

KNOW THE DIOCESES IN 2020

ARCHDIOCESE of BRISBANE

When the Colony of Queensland was established in 1859, an equivalent land area (1.853 million sq. Km.) was excised from the Archdiocese of Sydney to form the Diocese of Brisbane. Later, in 1877, Brisbane ceded part of its territory for the establishment of the Vicariate Apostolic of North Queensland for the Aborigines (never formally erected), which in 1887 became the Vicariate Apostolic of Cooktown, and in 1941 the Diocese of Cairns. In 1881 more territory was excised for the establishment of the Diocese of Rockhampton, and in 1929 more again for the establishment of the Diocese of Toowoomba. Brisbane's remaining geographical area is now just 65,000 sq. Km.¹ In 1887, Brisbane was elevated to an Archdiocese and became the Metropolitan See for the Province of Brisbane. It currently has 4 suffragan dioceses: Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba.

Demographics: At the 2016 Census 3,418,905 persons lived in the diocese, with 708,701 self-identified Catholics (20.7% of total). Since the 2001 Census (2,490,004 and 598,237 (24.0%)), the general population has increased by 37.3%, while the Catholic population has increased by 18.5%. Catholic numbers peaked at 715,893 in 2011. In 2016 the diocese ranked 2nd in Australia's Catholic population with the median age of Catholics at 39 years. Australia is the birthplace of 76.5% of all Catholics, including 15,397 indigenous Australians (2.2% of Catholics in the diocese), while the biggest groups born outside Australia are from New Zealand (3.2%), UK excluding Nth Ireland (2.9%), Philippines (2.8%), Italy (1.1%), Other Oceania (1.0%), India (0.7%), and South Africa, Germany and Latin America (each 0.6%).

Bishops: The present archbishop is Mark Coleridge, born in Australia in 1948, ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 1974, and ordained a bishop in 2002. He served as an auxiliary bishop in the Melbourne Archdiocese (2002-06), as the Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn (the 10th bishop of the diocese) from 2006 to 2012, and was installed as the 7th Archbishop of Brisbane in 2012. He is the current President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. He prepared most recent *Quinquennial Report* for his June 2019 *ad limina* visit, but has not made it public. The diocese has one auxiliary bishop, Kenneth Howell, born in Australia in 1958, ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Brisbane in 1983, and ordained a bishop in 2017.

Structure and Governance: A major restructure in 2004 reduced the number of parishes from 112 to 98 and organised them into 13 deaneries.² At end-2020, 87 (89%) of the parishes had a resident full-time priest, while 11 shared a priest. The diocese has a Diocesan Finance Council, a College of Consultors, and a Council of Priests, but no Diocesan Pastoral Council.³ Seven diocesan synods were held between 1863 and 1887, none during the 20th century⁴, and the most recent in 2003, which led to the *Jesus Communion Mission* document adopted as the diocesan vision statement and *Let Your Light Shine* document with its 9 priorities - Jesus, young people, liturgy, welcoming communities, pastoral leadership, small groups, daily life, communication and justice and welfare – as the diocesan pastoral plan. More recently Archbishop Coleridge has stated that Pope Francis's 2013 Papal Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* is to be the diocesan charter: embracing the person and vision of Jesus, building communion with God and others, and engaging in Christ's mission in our world.⁵ A second diocesan assembly, largely aimed at providing information, was held in 2019 to promote diocesan preparations for the 5th Plenary Council.⁶ Diocesan policy is to encourage parish pastoral councils.⁷

Priests and Deacons: At end-2019 there were 237 priests, including the 2 bishops, living in or associated with the diocese: 159 diocesan and 78 religious. At end-2020, 125 priests (including 2 bishops) were active in parish

¹ This area is similar to Lithuania (65,300 sq. Km.). The 2019 CPSL Audit Report states its area to be 77,000 sq.Km.

² Up to 2004 there were 23 pastoral areas and 10 deaneries.

³ Previous archbishops established diocesan pastoral councils in 1974 and 2000. Archbishop Coleridge has not yet established a Pastoral Council, opting to use the Diocesan Finance Council as a quasi diocesan pastoral council: cf. [Case Study 50 - Transcript - Institutional review of Catholic Church authorities - Day 255 - 24022017 \(childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au\)](#) cf. p. 26053

⁴ A non-canonical Diocesan Assembly was held in 1989.

⁵ <https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/about/charter/>

⁶ <https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/life/brisbane-assembly-2019/>

⁷ A *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils* was published by the Archdiocese in 2007. It has not been updated. <https://evangelisationbrisbane.org.au/assets/uploads/ppc-hbook-complete-text.pdf>

ministry: 77 diocesan and 48 religious. Of these priests, 57 were Australian-born (45.6%) and 68 overseas-born (21 in India, 16 in Nigeria,⁸ 8 in Vietnam, 3 each in Philippines and Poland, 2 each in Italy, Indonesia, Lebanon, and South Sudan, and 1 each in Sri Lanka, Netherlands, Timor-Leste, Tanzania, Ukraine, Ecuador, PNG, China, and South America). At end-2019, 41 priests were also ministering as full-time or part-time chaplains in the military, aged care, Catholic colleges, hospitals, universities, and to 12 ethnic communities; 4 worked in priestly formation at the Holy Spirit Seminary; 2 worked outside the diocese; 55 (including 2 bishops) lived in retirement (2 in parishes); 1 was on sabbatical leave; and 9 were either 'not listed elsewhere', 'on leave', or 'not resident in parishes'. A total of 21 clerical religious institutes have ministries in the diocese, but 2 of the recently arrived do not have foundations.⁹ The diocese has a Clergy Support Office, as well as Life and Ministry and Permanent Diaconate programs. There are 17 permanent deacons in the diocese: 9 working in parish ministry, 5 working (full-time and part-time) as chaplains, 1 doing 'supply ministry', 3 living in retirement, and 1 not in a parish.¹⁰ There has been a significant turnover of priests in parish ministry in the last 10 years, mainly due to deaths, retirements, and many overseas-sourced priests returning home. Fourteen Australian-born priests currently in parish ministry were ordained prior to 1980 and will retire over the next 10 years. The diocese currently has 14 diocesan seminarians preparing for priesthood, but as not all are Australian-born, an increasing reliance on priests from overseas can be expected. If only the priests actively ministering in parishes are counted, there are an estimated 5,857 Catholics per priest.

Lay ministers and officials: Thirty lay persons hold senior positions in the diocesan curia: 16 men, 13 women and 1 religious sister. Just 2 lay women minister as pastoral associates in the parishes, and 1 religious sister as a parish pastoral director. Three laypersons also run the Archdiocesan Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre. The presence of religious sisters has decreased by 46% since 2001 (from 829 to 449) and religious brothers by 27% (from 117 to 86). Currently 27 congregations of religious sisters and 3 congregations of religious brothers serve in the diocese. The diocese's Vicar for Religious is a religious sister.

Mass attendance and liturgy: In 2006 an average 70,923 Catholics attended Mass regularly (11.0%). In 2016 the average was 57,539 (8.1%) – down 18.9%. Each priest active in parish ministry currently ministers to an average 471 regular Mass attenders. The diocese has a Liturgy Commission and Liturgy office.

Seminary and Seminarians: Queensland's first regional seminary for 5 dioceses, Pius XII, was established at Banyo in 1939 for the formation of local diocesan priests. From a peak of 134 seminarians in 1967, there were just 5 for all 5 dioceses in 2005. Following the establishment of the Australian Catholic University's McAuley Campus at Banyo in 2003, the new Holy Spirit Regional Seminary, adjacent to ACU, was opened in 2008. Though seminarian numbers have increased, the candidates are older and from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. At end-2019 there was a total of 21 seminarians, including 14 for the Brisbane Archdiocese. There is a diocesan vocation's director.

Pastoral ministries: The *Let Your Light Shine* diocesan pastoral plan adopted after the 2003 Diocesan Synod has not been updated or promoted. Evangelisation Brisbane supports parishes and deaneries with adult, youth and children's faith and sacramental formation, pastoral council development, ecumenism and inter-faith relations, multicultural and Aboriginal ministries, and social justice and ecology. The diocese's long-standing Justice and Peace Commission also focuses on Catholic social action, with recent priorities being solidarity with the Aboriginal community in Cherbourg, continuing support for people seeking asylum, action on climate change, and support for the people of West Papua.¹¹ Other diocesan entities engaged in pastoral ministry include: Catholic Psychiatric Care, Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care, Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre, Net Ministries (focused on youth), and Centacare. Centacare's pastoral ministries include family and relationship services, indigenous education and formation, supporting seafarers, the mentally ill and released prisoners, and providing spiritual care to the sick and prisoners. There are also a large number of other organisations which are pastorally oriented, such as St Vincent de Paul Society, Legion of Mary, Emmanuel Community, menALIVE, Brisbane Courage, and Cursillo.

⁸ In 2006 an agreement was signed between the Archdiocese of Brisbane and the Nigerian Diocese of Umuahia, under which Umuahia would supply priests for ministry in Brisbane, as well as seminarians who would be educated in the Brisbane seminary: [Pilgrim visit to Africa | The Catholic Leader](#). By 2020 at least 9 Nigerian priests had returned to their home diocese.

⁹ These are the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS) and the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), both sending priests from Kerala in Southern India.

¹⁰ At end-2020 two other deacons (Carmelite and OLSC Ordinariate) were working in parishes.

¹¹ [cipc-annual-report-2020.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Ecumenism and Inter-Faith: The diocese has a Commission for Ecumenism & Inter-religious Relations which promotes meetings with members of the Jewish and Muslim communities, provides advice and resources for parishes, supports the Queensland Forum for Jews, Christians and Muslims, works with the Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue at Griffith University, and publishes the *Faiths Connect* quarterly e-newsletter. The Archdiocese is a founding member of the Queensland Faith Communities Council established in 2017.¹²

Plenary Council: A total of 17,373 persons – 1890 as individuals (35% women and 28% men) and 15,483 in 379 groups – responded to the Plenary Council’s Listening and Dialogue phase. They identified the top 10 priority issues for the Council as: greater Inclusion of all; fighting for human rights issues; greater focus on Jesus Christ; outreach to youth; ending mandatory celibacy and allowing priests to marry; a greater role for women; ordination of women; teaching authentic Catholic faith; greater trust, faith and hope in God; and ending clericalism. Five persons were selected for the Discernment and Writing Groups (1 bishop, 1 religious brother and 3 lay persons), and 11 persons have been called to participate in the Council sessions: 2 bishops, vicar general, 3 episcopal vicars, 1 seminary rector, and 4 lay persons (Ms Toni Janke, Ms Patricia Kennedy, Dr Meave Heaney, and Mr Thomas Warren).

Education: At end-2019 the Archdiocese had 169 Catholic schools: 105 primary, 42 secondary and 22 combined. They educate 96,234 students: 51,022 primary and 45,212 secondary. Of all Catholic children of school age, less than half (48.6%) attend Catholic primary schools and Catholic secondary schools (47.6%).¹³ Teaching staff (part and full-time) in all schools totalled 7,513, and among the 184 school principals, only 65 were women (35.3%). The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), representing the Queensland bishops, religious institute leaders, parents, diocesan councils and boards, and other incorporated bodies with schools, is the peak body for Catholic education in Queensland. Its strategic role is to set state-wide policy on funding and advocacy with governments and other peak bodies at state and national levels, as well as on research, industrial relations, public relations and communications. Its current *Strategic Plan* covers 2021-2023. Catholic systemic schools receive federal recurrent funding based on the school’s socio-economic score (SES) determined according to the school’s size, location and student population profile. The grants received from the Australian and state government are distributed to the systemic primary and secondary schools in each diocese. Total Commonwealth and State recurrent grant income received by Brisbane’s systemic schools in 2019 was \$858.5 million, with additional capital grants of \$17.3 million.¹⁴ The Archdiocese also has its own Catholic Education Council and Catholic Education Office. The Diocese Development Fund, with assets of \$1.36 billion provides loans and banking facilities to Catholic entities in the diocese, with more than half (55%) of its loans of \$958 million going to educational ministries.¹⁵ The Australian Catholic University has its McAuley Campus at Banyo providing degree courses in health sciences, education and theology.¹⁶ There are also 2 residential colleges, St Leo’s and Duchesne, within the University of Queensland.

Health and Welfare Services: Centacare is the diocese’s main social welfare organisation employing over 3000 staff in 214 sites and supporting 120,000 persons every year. With a budget of almost \$190 million - including government grants of \$83.4 million in 2019¹⁷ - it provides a range of services for children, indigenous persons, communities, families and those in relationships, prisoners, seafarers, the physically and mentally sick, elderly and disabled persons, carers, homeless persons, and victims and instigators of domestic abuse and violence.¹⁸ Other organisations, including Bridgeworks, Holy Cross, St Vincent de Paul, Mercy, OZCARE, Shamrock Court and St Anthony’s Housing, also supply a range of services. Eleven Catholic hospitals operate in the diocese under the auspices of the Canossian Sisters, Mercy Partners and St Vincent’s Health. There are also 2 hospices. As in many other dioceses, the proportion of Catholics in Brisbane aged 65 years and over has increased significantly, from 11.1% in 1996 to 15.8% in 2016. The response to this change has been the construction of many additional aged accommodation facilities: from 12 in 2011 to 103 in 2019. The major suppliers of these

¹² [Interfaith Understanding - Queensland Faith Communities Council \(qfcc.org.au\)](http://qfcc.org.au)

¹³ [Brisbane 2016-Diocesan-Profile.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](http://catholic.org.au) Cf. Table 5

¹⁴ [BCE-Financial-statement-2018-2019.pdf \(bne.catholic.edu.au\)](http://bne.catholic.edu.au)

¹⁵ [Flipbook \(brisbaneadf.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com\)](http://amazonaws.com)

¹⁶ [Australian Catholic University \(ACU\)](http://acu.edu.au)

¹⁷ [62a80fd2-38af-e811-a961-000d3ad24182-b19bd61b-92e5-45c3-b706-b85364f251b6-Financial Report-220875a7-2242-ea11-a812-000d3ad1cc03-Centacare FS 2019 Signed.pdf \(windows.net\)](http://windows.net)

¹⁸ [c3014_annual-review-2018-19-v3.pdf \(centacarebrisbane.net.au\)](http://centacarebrisbane.net.au)

facilities are Centacare, Mercy Aged Care Services, OZCARE, Southern Cross Care, and St Vincent's Care Services.

Finances: The diocese does not publish an annual financial report. It is registered with the Charities Commission (ACNC) as The Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane together with 12 other related entities, including Centacare, the Priests Foundation, Aspleycare, and Holy Cross Funerals. As a 'Basic Religious Charity' the diocese is not required to answer the financial questions in the Annual Information Statement, submit annual financial reports, or comply with any Governance Standards. However, the Archdiocese has published a financial report for Catholic Education (2019), Centacare (2019), the Priest's Foundation (2019), Aspleycare (2018), Holy Cross Funerals (2019), and De Paul Villa Aged Care (2019).

Communications: The diocese has a Communications Office, a website upgraded in 2013, and an official print and online weekly newspaper *The Catholic Leader* which informs from a Catholic perspective and connects the Catholic community. It also publishes a regularly updated *The Good News* e-newsletter, and maintains a Facebook page and Twitter account. It does not publish a diocesan annual report.

Safeguarding and Child Sexual Abuse: The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found the Archdiocese of Brisbane to be a significant setting for clerical abuse. Its June 2017 statistical report recorded the diocese as having the 6th highest percentage of alleged priest abusers (9.3%), taking into account the duration of ministry, of all dioceses.¹⁹ Its June 2017 *Analysis of Claims* report notes 152 claims made against the Diocese with 88 payments made for a total of \$3.01 million (average \$34,000 per payment).²⁰ The Brisbane Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy also had 49 claims made against it, including 27 where a priest in the diocese was the alleged perpetrator. It made 41 payments totalling \$1.23 million (average \$30,000 per payment).²¹ The diocese has a policy of zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and professional standards to safeguard all who interact with its ministries & services, especially children & adults at risk. It adheres to the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission and has adopted the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) developed by Catholic Professional Standards Limited and endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and Catholic Religious Australia. They took effect in 2019. During 2021 the diocese will transition from the *Towards Healing* protocol to the new National *National Response Protocol*.²² A 2019 Audit Report on the Archdiocese's implementation of the NCSS found a high level of compliance (84% of 104 indicators) and acceptance of 18 recommendations.²³ The diocese has an Office for Safeguarding Services with a Safeguarding Resource Hub, and with 526 other diocesan entities, is a registered participant in the National Redress Scheme as part of Australian Catholic Redress Limited.²⁴

¹⁹ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Proportion of Priests and non-ordained religious subject to a claim of child sexual abuse, 1950-2020*, June 2017 (revised version) :

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/CARC.0050.025.0283.pdf>

²⁰ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions*, June 2017. <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/CARC.0050.025.0001.pdf>

²¹ *Ibidem*. p. 152

²² [file \(catholic.org.au\)](https://www.catholic.org.au)

²³ [brisbane-cpsl-final-audit-report-december-2019.pdf \(brisbanecatholic.org.au\)](https://www.catholic.org.au/brisbane-cpsl-final-audit-report-december-2019.pdf)

²⁴ https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/institutions/search?search_api_views_fulltext=catholic+diocese+of+brisbane

Table 1: Statistical data for Brisbane Archdiocese: 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2019

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2019	Change 2001 to 2019
Total Population (at Census)	2,490,004	2,773,052	3,100,276	3,418,905		+37.3%*
Catholic Population (at Census) (% of Total)	598,237 (24.0%)	645,435 (23.3%)	715,893 (23.0%)	708,701 (20.7%)		+110,464* +18.5%*
Number of Parishes	112	104	103	99	98	-12.5%
Diocesan priests	174	155	157	165	159	-8.6%
Religious priests	92	93	82	108	78	-15.2%
Total Priests	266	248	239	273	237	-10.9%
Priests in active parish ministry			142		121	-14.8%**
- Australian-born			93		53	-43.0%**
- Overseas-born			49		68	+38.8%**
Parishes with full-time resident priest			83		87	+4.8%**
Catholics per priest in parish ministry			5,041		5,857 (est.)	
Permanent deacons	1	8	15	14	17	+1600%
Religious Sisters	829	718	611	501	449	-45.8%
Religious Brothers	117	125	124	103	86	-26.5%
Diocesan Seminarians	11	6	15	12	14	+27.3%
Diocesan Pastoral Council in operation		No	Yes/No	No	No	
Last Diocesan Synod (Diocesan Assembly)	1887 (1989)	2003	2003	2003	2003 (2019)	
Diocesan Pastoral Plan in place		Yes	Yes			
Catholic schools	149	157	159	164	169	+13.4%
Students in Catholic schools	65,306	74,867	85,996	94,307	96,234	+47.4%
Hospitals	9	6	11	11	11	+18.2%
Aged Care Accommodation Facilities	12	72	63	103	103	+816.7%
Regular Mass attenders (% of all Catholics)	n/a	70,923 (11.0%)	65,952 (9.2%)	57,539 (8.1%)		-13,384*** (-18.9%)***

Sources: *Official Catholic Directory* for 2002/03, 2007/08, 2012/13, 2016/17, 2020/21. Data is accurate at 31 December of the previous year, namely, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2019; ACBC, PRO, *Mass Attendance in Australia*, September 2008; ACBC, PRO, *Mass Attendance in Australia: A Critical Moment*, December 2013; ACBC, NCPR, 2016 *National Count of Attendance – National Summary*, Pastoral Research Online, Edition 44, April 2019. Notes: * Change from 2001-2016; ** 2011 to 2019; *** Change from 2006 to 2016

Sources:

Brisbane diocesan website: <http://www.brisbanecatholic.org.au>

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ACBC, NCPR, *Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue A Report to the Diocese of Brisbane*, Canberra, January 2020.

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Diocesan-Final-Report-Phase-1-Brisbane.pdf>

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Proportion of Priests and non-ordained religious subject to a claim of child sexual abuse, 1950-2020*, June 2017 (revised version) :

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/CARC.0050.025.0283.pdf>

Charities Commission: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/topic-guides/basic-religious-charities>

2020 Annual Progress Report on Implementation of the Recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal

Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: [FINAL Catholic Church Annual Report to NOCS.pdf - Google Drive](https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/topic-guides/basic-religious-charities)

Text and table prepared by Peter J Wilkinson (January 2021)

Note: This draft profile of the Archdiocese was be forwarded to Archbishop Coleridge with an invitation to correct any errors and to provide advice on any recent changes made or future plans being contemplated in relation to the recommendations in *The Light from the Southern Cross*. The Archbishop did not respond to the invitation.