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Port Pirie and Broome Dioceses lead the way for Plenary Council

More than 200 people from remote and rural parts of the Diocese of Port Pirie in South Australia have gathered together under the theme 'Looking forward in hope towards 2020'. This was the first major gathering in Australia since the announcement earlier this week of the 2020 Plenary Council.

The two-day assembly was attended by parishioners and clergy from all parishes across the vast geography of Port Pirie Diocese as well as the diocesan and state leaders of Centacare, Catholic Education, St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Women's League and other diocesan ministries.

The youth of the diocese were also strongly represented at the assembly with 2018 being the Year of Youth across the country. They reminded the gathering that the year of youth is not just for the young people - "it's for young people, old people and everyone in between!"

Bishop of Port Pirie diocese Greg O'Kelly said that "at a time when the rural Church in Australia faces seemingly insurmountable challenges, it is essential that we remember we are a people of hope and we are proud to be leading the engagement with the Plenary Council. This year we celebrate our 22nd Diocesan Assembly in Port Pirie. Together, we have experienced the power of listening deeply to one another's experiences of faith, life and the Church, as we reflected on what we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time."

Concurrently, the Diocese of Broome also gathered together for its annual leaders meeting which included clergy, pastoral and ministry leaders and catholic educators from across the diocese.

Participants commented that the Diocese of Broome is a very special place. "The people are what make Broome special. It has been important for us to learn more about the Plenary Council in the last two days, as it will enable us to plan how we can engage all the diverse communities of people that make up our diocese. We are excited to adapt the listening and dialogue processes and resources for our own context and share our stories with the Church in Australia."

Members of the Plenary Council facilitation team attended the Broome gathering summing up the views of many that "we are excited to see the local initiatives for Plenary Council listening and dialogue encounters take shape over the coming weeks."

The Plenary Council will be the first in held Australia since 1937 and will be held in two sessions in October 2020 and May 2021. Visit plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au for more information.