.1	16.6
Catholics born in non-English speaking countries	18.9	17.9	17.6	17.9	19.1
Catholics not proficient in English (%)	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.6
Catholics living alone	346,322	408,896	438,307	470,613	461,185
Catholic students attending Catholic schools (%)	52.7	51.8	52.3	52.8	53.7
Catholics (aged 15+) with a university degree (%)	9.7	12.2	15.0	17.6	20.6
Catholic males in labour force (%)	71.4	62.8	69.4	69.6	69.7
Catholic females in labour force (%)	54.0	52.3	56.7	58.5	60.6

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996-2016 (customised data obtained as part of the National Catholic Census Project).

New Research Projects



Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020

In preparation for the 2020 Council, the NCPR was invited by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to assist the Plenary Council Executive team with the collection and analysis of data throughout the process.

Phase I of *Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020* titled "Open Dialogue & Listening" has already begun. During this phase, we are helping to collect and collate the submissions from individuals and groups engaged in the discussion and dialogue processes. A research task group has been formed to guide the process of the research over three years. The members of the task group include two members of the Plenary Council Executive Committee, two members of the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research and two experienced researchers, renowned for their expertise in this field.

We will begin analysing the data next year. The findings will be reported to the Plenary Council Executive Committee and to the ACBC. Further research tools will be developed for Phase Two as deemed necessary. For further information on the Plenary Council go to <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>



Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia 2018

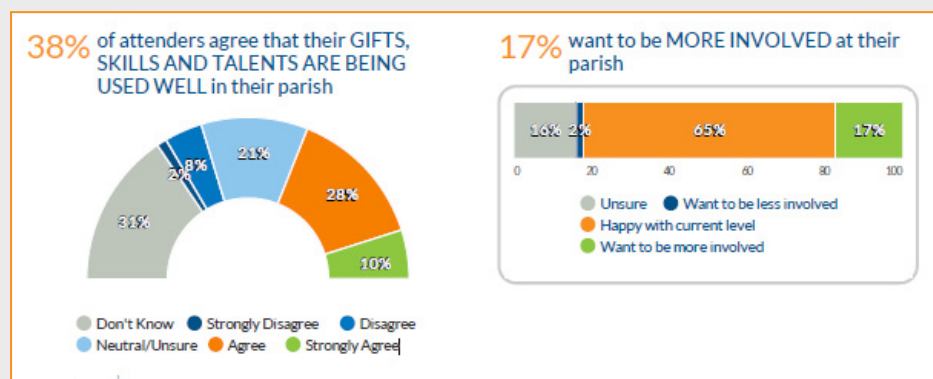
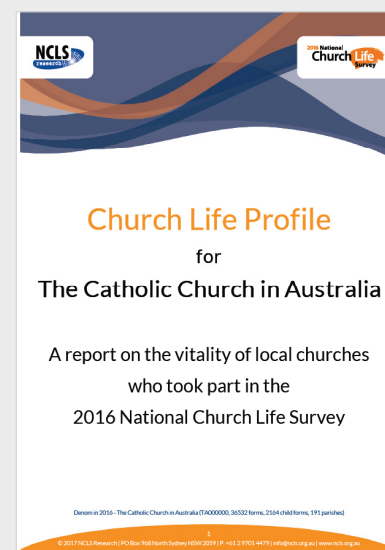
This new project was commissioned by Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) with the intention to update the numbers of Catholic religious after the last study was carried out in 2009. The new survey is currently ongoing and we are hoping to analyse the data before the end of this year. The NCPR will give CRA three months of exclusive use of the data before reporting on the numbers in our regular publications and broader workshops.

2016 National Church Life Survey

The 2016 National Church Life Survey was completed by 36,500 attenders from a sample of almost 200 Catholic parishes (plus a few hundred parishes who volunteered). All parishes and dioceses have received their results. We have begun sending reports to the 13 Catholic agencies who commissioned questions.

The Denominational Church Life Profile for The Catholic Church in Australia in 2016 is now available from our website. Below is a snapshot of results about Attender's Use of Gifts and Skills

2016 National
Church Life
Survey



IMPORTANT NEWS REGARDING NCLS RESEARCH

At its Plenary Meeting in May 2018, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference resolved to withdraw its support to continue as a sponsor from NCLS Research beyond 30 June 2019. The National Centre for Pastoral Research has been working with NCLS Research to finalise the conditions of the Conference's exit. One of the main priorities is to ensure that we have a copy of all Catholic data from dioceses and parishes that participated in the 2016 National Church Life Survey to enable us to analyse data and produce relevant research well into the future.

How does this change affect Catholic parishes, dioceses and agencies?

- If a Catholic diocese or agency wishes to become a sponsor of NCLS Research, they are free to do so. The conditions of the Conference's exit do not place any restrictions in this regard.
- Any Catholic parish or diocese is also free to engage in the 2021 National Church Life Survey. Invitations for this will be extended to all by our office and by NCLS Research as done previously in the past.

At this stage, we are not sure if we will be able to gather a national Catholic sample for 2021. More information on this will be forthcoming over the next two years.

The National Centre for Pastoral Research will continue to have strong relations with NCLS Research and its staff. We are committed to working together to produce relevant and engaging research resources for churches and communities.

If you have any concerns regarding the ongoing engagement of your parish, diocese or agency with NCLS Research or if you require further information, please contact our office at any time.

Website Resources

www.pro.catholic.org.au



Australian Catholic Bishops' Youth Survey 2017

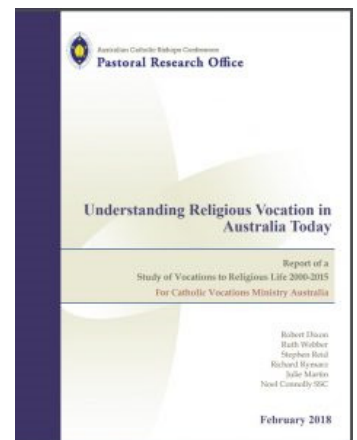
The National Report on the Australian Catholic Bishops' Youth Survey 2017 was released on 27 July 2018. The survey results highlighted some key concerns of young people: mental health issues; questions around identity – ethnic, spiritual and sexual; loneliness; relationships and friendships; the direction of society, politics and the Church; and living out their faith in a secular world.

The Final Report of this study can be viewed via our website. Report details: Trudy Dantis and Stephen Reid, *Called to Fullness of Life and Love: National Report on the Australian Catholic Bishops' Youth Survey 2017* (Canberra: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2018).

Understanding Religious Vocation in Australia Today

In 2014, Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia (CVMA) invited the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Pastoral Research Office (PRO) to carry out a research study of recent vocations to religious life in Australia. The purpose of the study was to help identify successful practices for promoting vocations to religious life and to understand what factors assist in the retention of new members.

The Final Report of this study can be viewed via our website. Report details: Robert Dixon, Ruth Webber, Stephen Reid, Richard Rymarz, Julie Martin and Noel Connolly, *Understanding Religious Vocation in Australia Today: Report of a Study of Vocations to Religious Life 2000-2015* (Canberra: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, February 2018).



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