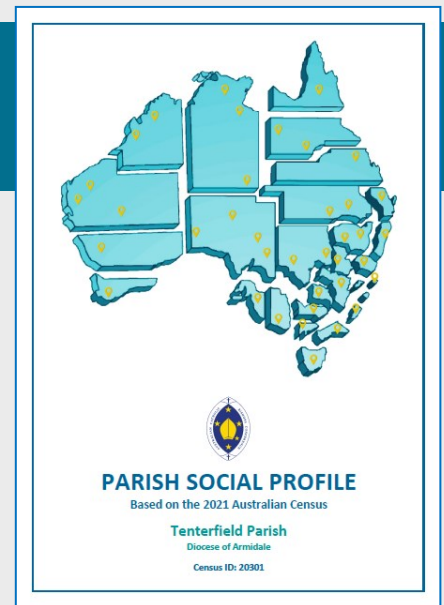


2021 Parish Social Profiles published

The 1,227 *Parish Social Profiles* were released in January this year, with a printed copy posted to every parish in Australia. The profiles can be viewed online or downloaded for printing from our website:

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

The *Parish Social Profiles* are a pastoral planning and mission resource that assists parishes in understanding the demographics of their local community and identifying its needs and strengths. They complete the full set of social profiles based on the 2021 Census, which also includes diocesan and national profiles available from the NCPR website.



Dear Readers,

As we approach Easter and prepare for a short break, we are mindful of our team's busy start to 2024. We were delighted to begin this year with the release of the 2021 Parish Social Profiles. These resources remain freely available to all parishes as part of the Australian Catholic Bishop's commitment to strengthening parish life.

We continue to work on analysing data from the 2021 Census, and this month we bring you some insights on Catholics born in non-English-Speaking Countries, aided by mapping technologies that make trends much more visible. We have also recently produced the "Top Five Parishes" report.

This newsletter includes a Synod report on the ongoing 2024 local and national consultations, which will aid preparations for the Second Assembly in October of this year. We thank all the bishops, diocesan contacts, agency heads, group coordinators and participants for their continued support and participation in the project.

In other news, we bring you information on new website resources, overseas research and consultations that the staff have conducted. We also welcome a new research assistant, Carole Gan, and look forward to her contributions this year.

We wish you and your families a blessed and joyous Easter!

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2021 National Catholic Census Project

Catholics born in non-English speaking countries

Note: This article references information found in the Social Profiles which can be accessed at <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/2021-catholic-social-profiles/>

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census was promoted on the premise that “every number tells a story.” The National, Diocesan, and Parish Social Profiles use Census data to tell stories about Australian Catholics.

One piece of information provided in Table 4 of all the *Social Profiles* is the percentage of Australian Catholics born in non-English speaking countries (NESC). Nationally, this figure increased from 19.1 per cent in 2016 to 21.4 per cent in 2021.

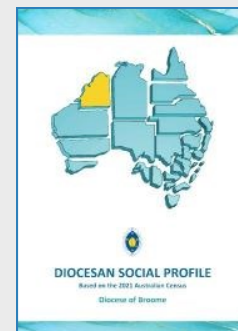
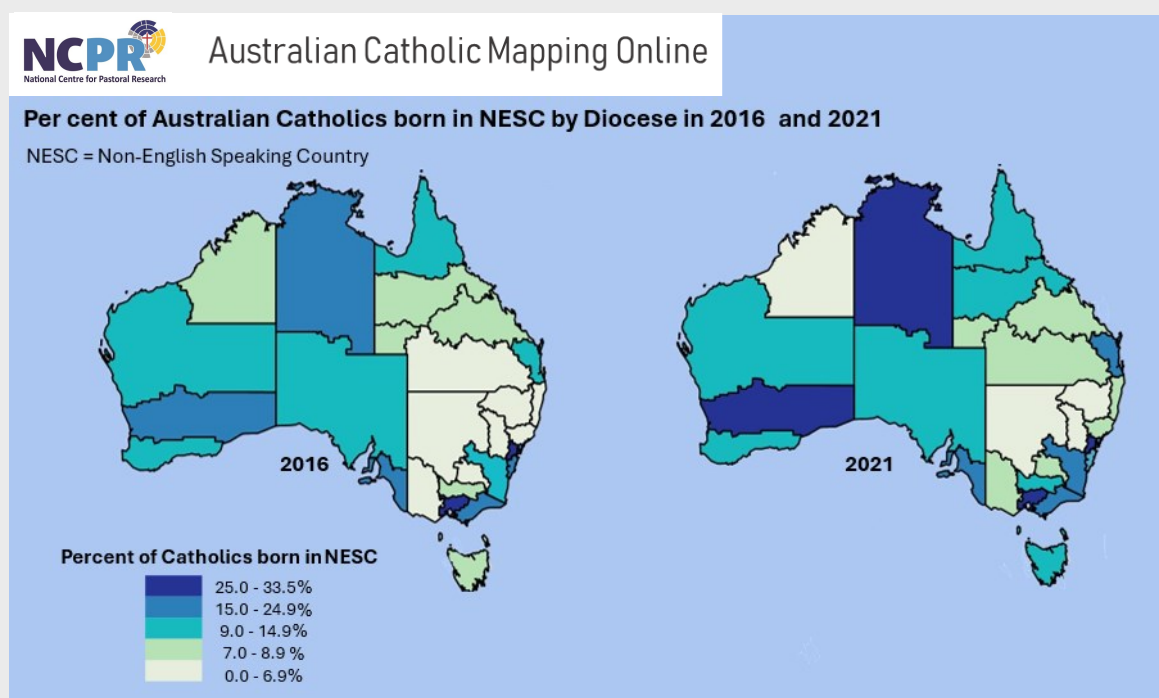


Figure 1: Percentage of Australian Catholics born in NESC by Diocese, 2016 and 2021



The maps in Figure 1 were created using data from Table 4 in the *Diocesan Social Profile*. Using the same data ranges for 2016 and 2021 allows comparisons between the two maps.

Looking at each map individually reveals that some dioceses have a greater proportion of their population born in NESC than others. When the maps for 2016 and 2021 are compared, we can see that in 2021 there were more dioceses coloured darker blue than in 2016. There were also fewer dioceses coloured cream. This indicates that there was an increase in the number of dioceses with high percentages of Catholics born in NESC between the two Censuses.

As an example, the percentage of Catholics born in a NESC in Perth (25.9%) and Darwin (25.4%) increased significantly enough in 2021 to move them into the highest range (25-33.5%, coloured dark blue), where they joined Sydney (33.5%), Parramatta (29.2%), and Melbourne (27.6%). At the lower end of the scale, there were four fewer dioceses in the lowest range (0-6.9%, cream-coloured band) after the percentage increased for five dioceses in 2021: Ballarat (8.3%), Maitland-Newcastle (8.1%), Toowoomba (7.7%), Wagga Wagga (7.6%), and Lismore (7.4%), moving them into the light green range (7.0 – 8.9%). The percentage of Catholics born in a NESC in the Diocese of Broome decreased from 7.3 per cent in 2016 to 6.8 per cent in 2021, placing it in the lowest band.

2021 National Catholic Census Project

The figures taken from Table 19 in the National Social Profile are summarised in Table 1 below by grouping Australian Catholics into four broad categories of birthplace: Australia, Other English-speaking countries (OESC), NES, and Unknown, not stated or at sea.

Table 1: Number of Catholics by birthplace, 2016 and 2021, and change over time

Birthplace	2016	2021	Difference
Australia	3,895,000	3,658,000	-236,000
Other English-speaking country	279,000	264,000	-15,000
Non-English-Speaking country	1,026,000	1,106,000	80,000
Unknown, not stated or at sea	92,000	48,000	-44,000
Total	5,292,000	5,076,000	-216,000

As the table above shows, between 2016 and 2021, the number of Catholics overall decreased by 216,000. However, the number of Catholics born in a NES increased by around 80,000, while those born in Australia and OESCs declined by around 251,000 during the same period.

The figures from Table 4 in the *Diocesan Social Profile* reveal that the proportion of Australian Catholics born in NESCs is increasing in many dioceses, resulting in a more culturally diverse community. The figures from Table 19 in all the *Social Profiles* provide much more detail and show that the increasing number of Catholics born in NES coupled with a decline in Catholics born in Australia and in OESCs is changing the ethnic makeup of Catholics in Australia.

Data Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2016 and 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

Note: Diocesan Boundaries are based on ABS Census SA1 Blocks, not Canonical Boundaries. They ensure “best fit” and may not always align perfectly.

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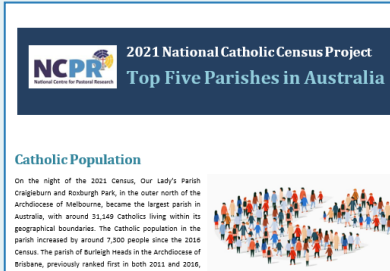
NEW REPORT: Top Five Parishes in Australia

With the recent release of the 2021 Parish Social Profiles, the NCPR have developed a report on the top five parishes in Australia in various demographic categories. The report is available on the NCPR website at:

<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2021-Census-Top-5-Parishes-in-Australia.pdf>

The report examines the top five parishes in terms of Catholic population, various age groups, population growth, ethnicity and birthplace, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics and education.

COMING SOON: Two special reports using Census data will soon be published on the NCPR website. These include the *2021 Disability Report for the Catholic Church in Australia* and the *2021 Engaging with your Parish Social Profile* which provides guidance and reflection questions to help parishes make the most of their Parish Social Profile. Be sure to watch out for them on our website.



Catholic Population

On the night of the 2021 Census, Our Lady's Parish Craigburn and Rosburgh Park, in the outer north of the archdiocese of Melbourne, became the largest parish in Australia, with around 31,149 Catholics living within its geographical boundaries. The Catholic population in the parish increased by around 7,300 people since the 2016 Census. The parish of Burleigh Heads in the archdiocese of Brisbane, previously ranked first in both 2011 and 2016, was a close second in 2021 with 29,576 Catholics.

Rank	Catholic (N)	Parish (Diocese)
1.	31,149	Craigburn (Melbourne)
2.	29,576	Burleigh Heads (Brisbane)
3.	22,475	Werrisbee (Melbourne)
4.	22,419	Maroochydore (Brisbane)
5.	22,135	Caloundra (Brisbane)

Another Melbourne parish, *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* in the archdiocese of Melbourne, was included in the Top Five for the first time after increasing by over 2,500 Catholics since the 2016 Census. Two other Brisbane parishes, *Maroochydore* (22,419) and *Caloundra* (22,135), rounded out the top five.

When it came to the proportion of Catholics, as Table 2 shows, three parishes in the Diocese of Darwin and two parishes in the Diocese of Brisbane had the highest proportion of Catholics in Australia in 2021. Just over eight out of ten people (83.1%) were Catholic in the parishes of Santa Teresa, 80km south-east of Alice Springs, and Bathurst Island (83.2%), 80km north of Darwin. Melville Island parish in Darwin ranked third (74.1%), followed by *St. Ignace* in Brisbane (57.4%). Another Brisbane parish, *St. Ignace* (56.6%), entered the Top Five list taking the final place in 2021.

Rank	Catholic (%)	Parish (Diocese)
1.	83.1	Santa Teresa (Darwin)
2.	83.2	Bathurst Island (Darwin)
3.	74.1	Melville Island (Darwin)
4.	57.4	St. Ignace (Brisbane)
5.	56.6	St. Ignace (Brisbane)

Synod on Synodality Update

The Synthesis Report of the First Assembly

The *Synthesis Report* and a *Letter to the People of God* were two documents that were published following the discussions of participants at the First Assembly of the Synod held in October 2023. The *Synthesis Report* is set out in three sections:

- The face of the synodal church,
- All disciples, all missionaries, and
- Weaving bonds, building community.

Each section is divided into several chapters, which provide an account of the convergences, matters for consideration, and proposals that emerged from the discussions. The convergences offer points to guide reflection on the topics, matters for consideration summarise areas that require further study, and the proposals indicate possible paths for action.

Copies of the reports, as well as more information about the Synod on Synodality, are available at: <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch> or <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/synod-on-synodality/>



Consultations Towards the Second Assembly

Following the publication of the Synthesis Report, all bishop's conferences were tasked with undertaking further consultation at a national and local (diocesan) level on the main theme, “How can we be a synodal Church in mission?”. In Australia, consultations began in February this year. The NCPR developed a suite of resources to provide guidance to bishops, diocesan teams and groups involved in the consultations.

Local Consultation: Dioceses are coordinating the local level consultation, which reflects on relevant chapters of the *Synthesis Report* and focuses on the question: “How can we enhance the differentiated co-responsibility in the mission of all the members of the People of God?” Each diocese has appointed a Diocesan Contact Person to manage the process.

Dioceses have been invited to focus on aspects that enable them to contribute according to their own “situation, character and experience, sharing good practices that represent visible and concrete signs of synodality”. The consultation will involve leadership teams and key stakeholder groups to help identify the paths to be followed and the tools that can be adopted in different contexts and circumstances. Groups will return their reflections to their Diocesan Contact Person, following which each diocese will prepare a Diocesan Summary and an optional Diocesan Testimony.

National Consultation: In the national-level consultation, Bishops Commissions, Councils and established Catholic organisations will reflect on the relations between Churches, groupings of Churches and the Bishop of Rome in order to find “a dynamic balance between the dimension of the Church as a whole and its local roots”.

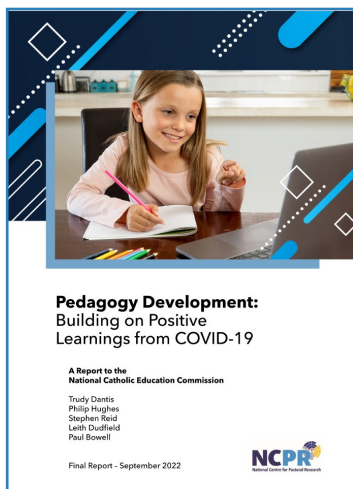


The Australian Report

The NCPR will summarise the reports received from the local and national consultations to prepare a National Report for the Holy See in May 2024. Diocesan testimonies will be submitted in their entirety and without summary to the General Secretariat at the same time.

NCPR Website: New Resources

<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/>



National Catholic Education Commission—Pedagogy Development: Building on Positive Learnings from COVID-19

The report from our 2022 study into the impact of COVID-19 on learnings in Catholic schools has now been released. The study was commissioned by the National Catholic Education Commission and sought to investigate schools that had developed innovative approaches to online teaching and learning during COVID-19. The focus of the project was learning about these experiences and innovative practices, with a particular focus on religious education, faith and spirituality. The report can be accessed on the NCPR website at:

<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/pedagogy-development-covid-19/>

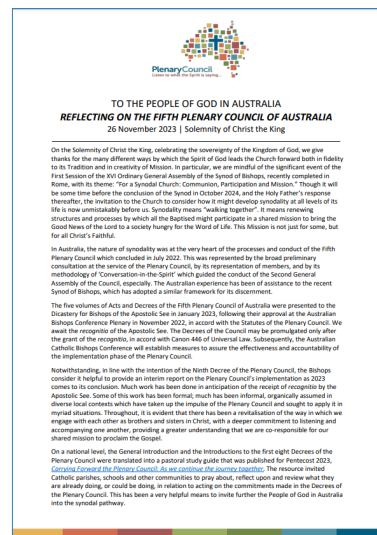
Plenary Council Implementation Interim Review

Decree Nine of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia required that reviews of the Implementation Stage of the Plenary Council be undertaken in 2023 and 2025. Presently, however, the decrees are awaiting *recognitio* from the Dicastery of Bishops in order to be promulgated. As a result, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference decided to establish an interim body to undertake the 2023 Review of actions that had been taken in response to the Plenary Council Decrees.

The NCPR was commissioned to gather data and prepare a report for the interim body, describing the Plenary Council's Decrees and the pastoral strategies proposed to achieve each of them. The interim body subsequently released a statement on 26 November 2023 noting what had been achieved in the Church of Australia since the conclusion of the Plenary Council in 2021.

A copy of the statement is available here:

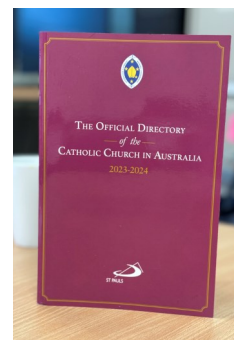
<https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/pro-research-projects/plenary-council-2020/>



Call for Diocesan Statistics

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 12 April 2024**.

Any questions about the process, or the information required, can be directed to Katherine Jelavic at katherine.jelavic@catholic.org.au or Stephen Reid at stephen.reid@catholic.org.au.



NCPR 'Out and About'

Archdiocese of Melbourne

Since our last newsletter, NCPR staff have been out and about presenting findings from a number of the Centre's projects, and assisting parishes, dioceses and other organisations to understand the context in which their various ministries take place.

In mid-February, Stephen Reid visited Greater Box Hill parish (Melbourne) to provide insights to parishioners and clergy from 17 parishes across the Archdiocese's Eastern region. Stephen's talk focussed on how to interpret data contained in the 2021 Parish Social Profiles for mission. A summary of the Eastern Region Parishes Forum written by the Proclaim: Office for Mission Renewal, titled "How knowing your people informs your parish's mission" can be read here: <https://melbournecatholic.org/news/how-knowing-your-people-informs-your-parish's-mission>



PC: Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Diocese of Sale



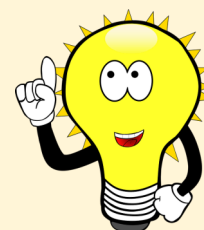
PC: © Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited.

Later that week, Stephen Reid also visited the Diocese of Sale's offices in Warragul to present to the board of DOSCEL (Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited). The presentation included an overview of the people in the diocese using data from the 2021 Census and the 2021 National Count of Attendance. Stephen's presentation was followed by a DOSCEL consultant, who used some demographic data from the NCPR (and other sources) to help the Board to strategically think about the future of schools across the diocese.

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

Did You Know?

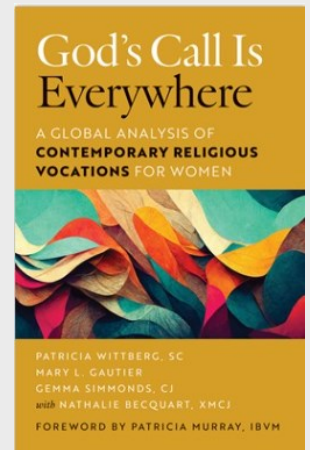
- ◆ The parish of **St Mary's (Archdiocese of Hobart)** is actually the town of St Marys as well as the Saint name. The town name does not have an apostrophe, while the parish name does. Additionally, the St Mary's church offices are located in St Helen's church in the town of St Helens!
- ◆ **St John's Wood / The Gap (Archdiocese of Brisbane):** St John's Wood is a neighbourhood in Ashgrove, next to the suburb of The Gap. The neighbourhood was named after a homestead of the same name.



Overseas Research

God's Call is Everywhere: a Global Analysis of Contemporary Religious Vocations for Women

Researchers Patricia Wittberg SC and Mary Gautier from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), together with Gemma Simmonds CJ and Nathalie Becquart XMCJ, recently published a book titled *God's Call is Everywhere: A Global Analysis of Contemporary Religious Vocations for Women*. The book examines research from six countries: the US, Canada, Australia, France, the UK and Ireland. The authors analyse data gathered between 2009 and 2019 and identify similarities and differences among women in the six countries who choose to enter vowed religious life.



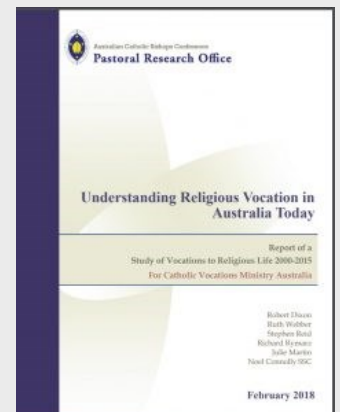
The book addresses six major points of comparison:

- Demographic characteristics of the women entering religious life and their personal and familial backgrounds.
- What attracted them to religious life and to their specific religious institute.
- What they find most satisfying and most challenging about religious life.
- Their hopes and concerns for the future.
- Experiences and programs that were helpful in their vocational discernment.
- Aspects of the larger society, of the Church, and of the religious institutes that make vocational discernment difficult for women today.

It also contains additional commentary from research in Africa, India and Mexico to broaden the global implications of the study.

The Australian contribution

The NCPR contributed to the research through an earlier project led by Dr Bob Dixon that studied vocations to religious life in Australia. The report, *Understanding Religious Vocation in Australia Today: Report of a Study of Vocations to Religious Life 2000-2015*, published in 2018, is available on our website at: <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/understanding-religious-vocation-in-australia-today/>



The figure below from the CARA Report highlights the research findings on members' preferred living settings across the countries investigated. The Australian research shows that 57 per cent of those surveyed preferred to live with members of different ages, 53 per cent preferred to live with members of different cultures, and 59 per cent—the highest number among the countries researched—preferred to live with members of different ministries.

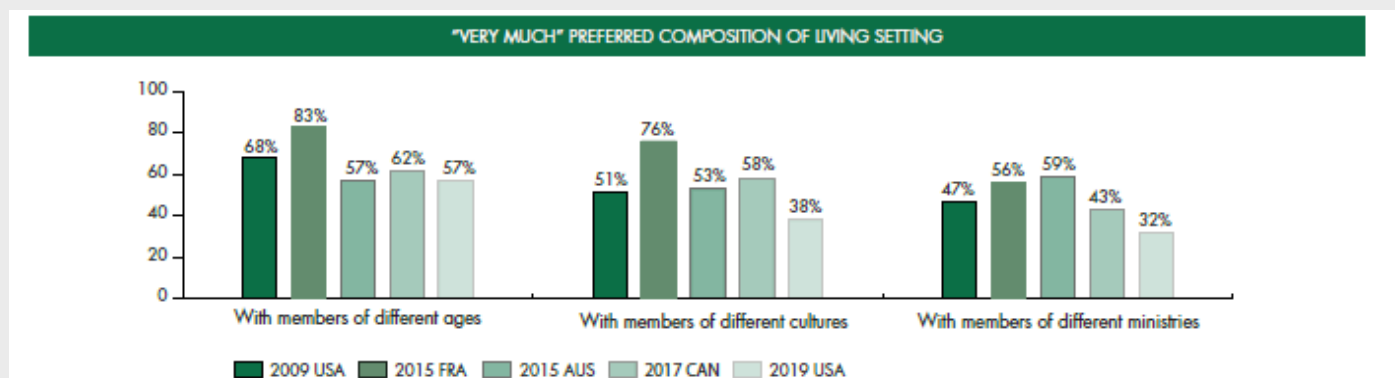


Figure from the CARA Report, vol 29, no. 3, Winter 2024

God's Call is Everywhere is available from Liturgical Press: <https://litpress.org/Products/E6914/Gods-Call-Is-Everywhere>

Staff News

New Staff Member

We recently welcomed Carole Gan as a research assistant until December 2024 to support the Centre with projects we are undertaking this year. Carole is based in Sydney and holds degrees in canon law, theology and business administration. Her JCL research at St Paul's University, Ottawa, investigated models of parish leadership in Australia. Carole works concurrently with NCLS Research and has served in various dioceses in Australia.

Carole's work at the Centre will primarily focus on the collaborative NCPR—ACMRO research project, which aims to create a profile of Catholic clergy in Australia, including those born in Australia and those born overseas who work here. The study will explore their spiritual, physical, mental and overall wellbeing, identifying areas that require additional care and support.



Above: Carole Gan, new research assistant at the NCPR

Do you enjoy this newsletter?

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



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