



## FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCES OF OCEANIA

The Episcopal Conferences of Australia • New Zealand • The Pacific •  
Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

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### Oceania bishops publish response to Synod of Bishops document

MEDIA RELEASE

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The bishops of Oceania say their people's reflections for the global Synod of Bishops for a Synodal Church left them feeling "peace and joy", but also called them to be prophetic and ready to "model ourselves on the love we proclaim".

The bishops, in Fiji for the quadrennial assembly of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania in February, spent part of that gathering considering the region's response to the Synod's Working Document for the Continental Stage, titled *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent*.

The Oceania response was drafted by a writing and discernment group, which synthesised reports from the four bishops conferences and the local Eastern Catholic Churches.

In a context of prayer and contemplation, the bishops reviewed and refined that document, which the FCBCO's executive council recently approved and submitted to the Synod Secretariat in Rome.

[The document has now been published](#), as have some other continental responses.

Bishop Anthony Randazzo of Broken Bay, appointed president of the FCBCO at the February assembly, said while the report captured the voices of Catholics across Oceania, the bishops felt the need to offer a pastoral response.

"One of the key works of a bishop is to teach. Gathered as the shepherds of the people of Oceania, we wanted to share our prayerful and considered thoughts on what we had heard," he said.

"As we bishops wrote, through this Synod process 'we do not want to build a different Church, but rather to renew and revitalise the Church which we love'. That starts with each and every one of us – all the baptised – individually, but also in communion with one another."

The document concedes that the responses gathered represented only a small proportion of the Catholic population, and the breadth and depth of local lived experiences were not always contained in the document.

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“The document captures the hopes and concerns of our people, and this might give the impression that the Church is in disarray,” the bishops’ pastoral reflection says.

“However, it is precisely in places and times of pain and suffering that Christ reveals Himself. This confidence and faith in His presence can guide us in our response.”

The Oceania report outlines the fruits of the discernment that took place in response to *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent*, drawing together common themes, issues and insights. It also highlights tensions and differences, and identifies priorities and calls to action.

Regional bishops conferences around the world were invited to prepare responses to the Working Document for the Continental Stage, with the seven submissions helping to shape the working document (*instrumentum laboris*) for the first Synod assembly, to be held in Rome this October.

“We pray – and we believe – that Oceania’s hope-filled contribution will help the work of the Synod move forward in fidelity to the Holy Spirit,” Bishop Randazzo said.

The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania comprises the episcopal conferences of Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands.