

# Pastoral Research Online

Issue 42

September 2018



ACCPR Council Members (Sept 2018) L-R: Mrs Sophy Morley, Mr Stephen Reid, Mr Daniel Ang, Dr Helga Neidhart rsc, Ms Danielle Cronin, Prof. Emeritus Gabrielle McMullen AM, Archbishop Julian Porteous, Dr Trudy Dantis, Prof. James McLaren, Fr Brian Lucas, Fr Stephen Hackett msc.

Dear Readers,

*In September, the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research (ACCPR) had its final meeting under the former structure of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, with Archbishop Julian Porteous as the Bishop Delegate from the Bishops Commission for Administration and Information (BCAI). Archbishop Porteous has served as Chair of the Council from 2012 to 2018. We sincerely thank him for his interest in and support for the work of the office during that time and wish him well for the future. From November 2018, the ACCPR Council will relate directly to the Permanent Committee. We look forward to welcoming a new Chair and a new Bishop Delegate in due course.*

*This month's bulletin features the latest data and trends on the marital status of Catholics from the 2016 Australian Census. Also featured is an update on the ongoing Plenary Council project and some new publications from NCLS Research and our other research partners.*

**LinkedIn**

## We are now on LinkedIn!

We are pleased to announce that we are now officially on LinkedIn.

As part of our goal to have a deeper engagement with the wider community we decided that LinkedIn is a great place to be!

With millions of users, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network. Connect with us at:

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference  
National Centre for Pastoral Research

# Australian Catholics in the 2016 Census

## Marital Status of the Catholic Population

**Table 1: Registered marital status of Catholics by sex, 2016**

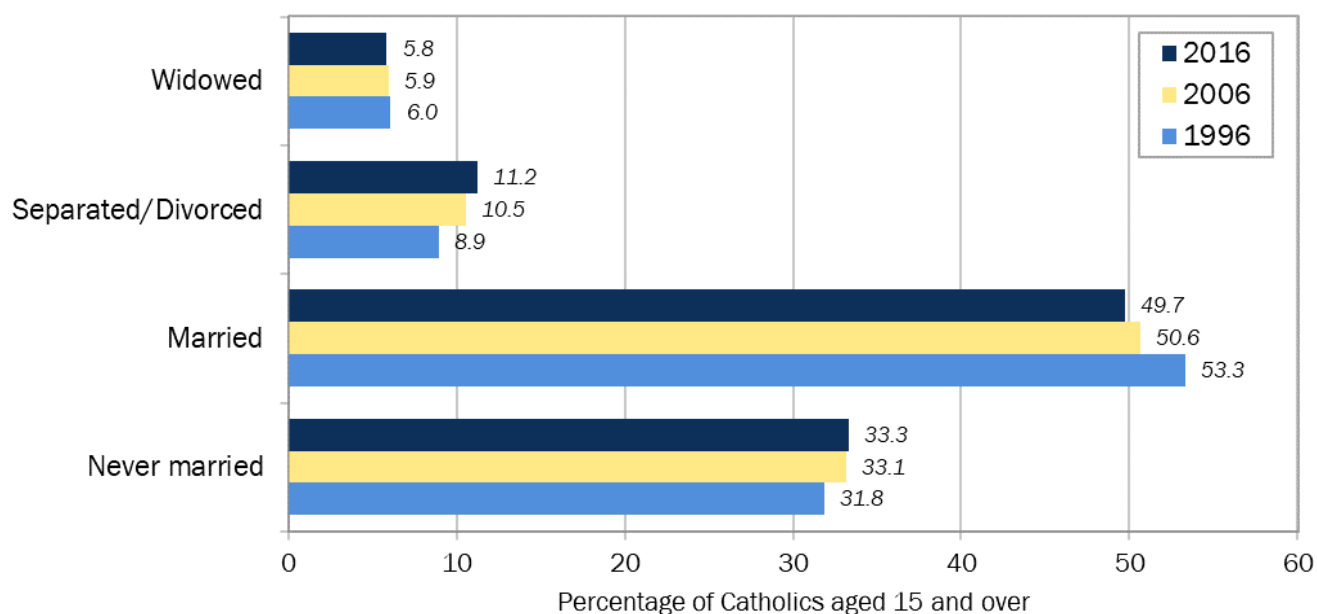
Age group	N	Males	Females		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%
Never married	727,287	36.7	684,790	30.3	1,412,077	33.3
Married	1,007,990	50.9	1,100,345	48.6	2,108,335	49.7
Separated/Divorced	197,677	10.0	278,648	12.3	476,325	11.2
Widowed	47,189	2.4	199,548	8.8	246,737	5.8
<b>Catholics aged 15 and over</b>	<b>1,980,143</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,263,331</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,243,474</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Aged under 15</i>	<i>534,976</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>513,383</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1,048,359</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>Total Catholics</b>	<b>2,515,119</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,776,714</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,291,833</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016.

- \* **According to the 2016 Australian Census, just under half of all Catholics aged 15 and over were married.**
- \* **In 1996, 53.3 per cent of Catholics aged 15 and over were married.**
- \* **In 2016, just over 11 per cent of Catholics were separated or divorced.**  
**In comparison, in 1996, just under nine per cent of Catholics were separated or divorced.<sup>1</sup>**
- \* **Nearly 81 per cent of all widowed Catholics aged 15 and over were female.**
- \* **According to the ABS, in 2016, 23.6 per cent of all marriages were conducted by a minister of religion, and 30 per cent of those were by a Catholic priest.**

Note 1: Because the Census is a 'snapshot' of the population at a particular point in time it records only those who were separated or divorced at the time the Census was taken. As such, the total number of people who had ever been separated or divorced would be higher.

**Figure 1: Registered marital status of Catholics, by Census year  
(aged 15 and over )**



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016

## Marriages in Australia—National Trends

### RELIGIOUS vs CIVIL WEDDINGS:

An increasing number of Australian couples are turning to a civil celebrant to conduct their marriage ceremony. The Australian Institute of Family Studies reports that in 1902, almost all marriages (97%) were conducted by ministers of religion. However, almost 100 years later in 2000, for the first time, there were more marriages conducted by civil celebrants than by ministers of religion. In 2010, only 31 per cent of all marriages were conducted by a minister of religion. By 2016, 76% of all marriages in Australia were conducted by civil celebrants.



Australian Government  
Australian Institute of Family Studies

### 2016 MEDIAN AGE OF MARRIAGE



**28.7**  
years



**30.3**  
years

### MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

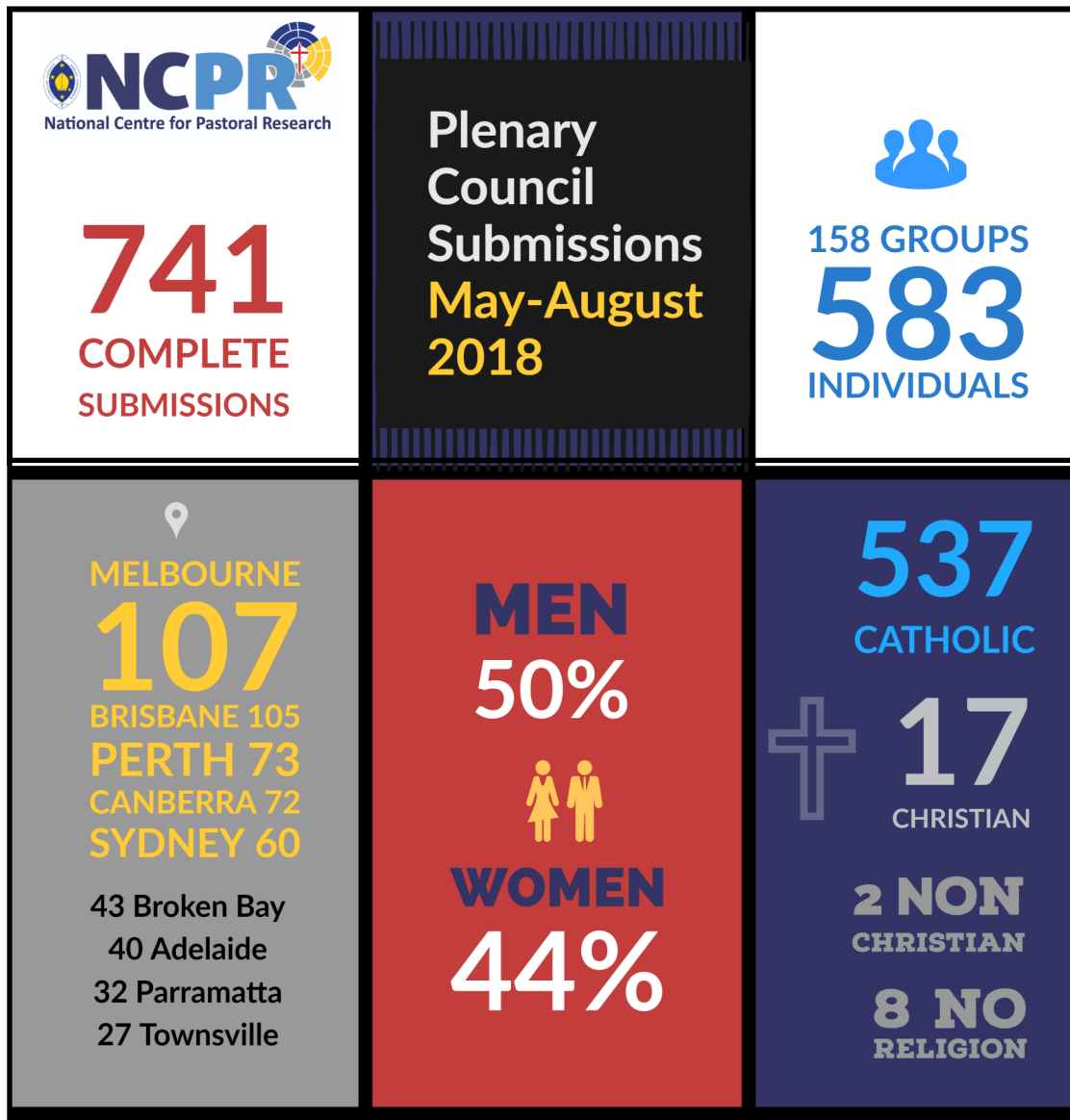
In 1970, there were 9.3 marriages per 1,000 Australian residents ('marriage rate'). In 2016, the marriage rate declined to 4.9. The divorce rate (divorces per 1,000 Australian residents) peaked at 4.6 per 1,000 resident population after the introduction of the *Family Law Act 1975*, which came into operation in January 1976 and allowed no-fault divorce. Since 2000, the divorce rate has fallen. In 2016, it was 1.9, the lowest rate since 1976.

© 2018 Australian Institute of Family Studies.



# Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020 Update

The online process for submissions for Plenary Council opened on 20 May 2018. Our office received a total of 390 usable responses from May until the end of July. In August a further 351 responses were received (*an increase of 90 per cent*) bringing the total number of responses to 741. Of these, 158 submissions were from groups. Below is a summary snapshot of the submissions received from May to 31 August 2018.



Nearly 4000 individuals were represented through the 158 groups that made submissions by the end of August. Apart from Australian-born respondents, the highest number of submissions so far are from people born in countries such as the UK and Northern Ireland, Netherlands, India and Ireland. At the time of writing this newsletter, the total number of submissions from individuals and groups had already surpassed 1000! We'll know more when we analyse the trends at the end of September.

*Watch this space for more updates on the project.*



## New Research Project



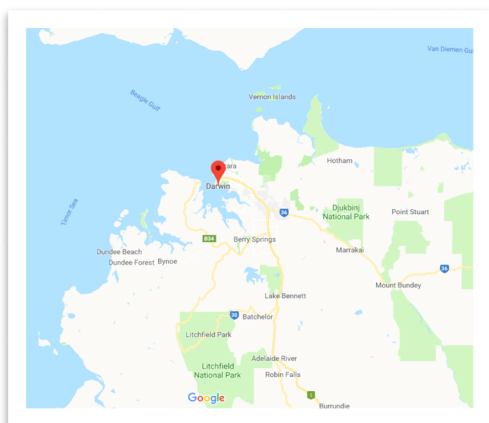
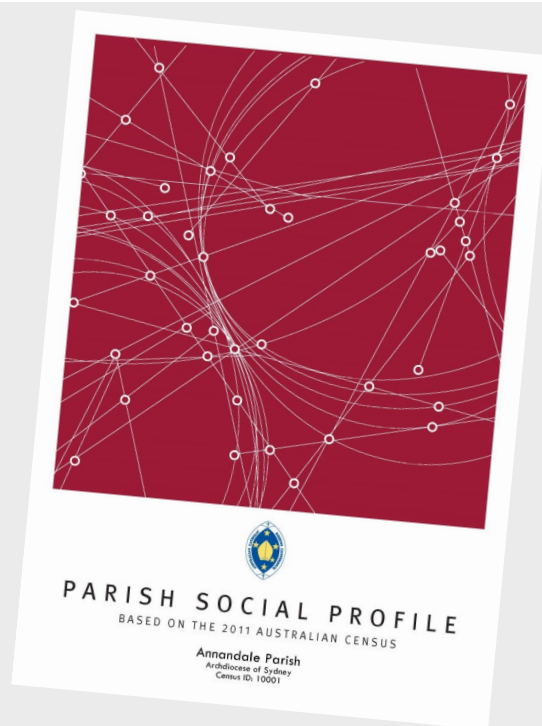
We are very pleased to offer our support to Fr Greg Bourke from the National Office for Clergy Life and Ministry in their International Priests project. The project examines the experiences of overseas priests and those who work with them in Australia to discover what worked, what could be improved and what could be introduced. The goal of the project is to formulate future best practice for inductions of overseas clergy in Australia. The Clergy Life and Ministry Office are also being assisted by Australian Catholic University in this project.

## Help needed for the 2016 Parish Social Profiles

We have begun working on creating the Social Profiles from the 2016 Australian Census. The process of creating the parish profiles is extremely complex and largely depends on the assistance of our diocesan contacts and parish staff in checking the boundaries of all the 1394 Catholic parishes in Australia.

In some areas, Catholic Education or other diocesan offices have already completed this process and have mapped the SA1s from the ABS Census to the new boundaries of their parishes. If you have access to this information and are willing to share it with us, please contact our office at the earliest.

This information will save us immense time and shorten an otherwise rather lengthy process.



### DID YOU KNOW?

According to recently released data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Hobart has the oldest median age of all the capital cities, while Darwin has the youngest. The median age of Hobart residents at June 2017 was 39.8 years, while the median age of Darwin residents was 33.6 years.

However, the area of Tea Gardens-Hawks Nest, a popular coastal retirement area north-east of Newcastle, had the oldest median age in Australia, with 62.4 years. The suburb of Acton, an area in the ACT with a large number of university students, had the youngest median age, with 21.3 years.

Source: ABS, Cat. 3235.0, *Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2017*

# National and Overseas Research News



## AUSTRALIAN TEENS' COMPLEX VIEWS ON SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

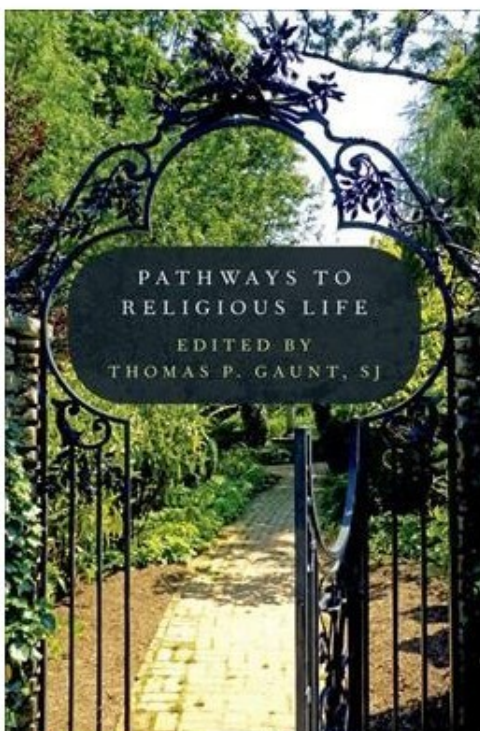
The Australian Gen Z Study provides a powerful insight into how teenagers make sense of the world around them by studying their everyday experiences of diversity and their interactions with each other. Funded by the Australian Research Council, this national study comprised of 11 focus groups with students in Years 9 and 10 (ages 15-16) in three states, a nationally representative telephone survey of 1,200 people aged 13-18, and 30 in-depth, follow-up interviews. The researchers, Prof Mary Lou Rasmussen, Asst Prof Andrew Singleton, Dr Anna Halafoff and Emeritus Prof Gary D Bouma AM identified six different "types" of spirituality that moved beyond conventional understandings of religious or non-religious identity. These were:

- This-worldly
- Religiously committed
- Seekers
- Spiritual but not religious
- Indifferent
- Nominally religious



More information on the project can be found at the ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences website: <http://sociology.cass.anu.edu.au/australia-s-gen-zs>

## Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate



CARA has just released a second book that compiles recent CARA research on religious life to examine the family and societal influences contributing to vocations to religious life.

Published by Oxford University Press, the book is titled *Pathways to Religious Life* and includes chapters on historical and demographic trends in U.S. religious institutes; influences on vocations from families, educational environments, volunteer service, parish life, and ministry experiences; emerging new forms of religious life and ministry, including the influence of religious from outside the United States; and a chapter of recommendations from the findings for vocation directors and religious institutes who wish to attract new members in the future.

The book is a useful reference for those engaged in youth and young adult ministry, campus ministers, and all those who work with young Catholics. For further information, contact CARA at [tpg9@georgetown.edu](mailto:tpg9@georgetown.edu).




# Association of Practical Theology in Oceania (APTO)

APTO is an ecumenical professional association for researchers, scholars and/or practitioners in the geographic area of Oceania in the field of practical theology. Members have a scholarly interest in the discipline demonstrated by publications and/or other scholarly and practical accomplishments, including a research degree allied to practical theology. The APTO 2018 Conference *Weaving Theology in Oceania: Culture, Context and Practice* will be held in Suva, Fiji from Sat 17th November to Wed 21st November 2018. More details at <http://www.apto.asn.au/>

ASSOCIATION OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN OCEANIA (APTO)

**APTO**



CONFERENCE



**Weaving Theology in Oceania:  
Culture, Context and Practice**

17 - 21 NOVEMBER 2018

SUVA • FIJI



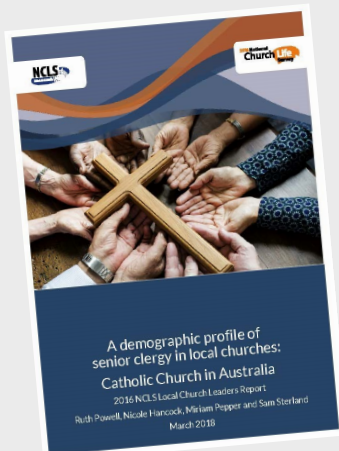
Proudly sponsored by **The Sisters of Saint Joseph**  
and supported by the **Catholic Archdiocese of Suva**; the **Pacific Regional Seminary, Suva**;  
the **Catholic Bishops Conference of the Pacific (CEPAC)**; and **TheLMent.com**

For details about the conference please visit [www.apto.asn.au](http://www.apto.asn.au)

# Website Resources

[www.pro.catholic.org.au](http://www.pro.catholic.org.au)

NCLS Research has produced two reports on Catholic leaders in parishes based on data from the 2016 NCLS Leaders Survey.

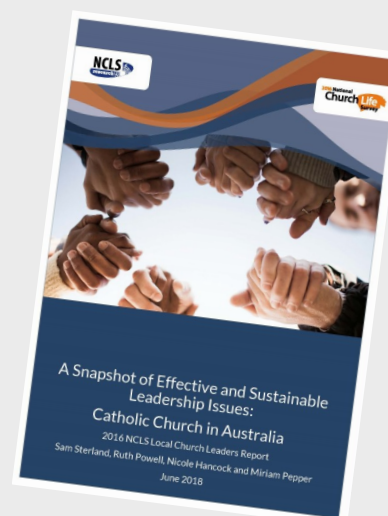


## 1) A demographic profile of senior clergy in local churches: Catholic Church in Australia

This report defines 'senior clergy' as priests in charge of parishes or those in a leadership position on a parish ministry team with others. The report contains information about their ages, marital status and ethnicity. It also outlines their levels of education, ministry qualifications, and other occupations.

## 2) A Snapshot of Effective and Sustainable Leadership Issues: Catholic Church in Australia

This report defines 'local senior leaders' as those who are leaders of a parish or who have equal standing in the ministry team, as well as laypeople serving as a leader in a parish. It is a snapshot of several significant areas related to effective and sustainable leadership, including Leadership Roles: Practices and Preferences, Leadership Training: Adequacy and Deficits, Governance: Church Council Effectiveness, and Leader Wellbeing.



Both reports are available from our website. Go to <https://pro.catholic.org.au/national-church-life-survey-ncls/>

### NCPR Staff

Trudy Dantis  
Director

[t.dantis@pro.catholic.org.au](mailto:t.dantis@pro.catholic.org.au)  
(02) 6201 9812

Stephen Reid  
Senior Researcher

[s.reid@pro.catholic.org.au](mailto:s.reid@pro.catholic.org.au)  
(03) 9953 3457

For more information about the office, or how we can assist you, please contact:

National Centre for Pastoral Research  
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference,  
GPO Box 368 Canberra ACT 2601  
P: (02) 6201 9812  
E: [office@pro.catholic.org.au](mailto:office@pro.catholic.org.au)  
W: [www.pro.catholic.org.au](http://www.pro.catholic.org.au)



## Come visit us

6 Donaldson Street  
Braddon, ACT 2612

