

## 2021 National Social Profile to be released in April

The 2021 *Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia* will be released in April. A printed copy of the profile will be sent to all the bishops. Once released, the document can be accessed online and will be available for download from our website:

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

Diocesan and Parish profiles will be released later this year. Thank you for your patience as we complete work on these profiles.



*Dear Readers,*

*Welcome to our first newsletter for 2023! We are pleased to report that work on the national Social Profile for 2021 is now complete and it will be published next month.*

*While we await this release, we continue to unpack information from the 2021 Census. This bulletin looks at the changing nature of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic population. We also take a closer look at the occupations and industries of employment of Australian Catholics and highlight some recent trends over the last decade.*

*We also introduce you to our newly-developed research maps and data portal named Australian Catholic Mapping Online (ACMO). Some of our readers will be familiar with previous versions of this software. We are presently checking parish boundaries using the new portal. Once this is done, we plan to load the maps with Census data from 2021 and make them available more broadly.*

*This bulletin also includes information on the Synod on Synodality and a recent consultation on 'Sport and Faith'. More information on these can be found inside.*

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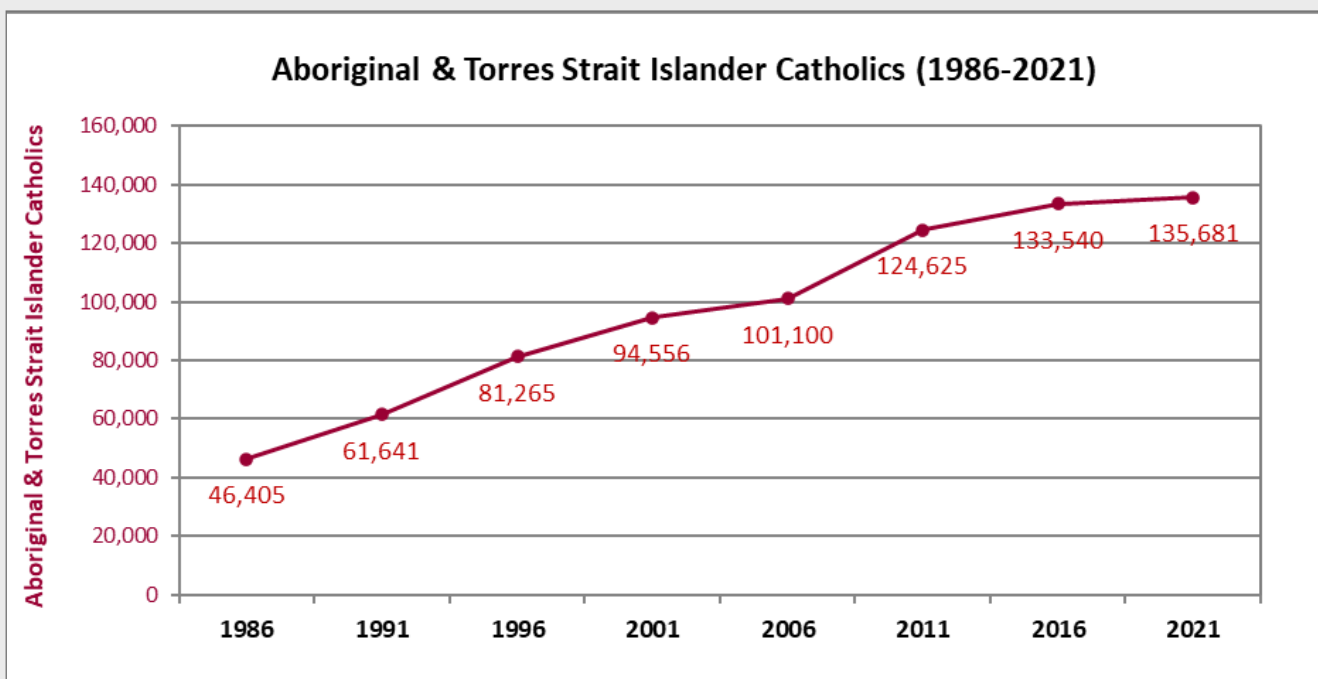
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# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in 2021

## 2021 Census tracks a young, growing community

The Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) counts every person and household in Australia every five years, providing the most comprehensive picture of how communities grow and change over time. Census data, which includes information such as a person's age, sex, religion, occupation and education, enables our Centre to conduct in-depth analyses of particular communities, providing richer insights into their transformations over time. Those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are one such community. The following analysis uses Census data from 2021 and earlier Censuses to provide an overview of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic population.

The chart below indicates that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics has risen continually since 1986, and nearly tripled over the 35-year period to 2021. Census statistics show that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader Australian community increased roughly three and a half times during the same period. Some of this growth can be attributed to changes in identification and fertility rates. For example, data from the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (ACL D) suggests that identification change led to a net gain of approximately 80,000 in Australia's Aboriginal population from 2011 to 2016<sup>1</sup>. This expansion has started to show signs of slowing in recent years. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic community grew by 1.6 per cent between 2016 and 2021, compared to 7.2 per cent in the previous five years.



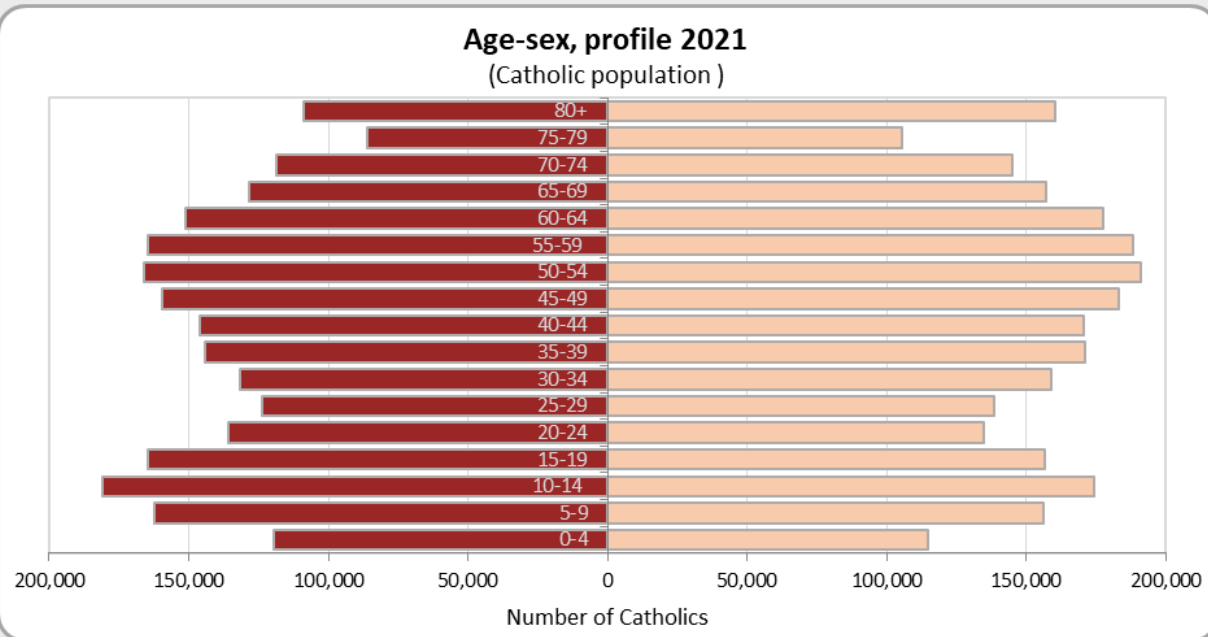
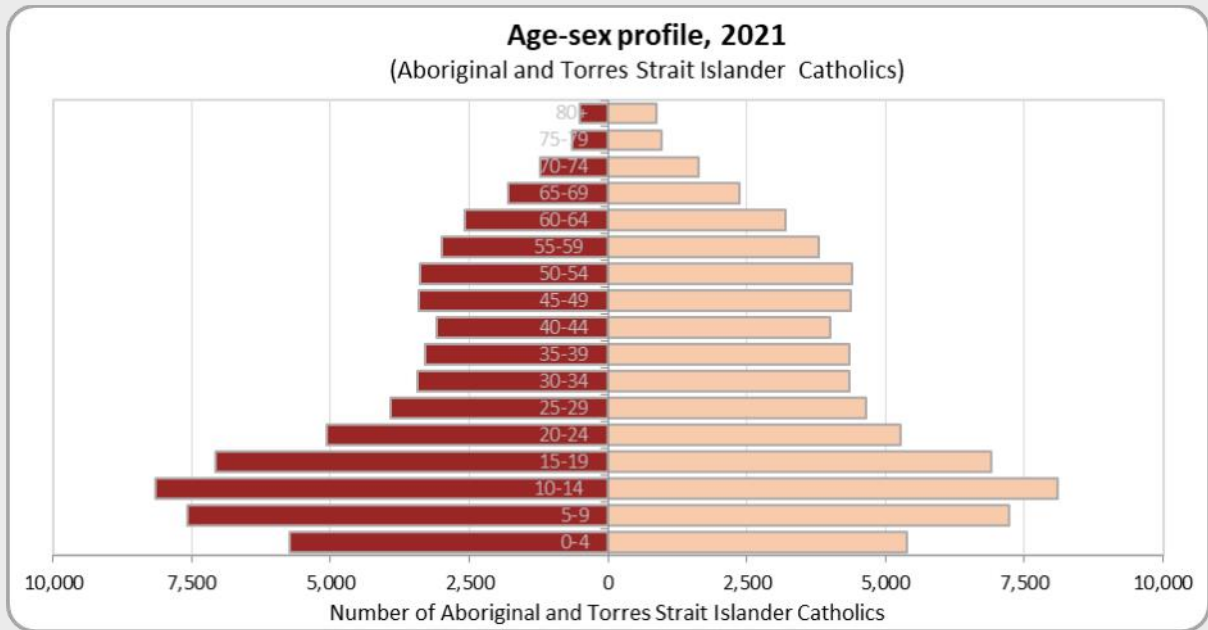
Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing 1986-2021 (data obtained using Census TableBuilder). 1986 National Data is sourced from the ABS archive.

The age-sex profile of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic population is another notable feature. The charts on the following page compare the age-sex profile of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic community to that of the general Catholic population (published in the forthcoming *2021 National Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia*). The proportions of those aged under 30 years vary significantly from those in the older cohorts. The general Catholic population is more evenly distributed across all age groups, with a much smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics aged 50 and over. An analysis of all 28 Australian geographical dioceses reveals a similar pattern regardless of whether the diocese is located in an urban, regional or rural area of Australia.

1. Biddle, N., & Markham, F. (2018). *Indigenous identification change between 2011 and 2016: Evidence from the Australian census longitudinal dataset*.

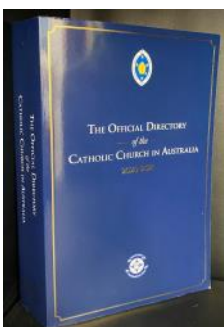
# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in 2021

Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing 1986-2021 (data obtained using Census TableBuilder).



## Call for Diocesan Statistics

### Diocesan statistics due by 31 March 2023



Diocesan contacts will have received a request from the NCPR to provide the annual statistics for the *Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia*. The directory provides a valuable reference for the Catholic Church and presents a picture of the current population, clergy and numerous ministries in all dioceses. The request includes a copy of the previous years' figures to assist with the process. Responses should be returned to NCPR staff by no later than

**Friday 31 March 2023.**

Any questions about the process, or the information required, can be directed to Stephen Reid at [stephen.reid@catholic.org.au](mailto:stephen.reid@catholic.org.au).

# From the 2021 National Social Profile

## Occupation and Industry of Australian Catholics

As we await the release of the 2021 *Social Profile* next month, we take a look at the recent trends on occupation and industry.

The occupation graph from the 2021 Social Profile reveals that between 2011 and 2021, the number of Australian Catholics employed as Managers, Professionals, and Community Services workers increased, while those employed as Technicians and Trades Workers, Clerical and Administrative Workers, Machinery Operators and Drivers, and Labourers decreased.



Source (left and below):  
ABS Census of  
Population & Housing 2021  
(data obtained using Cen-  
sus Table Builder).

The changes are part of a national<sup>1</sup> and worldwide trend in which jobs have changed dramatically in recent years due to the increased use of technology, requiring people to have more formal qualifications and specialised skills in trades and professions.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, some jobs have been automated, resulting in job losses in areas such as clerical administration and leaflet distribution.

The graph also highlights demographic changes in the community, such as an increasing proportion of Australian Catholics with higher levels of education. Nearly a quarter (24.6%) of Catholics aged 15 years and over had a degree or higher qualification in 2021, up from 20.6 per cent in 2016.

The adjacent table also provides a snapshot of the sectors in which Catholics are employed, showing that Health Care & Social Assistance (14.9%) was the most common industry of employed Catholics in 2021. The next most prevalent industries for employed Catholics were Construction (9.9%) and Education & Training (9.5%).

Catholics only	
Industry of Employment by Sex (employed persons aged 15+)	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	2.2
Mining	1.7
Manufacturing	5.9
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	1.1
Construction	9.9
Wholesale Trade	2.7
Retail Trade	9.2
Accommodation & Food Services	6.2
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	4.3
Information Media & Telecommunications	1.1
Financial & Insurance Services	3.9
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	1.8
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6.8
Administrative & Support Services	3.1
Public Administration & Safety	6.5
Education & Training	9.5
Health Care & Social Assistance	14.9
Arts & Recreation Services	1.4
Other Services	3.7
Inadequately described, Not stated	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. The National Skills Commission. *The transformation of Australia's labour market*. <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/insights/transformation-australias-labour-market>.

2. The National Skills Commission. *State of Australia's Skills 2021: now and into the future*. <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/reports/state-australias-skills-2021-now-and-future/executive-summary>

# Australian Catholic Mapping Online

## N CPR Research Maps and Data Portal

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides most Census and other data freely on their website. However, since Catholic parishes and dioceses have their own unique geographies, the N CPR requests customised data based on Catholic boundaries. The ABS's smallest area for collecting Census data is known as a Statistical Area 1 (SA1), which includes approximately 200 households based on location.

In 2021, there were 61,845 SA1s which represented the entire population of Australia. As part of the National Catholic Census Project, the N CPR must distribute these SA1s across approximately 1,300 Catholic parishes and 28 dioceses. Following each Census, the N CPR undertakes a lengthy collaborative process with key diocesan contacts to allocate every single SA1 to a parish, and then a diocese, on a best-fit basis. Only after these parish boundaries are finalised can commencement of work on the Parish Social Profiles begin.

## Online Maps

As part of the National Catholic Census Project, the N CPR is producing online maps of parishes and dioceses, and linking Census data to them. Census data is uploaded to the online application (called Australian Catholic Mapping Online, or ACMO) to generate a visual representation of the data.



Figure 1: Diocesan boundaries are shown by the dark blue lines on the map, with the light blue lines indicating parish boundaries.

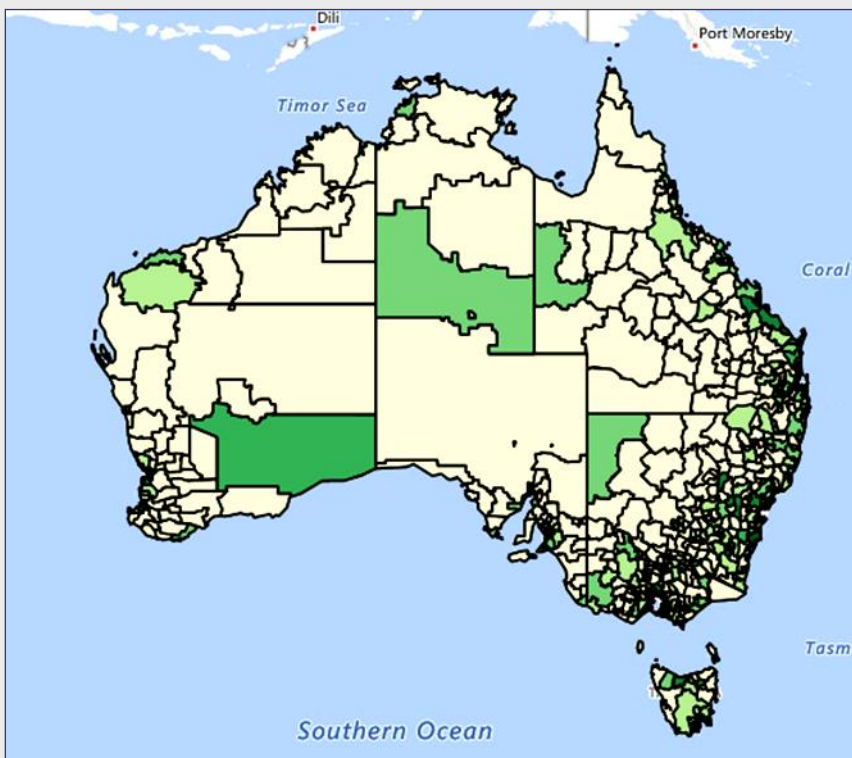


Figure 2: 2016 Australian Catholic Population Density

Online maps can be used to verify boundaries, as shown in the map of Victoria above. They can also be used to reveal other data trends, as illustrated by the 2016 Catholic population density map of Australia alongside. The darker shaded regions of the map indicate high density populations, while the lighter colours indicate areas with fewer Catholics in 2016.

ACMO Maps with 2021 Census Data will be available shortly on the N CPR website, giving you instant access to national, diocesan and parish-level data. Keep your eye out for updates!

Maps provided by: <https://mangomap.com/australia-catholic-mapping-online>

# Synod on Synodality Update

## The Australian Synthesis for the Continental Stage

On 21 December 2022, the NCPB published the Australian Synthesis of the response to the *Working Document for the Continental Stage*. Unlike earlier consultations, in this round, people were invited to engage in a process of discernment on the contents of the Working Document.

Many participants expressed their joy and gratitude at being invited to share their thoughts and experiences at a continental level. Some voiced concern that the fast pace of the Continental Stage left little opportunity to promote broader participation. Others expressed confusion about undertaking the process of discernment at this level and showed gratitude for the NCPB's Reflection Guide that was created to assist them.

The reflections of the discernment groups were organised around three topics examined in the Continental Stage: Experiences of Church, Challenges to Address, and Priorities and Calls to Action. The responses to the Working Document revealed that people's issues and experiences in Australia are often similar to those shared by people in other countries.

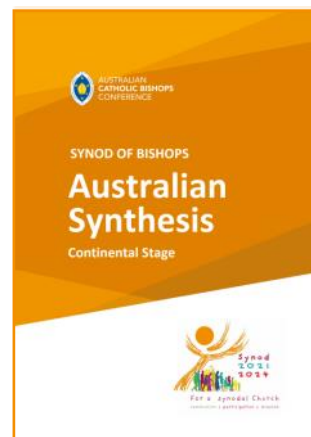
Some topics that did not appear to be well covered in the Working Document were brought to light, such as the absence of the mention of marriage and family, particularly in the transmission of faith; the lack of reflection on the "role and charism of religious orders in the Church"; and the exclusion of those with "hidden disabilities" such as autism and ADHD, or those with complex disabilities, such as comorbidities or dual diagnoses.

Nonetheless, participants expressed hope for the importance of the upcoming Synod, and the Church's future. A copy of the Australian summary, as well as more information about the Synod on Synodality is available at:

<https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>

## Oceania Continental Assembly

The Australian synthesis, along with four other syntheses from the Oceania region were used to draft the *Oceania Discernment on the Working Document for the Continental Stage*. NCPB Director, Dr Trudy Dantis, attended the assembly of the Federation of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO) where this document was discussed and approved. This final report will be submitted to the General Secretariat of the Synod by 31 March 2023.



Above: The attendees at the FCBCO Assembly in Suva in February 2024  
With thanks to the Australian Catholic Media.

## How COVID-19 Restrictions Affected Religious Groups Around the World in 2020

Pew Research Center



When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, many nations banned or limited public gatherings in order to slow its spread. The 13th annual study of religious restrictions around the globe by the Pew Research Centre focused on how lockdowns and other health measures affected religious groups, and how they responded.

Some of the key findings included:

- Authorities in 46 of the 198 countries and territories examined (23%) used physical means, such as arrests and prison sentences, to enforce COVID-19 related restrictions on worship services and other religious gatherings.
- Religious groups filed lawsuits or spoke out against the public health measures in 54 of the 198 countries (27%). A common complaint was that some churches, mosques, synagogues and other houses of worship were treated unequally—either by comparison with secular gathering places, like shops and restaurants, or by comparison with other religious groups.
- One or more religious groups *defied* public health rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic in 69 countries and territories (35%), .

More than a third of the countries and territories studied reported that religious groups were subjected to different forms of force or blame related to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. In 74 countries (37%), the study identified at least one of the following: (1) *governments used force* to impose limits on religious gatherings; (2) governments, private groups or individuals publicly *blamed religious groups* for the spread of COVID-19; or (3) *private actors engaged in violence or vandalism* against religious groups, linking them to the spread of COVID-19.

These incidents were spread fairly evenly around the world, occurring in 12 countries in the Americas (34% of countries in the region), 20 countries in the Asia-Pacific region (40%), 20 countries in Europe (44%), seven countries in the Middle East-North Africa region (35%) and 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (31%).

For more information on this study visit: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/11/29/how-covid-19-restrictions-affected-religious-groups-around-the-world-in-2020/>

### In 74 countries, religious groups faced force, blame related to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

#### In 74 countries, religious groups faced force, blame related to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

Number of countries and territories in 2020 where authorities or private actors used force against religious groups or blamed them for the pandemic



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.  
"How COVID-19 Restrictions Affected Religious Groups Around the World in 2020"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

If you would like more information about how the NCPR can support your organisation, please contact us at [ncpr@catholic.org.au](mailto:ncpr@catholic.org.au)

# Staff News

## National Consultation to Explore Sport and Faith

On 28 February, the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Mission (BCELM) hosted an online, national consultation on the topic 'Sport and Faith'. Santiago Pérez de Camino, head of the Church and Sport Office in the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, provided the keynote address, examining the Vatican's 2018 document on the Christian perspective on sport and the human person, titled *Giving the best of yourself*. He also shared insights from the 2022 Vatican conference that had the theme 'Sport for All'.

Dr Stephen Reid, senior researcher at the NCPR, recently completed a doctoral thesis on sport chaplaincy, and presented at the consultation. Dr Reid said that the ministry of sports chaplaincy was a prime example of the intersection between sports and faith. "Sports chaplains bridge a gap between the two very different cultures of sport and Church. Although sometimes tenuous, chaplains can provide a link, otherwise broken, between two vital local communities: the local parish or church and the local sporting club." For more information, including relevant resources, see [www.nce.catholic.org.au/sport](http://www.nce.catholic.org.au/sport).



Photo by Serge Kutuzov on Unsplash

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