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**Young People, Faith  
and Vocational Discernment**

**AUSTRALIAN REPORT**

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## INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, the Australian bishops were provided with copies of the Preparatory Document for the 2018 Synod of Bishops XV Ordinary General Assembly: *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, and were invited to respond to questions in the document. The Bishops Commission for Church Ministry and the Bishops Commission for Family, Youth & Life coordinated this task along with consultations with the Australian Catholic Youth Council and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Pastoral Research Office.

Each diocese was invited to provide feedback to the Synod questionnaire via a diocesan-led consultation process as well as inviting people in the 16-29 age group to respond to an online survey. This task was seen as a special pastoral opportunity in preparation for the Australian Year of Youth in 2018.

## HOW THE DATA WAS COLLECTED

### Statistical Data

The statistical data for the report was collected from three main sources:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011 and 2016.
2. Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, *National Count of Attendance*, 2001-2011.
3. NCLS Research, *National Church Life Survey*, 2016.

More information on each of these sources can be found in Appendix I.

### ACBC National Youth Survey

A short online survey was created based on some of the Preparatory Document questions. This survey was distributed to young Catholics (16-29 years) through an online link. Their responses were collated and individual reports were sent to every diocese to assist them in compiling their responses to the questions and to use the data to gain general insights. In total, around 15,000 young people in Australia responded to the survey. The survey was also designed to capture the voices of Indigenous Australian young people and young Australians with disabilities.

### Diocesan Reference Group

Each diocese was invited to consider the Preparatory Document's questions via a 'Diocesan Reference Group', selected and established by the local bishop, to advise him on the diocese's preferred consultation process to achieve Pope Francis' goal: "to go beyond what is familiar and known in order to encourage discussion." The members of this group represented diverse diocesan agencies that worked with young people including Catholic social services, Catholic schools, parish-based and school-based youth ministry leaders, clergy and the diocesan vocation offices. Responses from young people in the diocese were collected through a series of consultative processes. Each diocese also received relevant background statistical data and a diocesan-based report collating the responses from the online youth survey.

The diocesan consultative process usually involved face-to-face meetings with young people either at Catholic youth events or other purposeful gatherings. Some dioceses established innovative measures to help young people respond in a comfortable manner. For example, the diocese of Broken Bay set up a synod 'Video Booth' at Catholic youth events and gatherings. The opportunity to participate was presented in a fun and inviting way as 'Papa Francesco's Gelato Bar' where young people were given an ice-cream in return for sharing their thoughts with Pope Francis on video. This approach was highly successful with over 50 video submissions made, with a range of topics and issues raised by the young people themselves.

The final reports produced by each diocese were collated and summarised to form one national report, and most dioceses responded by providing reports addressing the Synod questions. However, some smaller, rural dioceses did not have the resources to do so, whilst others had limited youth involvement within their areas. Nevertheless, this report has attempted to capture the voices of young people from all dioceses across Australia.

## THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN THE AUSTRALIAN RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

The Australian religious landscape has constantly changed over the centuries. Prior to 1788, an Aboriginal spirituality, expressed in myth, ritual and way of life, prevailed. Most of Australia's religious groups trace their origins to Ireland, the United Kingdom and Europe, with Catholics and Protestants being the main religious groups in the early years of European settlement. Over the years however, large surges in the immigration of people especially from non-English speaking countries, have led to an increase in non-Christian religious groups, and a greater diversity of religious affiliations than in previous times. Added to these changes is a rejection of religion by a large and growing number of Australians. Research findings from the 2009 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes suggest that for almost half of Australians, religion or spirituality is so weak that it is not present at all.

The demographical profile of the Catholic community in Australia is increasingly multicultural with 23.6 per cent of the Australian Catholic population born overseas. An additional 22 per cent are second generation immigrants. While the Catholic population continues to increase, vocations to religious life (and even marriage) are on the decline. The number of Catholic religious in Australia shows a downward trend. In 2009 there were 8,422 Catholic religious in Australia as compared to 17,029 in 1976. The median age of Catholic religious was 73 as compared to 46 in 2006, confirming a rapidly aging profile. While these figures do not include diocesan clergy, Australia still has a relatively older religious community ministering to a younger Catholic population.

Section One of this report provides more details on the demographics of Australian Catholics.

### CATHOLIC PARISHES

There are currently 1,364 Catholic parishes operating in twenty-eight dioceses based on territorial divisions, five dioceses of Eastern Catholic churches and three other non-geographical dioceses which include the Military Ordinariate for the Armed Services of Australia, the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross and the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei.

Australian parishes and dioceses are very diverse in terms of their location, size and population demographics. The average number of Catholics per parish doubled between 1947 and 2006, 2006, from 1,735 to 3,729. Nevertheless, this population is unevenly spread across the country resulting in some very large parishes and other very small ones. Burleigh Heads in the Archdiocese of Brisbane is the largest parish, with over 32,000 Catholics. In comparison the smallest mainland parish of Jugiong in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn has only 86 Catholics. The percentage of the Catholic population in each parish in comparison to the total population of the area also varies greatly. In parishes such as Bathurst Island and Santa Teresa in the Diocese of Darwin, both of which are Aboriginal communities, Catholics make up 86 to 89 per cent of the population, while a few parishes in the dioceses of Geraldton, Darwin, and Cairns exist in communities that are under 10 per cent Catholic.

Recent research has shown that vibrant parishes are those that are inclusive and welcoming, with committed parishioners, active parish groups and a strong sense of belonging and community. Rural parishes face greater challenges due to the declining number of priests and lay leaders for ministry, shrinking Catholic populations and a lack of adequate resources to support Mass and other parish ministries. Despite this, some rural parishes continue to excel through innovative leadership structures and parish events, dynamic youth activities, strong community engagement and adaptability, planning and vision.

## THE IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Along with the changes in the religious landscape, the Church's significance as the centre of local community life has declined at the same time as people's mobility and reliance on electronic forms of communication has increased. Young people are faced with a rising level of secularisation and materialism in the Australian society. Social media and main-stream media influences often conflict with the teachings of the faith. In addition, the Church's teachings seem increasingly irrelevant to contemporary forms of relationships and do not support an individualistic way of working and living, so that the importance of religion has greatly decreased in many people's lives. One of the challenges is also the variety of approaches to faith and church practice. On the one hand, there are those who adhere to traditional devotional, liturgical and hierarchical styles. On the other hand, there are those who place more emphasis on being Catholic within the world, in dialogue with others.

Rural dioceses face unique challenges in their ministry to young people. Going to Mass and attending youth groups is not very easy due to the large distances, the absence of regular weekend Mass and a lack of parish resources. The movement of young people to larger towns and cities sometimes creates a changed relationship with the Church and community. The Church can sometimes be seen as part of their childhood and not part of their daily life as they move to a new location and commence as adults. Individuals often return to their home parish for special moments such as a child's baptism or a funeral but, due to the separation from the faith community of their childhood, they cease to engage in Church and have an ongoing faith life.

There are also challenges in ministering to migrant youth, with differently tailored youth programs needed for those who are born in Australia and new arrivals from overseas. These two groups of young people are distinct in their mentality, needs and also their choice of spoken language. For example, in the Chaldean diocese, some youth still speak only Chaldean and Arabic and struggle with English. This makes it a challenge to have an event that suits everyone. Indigenous Australians also face greater challenges with issues of equality and a lack of educational and work opportunities.

Additional challenges for young people, as identified by both young people and the wider Church, include the breakdown of family relationships and an increase in domestic violence; the negative effects of social media (including cyberbullying, the need for constant connection and the resulting rewiring of how young people now think) and a lack of self-esteem and concern about what the future may hold for them. Another challenge is the over sexualisation of entertainment, advertising and media. This exposure to explicate concepts normalises the use of pornography, which leads to many different social challenges.

Finally, the recent Royal Commission inquiry into the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church in Australia has had serious repercussions in many communities. The legacy of child sexual abuse in some dioceses has tarnished not only the institution of the Church but also anyone who remains an active member of its community. There is a general loss of trust in society's institutions and leaders, including the Church. In some places, priests refrain from visiting schools as they used to. There is a perception that the Church has lost moral high ground.

Sections Two and Three of this report provide further details on the challenges faced by young people and the responses provided by vocational programs, pastoral care workers and youth ministries in Australia.



## SECTION 1: GATHERING STATISTICS

### CATHOLICS IN AUSTRALIA

According to the Australian Census in 2016, Catholics were the largest religious group in Australia, with just under 5.3 million people identifying as Catholic, or 22.6 per cent of the 23.4 million Australian population. While, overall, 52 per cent of the population identified with a Christian denomination and 8.2 per cent with other religions, around 30 per cent of the population, or seven million Australians, did not identify with any religious group. Whilst the number of Catholics has grown in every Census since the first Australian Census was held 105 years ago, 2016 was the first time the Catholic population has seen a net decrease, falling by 147,000 people. Research has revealed that 140,000 young people aged 15-29 who identified as Catholic in 2011 dis-identified in 2016, with most indicating 'No religion' on the Census form.

In 2016, the average age of Australians was 38 years, and the average age of Catholics was only slightly higher at 39 years. There were almost 650,000 Indigenous Australians, with just over one-in-five identifying as Catholic. Just over one-quarter of all Australians were born overseas, and around 21 per cent spoke a language other than English at home.

There were 4.374 million young people aged 16-29, and 20.5 per cent were Catholic. Over 525,000 Australian young people aged 16-29 attended a secondary educational institution, with 120,000 enrolled in one of the country's 343 Catholic secondary schools. A further 865,000 young people were studying at a university or at another tertiary institution, while 318,000 were studying at a TAFE or other vocational institution. The vast majority of young people (60%) who were in the labour force were employees, although three per cent of all young people were owner-managers of enterprises. Thirty-seven per cent of all young people were employed full-time and 22 per cent were employed part-time. Around six per cent were unemployed, looking for either part-time or full-time employment.

In 2011, the number of people at Mass in Australia on a typical weekend was about 662,000, or 12.2 per cent of the Catholic population. The rate of attendance amongst young Catholics aged 15-29 was around five to six per cent. In comparison with the Australian Catholic population in 2016, the National Church Life Survey conducted in 2016 revealed that Mass attenders (aged 15 or over) were generally older (average age was 59 years), were well educated, a higher proportion were born in non-English speaking countries and a higher proportion were married.

### BIRTHS

There were 305,377 births registered in Australia in 2015. Just over half (51%) of all births registered in 2015 were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 105.9 male births per 100 female births. There were 5,680 more birth registrations in 2015 (a 1.9% increase) than in 2014 (299,697). The median age of all mothers for births registered in 2015 was 31 years, while the median age of fathers was 33.1 years. In 2015, Australia's total fertility rate (TFR) was 1.81 babies per woman. Since 1976, the TFR for Australia has been below replacement level. (*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia, Cat. 3301.0, 2015*).

### MARRIAGES

The median age at marriage for males in 2015 was 31.8 years, an increase from 31.5 in 2013 and 2014. The median age at marriage for females in 2015 was 29.8 years, an increase of 0.2 years since 2014. The number of marriages decreased in 2015 by 7,602 (-6.3%) and the crude marriage rate decreased from 5.2 in 2014 to 4.8 marriages per 1,000 estimated resident population in 2015. Civil celebrants have overseen the majority of marriages since 1999 and the proportion of marriage ceremonies overseen by a civil celebrant increased again to 74.9 per cent of all marriages in 2015. (*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Marriages and Divorces, Australia, Cat. 3310.0, 2015*).

*Further detailed information on the above can be found in Appendix II.*

## SECTION 2: EVALUATING THE SITUATION

### A) YOUNG PEOPLE, THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

#### 1. In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?

The National Youth Survey revealed that the main factors that contributed to the positive experiences of young people being listened to by the Church were 1) talking to people who valued their story, 2) the positive attitude of the clergy, and 3) the welcoming and supportive attitude of parishioners. The main ways in which listening happens is through parishes, Catholic schools, youth movements and diocesan youth ministry initiatives and programs.

Parishes, through their connections to everyday life, enable many moments where young people can be heard and understood. Youth feel most listened to when they have meaningful conversations with parishioners, when they are given the opportunity to contribute their gifts to the liturgy and participate in youth-specific events and when clergy and youth ministers set aside time to invest in them. Young people in youth groups can share their stories and experiences through the friendships they form there as well as in small group situations. Youth taking on roles in parish committees or councils enable greater opportunities for being heard. Being listened to by a priest seemed particularly important to many youth. In this regard, the sacrament of Reconciliation was recognised as a prime opportunity for such positive encounters.

Catholic schools are good places in which to tap into the lived experiences of young people. Young people are listened to through classroom interactions and conversations with staff and teachers and on school retreats and other faith events. They also feel listened to through consultations with teachers, principals, Religious Education coordinators and student leaders. School youth ministries and youth ministers, as well as university chaplains, play a key role in listening to and sharing in the experiences of young people in schools.

Young people who participate in the myriad of youth movements in Australia communicate their life situations at a deeper level to members within their community. They are encouraged to share their genuine experiences, struggles and joys of life. They are encouraged to be themselves knowing that God loves them as they are and that the people in the community will show them respect and charity.

Many Australian dioceses have recognised the need to engage with young people and have set up processes of review into youth ministry and the ways in which they support youth in their parish communities. Young people's voices and concerns are heard through parish visitations, consultation forums and conversations with the local bishop and at discussion forums at diocesan youth events such as youth rallies and retreats. The five eparchies of the Eastern Church in Australia also help provide specialised pastoral care to their young people. The youth events and activities organised by these dioceses reflect the unique culture and faith life of each community.

Many dioceses have established youth councils or offices for ministry with young people to ensure that they are regularly heard and given a voice. Members of these bodies represent various sectors of the Catholic community including parishes, schools, young adults, students, and multicultural groups. The experiences of young people are heard through the networking and supporting of youth ministers and youth ministry leaders, regular youth forums, an online presence with young people through social media and the development of leadership programs for students and young adults.

While there are many opportunities for being listened to, many young people feel that the Church can do much more in other areas such as being open to not-so-traditional forms of worship and prayer and building relationships with young people who are not in regular or conventional expressions of Church life. The National Youth Survey also revealed that the negative experiences of young people being listened to were primarily through negative personal interactions with a Church member, occasions where a young person's comments were ignored by a Church group, and seemingly close-minded or biased attitudes of people within the Church.

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## 2. What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in your country / countries today?

The experiences of young people in Australia vary from person to person, and place to place, as do the challenges they face. Youth in the city have more access to opportunities and services than their rural counterparts. The challenges facing high school youth differ from those in universities, and differ again from those who are working, getting married, and starting families. The main challenges that Australian youth face are:

**Mental health** – Many young people struggle with challenges of mental health issues, particularly depression, anxiety, body image issues and confusion about sexuality. Some are also addicted to drugs, alcohol and pornography. Many youth are raised in separated families or by grandparents due to the nature of family breakdowns, which also contributes to these issues. Self-harm and suicides are on the rise, and in 2016, suicide was the leading cause of death among all people aged 15-44 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Causes of Death, Australia, 2016*, Cat. 3303.0, Canberra, 2017).

**Education and employment** – There are rising pressures from school, family and society to achieve good grades and build long-term careers. Access to educational opportunities and universities is harder for the poor and those who live in regional and rural areas. There are not enough jobs available in these areas, and youth have to move to cities to find employment. This also has an adverse effect on finding suitable and affordable housing.

**Being a person of faith in an increasingly secular society** – Challenges from popular culture and secular society make it difficult to be a public witness to one's faith. Many young people fear that they or their friends will give up on the Church because it is 'too hard' or a 'waste of time.' Social media and mainstream media influences for our young people often conflict with the teachings of the faith. Some youth are frustrated with particular Church teachings on issues such as same sex marriage, LGBTQ+ issues, abortion, and the clergy sexual abuse scandal which creates difficulties in remaining faithful. Young people are also aware that it is not popular to be affiliated with religion, especially the Catholic Church. The fewer young people in the Church, the harder it is to stay involved.

**Finding community** – Young people, particularly those in regional and rural areas, find it challenging to build community, particularly in the Church. This usually increases after high school and youth look for intergenerational and peer relationships with other Catholics. A lack of connection and sense of belonging leads young people to feel isolated and alone. For example, young people aged 24-29 in one rural diocese described a significant lack of gatherings and events tailored to suit their age bracket. Particularly those who were unmarried and without their own families tended to feel left out to a greater extent.

**Integration and assimilation (for migrant youth)** – Migrant youth often face special challenges such as language barriers as they become assimilated into Australian culture. Especially in the second and third generations, young people lose their connection with their cultural heritage and faith and seek to create an identity of their own.

Amongst these challenges, Australia, being a first world country, is blessed with many opportunities for young people. Australians live in a supportive and inclusive society, with assistance available for those who are struggling. Young people have the freedom to make their own choices and develop their talents and abilities. They have the opportunity for quality primary and secondary education as well as access to tertiary education that allows for deferred payment of fees. Other opportunities include the breadth of diverse career opportunities, a higher quality of life, access to technology, healthcare, travel and sport, plus more. Young people in Australia also have an increased ability to make a change in the world through opportunities for social outreach and advocacy.

There are also many opportunities within the Church in Australia. Young people have the ability to receive a Catholic education if their parents choose, considering the number of Catholic schools available. There are opportunities to engage in and become part of a community and experience God and Church through their school, different parish groups, youth ministries and ecclesial movements. The natural and open Australian landscape also gives young people the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of God's creation and engage in the faith through the perspective of *Laudato Si*.

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### 3. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have been a major success within the Church, and why?

Gatherings that are engaging, offer community and a sense of belonging and provide experiences for young people to have a deeper understanding of their faith are very popular and effective. Listed below are the five most successful youth gatherings within the Church.

1. **Masses and special liturgical celebrations:** Youth Masses are successful because they have lively music and engaging homilies. Young people are aware of God's presence and feel motivated and energised for the week ahead. In some dioceses, Latin Masses also have a committed following as they offer a reverence and style of faith that appeals to some young Catholics. In Carnarvon in the Geraldton diocese, the Our Lady of Fatima feast is a great night which brings the community and Portuguese people together. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is also gaining popularity as young people experience it at many youth camps, retreats and conferences and it provides them with time alone with God. Liturgical celebrations based around the sacraments, particularly Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation give youth a greater sense of community and belonging to the faith. Easter and Christmas Masses are also popular as more young people are actively involved and a greater number of people in the community participate in these events.
2. **Catholic youth groups and ecclesial movements:** Parish-based youth groups and other youth ministries such as Antioch, Young Christian Students, Youth for Christ, Jesus Youth, Lasallian Youth Ministry, Marist Youth Ministry and Vinnies Youth have proven to be successful because of the variety of opportunities they provide. These include faith formation, an opportunity to gather and build community with like-minded people, social opportunities, young adult leaders who are good role models to teenagers, an opportunity to learn how to pray and a space to encounter Christ. For example, the *Stronger* youth events in the Sandhurst diocese continue to be a great source of vitality and youth groups are great places for young people to experience stability and safety in their spiritual search during the turbulent years of adolescence. New ecclesial movements add to this formation by offering an experience of God that is real and living and one that is based on a shared vision of life and a shared understanding of mission as entrusted to the Church by Christ.
3. **Global and national youth gatherings:** Global events such as World Youth Day, and national youth gatherings such as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and local youth conferences, such as Ignite, Shine and Veritas, are successful because young people get to meet new people, sometimes including people from all over the world, and share in prayer, discussion and reflections. They also get to hear speakers that are dynamic, engaging and relevant. These larger events offer a variety of experiences through the music, talks, large group gatherings with contemporary worship and prayer experiences particularly adoration and the sacraments.
4. **School-based youth events:** For some young people in Australia, schools are their only contact with the Church, and this becomes their 'parish'. The parish school is their community and their point of contact for experiences of God and Church. Therefore, the value of youth ministry programmes in schools (such as Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA) and REMAR (Marist Youth Ministry)) is very positive in supporting the faith journey of school-aged youth. School retreats, workshops, conferences, prayer experiences and school Masses are very successful.
5. **Social events:** Social events such as parish fetes, dinners, barbeques, sporting events, game nights and picnics provide opportunities to build relationships and a sense of belonging that so many young people crave in today's Australian context. These also provide an entry level activity for youth who find coming into a formal church or Mass setting overwhelming.

Other gatherings that are also successful are youth camps, mission and outreach opportunities and social justice programs and projects.

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#### 4. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success outside the Church, and why?

Gatherings outside the Church are successful because they bring people together with common interests in a socially acceptable manner. They also allow the opportunity for youth to be more independent and express their freedom while mixing with young people of their own age. Listed below are the five most successful youth gatherings outside the Church across all Australian dioceses.

1. **Organised social events — concerts, parties, music festivals:** These events are successful because people feel very welcome and not discriminated against. Young people mingle with like-minded individuals, the events are dynamic and there is an openness or even a shared vision and a sense of belonging. Music is a huge factor in engaging young people as they tend to enjoy the euphoric experience.
2. **Sports:** Sport is a significant part of the Australian culture with major stadiums and local clubs across every city and town. It is also experienced frequently throughout the Australian school curriculum. Sport brings families and friends and diverse groups of people together in a healthy and positive manner. Sporting associations are the life-blood of rural towns. In the past, country parishes had their own broader community of sport and social events. Now these events are 'secular' and draw large crowds and the commitment of time on weekends.
3. **Informal social activities — meeting friends at coffee shops, cafes or elsewhere:** Informal activities, just talking to 'real' people one-on-one and sharing experiences resonates with young people as something genuine. These gatherings offer an authentic experience for youth to engage with other people. There isn't the rigidity of an organised event so it provides young people with opportunities to express themselves as and when they wish and in a manner that they choose, without the fear of being made to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. These events need not be only in public places. For example, a young person from Port Pirie diocese mentioned that movie nights at each other's houses and small get-togethers where new people are welcome are often simple, effective gatherings when Christians have the opportunity to break down stereotypes about Christians and Church-goers.
4. **Youth groups:** Some evangelical churches and non-Catholic youth groups offer a strong attraction for young people looking for a connection to faith. Their dynamism contrasts strongly with the lack of life found in many parish gatherings. These groups have amazing opportunities for youth: camps, bible studies, conferences, leadership camps and youth-focused church services. University clubs allow young people the chance to participate in activism and experience a real sense of belonging with their particular interests or beliefs. Along with these, groups that enable a greater sense of self-worth, through fitness or self-improvement, are places where individuals encounter support and help in choices around lifestyle and self-image.
5. **Faith-based school events:** School events are usually well-run and designed specifically for youth engagement. For many, this is their initial and/or only experience of faith. These events offer an important and reflective space for young people to find meaning and look beyond themselves. This is something they typically would not find elsewhere and therefore, for many, it is a positive experience.

Other gatherings that are also successful are family gatherings, social justice and outreach events and projects, political movements such as online petitions and single issue political discussions and rallies, and online events via social media.

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## 5. What do young people really ask of the Church in your country / countries today?

Young people in Australia sometimes see the Church in a way that is not, at times, favourable, for different reasons. For many, the large 'institutional' Church is seen as an organisation that has allowed abuse and holds views that are not respected or valued in the wider community. Despite this, youth are searching for a sense of belonging and what to believe in. Some are moved by the beauty of what the Church offers, which is a vision of life that is beyond themselves. This is counterbalanced with the lived experiences of individuals where parishes, priests and religious are still seen in a favourable way, as a force for good within local communities.

Young people want the Church to adapt to the sensibilities of youth. They want to be engaged, but they need the Church to try to connect with them and make them feel welcomed. They ask for more relevant homilies at Mass, better music and to be guided through the Mass in a genuine manner that is easy to understand. They want to be listened to and mentored by the Church and given greater opportunities for participation and leadership. For example, a young person from the Syro-Malabar diocese felt the need for a change in attitude, as sometimes youth are not given a chance to express their true opinions and are disregarded for views that don't conform to traditional ways of thinking. Because of the ageing Church population, young people can sometimes be seen as too young for an extended period of time in a parish context because so many of their fellow parishioners are significantly older than them. Young people would like to have a say and be a part of the strategic discussions related to the future of the Church.

Young people are also asking for better faith formation opportunities. Those already connected to the Church are looking for more catechesis on faith and morals, as well as how to live out a Christian life in a secular, and sometimes confusing and intimidating society. They want people within the Church to be strong in their beliefs. Young people do not want the Church to hide away from teachings that may be tough or perceived to be too difficult for them to hear. The Church's stance on abortion and gay marriage are often questions asked by young people. They want to be challenged and be told the full truth in a manner that is logical, respectful and easy to understand.

Young people are also looking for a sense of community, through building genuine relationships and an opportunity to connect with like-minded people. They are disheartened when they feel they are the only youth who practice their faith. Part of the reason why large Catholic festivals are so popular is because young people can see that there are many others like them who are trying to live a Christian life. And this makes them ask the Church for more opportunities of these experiences. Young families also want more support from their parish communities. Young Catholics attending state schools want to be personally invited to parish events and programs as well.

Young people, especially those living in small towns and rural areas, ask for better resources for youth ministry. They need mentoring and help to grow and foster youth groups and they want to be encouraged by a resourced, faithful and innovative diocesan council. Youth ministers are constantly looking for up-to-date Catholic resources. Young adults also seek fellowship in their rural parishes with better resources and older mentors. Youth from these areas also ask for more help to participate in larger events such as World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival.

Many young people are looking for opportunities to put their faith into action through social justice initiatives to the disadvantaged and marginalised, and they want the Church to lead them in this. As one youth from Darwin observed, issues such as combating climate change, saving wildlife and helping disadvantaged international neighbours like West Papua are what they would like to see the Church become more vocal on, focusing more on action and leading by example rather than evangelisation. Often, however, the good works of the Church are not well known, which contributes to the general population's narrow understanding of what services it provides. For example, they may perceive a separation between groups such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the actions of the Church. Young people, however, respond incredibly well when given the opportunity to serve and this is one thing they continue to ask for.

Finally, many young people believe that the Church could do more to provide guidance, help and counselling for those dealing with personal and relationship problems, substance abuse and other mental health issues. For example, one young person from the Armidale diocese mentioned condemnation of sexual violence & harassment which they felt needed to be made central to the Church's teaching on chastity. They believed that the Church should see family violence and abuse as serious a problem as divorce is. Many youth also ask that the Church be willing to accept all people without judgement. In the National Youth Survey, this question drew a disproportionate number of responses referencing inclusivity of people who identify as LGBTQ+, possibly due to the current debate in Australia concerning same-sex marriage.



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## 6. What possibilities for participation exist in your country / countries for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?

There are many opportunities in Australia for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community as members of parishes and schools, through the sacraments and as active members of youth groups and movements. Some young people engage with the ecclesial community professionally as youth ministers, teachers, and lay missionaries.

Parishes continue to be one main point of contact and connection. Sacraments such as Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation are occasions for great interaction between the Church and young people — whether through sacramental preparation or new models of pre- and post-sacrament retreats that some dioceses have developed. This experience allows young people to explore their faith and connect with the church community in ways that are outside of the norm for them. This also facilitates the potential to connect young people to the many ministries and opportunities present in the parish community and in the wider diocese. Many parishes invite young people to be involved in liturgy planning teams and Parish Councils, and as lectors, musicians, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, or altar servers. Youth Masses provide more opportunities for greater participation and involvement.

Participating in youth groups is very enriching because young people can make new friends, discuss problems and explore their faith in a comfortable environment. Within these groups, they also have the opportunity for shared experiences of Mass, liturgy and worship. Participants at these events are not always Catholic, or Christian and some do not even hold a particularly religious view. However, they are usually welcomed to join in the discussions and in prayer and liturgical events to the extent that they are comfortable.

One of the main connections with the Church's life and mission for most young people in Australia is through the Catholic schools. School-run Religious Education classes, liturgies and Masses, retreats and reflection days are aimed at giving students an experience of some part of the faith. Many schools often support social justice causes and fundraising efforts and get actively engaged in mission works of the Church like Caritas (particularly Project Compassion) and Catholic Mission (*Socktober* and Mission Month). In some universities, young adults have the opportunity to gather with other Catholics in a youth group setting and participate in events centred on the faith.

Catholic youth events provide significant opportunities for young people to have an experience of community and the Universal Church. Primarily among these are large events such as World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and various diocesan youth festivals. The programs at these events allow young people to experience Christ and the sacraments and then, given the opportunity, to step out in faith and make an active decision to be a disciple of Christ.

Young people readily participate in the Church's social justice and outreach activities, particularly through the school environment where they are given opportunities to be involved in services like soup kitchens, St Vincent de Paul and visits to residents of nursing homes. There are also joint projects which young Christians collaborate on locally, for example pro-life movements (March for Life, LifeChoice Australia), social justice issues (Palm Sunday march, refugee and migrant support) and ecumenical prayer nights. Mission experiences are also popular. For example, The Immaculata Mission School in the Archdiocese of Hobart is an opportunity for young people to be formed in the faith, participate in prayer and mission opportunities, experience community and evangelise the community.

Australian dioceses are continually trying to improve their programs and services to get more young people involved in the life of the Church. Some youth are appointed as members of diocesan councils or offices for ministry to young people. Many diocesan, parish and school calendars for youth events are interlinked to ensure a focused and practical progression of events and activities for youth across each diocese. Events such as retreats, catechesis programs, prayer nights and praise and worship events allow young people to take a greater part in the life of the ecclesial community.

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## 7. How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?

Catholic parishes are in regular contact with disengaged Catholic youth in times of sacramental celebrations and in times of need (sacraments of initiation for children, weddings, funerals, anointing of the sick, and through services to those in need). Some individual parishes offer outreach in the form of sausage sizzles (barbeques) on a Friday or Saturday night, when young people are out celebrating with friends. This enables a touchpoint with the Church which is not confronting or challenging. Other evangelistic ministries, such as Alpha programs, also offer a point of contact in parishes. Parishioners are strongly encouraged to reach out to neighbours, co-workers and other people they encounter in life with an invitation to participate in these programs.

Catholic schools in Australia are the most significant point of contact with young people in the wider community. These schools have a significant intake of students who are not Catholic or practicing their faith. Young people encounter the Church in the school through Religious Education classes, spiritual events and activities and staff such as campus ministers or youth ministry officers. The students identify with these ministers at school and recognise them in public in the local town, which opens more opportunities for contact and conversations.

Most government schools in most Australian states have the provision of religious instruction to students as part of the curriculum. Catholic youth and young adults partner with more mature catechists to provide scripture and witness to thousands of primary and secondary students in these schools.

Catholic chaplains and their support networks in the wider community also play a significant role. University chaplaincies make a noteworthy effort to connect with all students, most of whom are agnostic, inviting them to youth groups and events run by the chaplaincy. Prison chaplains, armed forces chaplains and hospital chaplains all connect with a diverse range of people, which would include young people. These points of contact can be both formal and informal and are often pastoral in nature.

Social media provides the Church with significant opportunities to reach young people that they would not otherwise be able to connect with. Respondents of the National Youth Survey who were not involved in Church activities were asked to indicate ways in which the Church could better connect with them. These respondents suggested advertising youth events and activities through emails or on social media platforms such as Facebook as a means of direct communication.

Young people also encounter the Church through Catholic social service agencies, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, Pregnancy Assist, Rosies and Centacare Catholic Family Services, amongst many others. This assistance and interaction (which is also present in Catholic hospitals) allows the Church to reach out to those who are of other faiths. In country regions, religious orders (for example Missionaries of Charity sisters' outreach with indigenous communities) predominantly provide the pastoral support for communities and young people who have irregular contact with the Church.

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival and World Youth Day are attended by some young people who are not regular Mass-goers. Some diocesan youth ministries also run events which are aimed at those who do not frequent church such as *Pints of Faith* (Archdiocese of Hobart), Christmas Carols, and Ecumenical Stations of the Cross. Some parishes and dioceses have pilgrimages, processions through the streets and other expressions of faith in the public arena where most people don't frequent churches. A suggestion received from respondents of the National Youth Survey who were not involved in Church activities was to plan fun and interesting events and activities for young people and advertise them widely through schools and local communities so that young people of other faiths might hear about them and have the opportunity to participate.

Informally, family and friends who are part of the Church also make contact with young people. Peer invitations are one of the main ways young people come to attend youth groups. Relationship building is crucial to reach those who do not frequent church. Parents and grandparents are two of the strongest influences in a young person's life and can be a point of contact between the Church and young people.

### 8. How are families and communities involved in the vocational discernment of young people?

*Note: The term 'vocations' has been interpreted and reported on broadly within this section. It includes the traditional understanding of vocation as a person's 'state in life', that is, married, religious, priest or single, as well as about young people finding their way in the world.*

The Church encourages families as the first teachers of the faith. Many respondents of the National Youth Survey indicated that their families were major influencers of their key decisions and directions in life. Parents, through their witness and experiences of faith, enable young people to discern what is appropriate as a vocation in life. The role of grandparents is also significant in the lives of young people. Young people rely on older family members for wisdom and guidance when making life choices.

Most Catholic families in Australia however, are not 'actively' or 'intentionally' involved in the vocational discernment of their youth, and some are actively opposed. Family involvement in faith-related directions and decisions for their children often rests solely on the fact that they have chosen a Catholic education for their child. Most young people are encouraged to seek a career rather than faith-based options and traditional vocational discernment to the priesthood and religious life.

Some families report many small ways through which they assist in the faith formation of young people. These include personal faith witness, encouraging the sacraments, faith conversations over the dinner table at home, introducing young people to good models of the faith and encouraging young people to attend formation and prayer events.

Parish and diocesan communities actively try to encourage vocations through many different initiatives. Through homilies and resources distributed by schools, families are encouraged to pray for their young people. Models of vocational options are offered through visits to schools by priests and religious and through couples and single people in their interactions and witness. Building appropriate relationships between families and the local priest helps inspire young people in their vocation. However, significant trust needs to be rebuilt with hurting families and communities after the scandals that the Church in Australia has faced.

Some dioceses have a Vocation Office that hosts events and activities to promote and form young people in vocational discernment. These events usually include Holy Hours, novenas for vocations, discernment events, Vocations Sunday and National Vocations Awareness Week activities. Some vocations staff receive occasional invitations to visit Catholic schools, and present on vocations, answer questions and discuss possibilities with students. Most other dioceses rely strongly on their priests, parish leaders and workers to have a positive view of promoting vocations.

Pastoral placement for seminarians in some dioceses allows a broader experience for them in the life of the Church, and it also enables an experience for communities to meet young men discerning priesthood. The exchange is mutual in learning from each other around the pathways of vocational discernment. There are also other forms of help available in the form of support groups that meet regularly for prayer, and host dinners and events for clergy and seminarians.

Many youth ministries and those in the new ecclesial movements within the Church actively support vocational discernment. For example, Catholic Youth Ministry Perth offers guidance to young people through weekly Holy Hour prayer nights, discussion nights, frequent visits from vocation staff, religious orders and also retreat opportunities for young people.

The NeoCatechumenal Way is an example of an ecclesial movement where families and the communities play a very important role in the vocational discernment of the young people. The weekly proclamation of

the Word of God, the celebration of the Sacraments, pilgrimages and studying the Word of God, are lived in an environment of a community of people of different ages which is a great help for young people to rediscover their baptismal promises and where God is leading their life. Other examples of such ministries are the Disciples of Jesus and Immaculata communities in the Archdiocese of Perth.

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## 9. How do schools and universities or other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment?

Schools play a significant role in contributing to young people's formation in vocational discernment through their expression of their Catholic life, for example, through opportunities for prayer, liturgy, Religious Education lessons and spiritual retreats. Youth Ministry programs such as CSYMA, REMAR and others support and enhance this experience with additional evangelisation tools and formation resources.

Job shadowing, work experience opportunities, career nights, tutoring, and homework clubs are positive contributors to helping young people discern their careers and vocations in secondary schools. Secondary vocational schools, sometimes called trade schools or vocational colleges, also address a real need with young people, successfully helping them to develop skills for work.

Catholic Education Offices in several dioceses work closely with the vocation offices in the work of vocations promotion to students in Catholic schools. They design a range of resources and presentations that emphasise vocational awareness and discernment within the school's Religious Education curriculum.

School teachers can help students identify gifts and passions, offer opportunities for discernment, and provide guidance. Having well-informed and practicing teachers as examples for students is therefore paramount. To assist this, teachers in Catholic schools are required to undertake training and ongoing professional development in Religious Education. Several vocation offices support the on-going formation of school staff. The Religious Education curriculum is set and monitored over time to ensure it remains relevant. School staff often form part of parish and diocesan administration and sacramental committees and teams which provide a strong linkage between schools, local parishes and the diocese.

Catholic schools sponsor students to attend events such as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and World Youth Day. These are great formation opportunities given to young people who otherwise would not be able to attend. Such opportunities are crucial, considering many young people report having real conversion and deep experiences of the faith at these events.

Within a university context, the campus ministry and chaplaincy offices play a significant role in young people's vocational discernment. Appointing priests as chaplains who can relate well to young people is critical to vocations to the priesthood and the religious life coming out of these tertiary settings. Vocation offices have regular engagement with these chaplaincies and other Catholic groups on campus, such as The Newman Society, Australian Catholic University Campus Ministry and NET Ministries Mission Teams; both in presenting to their members and in resourcing these teams for vocations promotion on campus. Some offices also offer certificate courses in Christian Leadership and Ministry to campus ministers.

Campus ministries at Australian universities provide support for students to discern their vocational call through retreats, daily Mass and weekly prayer offered with seminarians studying on campus. University chaplains also run regular youth groups where different aspects of the faith are discussed in detail and include some form of prayer experiences. Vocation offices take referrals from university chaplains for young people discerning a call to religious life to help support them better.

In more recent years, it has been difficult to promote vocations to the priesthood in Catholic schools and colleges because of the influential secular environment that is part of the lives of most young people. The historical events of clergy sexual abuse and the Royal Commission into these events have also affected the confidence that the Church and Catholic schools and colleges have in promoting vocations.

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## 10. In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world?

The National Youth Survey revealed that young people desired a greater presence of parishes and clergy on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, youth ministry apps with regular news and faith formation tools and better websites with information on Mass timings and youth events and activities. To improve communication and connection among young people online, many Australian dioceses have developed or renewed their strategies to use these forms of media and technology effectively. Some dioceses have special communications officers to assist in these improvements. Rural dioceses with sparse population and small communities, struggle with connectivity and population decline. For them, the digital world offers greater opportunities for communication and community that have not been experienced before. Listed below are some ways in which Australian dioceses are taking cultural changes into account in the digital world.

**Informative websites:** Many dioceses and parishes have improved the quality and content of their websites to make them more accessible, relevant and user-friendly. A few diocesan magazines or newsletters are now also available online. Some parishes have moved sacramental enrolments online to save administration time and allow parish personnel to help form people for sacraments.

**Increased presence on social media channels:** Dioceses use social media like Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram not only to advertise events but to inform young people of current affairs in the Christian world, share articles/videos, prayers, blogs, podcasts, interviews, and other information relevant to the formation and potential growth of young people. Vocations offices are increasingly using social media platforms to promote religious vocations through vocational video presentations, testimonies and seminarian and religious blogs.

**Online training:** By using technology present in parishes and schools for educational programmes and e-conferences, institutes such as the Broken Bay Institute have enabled a large number of people to gain an understanding of certain areas of faith in a practical context. Especially in isolated areas where great distances and small groups make face-to-face meetings difficult, this chance to use digital technology ensures that individuals are trained and formed to the right level.

**Videos:** Current developments in the digital world have seen an increase in the need for high quality, relevant, short video content. Some dioceses use videos to run programs such as 'Alpha' and 'Chosen'. They create and share videos to promote events, offer catechesis and explain Church teaching. Some bishops have used webcasts to create online discussion forums for young people through Catholic schools. A few dioceses also have live streams of Mass online for those who are isolated, ill, or infirm. The Hobart Archdiocese uses Cradio (Catholic Radio) to help spread different podcasts and videos via the internet and social media.

**Greater event experiences:** Young people who attend events such as the World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, amongst other events, can experience new forms of media in action at these events. Social media helps maintain connections between pilgrims through live updates, posts or tweets. Online video calling is used for formation with WYD pilgrims travelling from country towns or skypeing with international hosts in preparation for visits.

**Smartphone apps:** Some dioceses have begun to use smartphone apps which serve a variety of evangelical purposes and help users locate Mass times, parishes, and events around them.

With the developments in the digital world, there is also a greater awareness of its hazards, which includes increased isolation and possible addiction. Several dioceses run workshops and seminars to alert young people to these truths and youth leaders receive special training in digital ministry.

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## 11. How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become a part of ordinary pastoral practice?

National and international events such as World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival are typically significant events for young people. They provide a unique opportunity for youth to engage with the universal Church and see that faith can be lived out and be alive and active. It gives them exposure to speakers and faith formation not always accessible to them, particularly in regional and remote areas. Getting people away from the norm and letting them see and experience the wider Church and all it offers can have significant impact on the individual and their faith.

In many Australian dioceses, World Youth Days and other national events already occupy a significant space in ordinary pastoral practice. The World Youth Day model (catechesis, sacraments, prayer) has been used for gatherings of young people. This has proven to be a good mix of ministry with young people which forms the basis of the structure of local youth festivals. Dioceses usually connect with large events through youth movements and groups, parish celebrations and preparations, migrant groups, Youth Masses, retreats (preparation for events and follow up after events), reunion celebrations and diocesan youth events that lead into or follow out of the international and national events.

One of the challenges many dioceses face is making these opportunities available to more young people. There is also an ongoing need for youth leader positions at a diocesan or parish level to advocate for the importance of these events in the faith development of young people and to coordinate the local response. Whilst the national events are relatively inexpensive, often events like World Youth Day are cost-prohibitive for young people. The time away from work and study, as well as travel and accommodation expenses, make participation difficult. Some dioceses offer sponsorship to young people to make such events more prominent, while others coordinate significant fundraising drives.

One way to expand the influence of such events is through diocesan World Youth Day celebrations and regular diocesan youth festivals. Having these youth festivals in regional locations as well as larger cities would also increase the popularity of the event and would broaden the audience. This would also help in incorporating such events into the culture of dioceses. Also, live streaming World Youth Day events, catechesis, concerts and Masses in parish communities is a way for those at home to feel like they are a part of the experience.

An ongoing challenge is ensuring that national and international events complement existing youth ministry rather than overwhelm them. Many youth have remarked that while large events are meaningful, if there is not significant opportunity to follow up after the event at all levels (diocesan, parish and youth group), the impact of the event on the lives of young people is at risk of being lost. Follow up events allow young people to process what they have experienced in a supportive environment and allow the effect of the experience to sink in and impact their lives before they quickly move on to the next big experience.

A significant way in which Australian dioceses have attempted to overcome this is by following a three-year operational cycle as developed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for Youth. This cycle allows for the incorporation of major international and national events into the ordinary ministry cycle of diocesan youth ministry offices and parishes. The three-year cycle revolves around World Youth Day, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and the Australian Catholic Youth Ministry Convention.

The new national operational cycle has allowed for the seamless incorporation of these events into the strategic plan of diocesan youth offices. This means that ongoing formation and programs around national and international events continues beyond that specific event, allowing for the true benefits of these gatherings to come to fruition in the daily lives and local parish experiences of young people. Although more work still needs to be done in this respect, the operational cycle has set foundations for a far more sustainable workload and workflow for engaging young people in both national and international events.

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## 12. In what manner is your diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational programme for young people?

Australian dioceses provide several opportunities for young people to experience their faith in action. Vocations promotion teams proactively promote and nurture a 'culture of vocations' in dioceses among students in primary and secondary schools, through their visible presence in the school, class visits, vocation talks; being involved in youth groups and youth gatherings, giving presentations and workshops on vocations; and the use of online and printed resources.

Various communities, movements, religious orders and diocesan vocations offices offer monthly reflection days, retreats and other experiences for men and women to help young people discern their vocations to priesthood, marriage or the religious life. The Quo Vadis Weekend is a live-in discernment weekend at seminaries, making it a realistic experience of seminary life, including interaction with current seminarians and seminary staff, as well as formation sessions.

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Archbishop's Dinners provide a unique forum for young people to discuss the pathway to a priestly or religious vocation, and allows the community to put forward young discerners from their parishes, schools or worshipping communities. VOCadventure (a discernment program combining faith and adventure) allows young people to discern while immersed in another environment or culture. Canali House is a house of discernment program that offers a permanent live-in experience for young men, who continue with their study or employment, whilst purposefully discerning priesthood.

Many schools, universities and some parishes and Catholic organisations offer immersion opportunities and pilgrimages, both local and international. These incorporate Christian service and social justice learning for young people to experience faith in action and reflect on how the Gospel calls them to live out their Christian lives. Youth help fundraise prior to the trip and on their return, they connect their stories of faith in action with the local communities who helped to support the finances of the programmes. The Immaculata Community in the Archdiocese of Hobart creates several opportunities where young people are able to participate in evangelisation missions locally and nationally through short and long-term mission schools. The Archdiocese of Melbourne's Vocations Office recently sponsored a Camino pilgrimage for 13 young men to walk the Camino to Santiago, Spain.

The exposure of young people to a range of Christian vocations in all youth gatherings and formation programs is also a key element, whether it is clergy, religious or lay people. The Australian Catholic Youth Festival is a valuable resource in this regard as young people can encounter various vocations through Expos and through engagement with people of different vocations through workshops, casual interactions, and by participating in a pilgrim group.

There are also many volunteering opportunities offered to young people through numerous Catholic agencies and youth ministries such as the Sisters of Charity, St Vincent de Paul, Edmund Rice Camps, NET Ministries and Marist Youth Ministry among others. These occasions provide young people with fulfilling and rewarding experiences of putting their faith into action.

There are also various training workshops and ministry opportunities provided for teachers, parish leaders and youth ministers. For example, the Bathurst Diocese offers young people the opportunity to apply for roles within high schools and parishes as youth ministers and youth workers — working with other young people on a peer-to-peer ministry basis. This gives young people a clear example of how their vocation can help others to grow in faith and develop a relationship with God. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle ran a Pastoral Placement Program which gave young people the opportunity to explore a variety of ministries across the diocese while being supported by mentors and supervisors. They were also given experiences for faith and personal formation. All these forms of pastoral vocational programmes enable young people to have a renewed and fresh examination of the opportunities before them in discerning their life choices.



### **13. How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide for personal spiritual guidance?**

It is difficult to determine the overall amount of time or the exact manner in which clergy and other formators, including religious and lay, provide for personal spiritual guidance, as individuals usually look for such support according to their specific needs.

Australian dioceses struggle with the declining clergy numbers and an aging clergy population. Many active clergy are often ministering to multiple parishes, sometimes across several small towns, covering diocesan roles in addition to parish placements and dealing with the general requirements of being a priest. This leaves them with limited opportunity to offer regular spiritual direction to people. Some clergy can provide greater support due to the nature of their placement in parishes and schools, while others have limited contact with young people due to placements in other ministries.

In recent times, many young people are also hesitant to approach clergy as the abuse scandals have brought about a lack of trust, and most people just do not know how to go about asking for spiritual support. Nevertheless, clergy in parishes are connected to schools and youth groups and encounter young people at Masses, celebrations, school events and retreats. This builds a relationship of trust, where young people are confident to approach them for spiritual guidance. Confessions, in particular, are great opportunities for spiritual direction and a chance for priests to offer input and advice to young people on how to live life as a follower of Christ.

The clear majority of personal spiritual guidance for young people is offered by experienced lay ministers and leaders. These lay leaders are predominantly made up of leaders of ministries that take a proactive interest in the ongoing formation and well-being of their young volunteers and ministers. Pastoral care workers in parishes also engage in processes of personal spiritual guidance.

Staff in schools such as principals and school youth ministry coordinators have many opportunities to engage with students, in groups and individually, and the personal spiritual development of students is seen as paramount. Many Catholic secondary colleges and universities have chaplains who are available for spiritual guidance. Religious communities in each diocese provide additional support with individual spiritual formation and retreats. This guidance is more regular and generally at a deeper level.

It is important that spiritual guidance be not only viewed as something for 'crisis situations', but as an ongoing part of being a healthy person, living life to the full. The Australian Network for Spiritual Direction is an ecumenical endeavour that is committed to fostering spiritual direction and to the training of spiritual directors in the Christian Community. Members of this group are enhanced through a national system of accreditation and supervision of Spiritual Directors within Australia. Spiritual direction in this formalised setting is more regular and has a significant focus on the interior spiritual life of the young person.

Many youth ministry and leadership formation programs in several dioceses ensure that young people involved in ministry understand and take part in spiritual direction. Youth are encouraged to find a mentor to offer guidance as they navigate personal discipleship. Mentoring sessions provide an opportunity to talk about personal life, work life, ministry life and spiritual life, taking a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the person. Diocesan vocations offices also provide discerners with spiritual direction in the form of one-to-one mentoring or as part of discernment groups.

Accompaniment has also been encouraged, in youth ministry and on university campuses. Accompaniment is understood as building intentional relationships with others on the faith journey and walking alongside each other amidst this. Any young person can accompany another in this way,

highlighting the great value of peer-to-peer ministry and support. Accompaniment is often an ad hoc arrangement that happens as the two people's lives intersect in the everyday.

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#### **14. What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance?**

In Australia, people who provide pastoral vocational guidance to young people include staff in schools, chaplains, youth workers and youth ministers, diocesan youth office staff, religious, clergy, adult leaders in youth groups, Catholic university staff and pastoral associates. There are many courses and opportunities provided to people such as these to develop their skills and receive ongoing formation.

Training opportunities in pastoral vocational guidance include ministry formation programs, academic courses, seminars, lectures, workshops and intensive courses, conferences, retreats and other occasions provided for self-development.

Staff members of Catholic schools receive ongoing pastoral vocational guidance throughout the year, with retreats, formation courses and other spiritual days. Diocesan offices of evangelisation run adult faith formation courses that are available on a regular basis and open to all adults who would like to attend and participate. Other diocesan offices run courses in ministry and liturgy for adults interested in participating in various parish and church ministries.

Opportunities for tertiary education in theology are also available through the Australian Catholic University and other educational institutions. These are available as regular classes, monthly lectures, short courses or distance study to suit the needs of different people. Diocesan staff also attend various conferences which focus on catechetical, spiritual and faith formation.

Diocesan youth offices have training days and seminars as an opportunity to gather youth leaders interested and involved in local ministry to network and receive essential spiritual and practical formation provided by the diocese. The sessions are facilitated with the assistance of guest speakers who are experts in their field, and include prayer and catechesis, training in mission, and practical skills and resources.

Seminaries are the main place for formation of priests in this area, as well as further formation through courses and sabbatical programmes. Ongoing seminars for clergy allows the group to explore what can be done to assist parishioners in their faith as well as offer input designed to deepen priests' understanding of themselves and the faith of their communities.

Diocesan vocation offices also collaborate with other organisations to offer several opportunities for formation at different levels. For example, Vocation Brisbane, Australian Catholic University and the Holy Spirit Seminary recently collaborated to offer the Xavier School of Mission, a live-in formation opportunity for those engaged in pastoral ministry. Through the Canali School of Leadership, Vocation Brisbane also offers the Certificate IV in Christian Leadership and Ministry to those in leadership or ministry positions.

Vocations directors and seminary rectors who assist vocational discernment, usually attend meetings, conferences and training programs to assist them in their role of supporting young people in discerning religious life. Vocation teams also meet regularly, online and face-to-face, for information, planning, updates and/or workshops. Formation opportunities are also available through network meetings of diocesan vocations directors and vocations conferences as well as meetings with the diocesan clergy formation staff.

Participation in national events such as the Australian Catholic Youth Ministry Convention, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and the Australian Catholic Youth and Youth Ministry Research Seminar are also initiatives that support formation and open opportunities for vocational guidance. The importance of well-equipped, well-supported leaders in providing effective and mature vocational guidance to young people is imperative to achieve success and growth in this area of ministry.

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## 15. What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?

Seminarians are exposed to various forms of personal formation from priest formators, spiritual directors, the rector and mentor priests, following Canon Law for the required guidance offered in seminaries and based on the teaching of St John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

The seminary provides formators whom the seminarians meet with monthly and receive personal formation from. Each seminarian is attentive to their own formation with the assistance of his formators. A five-pillar approach to this work is used, the pillars being: human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and missionary. This is what guides their own personal evaluation and the conversations they have with their formators. Seminarians also participate in weekly formation sessions where they receive spiritual, intellectual and psychological formation. A psychologist meets with the seminarians regularly to support their mental health and sustained practices of self-care and wellbeing. There are also older priests who mentor seminarians throughout their seminary studies. Such priests do so on a regular basis and are available to those who wish to receive extra mentoring.

For personal spiritual guidance each seminarian is assigned a spiritual director who offers regular input, reflection days and spiritual direction. Within this formation process particular attention is given to the growth of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love as well as to growth in a personal prayer life. Meetings with a spiritual director are usually monthly, or fortnightly, if needed. No topic is off limits in spiritual direction. Conversations are completely confidential, which means that the director cannot disclose what was discussed with anybody else, faculty member or otherwise.

In relation to guidance with subjects studied in preparation for priesthood, each seminarian has a faculty advisor, a member of staff to whom he can go and seek academic advice. The seminarian meets with the faculty advisor once a month unless there is a need to meet more frequently. If the seminarian is struggling with a subject or professor or any academic concern, he can bring it to the attention of the faculty advisor. Likewise, a professor can go to a seminarian's faculty advisor and discuss his or her concerns regarding the academic performance or attitude of the seminarian. A seminarian may seek the advice of his faculty advisor on the pastoral benefits or otherwise of undertaking particular electives, taking into account his own pastoral interests.

From a diocesan perspective, there are regular meetings with the bishop, local director of vocations and other diocesan clergy and community members to support seminarians in their development. Financial support during training and health insurance coverage may be provided, as well as placements during holidays when necessary.

Seminarians undergo pastoral placements which assist them in their formation but also provide them with a priest and other people who can offer them guidance. Additionally, there are special provisions of care given in the following ways:

- For those who come from overseas: The initial placement is made in a parish to develop relationships within the community. This community acts in a way as a 'home parish' situation for them throughout their training and beyond. There is also support and mentoring from the parish clergy whom the seminarian works with during this time.
- For those who are from Australia: Prior to entry to the seminary a candidate is supported by the clergy of their own 'home' parish. Mentoring support from another member of the clergy is given whilst in training.

Thus, much personal guidance is offered in the seminaries with the view to each man developing to his full potential.

**a. Why and how do religious gatherings by those who are non-Catholic exercise an attraction on young people?**

Young people today are searching for ways in which they can experience love, joy, freedom and truth. However, the reality is that the decline of the relevance of the true faith in the Catholic Church as a source of these good things has meant that young people are drawn to non-traditional ways of faith expression.

Non-Catholic religious events, such as Hillsong Conferences and other Evangelical and Pentecostal Christian events, attract young people on a variety of levels, primarily because of the higher levels of energy associated with them generated by the younger 'audience' who gathers, the music that is used and the greater sense of community and connection.

These events target young audiences with clever slogans, beautifully designed graphic art and images of attractive young people in leadership roles (speakers, musicians, presiders). Young people are often attracted to these 'event style' worship meetings that also have high budgets for staging, TV cameras, lighting and sound for bands leading their worship. This makes it a great 'festival-like' environment which increases the entertainment value and creates a more fun and lively atmosphere which appears positive.

The music used at these events is culturally relevant to young people. Praise and worship music that employs a variety of music genres (rock, pop, folk, electronic dance music and rap), connects with young people through a musical language they understand. Young people are deeply affected when 'singing along' with a large group. A sense of unity and belonging is created as the music at these events is also used to manipulate and control the emotions and responses of large crowds.

The presenters at these events tend to reflect the audience to whom they are marketed. They are young, attractive, and can speak to relevant issues and topics. The messages they present vary depending on the theology of the groups running the events. Young people are looking for answers, purpose, and direction in life. Many of these groups provide their audiences with black and white answers that make sense to those with an immature and searching faith. There are also strong messages to engage in a personal relationship with Christ delivered by these very inspirational preachers.

Many Christian churches have very warm and welcoming communities and a great sense of hospitality. This real sense of community and good friendships are very attractive for young people attending such gatherings. Young people remark that these communities are more relationship-focused rather than fixated on church teaching, rules and instructions.

The experience of many young people who go to non-Catholic gatherings is that the other young people they meet there are generally 'on fire' for their faith. They are seen to be living their faith and practicing their beliefs at a high level. There are well-developed ministries for all ages such as Bible studies, youth groups and other ministries. These churches also have an active evangelisation outreach.

On a smaller scale, regular prayer gatherings of Muslims, for instance the Friday night gatherings at the University of Queensland in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, can attract 100-200 young men. Reasons for why these gatherings exercise an attraction on young people might include a sense of tradition, a strong first generation cultural community and the opportunity to engage in meaningful, prayerful experiences.

In the small coastal towns up and down the East Coast of Australia, a 'Zen' way of life is attractive. New Age Spirituality is trendy in these towns because it is a quick way for people to find somewhere they belong. Yoga and Buddhist meditation are also popular. At a deeper level, these forms of religious worship are slow, simple and peaceful, and offer a perfect antidote to the fast-paced world that many young people are engrossed in.

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**b. In what way can the values of a local culture be combined with Christian teaching, while also giving importance to popular piety?**

In recent times Australia appears to be rediscovering its own sense of culture and values. Amidst the local indigenous culture, Western colonial and modern culture, and recent migrant cultures, the Church is working with communities to better understand the variety of perspectives, to benefit the common good.

Indigenous culture has a strong connection of family, community, creation and spirituality. The beauty of Catholic indigenous rituals has become part of our lived experience as the Catholic Church in Australia. The incorporation of an 'acknowledgement of country', prior to many liturgies, to recognise the traditional stewards of the land, through to local indigenous rituals such as smoking ceremonies and indigenous dance to accompany liturgies, enrich the local church. In the last decade, indigenous artists have also developed native Australian representations of the Stations of the Cross, Our Lady and even the Holy Spirit, as showcased during the World Youth Day celebrations in Sydney in 2008.

There are growing numbers of many multicultural communities in Australia and the popular piety of these groups emanates from other countries and is not necessarily a locally driven expression of faith. Young people are often attracted to these cultural celebrations. For example, the Youth Mass at the Maronite parish of Our Lady of Lebanon in Sydney attracts over 1000 young people every week. There are some challenges however, as some migrant youth can sometimes feel a disconnect as they integrate more firmly into Australian society. Popular youth culture is another aspect to consider. The focus on individuality, energy, change, and passion for justice are influencing the above cultural groups, and challenging the Church to be more responsive and inclusive.

Efforts such as parish renewal processes, multicultural celebrations (including celebrations of individual cultures), and ongoing dialogue and interaction with other faith communities (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist, amongst others) are helping Church communities to better appreciate the diversity of culture and the commonalities we all share.

The Australian culture has many rituals and traditions that could be incorporated into the life of the Church. These include commemorative services, ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day. Australia's first saint also has much to offer to connect with the Australian culture as Mary Mackillop encapsulates the Australian spirit. "She was a determined but humble woman of deep faith and trust in God who inspired many by the generosity of her efforts to educate and support the needy." This determinedness to make things better is a quality admired by many Australians.

Australia's sporting culture is also an opportunity that can often be overlooked when exploring ways to promote Christian teachings. In the Catholic setting, chaplains for sporting teams are less common than they used to be, yet they can provide a tangible connection point between the Church and those who are not connected to it. The sporting culture also provides many opportunities for sporting competitions within the Church community.

Australian culture is becoming increasingly secular. Results from the 2016 Australian Census show the number of people who identified as having no religion (30%), surpassed those who identified as Catholic (22.6%). Christianity has seen a significant decline in affiliation and participation, particularly among young people, where only 41 per cent of those aged between 16 and 29 identified as Christian while 39 per cent identified as no religion at all.

Within this cultural setting, key values in Australian society such as 'equality' and 'fairness' still resonate with the social teaching of the Church. In relation to popular piety, the diminishing importance of religion in Australian society would appear to work against engagement in these devotional forms of faith. However, the strong migrant presence among Australian Catholics upholds its practice. As an instance of this continuing piety, there has been an increase in popular expressions of faith within varied cultures, with many clergy heralding from overseas as well as from religious orders. Clergy and laity alike from

countries such as Poland, India, Italy and Korea have encouraged practices and devotions related to Divine Mercy, Eucharistic processions and food blessings among other expressions of faith. This then enriches all people through exposure to different ways of praying and living the Christian faith.

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### **c. How is the language used in a young people's world incorporated in the pastoral care of young people, especially in the media, sports and music?**

Young people need to be engaged at their level using language and trends that they can relate to. Leaders who can interact at this level, know what they are talking about, and incorporate that into ministry are at a distinct advantage. In the past the Church has not used many technologies to communicate a specific message to young people. This has changed in recent times and is continuing to change, where the plan is to engage much more with people using such technological platforms.

Many schools, universities, parishes, dioceses and youth ministries work hard at providing a relevant understanding of the Catholic faith to young people. Using tools such as popular culture, social media, video, music, and images, they are able to incorporate the language of young people into their presentation of the Gospel. Any media is only effective if there is a 'message' as well. To engage young people, it is important not to assume knowledge, or to use jargon or 'catch-phrases'. Instead, clear explanations and succinct information, possibly presented in layers, help young people to go deeper as they wish.

Music is a powerful means of communication and using all aspects of the visual and performing arts can be very effective. Many youth events and youth groups use both modern secular and praise and worship music to create a more youth-friendly atmosphere but also to encourage greater participation of the youth. This music is also used to convey and offer an experience of prayer to young people who may not connect with other more formal experiences of prayer yet.

Movies with strong moral messages often are an effective teaching tool with youth groups and school students. Many dioceses have started using videos, podcasts and recordings to communicate ideas and evangelise young people. Being aware of what is happening in the world of teenagers can also prompt topics of discussion and discourse. For example, when '13 Reasons Why' (a 2017 TV series on the reasons why a teenager chose to commit suicide) was aired, this prompted the need to discuss suicide and depression with young people, because in some ways it normalised suicide. Being able to speak to these kinds of trends, whether they are positive or negative, can be an important way to understand the struggles young people face, connect a young person's experience with the broader experience of life, and be a voice of truth in an often-confusing world.

Many dioceses use the internet to give information to young people by creating websites that are user-friendly and appealing to a younger audience. Social media is used to communicate with young people regarding upcoming events, advertising, articles/blogs, videos, podcasts, photos/images, catechetical tools as well as general communication. Memes, viral content, popular pages, even emojis, are all a part of what makes up the current social media culture for young people. These can sometimes be incorporated into the language used when relating to young people.

Finally, young people, more than anything, are looking for authentic communication and building real relationships. Language is not just about the words that are used. It is also about the body language and gestures. Active listening is a language that young people may not always experience from their peers or through social media, yet it is something that all people can connect with – and this can certainly be incorporated into the pastoral care of young people.

Regional and rural dioceses need greater assistance to provide young people with an understanding of the Catholic faith. The aging population of the Church in these areas, including the clergy, makes it difficult to present a vision of the Church in the relevant language of young people. A greater effort in building up youth ministries in these locations will help young people feel the connection between their everyday world, the language used within it, and the work of the Church.



## SECTION 3: SHARING ACTIVITIES

### 1. List the main types of pastoral activity in accompaniment and vocational discernment in your present situation.

Listed below are several pastoral activities in accompaniment and vocational discernment that vocation offices, parishes, youth ministries and ecclesial movements in Australia are currently involved in.

#### ***Vocation and discernment events:***

- Discernment retreat days and weekends for men and women
- Seminary enquiry days, vocations dinners and expos
- Discernment study groups.

#### ***Parish events:***

- Visits to parishes by vocations directors and seminary staff to preach on vocations
- Alpha programs (an opportunity for accompaniment).

#### ***School events:***

- Visits to schools (classes, retreats and reflection days) by vocations directors and other retreat ministries to discuss the priesthood and consecrated life, discernment, and life direction
- Religious Education programs
- School-based youth ministry coordinators or school chaplains within high schools and colleges to lead the spiritual formation of the entire school community
- University Chaplaincy — accompaniment of students through events, catechesis sessions and faith discussions
- Faith in Action Teams (Diocese of Parramatta)—Teachers who are dynamic, faith-filled individuals, active within the life of the Church, who have the capacity to foster the personal and spiritual growth of young people, engaging them in the life and mission of the Catholic faith community.

#### ***Formation programs:***

- Presentations and lectures by vocations directors at assorted youth events, including youth conferences and youth festivals, Holy Hours and youth and young adults' camps
- Mission School — an opportunity for young people to live in community and participate in spiritual and intellectual formation, as well as mission and evangelisation activities
- Lay Pastoral Ministry Programs (short program online study opportunities) for youth leaders
- Leadership camps for student leaders and youth ministers.

#### ***Personal accompaniment:***

- One-to-one meetings, small-group gatherings and spiritual direction for those who are discerning
- Youth Minister Network and Mentoring.

#### ***Special youth ministry programs:***

- Activities by youth groups and movements representing the diversity of spiritualities in the Church (e.g. meetings, youth camps, talks and reflection days)
- Young adult weekends and seminars (e.g. Pints of Faith and the Christopher Dawson Centre Colloquium in the Archdiocese of Hobart)
- Praise and worship events, targeting high school youth, with exposure to a range of Christian vocations and lived testimonies of faith
- Immersion and pilgrimage experiences for young people
- Volunteering opportunities with NET Ministries
- Youth Festivals and Conferences — e.g. Australian Catholic Youth Festival, World Youth Day, Ignite (Brisbane), Live (Parramatta), Veritas (Perth) and Gracefest (Hobart).

**Prayer events:**

- Lenten 'Rosaries for Vocations' campaigns
- Holy Hours for vocations
- Dedicated vocations ministry prayer teams.

**Online presence:**

- Websites featuring videos, local news and events, and information on the priesthood, discernment, and the seminary (e.g. [perthpriest.org](http://perthpriest.org))
- Facebook pages relating to vocations and discernment (e.g. [facebook.com/perthvocationsoffice](https://www.facebook.com/perthvocationsoffice)).

**Other resources:**

- Books, brochures, prayer cards and posters available for distribution to parishes and schools
- Radio programs— E.g. Arch D Radio, a ministry of the Archdiocese of Adelaide Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults working with young people to produce a weekly Catholic FM radio broadcast.

**Services for the discernment and accompaniment of the vocation of Marriage:**

- Monthly small group experiences for young adults discerning marriage
- Marriage preparation programs run by various ministries
- Marriage enrichment programs (e.g. Marriage encounter)
- Activities of ecclesial movements such as Couples for Christ and the NeoCatechumenal community (e.g. regular meetings, Masses, formation days and other events)
- Special Masses for Marriage, celebrating significant anniversaries.

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**2. Choose three activities you consider the most interesting and relevant to share with the universal Church, and present it according to the following format (no more than one page for each experience).**

In response to this question, an extensive list of activities was collected from many Australian dioceses. Out of these, three activities have been selected based on their wide scope of ministry and the diversity of youth events contained within each program. They also reflect the nature of pastoral activity in accompanying young people provided in Catholic parishes and Catholic schools.

The three activities are:

1. Activity 1: LIFTED (Diocese of Parramatta)
2. Activity 2: Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA) (Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn)
3. Activity 3: NET Ministries (Archdiocese of Brisbane)

It must be acknowledged however, that the resources for building such extensive youth ministries can only be mobilised in larger, urban dioceses. In smaller dioceses and more rural areas, even a single event or activity, such as the formation of a parish youth group or the organisation of a youth pilgrimage, has the potential to generate interest among young people and be a source of inspiration, growth and change. The authors of this report would like to draw attention to these other interesting and relevant youth programs as well, details of which can be found in Appendix III.

## ACTIVITY 1: LIFTED (DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA)

**Description:** LIFTED is a special program organised by Catholic Youth Parramatta, whose mission is to connect youth and young adults of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains with the Church through events, quality formation programs and local youth groups. LIFTED is a youthful brand that aims to reach unchurched young people through secular looking and youth orientated branding. It takes the form of five very different events that promote a gentle but authentic sense of Church:

**LIFTED Breakfast with the Bishop** - Each year the Bishop hosts a breakfast with youth and young adults from across the Diocese of Parramatta. Attendees have an incredible opportunity to listen to the vision of the Bishop and ask him questions about the challenges they are facing and the priorities they have identified for the year ahead, in their local context. The event is also a chance for the team at Catholic Youth Parramatta to motivate and encourage a successful year of ministry with young people.

**LIFTED Leadership Seminar** - Catholic Youth Parramatta have identified leadership development as a key element of formation for youth and young adults. Leadership development in youth ministry calls forth the gifts of young people, empowering and supporting them in ministry to their peers and the wider community. It also provides opportunities for adults to gain skills and experience in mentoring youth. This program helps young people discern their gifts, calling, and appropriate leadership role in their context.

**LIFTED Retreat** - Each year youth and young adults are invited to the Benedict XVI Centre in Grose Vale for a weekend retreat led by Catholic Youth Parramatta that features input and reflection from a range of wonderful facilitators in relation to an annual theme. The pinnacle of the program is the LIFTED night on Saturday when a team of priests are welcomed and eagerly embraced for prayer, praise, worship, adoration and reconciliation.

**LIFTED Live Nights** - LIFTED Live nights usually take the form of a concert or theatrical experience with presenters, performers, bands and inspirational speakers. Whilst three of these events occur each year with different head-line acts, the premier LIFTED Live of the year is held in the Cathedral forecourt and promotes a festival-like experience for youth and young adults to experience the beauty of the young heart of the Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. It is timed to coincide with the Feast of Saint John Paul II, Founder of our Diocese and Father of WYD's and highlights the spectacular monuments of him and young people in the St Patrick's Cathedral Forecourt.

**LIFTED Sports Day** - Sport unites young people. The Sports Day has become one of the longest running and most successful post-WYD Sydney initiatives in the Diocese. The day involves a round robin competition between 16 parishes in touch football, basketball, soccer and volleyball.

**Analysis:** LIFTED is a unique and dynamic brand of large-scale faith-based events that aim to draw upon and mirror the most positive ingredients of contemporary, popular culture that young people are currently living in. This collection of events, programs and experiences challenge committed young Catholics to renew, celebrate and deepen their faith whilst extending an invitation to friends, colleagues and peers to these vibrant experiences of Church.

**Evaluation:** A strong sense of identity and belonging has developed at these events. It has become apparent that young people find these gatherings to be a place of welcome, comfort and inspiring content. More and more young people see these events as an opportunity to invite a friend, peer or colleague into a safe experience of Church that won't look or feel too overwhelming. At the recent LIFTED Retreat more than 65 per cent of the attendees had been invited by a friend or were encouraged by someone who had heard positive feedback.

## ACTIVITY 2: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS YOUTH MINISTRY AUSTRALIA (CSYMA) (ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA-GOULBURN)

**Description:** Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA) is a professional teacher and Church leader centred organisation networking Catholic schools and youth ministries (parishes and movements) for the mission of the Church, initiated in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn. Currently, there are approximately 100 schools that are a part of the CSYMA Network.

CSYMA has the following Focus Areas:

1. CSYMA Youth Ministry – A Four Phase Model of Student Formation complemented by Student Events.
2. CSYMA Teacher Formation – A teacher formation and renewal program in the New Evangelisation and Youth Ministry (CSYMA TEN).
3. CSYMA National Team – A Post-School Faith and Mission Year in the grace of the New Evangelisation.
4. Youth Academy – A discipleship pathway for young people engaged in the CSYMA youth ministry model in schools to enter into greater participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Church.
5. CSYMA Junior – A ministry pathway for Catholic Primary School students through a Four Phase Junior Ministry Model.

CSYMA Youth Ministry is a key formation program for young people with a 'Four Phase Model of Formation' that is developed and individually tailored to each school considering local resources, timetables, and the existing Religious Education curriculum. This program involves Phase One - An initial retreat experience, Phase Two - A Youth Ministry Classroom Curriculum, Phase Three - The formation of Senior Youth Ministry Teams and Phase Four - A post-school connection with the broader Church.

**Analysis:** Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA) has a vision to inspire and equip Catholic Schools to respond to the Church's vision of our schools becoming centres of the New Evangelisation. CSYMA has five goals:

- To help staff develop and sustain a personal living relationship with Jesus and a strong Catholic identity through on-going formation, discipleship and participation in the life of the Church
- To develop a vision for a ministry of evangelisation as teachers including the 'Four Phase Model of Youth Ministry'.
- To build bonds of communication and foster solidarity amongst Catholic schools, through inter-school staff and student formation programs at a local, regional and national level.
- To equip post-school youth ministers and Church leaders for ministry and mission.
- To build pathways from school to active participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Church.

The Youth Ministry Model provides a clear, strategic evangelisation pathway for young people in secondary schools into participation in the life and mission of the broader Church. It shifts the culture of a school to have faith formation at the core of its identity. In addition, the diocesan implementation across all secondary schools in the Archdiocese has allowed for diocesan renewal, with youth taking up the opportunity to connect with one another regionally, whilst receiving the opportunity for ongoing formation locally.

**Evaluation:** In the early stages of implementation, the CSYMA model has shown significant success in its implementation across all areas of the Archdiocese. In addition, hundreds of students have connected with the common events. The comprehensive approach of student formation, youth ministers and teacher formation whilst being integrated within the Archdiocese has allowed for significant renewal across a number of key focus areas.

### ACTIVITY 3: NET MINISTRIES (ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE)

**Description:** NET Ministries (National Evangelisation Teams) is a Catholic peer-to-peer youth ministry that puts into action the Church's mission to evangelise and disciple young people. NET does this by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a personal witness of faith, inviting young people to live for Christ, forming young people in Christian character through the study and practice of the faith, and equipping young adults with the ministry skills needed for evangelising and discipling young people.

Young people (18-30) volunteer with NET Ministries for a commitment of 10 months. They receive six weeks of initial training to prepare them for ministry at the beginning of the year, covering topics such as Christology, missiology, evangelisation, discipleship, team building, conflict resolution, community living, leadership, retreat facilitation, communication and much more.

These young people are then sent in teams of varying sizes to a local area for the year, except for the National Team which travels across Australia to Catholic schools and parishes. Each team has a unique ministry and can be placed either in a parish, school, university or diocesan context. The team lives in community for the year and this community living is an essential aspect of the formational experience. Once in their local areas, these young people (usually called 'Netters') receive a follow-up to the initial training through weekly supervision calls, a mid-year retreat, mid-year training and 3-4 supervisor visits.

**Analysis:** NET was founded in response to the invitation of a 'new evangelisation' by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, "...one that is new in its ardour, new in its methods, and new in its expression" (Bl. John Paul II, Address to the Latin American Bishops).

Although NET was around well before the recent language of Pope Francis (it was founded in the USA in 1981 and in Australia in 1988) it is grounded in the framework of missionary discipleship that he describes. NET recognises the value of peer-to-peer ministry and personal sharing and accompaniment as important methods of ministry and evangelisation, particularly with young people who must receive special consideration in the way that faith is communicated to them. Our experience shows that the bottom line is often that young people can 'tune out' their parents, teachers and other authority figures but will respond to an authentic witness of faith from their peers.

Theological reflection and praxis-based learning are important aspects of the formation of Netters. The primary purpose of NET is to form these Netters into modern day evangelists and future leaders for the Church so NET Team members don't just learn through lectures or theory, but also by doing what they are taught and then reflecting on the outcomes as they do their ministry day by day.

**Evaluation:** The Archdiocese of Brisbane has perhaps experienced most powerfully the fruits of NET Ministries in the number of NET Alumni who have now taken on ministry roles within the Archdiocese, either directly as youth ministers/campus ministers, as teachers in Catholic schools as well as several alumni who are currently in formation at the seminary.

The immersive experience of NET Ministries is what is unique to this pastoral activity of accompaniment and vocational discernment. Young people are transformed as they are supported and accompanied through an experience of mission and community that often stretches them beyond their comfort zone. This cultivates a deeper awareness of God at work in their lives and creates a space where they can ask the question of where God might be calling them in the future.

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### THE AUSTRALIAN CENSUS

The Australian Census, or officially, the Census of Population and Housing, is a descriptive count of the Australian population. The count is taken every five years and is managed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Participation in the census is compulsory, though answering some questions (such as religion) is optional. The most recent census was held on 9 August 2016. Since 1991 the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, through its Pastoral Research Office, has obtained customised Census data on the Catholic population on a wide range of Census demographics, based on Catholic parish and diocesan boundaries. Every parish receives a detailed 'Parish Social Profile' of the people within their parish, while every bishop receives a 'Diocesan Social Profile'. ***At the time of this report being produced, some Census data from 2016 had not been released, so data from the 2011 Census was included.***

### THE NATIONAL COUNT OF ATTENDANCE

The National Count involves an attempt to count attendances at *all* Masses (and at Sunday Assemblies in the Absence of a Priest) across Australia during the same period. It includes attendances from Masses celebrated in all parishes, migrant Mass centres, hospitals and nursing homes, prisons, religious houses, university and other chaplaincies, boarding schools, and so on. Each national count is conducted over four Sundays during the month of May, ensuring that attendances at monthly Masses, quite common in rural areas and in non-parish settings, are included. The count provides us with information such as average weekly attendance figures, attendance rates, change over time, and attendances at Masses celebrated in languages other than English. ***At the time of publication, data for the 2016 National Count was not finalised, so 2011 data has been provided instead.***

### THE NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

Held in the same years as the National Count, the multi-denominational National Church Life Survey (NCLS) conducted in Catholic parishes is a national random sample of parishes, and provides a great deal of information about Mass attenders, including their frequency of attendance, their demographic characteristics and their beliefs and practices. In 2016, a total of 36,532 completed questionnaires were received from the 191 parishes in the national sample. Because these parishes were part of a carefully constructed statistical sample, we can be confident that their results are an accurate representation of all parishes in Australia.



## APPENDIX II: MORE STATISTICAL DATA

### CATHOLICS IN AUSTRALIA

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics: Australian Population and Catholic Population 2016**

Demographics	Australian population	Catholic population
Population	23,401,892	5,291,834
Average age	38.1 years	39.5 years
Indigenous Australians	649,171	133,528
Percentage born in Australia	66.7%	73.6%
Percentage born in another English-speaking country	8.4%	5.6%
Percentage born in a non-English speaking country	17.9%	19.0%
Percentage who speak a language other than English at home	20.8%	20.4%
In a registered marriage (aged 15 and over)	48.1%	49.7%
Average people per household	2.6	-

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*.

**Table 2. Religious Identification of Australians 2016**

Religious identification	Number	%
Anglican	3,101,185	13.3
Baptist	345,142	1.5
Catholic	5,291,834	22.6
Eastern Orthodox	502,801	2.1
Lutheran	174,019	0.7
Pentecostal	260,558	1.1
Presbyterian & Reformed	526,689	2.3
Uniting Church	870,183	3.7
Christian, not further defined	612,371	2.6
Other Christian	516,809	2.2
<i>Total Christian</i>	<i>12,201,591</i>	<i>52.1</i>
Other religions	1,920,825	8.2
No religion & secular beliefs	7,040,717	30.1
Not stated	2,238,735	9.6
<b>Total population</b>	<b>23,401,868</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*

**Table 3. Age Profile of Australian Catholics 2016**

Age	Number	%
0-4 years	305,595	5.8
5-9 years	372,487	7.0
10-14 years	370,282	7.0
15-19 years	349,515	6.6
20-24 years	310,248	5.9
25-29 years	308,933	5.8
30-34 years	330,055	6.2
35-39 years	330,602	6.2
40-44 years	359,769	6.8
45-49 years	374,855	7.1
50-54 years	368,556	7.0
55-59 years	338,719	6.4
60-64 years	293,501	5.5
65-69 years	274,236	5.2
70-74 years	209,063	4.0
75 years and over	395,418	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,291,834</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*

### SUMMARY OF AUSTRALIAN STATES AND DIOCESES

**New South Wales** - contains the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Broken Bay, Lismore, Maitland-Newcastle, Parramatta, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia-Forbes, and some parts of the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn

**Victoria** - contains the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Dioceses of Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale

**Queensland** - contains the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Dioceses of Cairns, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville

**South Australia** - contains the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie

**Western Australia** - contains the Archdiocese of Perth, the Dioceses of Broome, Bunbury and Geraldton

**Tasmania** - wholly contains the Archdiocese of Hobart

**Northern Territory** - wholly contains the Diocese of Darwin

**Australian Capital Territory** - contains some parts of the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn

**Other Territories** - used for other geographical or non-geographical areas

**Table 4. Population by State, 2016**

State	Total Population	Catholic Population	Percent Catholic
New South Wales	7,480,230	1,846,443	24.7
Victoria	5,926,624	1,377,131	23.2
Queensland	4,703,192	1,022,518	21.7
South Australia	1,676,653	301,035	18.0
Western Australia	2,474,414	530,362	21.4
Tasmania	509,961	79,451	15.6
Northern Territory	228,838	45,845	20.0
Australian Capital Territory	397,393	88,618	22.3
Other Territories	4,583	433	9.4
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>23,401,891</b>	<b>5,291,839</b>	<b>22.6</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*

## YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIAN DIOCESES

**Table 5. Young people (aged 16-29) by diocese, 2011**

Diocese	Total population aged 16-29	Percent in diocese aged 16-29	Catholics in diocese aged 16-29	Percent of Catholics in diocese aged 16-29
Adelaide	266,759	18.6	50,558	17.4
Armidale	29,545	16.6	7,712	17.4
Ballarat	65,726	16.1	17,491	17.1
Bathurst	37,388	16.9	11,856	17.5
Brisbane	603,208	19.5	134,288	18.7
Broken Bay	143,053	16.1	35,140	15.7
Broome	8,216	22.7	2,274	23.3
Bunbury	50,457	15.4	9,777	15.5
Cairns	44,650	17.2	10,641	17.1
Canberra & Goulburn	116,405	19.2	29,967	18.4
Darwin	47,253	22.5	10,085	22.1
Geraldton	25,790	20.4	5,728	19.5
Hobart	83,677	16.9	14,694	16.5
Lismore	65,321	13.6	15,913	14.3
Maitland-Newcastle	115,076	17.3	28,018	17.6
Melbourne	833,269	20.3	201,597	18.1
Parramatta	206,798	19.7	62,861	18.9
Perth	360,932	20.6	82,377	19.3
Port Pirie	26,757	16.1	4,333	15.4
Rockhampton	79,387	18.3	20,512	19.0
Sale	85,483	17.4	21,522	17.9
Sandhurst	58,067	16.2	15,622	16.7
Sydney	474,642	21.4	115,877	19.0
Toowoomba	44,052	16.9	11,296	17.0
Townsville	58,294	20.9	16,800	20.9
Wagga Wagga	36,049	18.3	11,677	18.4
Wilcannia-Forbes	16,313	15.0	5,220	16.0
Wollongong	118,436	18.0	33,599	18.0
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>4,101,003</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>987,435</b>	<b>18.2</b>

Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011*.

## EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

<b>Table 6. Labour force status of young people (aged 16-29), 2011</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed, worked full-time	1,510,481	36.8
Employed, worked part-time	918,478	22.4
Employed, away from work	173,410	4.2
Unemployed, looking for full-time work	151,305	3.7
Unemployed, looking for part-time work	117,201	2.9
Not in the labour force	1,000,617	24.4
Not stated	229,499	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,100,991</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011

<b>Table 7. Occupation of young people (aged 16-29), 2011</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Employee not owning business	2,446,277	59.7
Owner managers of incorporated enterprises	35,059	0.9
Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises	81,121	2.0
Contributing family workers	14,074	0.3
Not stated	25,838	0.6
Not applicable (young people not employed)	1,498,622	36.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,100,991</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011

<b>Table 8. Type of educational institution attending (aged 16-29), 2016</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Secondary - Government	300,329	6.9
Secondary - Catholic	120,368	2.8
Secondary - Other Non-Government	104,465	2.4
Technical or Further Educational Institution	243,358	5.6
University or other Tertiary Institution	864,699	19.8
Other	74,474	1.7
Not stated	323,969	7.4
Not applicable (young people not attending)	2,342,499	53.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,374,161</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016

## MASS ATTENDANCE IN AUSTRALIA

**Table 9. Mass Attendance in Australia, 2001 - 2016**

Mean weekly total attendance 2001	763,726	(15.3% of Catholics)
Mean weekly total attendance 2006	708,618	(13.8% of Catholics)
Mean weekly total attendance 2011	662,376	(12.2% of Catholics)
<b>In 2016, of Mass attenders aged 15 and over:</b>		
Average age of attenders	59 years	
Percentage with university degree	36%	
Percentage born in Australia	57%	
Percentage born in another English-speaking country	6%	
Percentage born in a non-English speaking country	37%	
Percentage who speak a language other than English at home	33%	
Percentage married	67%	

Sources: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, National Count of Attendance; 2001-2011 and NCLS Research, National Church Life Survey, 2016.

## MASS ATTENDANCE IN AUSTRALIAN DIOCESES

**Table 10. Mass attendance by diocese, 2011**

<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Average weekly attendance</b>	<b>Attendance rate</b>
Adelaide	31,984	11.0
Armidale	4,389	9.9
Ballarat	11,896	11.7
Bathurst	7,094	10.5
Brisbane	65,952	9.2
Broken Bay	25,532	11.4
Broome	724	7.4
Bunbury	5,246	8.3
Cairns	4,196	6.7
Canberra & Goulburn	17,327	10.6
Darwin	4,313	9.6
Geraldton	2,248	7.7
Hobart	6,208	7.0
Lismore	10,103	9.1
Maitland-Newcastle	12,774	8.0
Melbourne	148,759	13.4
Parramatta	50,613	15.2
Perth	56,616	13.3
Port Pirie	2,861	10.2
Rockhampton	8,855	8.2
Sale	11,503	9.6
Sandhurst	9,388	10.0
Sydney	98,308	16.1
Toowoomba	7,084	10.7
Townsville	5,895	7.3
Wagga Wagga	7,817	12.3
Wilcannia-Forbes	2,747	8.4
Wollongong	19,598	10.5
Other dioceses and eparchies	22,347	-
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>662,376</b>	<b>12.2</b>

Source: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, National Count of Attendance; 2011

APPENDIX III: YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS IN AUSTRALIA

DIOCESE	NAME	DESCRIPTION
Canberra-Goulburn	Youth Ministers (YMI)	Post-school Youth Ministers support the development, implementation and growth of Youth Ministry within parishes and Catholic schools across the Archdiocese. The Youth Minister Model is a decentralized, partnership model across the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn incorporating both parish communities and Catholic schools and has a vision for evangelisation of students from school to parish. The Youth Minister role involves the development of parish youth faith formation initiatives (such as a Youth Mass, Youth Groups, etc.), the development of pathways from school to Church, assisting in the implementation of the CSYMA model within the school and leading broader Church events that seek to further the formation of students and other young people.
Canberra-Goulburn	Teacher Formation (Porta Fidei and Leading the New Evangelisation)	Porta Fidei is a teacher renewal experience that provides staff formation and allows teachers to develop a personal relationship with Christ and a vision for the new evangelisation. There are key sessions focusing on the themes of God’s love, the Gospel message, renewal of faith and teaching as a vocation. The ACU Leading the New Evangelisation program (LNE) is a new formation program, conducted as a Graduate Certificate or incorporated within Masters programs, that equips postgraduates for the mission of the Church. The LNE is designed for Catholic school leaders, Religious Education classroom teachers, and teachers. It is also designed for Church leaders, youth ministers, family-parish educators or others who work in Church organisations that work with Catholic schools.
Adelaide	Youth Listening Forums: Raise Your Voice	The Raise Your Voice Forums are an opportunity for young people to gather with peers and share their experiences, ideas, and concerns with the Catholic Church. The Forums are based on the World Café conversation method ( <a href="http://www.theworldcafe.com">www.theworldcafe.com</a> ). Young people gather in a welcoming atmosphere with music, food, and prayer. The room is set up with several tables, each with a poster-sized paper with a different question on it. Young people choose a table with five or six other participants, and spend ten to fifteen minutes discussing the question and recording their insights on the poster-paper. At the end of the process, participants are given nine stickers which are to be used to mark the most important insights from the evening. Once the young people have finished marking the comments and insights they found most important, the facilitator knows which issues and insights to focus on for future engagement.
Adelaide	Annual Youth Consultation with the Archbishop	Each year two senior students from each Catholic school are nominated in recognition of their leadership and faith in action (more information on the Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults website: <a href="http://www.cathyouthadelaide.org.au">www.cathyouthadelaide.org.au</a> ). During the year, all nominated students are invited to meet with the Archbishop and each other and discuss the issues that are most important to them as young people. The aim of the gathering is to allow young people the space to voice their successes and challenges and most importantly to engage in consultation with the Archbishop. He then addresses the young people in a way that recognises their realities, connects with their journey, and provides opportunity to answer questions and engage in conversation. The gathering is hosted by the Adelaide Archdiocesan Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults based at the Catholic Education Office. The Coordinator and Youth Ministry Support Officer run the evening and prepare the content which is always well received and very well attended.

Adelaide	Arch D Radio	Arch D Radio is a twice weekly, evening radio show that airs on 1079 Life, Adelaide's Christian Radio Station. A member of the Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults is the program's producer and anchor announcer, and coordinates the participation of young people from Catholic schools and around the Archdiocese of Adelaide. Approximately 70 young people are involved in the show's production per year, and the show has a weekly listening audience of around 40,000 people.
Perth	Discernment Retreat Days	Full-day retreats for young Catholic men and women who seek an opportunity to pray about their life's vocation. The days include presentations (from single, married, clergy and religious), Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, Adoration, and lunch. Both the men's and women's days have been well attended. Of note is the considerable interest shown by many young women, who lamented the lack of sustainable options available when it came to religious and consecrated life in Australia. The struggle we experience is how best to support young women in their search or desire for religious life. Many local women's orders won't take young people anymore. We find that to journey with them, we have to offer options on the east coast of Australia or overseas for women religious. There are young women keen to serve in this vocation, the difficulty is where or how we can best support them locally.
Perth	Young Catholic Men's Group	Weekly or fortnightly meeting with a group of 6-8 young men who are in the process of discerning their life direction and are open to the priesthood. The evening begins with either Mass or Vespers, after which we have a light dinner as we watch an hour-long video on a topic relating to discernment, spiritual growth, theological formation, etc. The evening concludes with 30-40 minutes of conversation. These evenings have been among the more fruitful efforts of the Vocations Office, offering some formation for those seeking it, and providing an opportunity for open discussion about the priesthood, seminary life, and various hot-button Catholic topics.
Broken Bay	Twilight Talks	Twilight Talks is a regular event for young adults (18+) in our diocese, with a facilitator and guidance of conversation on issues connecting faith and life. Participants share community, a meal, pray, and are nourished by guest speakers, hosted by Catholic Youth Broken Bay under the direction of the bishop. The night takes places in a café or pub, with the location of the event rotating around the diocese each month to invite broad participation. At the event we also encourage other diocesan teams and agencies to be present, in particular the Vocations Office, along with our current seminarians and our CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine).
Broken Bay	Praisefest	Praisefest is an opportunity to gather young people, largely school-aged, around the Eucharist, worship music, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The evenings start with fellowship and a meal, before moving into the host parish church or hall for a youth rally. The evening will include energetic and contemporary worship music, Scripture, and preaching which leads into a sacramental response such as Adoration and Reconciliation along with other engaging prayer elements. The event is facilitated by Catholic Youth Broken Bay under the direction of our bishop. The event is held within different parishes across the year. Praisefest is open to all young people aged 12-30 years; however it is tending to attract school-aged participants on the whole.
Broken Bay	Catholic Youth Broken Bay (CYBB) Training Days	CYBB Training Days are an opportunity to gather youth leaders interested and involved in local ministry to network and receive essential spiritual and practical formation provided by the diocese. The days are facilitated by Catholic Youth Broken Bay with the assistance of guest speakers who are experts in their field. Four training days are held across the year, early in the school term, to allow for greater impact on ministry at the local context. Each day includes three components – prayer and catechesis, 'mission' training, and practical skills and resources. It is also hoped that the day will be held in a joy-filled environment, with opportunities for fellowship.

Perth	Ministry with Young People from the Neocatechumenal Way	<p>To illustrate the ministry let us simply look at the life of 'Paul', a typical teenager. His parents pray the Divine Office early every morning. On Sunday mornings the family gathers around the dining table to celebrate Morning Prayer together – during which his parents explain the Scriptures and dialogue with all the children about their lives. Since he began school Paul was always a part of his parents' Neocatechumenal community, sharing in the celebration of the Eucharist on Saturday nights, being helped to understand the Readings, and feeling welcome among them. At the age of 12 he was confirmed and immediately joined the parish Post-Confirmation Program which will continue all through the high school years. Every Friday night he meets with others of the same age and with a married couple. They are helped through the Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church to discover the riches of the Church's teachings.</p> <p>At the age of 13/14 Paul listened to a series of kerygmatic catechesis for adults and joined a Neocatechumenal community separate from his parents. There are other young people and also older adults (including a priest and a couple of seminarians), all following an 'itinerary' whereby the Church will give them adult faith. He meets with them mid-week for a celebration of the Word and on Saturday nights for a celebration of the Eucharist. Little by little they start to share their lives, their sufferings. They are led by a team of catechists who will help them gradually to rediscover their baptism in depth – to live a Christian life to the full.</p> <p>Every year the same young people go on a pilgrimage where the focus is on the baptismal vocation – to priesthood, to religious life, and to marriage. Paul listens with the others to catechesis on the Theology of the Body, and on Christian marriage and sexuality. On the pilgrimage there are several priests and seminarians who generously share their experience. When there is a World Youth Day Paul will be invited to take part. After the meeting with the Holy Father, there is always a big vocational gathering with Kiko, the initiator of the Neocatechumenal Way, during which there is a call for vocations. Paul will witness the spectacle of hundreds and even thousands standing up and making themselves available – and he may well be among them.</p> <p>Underlying all this experience of Paul is the presence of the Neocatechumenal Way in the parish – the gift of successive parish priests who saw the need to give people an adult faith, a faith equipped for life today, a faith lived deeply and with passion – a faith that bears fruit either in religious life, as celibate young men or women for the new evangelisation or a Christian couple.</p>
Ballarat	Journey of the Cross and Icon, October 2007.	<p>The Journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon took place throughout the Ballarat Diocese in the lead up to WYD08 (World Youth Day 2008 was held in Sydney – the Cross and Icon went round Australia in the year preceding the week of World Youth Day). Local communities, both large and small, met in the lead up to the visit to plan an event that was unique to their own context. The Cross and Icon were in our diocese for approximately 8 days and travelled to many parishes. The events engaged schools and parishes as well as the wider community. The real strength of this event was that it gave parishes an opportunity, and almost an excuse, to engage with and seek out the younger members of their parishes. It gave young people a purpose, as they had something tangible to work towards. It helped parishes to identify what was important to them and how to showcase what they were proud of in their place. It highlighted to parishes that young people will turn up when an invitation is extended to them and when they have a job to do. One of the weaknesses was that it was a once off. In many places, the momentum that was created was not capitalised upon and those young people were once again lost to their parish community. The presence of the Cross and Icon in the Ballarat Diocese was a true blessing. It brought communities together and it was an event that has stayed in the hearts and minds of those who took part.</p>

Ballarat	Australian Catholic Youth Festival - Multi-arts in 'the Vault', December 2013	<p>Three thousand young people (15-25 year olds) attended the first Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Melbourne in 2013. Our diocese assisted in organising the Art Exhibition. We were given a downstairs space called 'the Vault' at the Festival venue in which to display the 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional artworks. Works were initially submitted in electronic image ahead of the Festival and then participants brought their artworks with them to the Festival. There was a committee and selection panel facilitating. We had asked for the artworks to reflect a faith expression theme (same as the theme of the Festival), and importantly we asked each artist to write a short artist statement that was printed up and displayed beside the work. The Festival had a 'whole of Festival' passport activity to promote and encourage visiting displays and events at the Festival, like the Social Justice hub, and 'the Vault' Art Exhibition. At the Vault, participants could get their passport stamped if they voted for their favourite artwork. This engaged the young people in not only visiting the Vault but also really looking at the artworks and reading the statements by the artists, thinking about the faith theme being explored and the many different ways of interpretation. It also got young people talking about it all. We wanted to make the Vault a multi-arts place, not only about visuals. So we added two other aspects: Spoken word, and dance. Spoken word was enabled in two different ways:</p> <p>A 'Gospel relay' - we put a bible on a reader's stand with a microphone and once an hour we would read from one of the Gospels and then ask any of the young people who were there if they would like to continue reading and so on – they could read for a short or longer time – we started at Chapter One of St Mark and continued through the chapters in order. Young people participated and others stopped and listened.</p> <p>At other times we had a resident poet/story-teller (one of the diocese's priests) who asked small groups of young people how they were experiencing the Festival, and wove their comments into free form poetry which he then read out. Some groups returned again to hear 'their' poems and were given copies of them. The poem-stories were 'performed' a number of times so young people heard what others were doing and thinking.</p> <p>Dance - we had a young choreographer who had prepared a dance routine to Steve Angrisano's "Go Make a Difference". Several times a day he would teach this choreography to those young people who were in the Vault and wished to participate (we were promoting these times). Then those who had done 'the class' emerged from the Vault (with portable music) and did a 'flash mob' performance of the dance. This was really appreciated by all involved. It was good way to engage in the 'message' of the song. The only really planned part of the Vault was the Art Exhibition. We also had a space that had greater potential. And we wanted to demonstrate that there are many ways to express faith, so we filled the space with a variety of arts activities.</p>
Ballarat	Bringing the Gifts – a Parish in Ballarat Diocese, 2016	<p>One of the youth groups in the diocese comprises young people from the Tongan community, whose families are comparatively recent immigrants to Australia. They and their families have a strong tradition of music and singing, and are an active part of one of the choirs that sing at Mass regularly.</p> <p>The youth group spoke to their parish priest about 'bringing up the gifts' on particular special Sundays like Pentecost. Could they do this as a whole group in a way traditional to their culture? Yes, they were encouraged to do so. This involved the youth group in a lot of planning and rehearsing. Traditional costume items were worn and had to be sourced and organised. Instead of two people carrying the bread and wine up the aisle to the priest at the altar, the whole group of young people formed an intricately woven procession to 'herald' or display the gifts as they were ceremoniously borne up the aisle. These were not really 'dance moves' but it was like a dance in the carefully executed patterns that were created to the accompanying music.</p> <p>It was beautiful and moving. All the youth group was involved and some younger siblings. They put in a lot of rehearsal time. At Mass it was very well received by all who were there. It was both reverential and joyful. The initial encouragement they received was particularly valuable for the ongoing development of the parish community in its different parts, and as a whole.</p>



Bathurst	Inculturation of Overseas Seminarians	<p>Due to many and varied reasons, some expressed in our Synod document, our diocese has experienced a dearth of vocations to the priesthood and religious life over the last 20 years. This has had a huge impact on the priests of our diocese, through their experience of their ministry, as well as the impact on workload and the natural progression of skills and experience from one of a young priest to an older one, who may be more active in other areas not normally associated with youth. With this shortage of vocations has come the need to look to other locations for seminarians, to assist our diocese to supply priests for its mission.</p> <p>It has become possible for young men who feel a calling to the priesthood in Vietnam but are unable to follow their call in their home country, to do so here. The diocese has developed a formation programme which allows these men to experience our Diocese, as well as continue to discern their vocation.</p> <p>Pre-seminarians are interviewed by our Vocations Director for suitability. During this interview and discernment programme, if it is felt that the young man is appropriate to come to Australia, all the necessary paperwork is organised and the pre-seminarian then takes part in an intensive English programme in Vietnam, to ensure he is able to communicate with members of the parish and diocese on arrival. There is then a programme of induction into the diocese, with information about the diocesan offices, priests, culture and policies.</p> <p>Following this initial induction the pre-seminarians then take part in a six-month placement around parishes in the diocese, to gain an understanding of the culture and practices of the diocese. These placements may require more than one location - a small parish as well as a larger one - enabling pre-seminarians to understand the reality of our diocese. Following this time in parishes, there is then an assessment of the pre-seminarian's English, pastoral skills, interactions with clergy and parishioners and their prayer life since their placement. This feedback is given to the pre-seminarian as areas to be congratulated, as well as areas to work on. This then decides whether a pre-seminarian will attend the seminary the following year.</p>
Bathurst	Pre and Post Confirmation Retreat	<p>The implementation of the CSYMA programme to the diocese has allowed an opportunity for young people in this programme to be involved in ministry to youth in the diocese. This resulted in a programme being developed, run by Year 10 students, for young people to explore their faith pre and post the sacrament of Confirmation. This experience is designed to demonstrate that it is possible to have faith when you are older as well as explore what sacraments can mean to a young person's faith journey, as well as be an authentic encounter with Christ.</p>
Bathurst	Sacramental Interviews	<p>Teams of parishioners and priests visiting families before sacraments, not just asking for a form to be filled in, building relationships. This is going against 'parent nights' which are formal and do not allow authentic sharing of faith and relationships.</p>
Brisbane	Mentoring	<p>Mentoring is the experience of a young person in ministry (over 18) talking about their current experiences in life with a more experienced person of the same gender. Mentoring sessions usually take place once a month and the sessions go for 1-2 hours. These sessions are an opportunity for the young person to talk about their personal life, work life, ministry life and spiritual life, taking a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the person. Mentors are generally people who have had at least 7 years' experience in ministry, some of this time in a leadership capacity. Mentors live out the teachings of the Catholic Church faithfully and receive mentoring or spiritual direction themselves. They meet with their mentees over a meal or a drink in a public location.</p>

Brisbane	Canali House of Discernment	<p>Canali House is a place of discernment where young men can “test their call” to priesthood. Whilst continuing to study, work and go about their daily life, the young men live in community together and live alongside a resident priest. Canali House exists as one of only four discernment houses in the world.</p> <p>The young men of Canali House are encouraged to participate in daily prayer, Mass and theological study, in order to gain an insight into the life of a priest. This place of live-in discernment is designed to help men, over a twelve month period, to decide whether they will (or won't) continue on to apply for the Seminary.</p>
Chaldean	Youth group, which is dedicated to the youth aged 16-36	<p>This group is run by the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator Miss Reta Fargi with the help of Fr Denkha Joola in Sydney. In Melbourne it is run by Mr Ben Giliana and Fr Kamal Bidawid. The youth group runs fortnightly. Activities differ each week, we run spiritual activities like retreats, social talks, outdoor sports, indoor games, activities e.g. adoration hour, rosary prayer, watching saint's life films, bible discussions, Good Friday all night walk as well as regular youth Masses Also, we push the youth to connect with events such as WYD, ACYF as well as other events run by the Archdiocese e.g. the Good Friday walks.</p>
Chaldean	The annual Chaldean Youth Convention 2016	<p>More than 300 young people, aged from 16 to 35, attended the first Chaldean Youth Convention in Sydney from 7 to 10 July 2016. The convention was initiated by Archbishop Amel Shamon Nona, led by the coordination of Mr Waseem Hermiz as well as help of youth leaders from each church across the diocese and was attended by young Chaldean people from Melbourne, Sydney and New Zealand.</p> <p>The young people shared not only their jokes and cultural rituals, but also their love for Jesus and the Church. For some this was a journey to redemption, for others this was a journey to get to know God and others this was a whole new experience to get closer to God, meet new people and get closer to their community. The convention program was based on three pillars 1. Educational 2. Spiritual 3. Fun. The three convention days included Mass led by Archbishop Amel Nona, a talk by Father Greg Morgan who spoke about the beauty of mercy and how it feels to be merciful, and Father Douglas Bazi all the way from Iraq, gave a live testimony through Skype. Fr Douglas was kidnapped and tortured by an extremist Islamic group in 2006. He spoke to the young people about the horrendous situation of the Chaldean people and reminded them of God's love and mercy. Above all, he asked them to never forget where they come from and how history proves that our nation is the strong and ever faithful nation despite all the crosses that we had to carry throughout. Jeremy Ambrose spoke about Evangelisation and Discipleship — how to go out and be apostles. There were games and group sharing activities, as well as Adoration and a pilgrimage to the Our Lady of Mercy Monastery.</p>

Chaldean	Youth Camp	<p>Youth camps are run in each of Melbourne and New Zealand, in a similar context and programming style. The Chaldean Catholic Youth Camp was held this year in Sydney in Collaroy Centre and lasted for three days between 14-16 July 2017, with about 60 people attending. It was supervised by Fr Denkha Joola, the spiritual director of the group and Miss Reta Fargi, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator. Over the three days, the program included:</p> <p>Day 1 (Friday): Prayer, a movie night that included a movie relevant to the theme of the camp called “Restless Heart: The confessions of Augustine” and discussion about the movie.</p> <p>Day 2 (Saturday): Outdoor morning prayer – A talk by Simon Carrington about relationships and love. A group discussion about the topic above and a talk by Sydney Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umber on the theme of the camp (‘For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be’ Mt 6: 21), followed by a “Questions and Answers” session with both Bishops: His Grace our Archbishop Amel Nona and Bishop Richard Umber with the group members – A visit to the beach – An outdoor adoration hour for the holy Eucharist at night with candles. A confession session by Fr Denkha along with spiritual guidance and direction given by Deacon Rodi Sitto. Some fun activities, games and music ending the day.</p> <p>Day 3 (Sunday): Morning Mass – A ‘treasure hunt’ puzzle game that was to find hidden pieces of two large icons and complete them.</p>
Toowoomba	Collaboration with Catholic Schools Office regarding participation in World Youth Days	<p>When organising a diocesan group to attend World Youth Day the Catholic Schools Office is encouraged to participate and send young teachers from their schools to attend and experience the global church. The teachers are then asked to share their experiences with their communities and parishes in the hope of sharing the enthusiasm and experiences had while away on pilgrimage. There is also a hope that this will start new growth and ideas in these communities and throughout the diocese. The factors that have contributed to this partnership between the CSO and the Diocese are many but start with the recognition that Catholic schools are the first and sometimes the only point of contact to the Catholic Church that students and parents will experience. It has also been evident that relationships need to be built between the schools and parishes within the diocese and so it is hoped that these teachers may also help to bridge these gaps by sharing their experiences and involving themselves in parish WYD celebrations and other parish events in the future while also encouraging parishioners to get involved with school events. By bridging the gap between schools and parishes it was also hoped that students would see that there is more to the Catholic Church than what they see in their parishes and encourage post-school engagement.</p>

Toowoomba	Diocesan Youth Office Activity-Movers and Shakers	<p>Led by a team of Youth Ministry professionals, Movers and Shakers is facilitated by Dave Jorna from Project Hatch and coordinated by Sarah de Byl (Toowoomba Diocese) and is one of the longest running youth leadership training initiatives in Australia. Since its beginnings in 1991, over 2000 people have participated in the program.</p> <p>One of the strengths of the program is its ability to combine theory and practical leadership development with different activities to challenge participants. During the residential five day program participants are challenged both individually, and in small groups, to work on problem solving, teamwork and adventure based activities. Participants are also given the opportunity to explore their faith and question what their vocation in life is.</p> <p>Movers and Shakers provides young people from a variety of parishes, schools and youth movements across Queensland and Australia with high quality leadership training in a safe and fun environment. It also provides an opportunity for the group to support and network with others in person outside of social media or their immediate circle of friends.</p> <p>By engaging in the program it is hoped that participants will know what it means to be the face of Christ as a Christian leader, discovering their personal vocation and their place in the life of the Church. Those who have participated in the program have gone on to work in a variety of ministries, some have become religious or clergy and others have decided to go into education, teaching and working in Catholic education. The strength of the program is the “family” bond created within the group. It has been noted that participants support each other and attend Mass together when they go back to their parishes and often run events and participate in both school and parish functions.</p>
Hobart	Immaculata Mission School	<p>The Immaculata Mission Schools are two interrelated programs run for youth each year in the Archdiocese of Hobart. The schools are run by the Immaculata Community, a community of religious sisters and lay people.</p> <p>The short-term Mission School runs in January for nine days. It draws upwards of 100 young people at different stages of their faith journey, including non-Christians with a curiosity about the faith. The long-term Mission School, now in its second year, provides an opportunity for a smaller group to receive more in-depth formation. It runs from August to February and draws most of its participants from past short-term Mission School attendees. Both schools are centred around Eucharistic Adoration, faith formation and community, in line with the Immaculata community’s charism.</p>
Hobart	World Youth Day Pilgrimage	<p>The pilgrimages to World Youth Day involve taking a group of young people from the Archdiocese of Hobart, normally from both school and post school age groups. The Archdiocese organises the pilgrimage with the support of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office. The pilgrimage normally travels through cities/countries that are close to or linked with the host city. The point of this travel is so that the young people experience pilgrimage and come closer to God through this journey.</p>
Hobart	Year of Youth Ambassador Program	<p>The Ambassador program looks to create new leaders in the Church by empowering a number of students in each Catholic high school to assist in activities during the Year of Youth (YOY) in 2018, which was called by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The program involves the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office – in collaboration with the Archdiocese and Catholic schools – sponsoring young people to attend the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (at the start of the YOY) after which they will be called to form a leadership team in the Archdiocese.</p>

Lismore	Youth Ministry Officer (YMO) Team	The YMO Team is a network of young adults employed by respective secondary schools and parishes, to facilitate youth ministry events, programs and other strategies in most secondary schools in the Lismore Diocese. In 2017, each Catholic high school was offered funding for the role by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The CSO provides funding for YMOs to attend initial training at the School of Evangelisation in Canberra; they also provide and fund ongoing retreats and training for the YMOs throughout the year. Each individual parish and school is responsible for the general management of the YMO. Some parishes have the resources to provide fortnightly formation for the YMO as well. The presence of YMOs in schools provides a daily opportunity for young people to be listened to and invested in. The YMOs' role is to be a witness of the Church for the students in their everyday lived situations.
Lismore	World Youth Day (WYD) / Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) Pilgrimages	WYD and ACYF are great events and the Lismore Diocese is in full support. In 2016, the WYD pilgrimage consisted of clergy, parish members and school staff. Participants between the ages of 18-35 were selected through a rigorous process of application and referral. The key element of the pilgrimage was a personal formation program that aimed to strengthen parishioners as both witnesses to Jesus Christ and communicators of the Catholic Faith to others. The Lismore Diocese sends a contingent of 200+ young people to ACYF. The responsibility of pre-event formation, preparation and ongoing support, is up to each individual parish. The main coordinators of these events are the CSO SEACS Team, advised by the newly formed, Diocese Events and Pilgrimage Committee and Priest Council.
Maitland-Newcastle	Diocesan Pastoral Placement Program	The purpose of this one-year program is to provide pastoral placements for those seeking to explore the opportunities to serve God and God's people through ministries of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Participants are placed in as many of the following ministries as possible to get a sense of what is involved in working in the mission field of diocesan life. Some of those placements could be with Parishes, Chaplaincies (Hospitals, University, Port, Prison, Schools), Clinical Pastoral Education, Catholic Schools (Administration, Pastoral Care, Teaching), CatholicCare Social Services (Youth, Out of Home Care, Disability Programs, Refugee Service, Community Care Van), Pastoral Ministries (Parish Family Liaison, Mum's Cottage, Seasons for Growth, Chancery), Children's Ministries (SRE, Sacraments of Initiation, Children's Liturgy of the Word, School Chaplaincy), Youth Ministries (ACTiv8 Chisholm, LifeTeen, Diocesan Council of Ministry to Young People (DCMYP), World Youth Day, Australian Catholic Youth Festival Aged Care) or Overseas Aid and Development (Caritas, Catholic Mission).
Maitland-Newcastle	Collaboration with Catholic Schools Office regarding participation in World Youth Day/Australian Catholic Youth Festivals	When organising diocesan participation in World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festivals, a conscious decision has been made for the diocese (through the Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People (DCMYP)) to take the lead in facilitating participation in these events. The DCMYP assists in discerning the appointment of volunteer co-ordinators for these events. An event team is then established which includes a representative from the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The event team then disseminates information to schools and the wider diocesan community. The event team also looks after all logistical elements of the preparation, including formation for participants and recruitment and training of group leaders/supervisors.

Maitland-Newcastle	Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People	The Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People (DCMYP) is the body responsible for overseeing diocesan youth ministry initiatives and advising the bishop on issues pertaining to youth ministry. The council was established in 2012, and consists of a group of 10-12 volunteers drawing from various youth ministry backgrounds and experiences across the diocese. The DCMYP is responsible for coordinating diocesan involvement in major events such as WYD and ACYF, as well as supporting and fostering local youth ministry initiatives including <i>Pints with a Purpose</i> , <i>Seven at Sacred Heart</i> (Adoration), the <i>Be Grow Show</i> annual retreat for young people, and periodic praise and worship gatherings. The DCMYP maintains an active presence in social media, using Facebook and Instagram to connect with and inform young people across the diocese.
Parramatta	HSC (Higher School Certificate / Year 12) Parish Youth Masses	<p>A unique initiative occurs in the Diocese of Parramatta. Catholic Youth Parramatta identifies the final weekend before the Year 12 examinations commence and then invites each parish in the diocese to offer a special Mass for young people. With the details of that Mass, Catholic Youth Parramatta puts together a poster two months in advance advertising each of these Masses. This poster is then emailed directly to all Year 12 students in the diocese through the Catholic Education database. Students and their families can then make a decision to attend their usual Mass, reconnect with their former parish or join with others and choose their closest Mass. Parishes are encouraged to do the following in an attempt to evangelise their guests:</p> <p><b>Welcome team:</b> Have your friendliest parishioners on welcoming duty at the door to make the students and their families feel completely at home in your parish. Some of them may not have visited for a while.</p> <p><b>Wear your Year 12 jersey:</b> Ask all parishioners to wear their past Year 12 leaver's jersey to the HSC Mass as a sign of solidarity with the current HSC students (it also makes for a colourful Mass!) The Year 12's should do this as well. It helps you know whether any have turned up to your Mass.</p> <p><b>Pray specifically for the Year 12 students present:</b> Include petitions for the students in your Prayers of the Faithful. At some point in the Mass, invite HSC students to stand, or come out the front, to receive a special blessing in preparation for their exams.</p> <p><b>Put on a BBQ afterwards:</b> Having a quick and simple feed after Mass with caring and generous parishioners can really lift their spirits and its one less thing to do when they get home.</p> <p><b>Give each student an "HSC survival pack":</b> Have little care packages ready for them with items such as these in them: A copy of the Students Prayer, the name of one or more parishioners who have promised to pray for them specifically throughout the HSC exam period, a treat or two, some chamomile tea bags or something similar and a summary of parish Reconciliation and Mass times, as well as upcoming youth group/event dates and details.</p>
Parramatta	Good Friday Night Walk	Catholic Youth Parramatta is unique in providing this once a year initiative for young people to come together in the diocese for a cause. Each year more than 1,500 young people gather at Blacktown Parish for a 21km overnight pilgrimage through six parishes and onwards to Parramatta's Cathedral for Good Friday. The event is led by the Diocesan Youth Council and links the Stations of the Cross to various current and real-world struggles occurring in the previous months. Often there is a social justice theme to the night. At each parish stop, pilgrims rest but also are invited to pray, and be informed and respond to an issue in the world. It is a special opportunity also for the Bishop to address hundreds of young people who see this initiative as their one connection to Church throughout the year. Year in, year out, evaluations prove categorically that many do the walk because it speaks to their sense of challenge, and going out of their comfort zone in solidarity with something they know is real – that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins.

Rockhampton	Elevate High School Youth Group	<p>The Elevate High School Youth Group is a youth group for students from Grade 7 through to Grade 12 run by the Cathedral Parish in conjunction with The Cathedral College. Youth Group events typically take place on a Friday evening for 3 hours, held approximately monthly during school terms at a hall located within the college grounds. The overall aim is to provide a faith-based youth group and social network for high school aged students to help develop and understand their faith. Their activities vary but have included games, food, Mass, Adoration, praise and worship, guest speakers, trivia, multi-media, group discussions, teaching, prayer and Q&amp;A sessions. The focus has always been faith and more specifically the Catholic faith. The team have sought guidance from school leadership and clergy to ensure the basis of their teaching is sound.</p> <p>The level of engagement from this age group has been very impressive and they are now reaching the point where some of the older ones are starting to assist with coordination and leadership roles. They are also starting to realise and appreciate the beauty of the Mass, Adoration and prayer, and look for and enjoy these experiences. Elevate has certainly filled the void that it was intended to fill, and quickly went beyond initial expectations in regard to numbers and engagement of the students. At its peak the group has had 80-90 students in attendance on a given night. Being run by teachers from the College the students have someone they know and can relate to, and can see the example of faith they provide. It is also a comfort to parents having someone they know and trust leading the group. Youth from all backgrounds have come along – Catholic, Christian, even non-religious, so while it is a Catholic youth group and they explore all aspects of the Catholic faith, all feel comfortable enough to come along and participate in the way they can. This youth group has provided these students with a much deeper connection to their faith than they would have achieved previously. They are really learning about the beauty of the Church and its various expressions of prayer and praise, and they are loving it. It appears to be creating a group of well-formed and involved young people for our Church.</p>
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Rockhampton	ACTS Camps – Leadership Training	<p>ACTS Camps are a diocesan leadership camp for students. There are two levels of the camp – A Chance to Share – for Year 10 students, and A Chance to Serve – for Year 11 students. Each is run annually. They are designed to get students to look beyond themselves and ultimately prepare them to move into leadership roles within schools in coming years. They used to be run by the Diocesan Youth Ministry Office, but due to having no one in that role the Catholic Education Office now organise these for the diocese. The Catholic Education Office coordinates each 3-day event and the program is run by a contracted facilitator. Each college is invited to send a small group of students who travel to an external camp site that is located centrally within the diocese and near the beach. Over the course of the days students are encouraged to open up, look at themselves and their lives, look beyond themselves and how they can contribute to the communities around them. This is done through talks, personal reflection, activities, and prayer - basically Christian leadership training. The aim is by the end of the time students will be changed in some way and be less self-focussed.</p> <p>The camps have been developed over the years by the diocese to prepare potential leaders for leadership roles within the colleges. The program is modified each year based on the facilitators but remains focussed around the formula developed over time and relevant youth leadership development formulae used around Australia. Supervisors from each school travel with students to assist with supervision but also to be an ongoing contact for them when they return home. The supervisors are actively involved in the program through activities and leading small group discussions.</p> <p>This has been long a standing initiative of our diocese and has proven results in preparing our young people for future roles. It is also seen as part of the development pathway for youth leadership – completing these two camps and then moving to the external Movers and Shakers leadership program. The program is as good as its facilitation, so ensuring we have appropriate facilitators engaged for the camps is critical. The program has consistently shown strong bonds formed between participants despite being from different colleges and towns.</p>
Sydney	Culture Project	<p>Culture Project is a group of missionary young people who make it their mission to work with young people and educate them on Catholic social teaching. This process for learning allows young people the opportunity to evaluate where they stand on current issues.</p>
Sydney	Vocation Expo	<p>Vocation Expo is an event which is run by the Sydney Archdiocese that works to engage with young people to open the dialogue between themselves and the potential of joining religious life. The activity takes place in the middle of the city and attracts people from all different walks of life.</p>
Sydney	Young Men of God Conference	<p>Young Men of God Conference is an organisation which bring young men from all around Australia together to talk about social issues as well as their formation as men. It challenges all the young men in the room to be men of value and integrity while also fostering a community of men who support each other in time of need.</p>



Rockhampton	Movers and Shakers – Leadership Training	<p>Movers and Shakers is facilitated by Dave Jorna from Project Hatch and is one of the longest running youth leadership training initiatives in Australia, beginning in 1991. One of the strengths of the program is its ability to combine theory and practical leadership development with different activities to challenge participants. During the residential five-day program participants are challenged both individually, and in small groups, to work on problem solving, teamwork and adventure based activities.</p> <p>Movers and Shakers provides high quality leadership training in a safe and fun environment for late high school and young adults. It also provides an opportunity for the group to support and network with others in person outside of social media or their immediate circle of friends. Initially an initiative of the Dioceses of Queensland, the program is now nearly fully coordinated by the Toowoomba Diocese and is run at the diocesan owned retreat site in the Toowoomba Diocese.</p> <p>To make Movers and Shakers as successful as possible, a leadership structure has been developed. Each role within the structure has its own responsibility in the lead up to, and during the program. The leadership structure is not there just to complete tasks associated with running the program, but to demonstrate the leadership strategies used in the program. Movers and Shakers also uses small group discussion to explore a Christian approach to leadership. Small Group Facilitators are invited to the program to be an example of that approach through collaboration and mutual support.</p> <p>Movers and Shakers is designed to develop skills and talents of young people to be used in everyday life. To get the most from the experience each applicant will nominate an adult who will act as a Pastoral Supporter. The pastoral supporter will act as referee and will be contacted before the program to discuss how the program will suit the applicant. The pastoral supporter will make contact with the young person and ask them about their expectations before the program and assist them with evaluation when they return home. After the program the coordinator will contact the Pastoral Supporter to discuss how the young person is using the information and experience gained.</p> <p>While current youth resourcing has prevented us taking an active role in the coordination of the event, the Rockhampton Diocese has been a big supporter of the program and have identified it as a crucial part of the ongoing leadership development of our young people. Regularly having many participants attend the program (between 15 and 30) the cost of getting them to the site does come to a substantial amount, and can be a deterrent for some. The diocese does subsidise where it can, and some Colleges are in a position to assist participants as well. The participants are really challenged and changed by the experience, and it helps to identify and cement the leadership values of those looking to take on leadership roles.</p>
Sale	Year 11 Leaders' Day / Year 9 Youth Gathering	<p>The Education Officer Catholic Identity and RE (Secondary) and the Youth Minister from the Catholic Education Office Diocese of Sale, facilitate a training day with volunteer Year 11 Youth Ministry leaders from each of the seven diocesan schools. This day is designed to: develop leadership skills and vision in a Christian context; to encourage student voice in their planning of a retreat day for the Year 9's later in the term; and to help to build a community/network of faith-filled young people as they prepare for the possibility of leadership of their school communities within the diocese. The Year 9 gathering itself also aims to bring the seven schools together and help the students to build relationships; understand their place as part of the diocese; and understand the shared narrative they have as young people with an emerging/established faith in Gippsland. The Year 11 leaders, having collaboratively devised the program for the Year 9 gathering, prayers, liturgy, icebreakers and workshops then go about working with the Year 9's as leaders supporting a dialogical and open space for sharing.</p>

