



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Parishes given vital information to help serve their communities**

Profiles of 1230 Catholic parishes across Australia have been published, offering a wealth of insight they can use to better serve the needs of their local communities.

The parish “social profiles” draw on data captured in the 2021 Australian Census and examine the Catholic and local population within parish boundaries.

“It will be a valuable tool to help parishes understand their local communities,” said Professor Gabrielle McMullen, chair of the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research.

“It is important that parish leaders have the latest information, so they can assess the pastoral needs of people and then plan the best way to meet those needs.”

Trudy Dantis, the director of the National Centre for Pastoral Research, said the reports provide statistics on a range of demographic measures, including age, sex and country of birth, that present the evolving nature of Catholic parishes.

They also contain important information on the language people speak at home, the makeup of their families and households, their income levels, occupation, and employment status. Data on educational background and attendance at educational institutions are also included.

Where possible, the statistics in the 2021 parish profiles have been compared with the 2016 data.

“The work of analysing the data from the 2021 Census is a lengthy process and, while 2021 might feel like a long time ago, the details in these reports help paint the most comprehensive picture we can of local Catholic communities,” Dr Dantis said.

The next data will not be available until 2028.

The parish profiles complete the National Centre for Pastoral Research’s major reports on the 2021 Census data, following earlier reports on the Church nationally and at the diocesan level.

“There have been a significant number of changes in the demography of parishes in the years following the 2016 Census. This series of social profiles will provide a critical resource for the Church in Australia for at least the next four years, when we can next obtain updated data,” Dr Dantis said.

Rockhampton Bishop Michael McCarthy, the Bishop Delegate for Pastoral Research, said he values the insights that the reports offer.

“Each parish should have three things - its own vision or aspiration, an understanding of what sort of people make up its local Catholic and general community and an awareness of the resources and gifts available to the parish to realise the vision,” Bishop McCarthy said.

“The social profiles provided in these reports will empower parishes using pastoral planning to move into the future with hope and confidence, ready to do the work of Jesus Christ as the people of God on mission.”

The 1230 reports have now been published here <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/2021-parish-social-profiles/>