



Welcome to Fr Chris de Souza

We are delighted to welcome Fr Chris de Souza as the new General Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Fr Chris was formerly the Vicar General, as well as the Episcopal Vicar for Education and Formation, of the Diocese of Parramatta. As part of his role with the ACBC, he joins the Australian Catholic Council of Pastoral Research (ACCPR) and will be working closely with the N CPR, particularly on matters relating to the Synod and other key projects. We look forward to the fresh perspective he brings and his enthusiasm for the journey ahead.

Left: Fr Chris de Souza. Photo credit: ACBC Media and Communications.

Dear Readers,

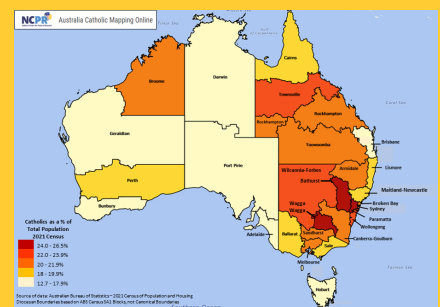
As we look forward to the First Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, there is much anticipation about how the event will unfold and what its implications will be for the Church. In this newsletter, we provide an update on the Oceania participants as well as a summary of the methodology for the proceedings. We wish all Oceania participants every blessing for their involvement and sharing at the October event.

We are also pleased to announce the release of our 2021 Diocesan Social Profiles, which may be downloaded from our website. The team is currently at work on the companion Parish profiles, which will be available later this year.

We have recently begun creating digital resources with our mapping software. This month, we highlight a printable '2021 Percentage of Catholics Map' that is available for download. National, diocesan, and parish digital maps that have updated Census boundaries are also available for purchase.

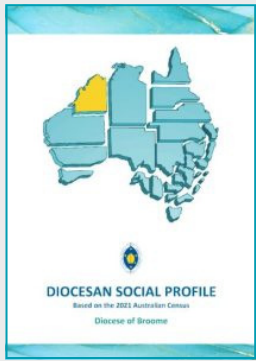
In other news, as part of our work responding to the proposals in 'The Light from the Southern Cross,' we recently produced two reports, one on Diocesan Pastoral Councils and the other on Parish Pastoral Councils. We also assisted in the preparation of the report for the ACBC—CRA five-year response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. More information on these and other topics can be found inside....

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2021 National Catholic Census Project



Diocesan Social Profiles Released

The Diocesan Social Profiles were released on August 1, 2023, with printed copies being distributed directly to the bishops in each geographical diocese. The profiles include data from the 2021 Census and are a useful tool for mission planning as they serve to illuminate changes in the diocesan Catholic community. The Diocesan Social Profiles are available for download via the NCPR website at:

<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/2021-diocesan-social-profiles/>



IMPORTANT NOTICE: Gremlins in our Profile

We discovered a few "gremlins" in the previous edition of the Diocesan Social Profiles. Two errors have been detected, which are detailed below. The electronic versions available on the NCPR website have been corrected. However, the hard copies that were initially delivered with the accompanying electronic files still contain these issues.

1. **"Snapshot" on Page 2:** The last line reported "... Catholics have changed address since 2011". The correct text is "... Catholics have changed address since 2016".
2. **Note on Page 3.** The note at the top of the page titled, "Randomisation of Census Data" had the following text:

Since the 1996 Census, following consultation with the Eastern Catholic Bishops, Eastern Catholics have been counted separately from Western (or Latin Rite) Catholics. Catholics belonging to the Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Syro-Malabar or Ukrainian Catholic Churches have been requested by their Bishops NOT to tick the box marked 'Catholic' on the Census form, but rather to write, for example, 'Maronite Catholic' in the space provided. Those Eastern Catholics who were unaware of this request and who ticked the 'Catholic' box are counted as Western Catholics.

The correct text beneath this heading should be:

The Catholic population of the diocese may be slightly different in different tables in this profile as a result of the randomisation procedure used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in carrying out its statutory obligation to protect the confidentiality of individuals. This variation in figures does not impair the value of Census data as the Census is intended to be an instrument that paints a broad picture rather than a precise measurement of a particular locality. Care should always be taken in interpreting small counts in tables.

If you have received an earlier copy of one of the profiles with these errors, please download the corrected version from the NCPR website at the address above.

Parish Social Profiles in the Works

The next stage of the Census project is to develop the Parish Social Profiles for the 1,230 parishes in Australia. These are already in the works, and the Centre hopes to begin distribution by the end of 2023.

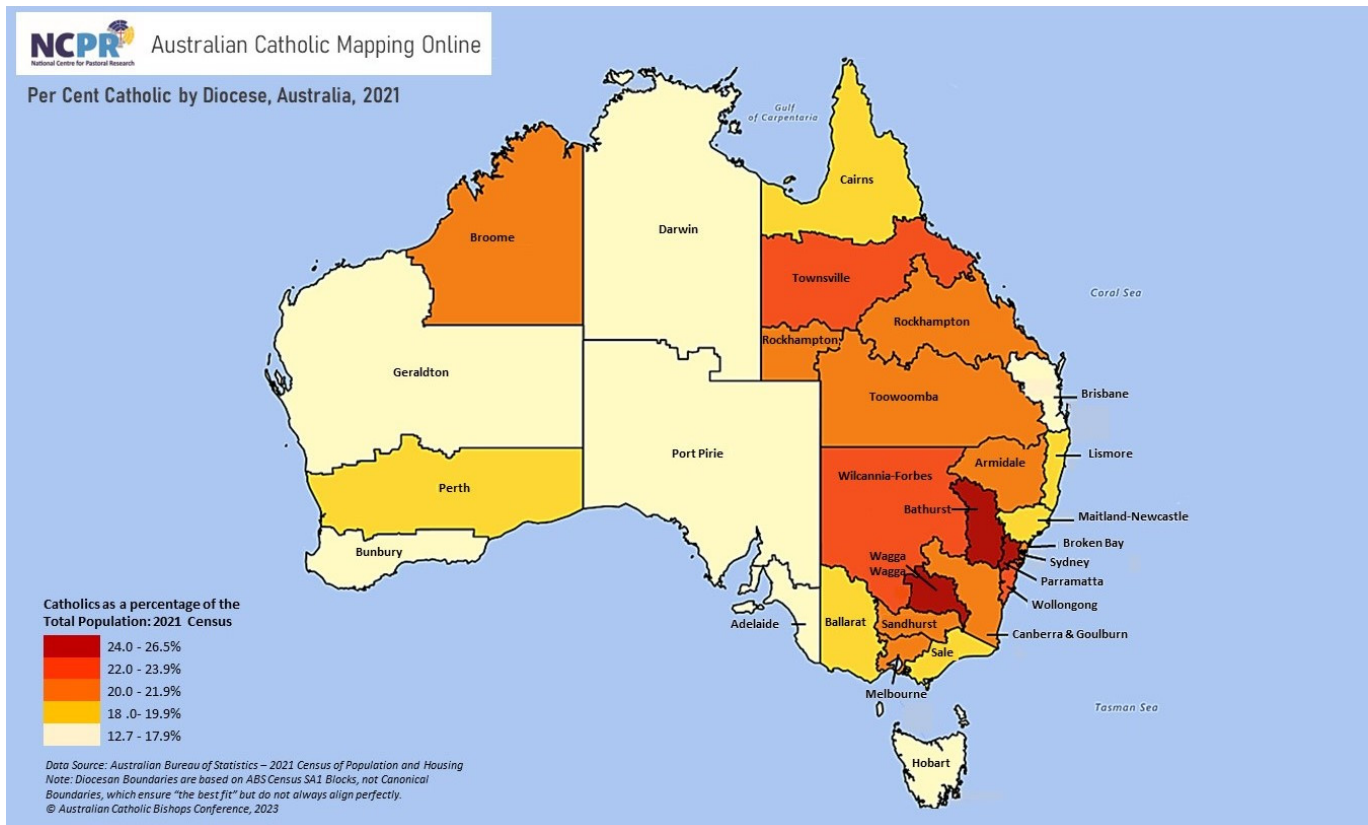
Special Report based on the 2021 Census

The Centre produces special resources to assist pastoral planning as part of our work on the National Catholic Census project. The first of these is a Summary Report, titled *Australian Dioceses by Religious Affiliation, and Per Cent Catholic, 2021 Census*. The information in this report is sourced from Page 9 of each Diocesan Social Profile and provides figures for Catholics, Other Christian, Non-Christian, No Religion and others in each diocese. The report is available for download from our website at: <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/national-catholic-census-project/> under "Special Reports from the 2021 Census".

Australian Catholic Mapping Online

New Resource: 2021 Percentage of Catholics Map

“Per cent Catholic” or the proportion of people in each diocese who identified as Catholic in the 2021 Census is a key piece of information recorded in the Snapshot (page 2) and Table 1 (page 4) of all the Social Profiles. According to 2021 data, the percentage of Catholics ranges from 26.5 per cent in Wagga Wagga to 12.7 per cent in Hobart. These figures were used to create the Australian “Catholicity” map shown below.



Data Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing 2021 (data obtained as part of the National Catholic Census Project).
Note: The map is created using Census boundaries which are “the best fit” with canonical boundaries, but do not always align perfectly (e.g. as in the case of the Diocese of Rockhampton and the Diocese of Toowoomba).

The map indicates that the majority of dioceses with the highest proportion of Catholics are on Australia’s east coast, where the colours are mostly orange and red. Dioceses shaded dark red have the highest proportion, with Wagga Wagga (26.5%), Bathurst (25.3%), and Parramatta (24.7%) in the top three.

Data from the 2021 Census reveals that nationally, Catholics account for 20 per cent of the Australian population. As the map shows, dioceses shaded gold or cream have a lower proportion of Catholics than this, whereas those shaded in orange, red or dark red have a Catholic population that matches or exceeds the national average. The map is available for download at: <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/australian-catholic-mapping-online/> It can be printed in either A3 or A4 format for optimal clarity.



2021 National Social Profile for Sale

The 2021 Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia provides comprehensive information of those who identified as Catholic in the 2021 Census. The electronic version is available for free download on the NCPR website. A professionally printed hard copy is available for \$22 including GST from the ACBC shop. Go here to get your copy now: <https://bit.ly/2021nationalsocialprofile>

Synod on Synodality Update

Announcement of Voting Members to the Synod

On 10 July 2023, the Holy See announced the appointment of more than 450 participants to the Synod, including—for the first time—voting members from religious men and women and lay people from around the world. More than a quarter of the voting members are non-bishops, including 54 women, a first in the history of the Synod. The list of attendees at the Synod is not yet complete, and further people may be appointed as nonvoting members, including experts and representatives of non-Catholic Christian communities. However, the number of voting members has been finalised.



Oceania Participants

From Oceania, there are 10 non-bishop members appointed as voting members:

- Manuel Beazley (New Zealand)
- Dr Trudy Dantis (Australia)
- John Lochowiak (Australia)
- Fr Denis Nacorda (New Zealand)
- Kelly Paget (Australia)
- Sr Mary Angela Perez RSM (Pacific)
- Fr Sijeesh Pullenkunnel (Syro-Malabar Eparchy)
- Dr Susan Sela (Pacific)
- Grace Wrakia (Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands)
- Professor Renee Köhler-Ryan (Australia)

These will join the following bishop members from Oceania:

- Bishop Shane Mackinlay (Australia)
- Archbishop Patrick O'Regan (Australia)
- Archbishop Paul Martin SM (New Zealand)
- Bishop Dariusz Kaluza MSF (Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands)
- Bishop Paul Donoghue SM (CEPAC [Pacific])

Three Australian bishops will attend the Synod in other roles. Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB will serve as one of the nine delegated Synod presidents, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP will participate as a member of the Council of the Synod of Bishops, and Bishop Anthony Randazzo, as current President of the FCBCO (Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania), will attend along with the other presidents of continental episcopal conferences. There have also been five experts and facilitators appointed from Oceania:

- Dr Sandie Cornish
- Br Ian Cribb SJ
- Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe
- Fr Asaeli Raass
- Fr Ormond Rush

More information about the non-bishop Oceania representatives, including brief biographies, is available at: <https://bit.ly/SynodFCBCOononbishopmembers>. The full list of participants in the Synod is available at: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/07/07/230707a.html>

Synod on Synodality Update

Methodology for the First Assembly

The First Assembly will deal with the questions posed by the *Instrumentum Laboris* (IL) by alternating plenary sessions (*Congregationes Generales*) and group work (*Circuli Minores*). Participants will address different topics in the order outlined in the IL as follows:

- Section A (n. 17-42) – focusing on the fundamental characteristics of a synodal Church, starting from the experience of walking together lived by the People of God over two years and gathered in the documents produced during the first phase.
- Section B – addressing the three priority issues that emerged from the consultation phase:
 - ◊ B1 (n. 46-50) – “A communion that radiates: How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?”
 - ◊ B2 (n. 51-55) – “Co-responsibility in Mission: How can we better share gifts and tasks in the service of the Gospel?”
 - ◊ B3 (n. 56-60) – “Participation, governance and authority: What processes, structures and institutions are needed in a missionary synodal Church?”
- Final Section – gathering the fruits of the process and discerning further paths to continue walking together. The Assembly will consider ways to continue listening to the experiences of the People of God, including promoting in-depth theological and canonical studies in preparation for the Second Assembly in October 2024.

Assembly participants will use the method of spiritual conversation in their deliberations, adapting it where necessary. Synod members are asked to keep a dynamic equilibrium between maintaining an overview perspective and identifying the steps to be taken in the journey ahead.

Together 2023 Prayer Meetings

Several groups around the world, including some from Australia, have registered to meet either in the lead-up to the Synod, or during the Together 2023 Prayer Vigil on 30 September. More information about these groups can be found on the Together2023 website under “Prayers elsewhere in the world”, or at this link:

<https://together2023.net/events-map/>



Video on Synodality

Fr Ormond Rush, who served on the Synod of Bishops’ theological commission, and has been appointed as one of the experts to advise at the upcoming Synod, has recorded a video explaining what Synodality is and what his hopes for the Synod are. The video runs for eight and a half minutes and is a useful resource for sharing the concept of Synodality with others, such as at the end of a parish Mass, during a small group meeting or in a newsletter to parents of parish school students.



The video can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/SynodalityOrmRush>

Response to Governance Review

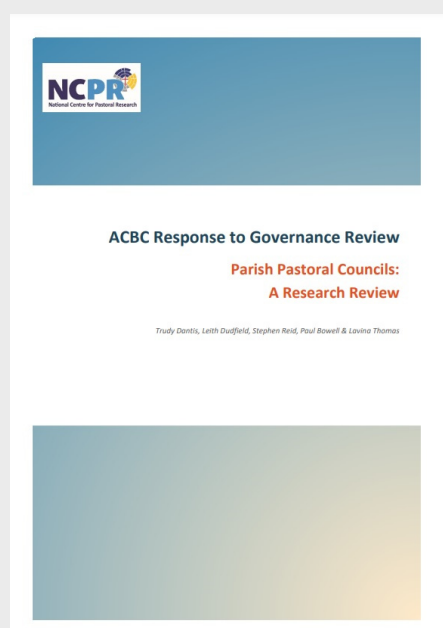
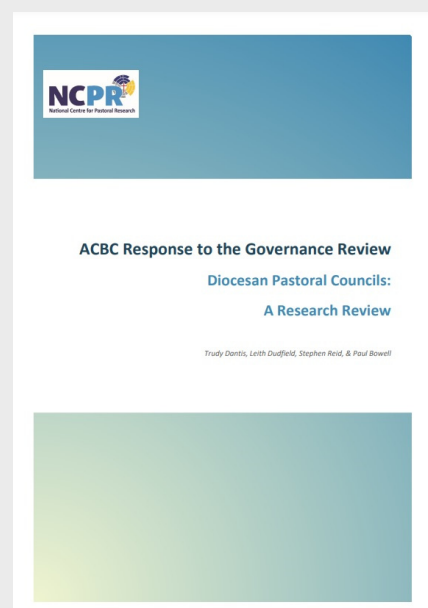
New Reports Published

The NCPR has recently published two reports which complete the Centre's work on the Response to Governance Review project, undertaken since 2021.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) had commissioned a review of diocesan and parish governance and management in Australia, the outcome of which was published as *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*. The report included a number of recommendations regarding Diocesan and Parish Pastoral Councils and the Centre was commissioned to inform the ACBC's response.

In response to this request, the NCPR undertook a number of initiatives including:

- Commissioning a report by Dr Damian Gleeson into the history of Diocesan Pastoral Councils in Australia (reported on in our March 2022 edition of *Pastoral Research Online*);
- Undertaking a review of diocesan and parish pastoral councils both in Australia and overseas; and
- Reviewing previous research undertaken by the NCPR which pertains to diocesan and parish pastoral councils, including Building Stronger Parishes, National Church Life Survey and the Plenary Council.



The findings of these investigations have resulted in two reports: [*Diocesan Pastoral Councils: A Research Review*](#) and [*Parish Pastoral Councils: A Research Review*](#). The reports set out the various requirements for pastoral councils in canon law and other related literature. They then examine what previous research says about the role of pastoral councils, what works and what can be improved. The concluding sections propose a number of different models of pastoral councils which could be implemented to serve the community.

The reports share some of the successes and exemplars from other dioceses and parishes both in Australia and overseas. They provide direction for any diocese or parish looking to begin or to improve on their pastoral councils.

The *Parish Pastoral Council* report also provides a deep dive into the elements of parish pastoral councils in Australia which can be observed through parish and diocesan websites. These include whether parish pastoral councils are mandated by the dioceses, the role and function of such councils, vision and mission statements, naming conventions, meeting schedules, and council membership, among others.

These reports, together with the earlier historical report by Dr Damian Gleeson, can be found on the NCPR website at: <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/resptogovrev/>

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

ACBC-CRA Response to the Royal Commission

Five-Year Report Released

On 31 August 2023, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), in conjunction with Catholic Religious Australia (CRA), published their five year updated report on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The NCPR was commissioned to assist with investigating and reporting on how the recommendations had been implemented since the ACBC and CRA published their initial joint response to the recommendations in August 2018.



The range of initiatives taken by the ACBC and CRA include activities which have gone beyond what the Royal Commission recommended. These initiatives, which are additional to the actions taken to address each of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, include:

- “the establishment of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL), the successor company to Catholic Professional Standards Limited;
- the new commitment of the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons jointly with the ACBC and CRA to ACSL;
- the preparation by ACSL of National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, developed in accordance with the 10 Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission, and now in their second edition;
- rigorous audit and accreditation processes through the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Audit Framework to ensure compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and therefore the Royal Commission recommendations;
- the preparation of the new *National Response Framework* and related *National Response Protocol* and other protocols to replace *Towards Healing*;
- the preparation of a new national program of priestly formation (*Ratio Nationalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*) for Australia;
- the preparation of the updated *Restoring and Nurturing Right Relationships* to support religious formation;
- the establishment of a Bishops Commission for Professional Standards and Safeguarding and Safeguarding Committee for CRA; and
- the development of *Our Common Mission*, a national framework for all those in Catholic ministry and service in the Church in Australia.”¹

To find out more about how the Catholic Church has responded to the Royal Commission recommendations, see the full report here: <https://bit.ly/ACBCCRA5Years>

¹ Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, *Report on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (Canberra: August 2023), ii.

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<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/pro-newsletter/>



International Conference Presentations

37th Biennial International Society for the Sociology of Religion Conference

The 37th ISSR Conference was held in Taiwan from 4 to 7 July 2023. Usually hosted in European countries, this was the first conference in Asia, held at the Academia Sinica, a leading academic institution in Taipei. According to organisers, the 2023 ISSR Conference hosted around 200 delegates over the course of four days, about half the number that would usually attend such an event if held in Europe.

Dr Trudy Dantis attended the event and, together with three co-presenters, convened a session at the conference entitled "Current Concerns in Parish and Congregational Research". She also presented a paper titled, "Catholic Mass Attendance in Australia and the Impact Of COVID-19". Using data from the 2021 Australian Census and the 2021 National Count of Attendance, Trudy presented a snapshot of Catholic Mass attenders, describing demographic trends and discussing the effect of the pandemic on how Mass was offered and its impact on participation patterns.



Dr Trudy Dantis (far right) with co-presenters (L-R) Philip Hughes, Ruth Powell and Kobus Schoeman.



XX International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology

The twentieth World Congress of Sociology, held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and the Crown Hotel, was attended by 3,000 delegates with a further 1,600 people registered virtually. The Congress attracted delegates from 107 countries, with the highest numbers of overseas delegates coming from the US, India, Japan, Germany and the UK.

Dr Stephen Reid presented a paper, "Understanding the Catholic Community in Australia: History, Methods, and Applications", held within a Religion in Oceania session (one of the 20 Sociology of Religion sessions), which explained how the Catholic Church in Australia utilises Census data to assist with mission and ministry planning. The session attracted

some interest from a diverse group of sociologists, and Stephen was able to hand out a few complimentary copies of the *2021 Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia*.

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