

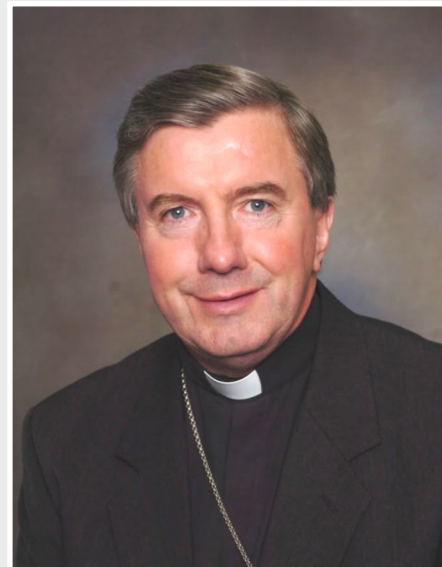
## *Pastoral Research Online*

**Issue 43**

**December 2018**



*Left:*  
*Prof. Gabrielle McMullen OAM,*  
*new Chairperson of the ACCPR.*



*Right:*  
*Archbishop Christopher Prowse,*  
*Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn,*  
*new Bishop Delegate to the ACCPR.*

## Welcome to the new Chairperson and Bishop Delegate of the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research

*Dear Readers,*

*The National Centre for Pastoral Research is celebrating December 2018 as a month of many welcomes!*

*We extend a warm welcome to Archbishop Christopher Prowse as the Bishop Delegate from the Permanent Committee to the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research (ACCPR). We also welcome Professor Gabrielle McMullen as our new Chairperson and we look forward to working with them both.*

*In recent months we also had two new staff joining us, Leith Dudfield and Paul Bowell. We welcome them to our team and are glad to have them on board. One of our former staff, Marilyn Chee is also working with us on a casual basis to help with the National Catholic Census Project. Marilyn did similar work in 2011 and is well versed in the process involved in creating the Social Profiles.*

*As we continue our analysis of data from the 2016 Australian Census, this month's bulletin looks at diocesan differences in the age and income of Catholics in the Census. Also featured is an update on the Plenary Council project and some new research from the Pew Research Center comparing the religious observance of younger and older adults around the world. We also highlight some further learnings from the Bishops Youth Survey 2017.*

*As we end 2018, we thank you all for your interest and support throughout this year. We wish you a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!*

# Australian Catholics in the 2016 Census

## Median Age and Income of Catholics in Australia

### Median Age

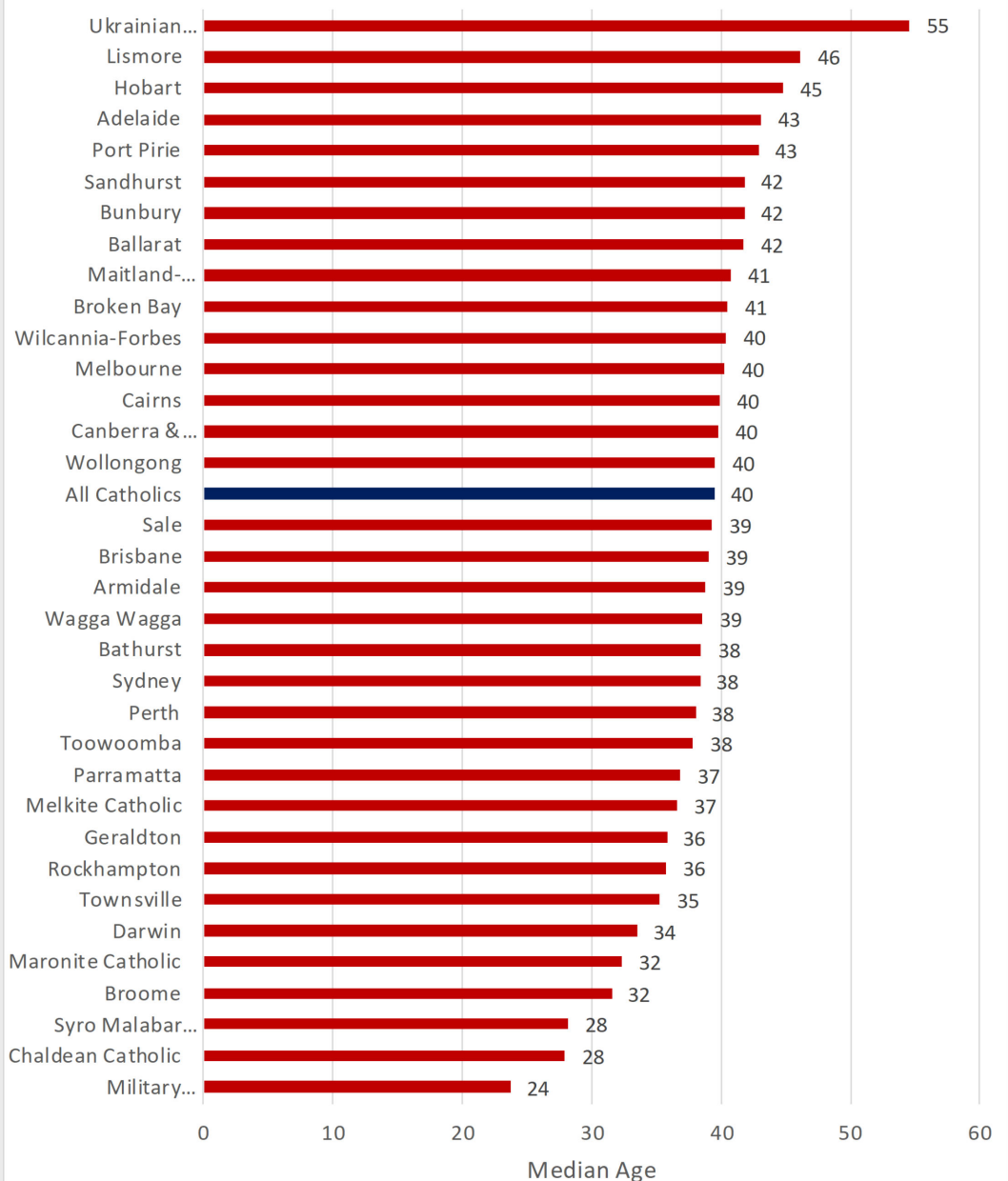
The median age is the point at which half of the Catholic population are above this age and half are below it.

Figure 1 shows the median age of Catholics in 2016, sorted by oldest to youngest, for each of the 28 geographical dioceses as well as the Military Ordinariate and the five Eastern Rite eparchies/dioceses. Over the last two decades, the median age of Catholics has increased from 33 in 1996, to 37 in 2006 and 40 in 2016.

According to the Census, the oldest 'group' was the Ukrainian Catholics, with a median age of 55 years. While 60 per cent of Ukrainian Catholics were born in Australia, around 27 per cent immigrated before 1976, from Ukraine and other Eastern, Western and South Eastern European countries.

In contrast, Chaldean Catholics and Syro-Malabar Catholics had the youngest age profile of the dioceses/eparchies, with a median age of 28. However, not surprisingly, Catholics in the Military Ordinariate were the youngest group of Catholics overall, with a median age of 24 years. This group would include Catholics serving in the defence forces, as well as their families and others living on military bases.

**Figure 1: Median Age of Catholics by Diocese in 2016**



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016

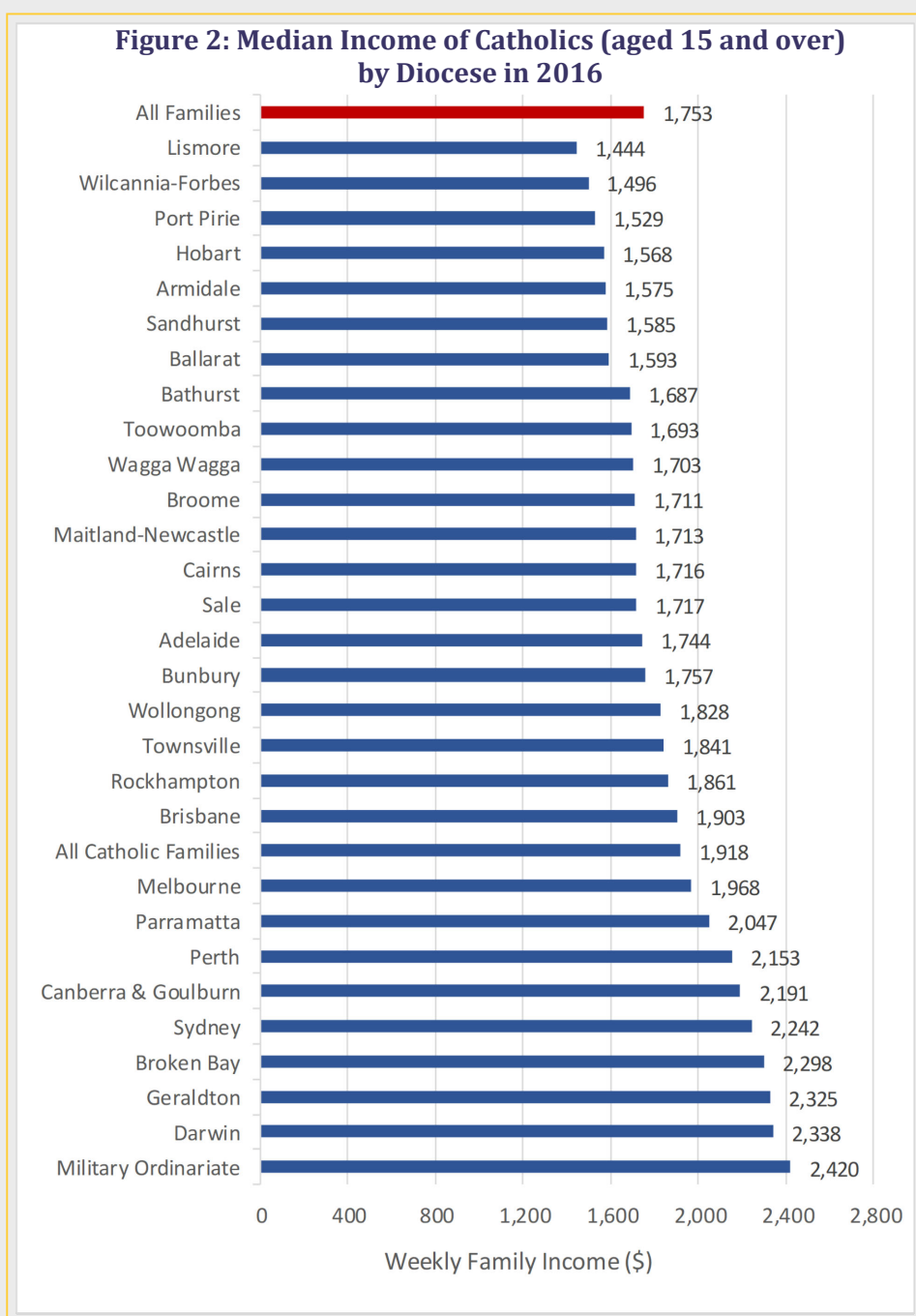
Of the geographical dioceses, Lismore had the oldest median age of Catholics (46), a consequence of having a number of seaside 'retirement' locations within the diocese. Broome (32) and Darwin (34) had the youngest median ages of Catholics, likely attributed to the high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, a group which had a much lower age profile in the 2016 Australian Census.

## Median Family\* Income

Figure 2 shows the median weekly family income of Catholic families, according to the 2016 Census. Median weekly family income is the point at which fifty percent of families have a higher income and fifty percent have a lower income. Family income is the sum of the incomes of all family members aged 1and over. In 2016, the median family income of all Catholic families was \$1,918.

The graph reveals that Catholic families in the Military Ordinariate had the highest median family incomes (\$2,420) in 2016, while the dioceses of Darwin and Geraldton had the highest median family incomes of the geographical dioceses, at \$2,338 and \$2,325 respectively. Both dioceses had high proportions of Catholics in the labour force, and also high proportions of trade occupations represented in industries such as mining.

The lowest median family incomes were in the dioceses of Lismore (\$1,444) and Wilcannia-Forbes (\$1,496). Lismore had a high proportion of older Catholics, probably retired, hence lower income levels, while the lower income levels among Catholic families in Wilcannia-Forbes could be attributed to a higher proportion of occupations represented in industries such as farming.



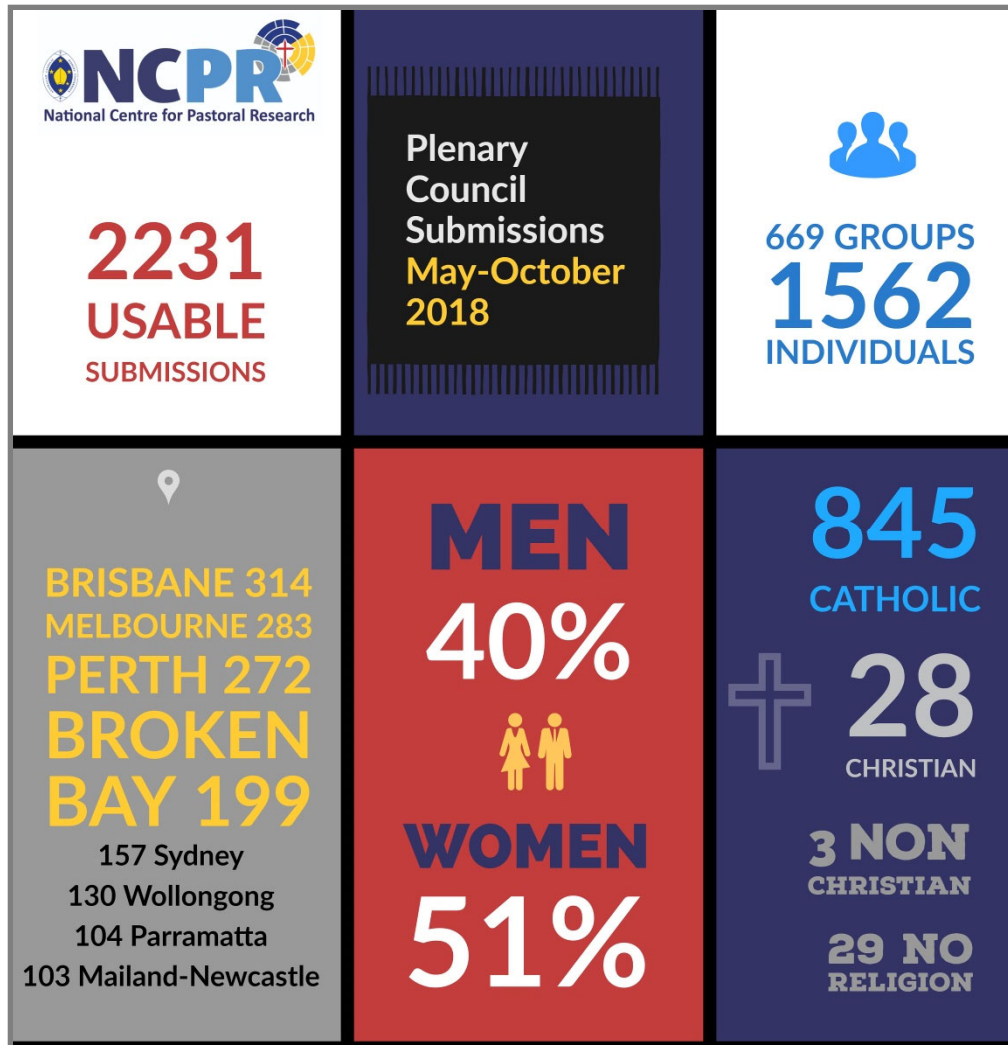
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016

*Note: \*A family is defined as two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. Family members who live elsewhere are not included in the Census definition. For Census purposes, a Catholic family is defined as a family in which at least one person is Catholic.*

# Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020 Update

## What's been happening with the Plenary Council submissions?

The online process for submissions for Plenary Council opened on 20 May 2018. Our office received a total of 2,231 usable (complete) submissions from May until the end of October. In October a further 923 responses were received (*an increase of 65 per cent from the month before*) bringing the total number of responses to 2,231. Of these, 669 submissions were from groups. Below is a summary snapshot of the submissions received from May to 31 October 2018.



Over 21,000 individuals were represented through the 669 groups that made submissions by the end of October. 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 23,000! So what are people talking about? We'll know more when we begin to analyse the trends early in 2019.





# Journey to Plenary Council 2018-2020 Update (Cont...)

## How will we analyse the Plenary Council data?

One of the questions we keep getting asked is, “What is going to happen to my submission to Plenary Council?”

The process of analysis is a complex one. The first step will include a rigorous de-identification of all the data. All key identifiers in the form of names, contact details and other information will be removed prior to the analysis. This will be followed by entering the data into a qualitative analysis program called NVivo. NVivo allows the researchers to read through all the responses and code them into different themes. Once the qualitative analysis is complete, it will highlight the emerging themes and shape the next stage of the Plenary Council preparations — working groups, deeper discernment, theological reflection, re-listening, face-to-face encounters and topical dialogue.

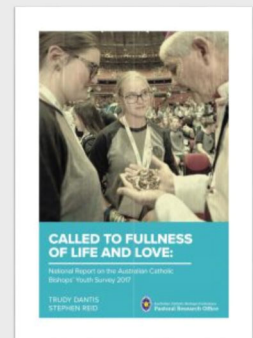
Along with the qualitative analysis, the Plenary Council data will also undergo a range of quantitative analysis using SPSS statistical software. This analysis will include a detailed demographic examination of participants’ age, religious affiliations, cultural back-ground and location. The NCPR will use this to prepare tables and graphs for use in reports and publications. Over many years the NCPR has built a reputation for presentation of statistical data in graphically appealing ways that are easily understood by a non-technical audience. The final reports and publications will be available from the Plenary Council website.

The NCPR has been granted ethics approval for the data analysis of the Plenary Council project by the Christian Research Association Human Research Ethics Committee.



The annual meeting of the SSSR was held jointly with the Religious Research Association (RRA) in Las Vegas, Nevada this year. The work of the NCPR was showcased through a paper presented by Trudy Dantis titled, ‘ACBC Bishops Youth Survey: Male and Female Differences in Attitudes and Participation Experiences’. This paper included further analysis of the data collected for the Bishops Youth Survey in 2017. Some of the additional insights from this study were:

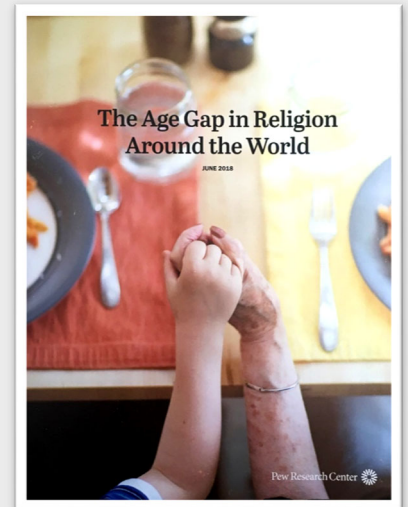
- There appeared to be no apparent differences in patterns of faith and belief in males and females aged 16-29.
- Females participated to a greater extent in Church activities and events as compared to males. Females were also more likely to want to participate in events and activities than males.
- Females are more likely to be influenced by family and friends than their male counterparts.
- Females are concerned about issues such as mental health, body image, school/study, friendships, sexuality & social justice to a greater degree than males are. Males on the other hand, were more likely to be concerned to a greater degree about issues such as drugs or alcohol, work or employment, the environment and sport and health.





## The Age Gap in Religion Around the World

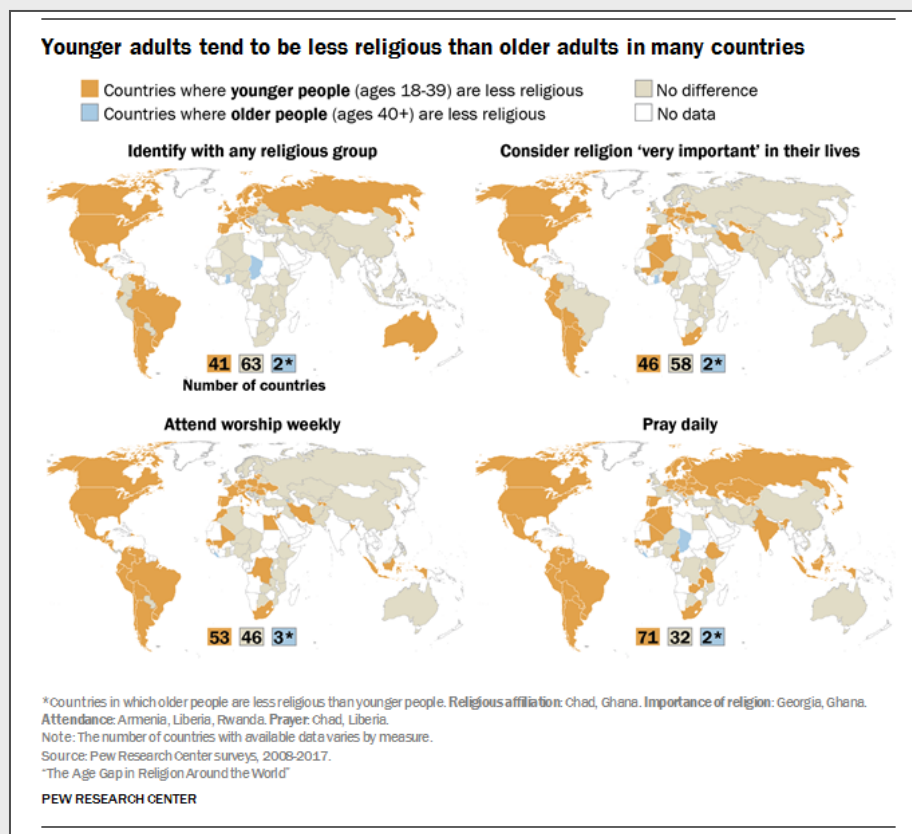
A new report published by the Pew Research Center shows that lower religious observance is common among younger adults around the world. The study that was conducted in more than 100 countries and territories over the last decade shows that adults younger than 40 are less likely than older adults to say religion is “very important” in their lives. This is the case in wealthy and relatively secular countries such as Canada, Japan and Switzerland, and also in countries that are less affluent and more religious, such as Iran, Poland and Nigeria.



While this pattern is widespread, it is not universal. In many countries, there is no statistically significant difference in levels of religious observance between younger and older adults. And in two countries—the former Soviet republic of Georgia and the West African country of Ghana—younger adults are, on average, more religious than their elders. However, in most places where there is a difference, it is almost always in the direction of younger adults being less religious than their elders.

Similar patterns are also found using three other standard measures of religious identification and commitment: affiliation with a religious group, daily prayer and weekly worship attendance. More information on the project can be found at the Pew Research Center website:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>



# Welcome to Our New Staff

## Paul Bowell

Paul comes to the NCPR with both academic and applied experience in social research. He completed his Bachelor of Arts, majoring in anthropology and minoring in development studies at the Australian National University (ANU). Paul's social research knowledge includes field work conducted in remote parts of the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea, researching the restrictions to cash-cropping activities of local customary land owners. As a research assistant with the School of Sociology at ANU, he assisted with the sociological investigations of the lived experience of wearable technology and self-tracking and the effects this has on individuals' identity, corporeal impression and sensory understanding of everyday life. Paul will continue researching wearable technologies and self-tracking in his honour's year at ANU in 2019. He is very excited to join the NCPR and is looking forward to assisting in the qualitative analysis stage of the Plenary Council 2020 project.



## Leith Dudfield



Leith joined the NCPR in October 2018 after a varied professional and academic career. She completed her Bachelor of Arts from ANU in 1999 majoring in Latin and Ancient History. Some years later she returned to study, completing her Graduate Certificate in Theology from ACU in 2013, and her Graduate Diploma in Psychological Studies from USQ in 2015. She is currently in the final stages of completing her Honours in Psychology at the University of Canberra, with a research thesis looking at whether personality predicts well-being in people living with chronic wounds. Leith has worked in various roles in the past: legal secretary, business banking relationship manager, weight loss consultant, finance officer, executive officer, life coach, and most recently, the office manager at a community radio station. She is looking forward to the next stage of her career, and being able to put her study to good use.



**Come visit us at our  
new location:**

**Dougherty Centre  
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Braddon ACT**

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# Christmas Greetings From the National Centre for Pastoral Research

*Wishing you a Christmas season  
full of peace, goodwill and joy!*



*From the staff at the NCPR: Trudy, Stephen, Paul, Leith and Marilyn.*



The NCPR office will be closed from  
Friday 21 December and will reopen  
on Wednesday 2 January 2019.