



### Catholic Population

According to the 2016 Census, the parish of Burleigh Heads, in the south of the Brisbane archdiocese, had the highest number of Catholics in Australia, with almost 31,200 Catholics living within the parish’s geographical boundaries. Two other parishes in Brisbane were also in the ‘Top Five’ for Catholic population: Maroochydore and Caloundra, both in the archdiocese’s north.

The parish of Craigieburn, in Melbourne’s outer north, had the second highest number of Catholics (23,800), while Mill Park, a parish in the north-eastern suburbs, was the fourth highest

ranked parish, with around 21,600 Catholics. In 2011 as well, Burleigh Heads had the highest number of Catholics in Australia, with around 32,600.

**Table 1: Top five parishes - Catholic population**

Rank	Number of Catholics	Parish (diocese)
1.	31,179	Burleigh Heads (Brisbane)
2.	23,815	Craigieburn (Melbourne)
3.	22,856	Maroochydore (Brisbane)
4.	21,629	Mill Park (Melbourne)
5.	21,273	Caloundra (Brisbane)

When it came to the **proportion** of Catholics however, four parishes in the Diocese of Darwin and one in the Diocese of Broome had the highest

proportion of Catholics in Australia in 2016. Just over nine in every ten people (90.7%) on Bathurst Island, 80km north of Darwin, were Catholic, as were 82.6 per cent of the population in Santa Teresa parish, 80km south-east

of Alice Springs. The parish of Wadeye (74.4%), Melville Island (74.2%) and Kalumburu (66.6%) rounded out the top five. In 2011, only Kalumburu was not in the top five, replacing another Broome parish of Balgo - Kutjungka.

**Table 2: Top five parishes - Percentage Catholic**

Rank	Percent Catholic	Parish (diocese)
1.	90.7	Bathurst Island (Darwin)
2.	82.6	Santa Teresa (Darwin)
3.	74.4	Wadeye (Darwin)
4.	74.2	Melville Island (Darwin)
5.	66.6	Kalumburu (Broome)

**Table 3: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholic population aged under 15**

Rank	Percent aged 0-14	Parish (diocese)
1.	41.9	Mungindi (Armidale)
2.	35.9	Wyndham (Broome)
3.	35.5	Wadeye (Darwin)
4.	35.2	Palm Island (Townsville)
5.	33.5	Dampier Peninsula (Broome)

A number of remote or rural parishes had the highest proportion of Catholics aged under 15 in 2016 (See Table 3). Almost 42 per cent of Catholics in the parish of Mungindi, one of the northern most parishes in the Armidale diocese, were aged under 15 years. The parish of Wyndham, in Broome diocese, was ranked second highest with 35.9 per cent aged under 15, while the parishes of Wadeye (Darwin) and Palm Island (Townsville) had similar proportions of young people aged under 15, with 35.5 and 35.2 per cent respectively. Another parish in the Broome diocese, Dampier Peninsula, rounded out the top five, with just over one third of Catholics aged under 15.

**Table 4: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholic population aged 65 and over**

Rank	Percent aged 65 +	Parish (diocese)
1.	39.3	Victor Harbor / Goolwa (Adelaide)
2.	38.3	Rosebud (Melbourne)
3.	36.9	Reservoir North (Melbourne)
4.	35.6	Hadfield (Melbourne)
5.	35.1	Forster (Maitland-Newcastle)

In contrast to the younger age profile in the rural and remote areas, the Adelaide archdiocese's coastal parish of Victor Harbour/Goolwa, recorded the highest proportion of Catholics aged 65 and over, with 39.3 per cent of Catholics in this age group. Another sea-side parish – Rosebud, in the Melbourne archdiocese – ranked the second -highest, with 38.3 per cent. Two other Melbourne parishes, Reservoir North (36.9%) and Hadfield (35.6%), ranked third and fourth, while the parish of Forster, a coastal parish in the Maitland-Newcastle diocese, was fifth-ranked, with 35.1 per cent of Catholics aged 65 and over.

*PC: Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay*

## Population Growth

According to the 2016 Census, the parish of Mernda, in the north of the Melbourne archdiocese, had the largest numerical increase in the Catholic population between the years of 2011 and 2016 with an increase of 4,564 persons. As Table 5 shows, two other parishes (Petrie in Brisbane and Craigieburn in



Melbourne) had increases of 4,536 and 4,119 respectively, to put them in the 'Top Five'. In Western Australia, the parish of Ellenbrook in the Archdiocese of Perth, which reported an increase of 3,264 Catholics, was ranked the fourth highest parish, with a total of 9,648 Catholics in 2016. On the other coast, in Canberra & Goulburn, Gungahlin parish increased by 2,949 persons to bring their total Catholic population to 15,663 in 2016, putting them in fifth place.

**Table 5: Top five parishes - Largest numerical increase in Catholic population 2011-2016**

Rank	Catholics 2011	Catholics 2016	Change	Parish (diocese)
1.	8,450	13,014	4,564	Mernda (Melbourne)
2.	9,578	14,114	4,536	Petrie (Brisbane)
3.	19,696	23,815	4,119	Craigieburn (Melbourne)
4.	6,417	9,684	3,267	Ellenbrook (Perth)
5.	12,714	15,663	2,949	Gungahlin (Canberra & Goulburn)

*Note: Some parishes which had boundary changes between 2011 and 2016 that resulted in numerical increases in their population have not been included in the above list.*

Table 6 shows the Top Five parishes with the largest increase in the **proportion** of the Catholic population between 2011 and 2016. In first position, was Binalong parish in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn that showed the largest proportional change of a 103.7 per cent, although the numerical size of the Catholic population is still quite small. Crows Nest parish in Toowoomba had a similar change from 988 Catholics in 2011 to 1,990 in 2016. In Perth, the parish of Baldivis reported a change of 84.2 per cent, including it in the Top Five parishes. Two parishes in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Mernda in the north and the more centrally-located Melbourne-Bourke

Street parish, reported an increase of just over 50 per cent, locating them at the fourth and fifth places respectively.

**Table 6: Top five parishes - Largest percentage increase in Catholic population 2011-2016**

Rank	Catholics 2011	Catholics 2016	% change	Parish (diocese)
1.	162	330	103.7	Binalong (Canberra-Goulburn)
2.	988	1,990	101.4	Crows Nest (Toowoomba)
3.	3,064	5,645	84.2	Baldivis (Perth)
4.	8,450	13,014	54.0	Mernda (Melbourne)
5.	1,442	2,179	51.1	Melbourne-Bourke St (Melbourne)



## Ethnicity and Birthplace

As many Catholic parishes continue to increase in ethnic diversity there are some for whom multiculturalism is the norm. Table 7 shows the Top Five parishes with the percentage of Catholics born in non-English speaking countries (NESC). NESC countries are defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as being all countries other than Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, United States, Canada and South Africa. As Table 3 shows, Fairfield in Sydney has the highest proportion (65%) of NESC Catholics. Coming in a close

second, is the Melbourne-Bourke Street parish at 63 per cent. One other parish in Sydney (Haymarket) and two in Melbourne (Noble Park and St Albans South) reported figures between 57 to 60 per cent each, placing them in the last three positions in the Top Five list.

**Table 7: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholics born in non-English speaking countries (NESC)**

Rank	Per cent born NESC	Parish (diocese)
1.	65.0	Fairfield (Sydney)
2.	63.0	Melbourne-Bourke St (Melbourne)
3.	60.1	Haymarket (Sydney)
4.	57.7	Noble Park (Melbourne)
5.	57.1	St Albans South (Melbourne)

Table 8 shows the Top Five list for recently arrived Catholics in Australia

from NESC countries. These are Catholics who arrived in the three years prior to, and including, the Census year, between the start of 2013 to August 2016, when the Census when held. Craigieburn Parish, in the north of Melbourne, had the largest number of recent arrivals of Catholics from NESC countries (1,519)—including countries such as Iraq, Philippines, Italy and India, to name just a few. The parish of Fairfield, in western Sydney ranked second with 1,242 new arrivals. The centrally-located parish of Brisbane Cathedral (1,050) and the western Sydney parish of Smithfield, including Fairfield West, (1,046) recorded similar numbers of newly-arrived NESC immigrants, placing them in third and fourth place. Rounding out the Top Five was Surfers Paradise from the Archdiocese of Brisbane with 778 new arrivals in 2016. Surfers Paradise Catholics arrived from countries such as Brazil, Croatia and other Former Yugoslavia, Philippines and Italy.

**Table 8: Top five parishes - Catholics from non-English speaking countries who arrived 2013-2016**

Rank	Number who arrived 2013-2016	Parish (diocese)
1.	1,519	Craigieburn (Melbourne)
2.	1,242	Fairfield (Sydney)
3.	1,050	Brisbane Cathedral (Brisbane)
4.	1,046	Smithfield, including Fairfield West (Sydney)
5.	778	Surfers Paradise (Brisbane)

**Table 9: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholics speaking a Language other than English at home (LOTE)**

Rank	Per cent speaking LOTE	Parish (diocese)
1.	95.6	Bathurst Island (Darwin)
2.	93.5	Santa Teresa (Darwin)
3.	93.4	Wadeye (Darwin)
4.	87.3	Melville Island (Darwin)
5.	77.1	Fairfield (Sydney)

Table 9 shows the Top Five parishes for Catholics speaking a language other than English at home. The top four spots were all taken by parishes from the Diocese of Darwin that have the majority of their Catholic populations speaking Australian Indigenous languages. Among these, Bathurst Island parish ranked first, at 95.6 per cent. The fifth and final position was Fairfield parish in the west of Sydney. Fairfield parishioners spoke a number of languages other than English at home, including Assyrian and Chaldean, Arabic, Vietnamese and Spanish.

## Indigenous Population

Table 10 shows the Top Five parishes for Catholics who identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the Census. Three of the top five spots were within the Darwin diocese, with Wadeye ranking first with a population of 2,078. Dubbo parish in Bathurst diocese was ranked second with 1,787 and Broome Cathedral parish was ranked third with 1,581.

**Table 10: Top five parishes - Indigenous Catholic population**

Rank	Number of Indigenous Catholics	Parish (diocese)
1.	2,078	Wadeye (Darwin)
2.	1,787	Dubbo (Bathurst)
3.	1,581	Broome Cathedral (Broome)
4.	1,399	Bathurst Island (Darwin)
5.	1,342	Alice Springs (Darwin)

## Education



Table 11 shows the Top Five parishes of Catholics who had a degree qualification or higher. The first four ranked parishes were within the Sydney archdiocese, with the fifth being in the Perth archdiocese. All were well above the Australian average of 20.6 per cent.

**Table 11: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholics with degree qualification or higher (aged 15 and over)**

Rank	% with degree or higher	Parish (diocese)
1.	57.7	Paddington (Sydney)
2.	55.6	North Sydney-Kirribilli-Lavender Bay (Sydney)
3.	55.3	Neutral Bay (Sydney)
4.	54.0	Edgecliff (Sydney)
5.	53.5	Shenton Park (Perth)

Tables 12 and 13 show the Top Five parishes of Catholic school students attending Catholic schools. These categories are driven by the availability of Catholic schools in a particular area as well as the engagement of local Catholics with the school. It is important to note that these figures refer to the home location of the students, and not necessarily to the location of the school that they attended.

In Table 12, which looks at primary school students, the parish ranked first was Bathurst Island, with 96.1 per cent, which, as noted in Tables 9 and 10, was also highly ranked for the Indigenous population and the number of Catholics who speak a language other than English. The third ranked parish was Santa Teresa with 87.7 per cent, also from Darwin diocese. Both the second and fourth ranked parishes were from Melbourne, with Kensington parish (88.2%) and Niddrie parish (87.4%) respectively. The final parish in the Top Five was Tarcutta parish from Wagga Wagga diocese with 87.0 per cent.

**Table 12: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholic primary students attending Catholic schools**

Rank	% of primary students	Parish (diocese)
1.	96.1	Bathurst Island (Darwin)
2.	88.2	Kensington (Melbourne)
3.	87.7	Santa Teresa (Darwin)
4.	87.4	Niddrie (Melbourne)
5.	87.0	Tarcutta (Wagga Wagga)

Table 13 looks at Catholic secondary school students attending Catholic schools. There is a different picture here than with the primary school students, which may reflect such factors as the availability of both Catholic and Government schools in a parish, or the costs of secondary education.

**Table 13: Top five parishes - Percentage of Catholic secondary students attending Catholic schools**

Rank	% of secondary students	Parish (diocese)
1.	92.3	Moyhu (Sandhurst)
2.	91.3	Cororooke (Ballarat)
3.	88.0	Granville East (Parramatta)
4.	88.0	Attadale (Perth)
5.	86.7	Manning (Perth)

Moyhu parish in the Sandhurst diocese took the top ranking with 92.3 per cent. Cororooke parish came in second with 91.3 per cent, followed by Granville East in Parramatta diocese with 88 per cent. The fourth and fifth ranked parishes were both from the Perth archdiocese, Attadale with 88 per cent and Manning with 86.7 per cent.



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