

KNOW THE DIOCESES IN 2020

DIOCESE of PORT PIRIE

Originally excised from the Diocese of Adelaide, it was established as the Diocese of Port Augusta in 1887, then renamed the Diocese of Port Pirie in 1951. Its geographical area is 980,000 square kilometres and includes the southern part of the Northern Territory including Uluru¹. The diocese is one of three dioceses – with Adelaide and Darwin - constituting the ecclesiastical Province of Adelaide and is a suffragan diocese of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Adelaide.

Demographics: At the 2016 Census 166,871 persons lived in the diocese, with 27,069 self-identified Catholics (16.2% of total). Since the 2001 Census (166,713 and 28,653 (17.2%)), the general population has decreased slightly (0.1%) and Catholic numbers have decreased by 5.5% (-1,584). In 2016 the diocese has the 2nd lowest number of Catholics and the 2nd lowest percentage of Catholics. The median age of Catholics is 43 years. Australia is the birthplace of 83.9% of Catholics, including 875 Indigenous Australians (3.2% of all Catholics), while the birth countries of the biggest groups of overseas-born Catholics are the UK (2.9%), Philippines (2.9%), and Italy (1.6%). The diocese has the least number of Aboriginal Catholics of all dioceses.²

Bishop: The new Bishop, Karol Kulczycki SDS, was born in Poland in 1966, ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Saviour (Salvatorian Fathers) in 1994, and ordained bishop in Poland in September 2020. He took possession of the Diocese of Port Pirie as its 12th bishop on 28 October 2020. He is an Australian citizen and previously ministered for 21 years in the dioceses of Perth, Bunbury and Geraldton.

Structures and governance: At end-2020 the diocese had 14 parishes organised into 4 regions. With Darwin it had the second lowest number of parishes of all territorial dioceses. All parishes have a full-time resident priest. The diocese has a Council of priests, Diocesan Financial Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Council of Consultors, and a Liturgical Commission. Two diocesan synods have been convened, the first in 1890 and the second in the 1950s. Diocesan Assemblies have been held annually for over 20 years with the most recent in March 2021.³ The diocese has a *Strategic Plan for 2020-22*.

Priests and Deacons: At end-2020 the diocese had 21 priests residing in and 1 working outside the diocese: 19 diocesan and 3 religious, including the Bishop.⁴ At 29 August 2021 16 priests were ministering in the parishes, including the Bishop. Ten were Australian-born and 6 overseas-born (4 in the Philippines and 1 each in Tanzania and Poland). Four retired priests reside in the parishes. There has been a significant turnover of priests in the past 10 years and, with 4 Australian-born diocesan priests ordained prior to 1980 due to retire shortly, the diocese will become increasingly reliant on overseas-born priests. There are two seminarians in formation and 2 permanent deacons minister in the parishes.

¹ The area is almost as large as Egypt (1,002,450 sq. Km).

² ACBC, NCPR, *Diocesan Social Profile, Based on 2016 Australian Census: Diocese of Port Pirie*, Canberra, September 2019. [Port-Pirie_2016-Diocesan-Profile.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#), Table 4

³ [2021 Poster.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#)

⁴ The data table in the 2020/21 *Official Directory* gives a figure of 27 diocesan priests. However, including the new bishop, 2 are religious. The Diocese of Port Pirie did not respond to the *Governance in Australia Survey 2019*.

Lay ministers and officials: Seven lay women and 2 lay men hold responsible positions in the diocesan curia and a religious sister is the Vicar for Religious. Thirteen religious sisters from 5 congregations minister in the diocese, with 7 working as pastoral associates. The St Anne Sisters, who arrived from India in 2014, minister specifically for the welfare of the Aboriginal communities in Port August and Ceduna. Four lay women also work as pastoral associates in parishes.

Mass attendance: In 2006 an average 3,760 Catholics attended Mass regularly (13.8%). In 2016 the average was 2,857 (10.6%) - down 24.0%. Each priest in parish ministry serves an average 150 regular Mass attenders.

Seminary and Seminarians: The diocese has usually sent its seminarians to the seminaries in Sydney and Melbourne for formation. At end-2020 the diocese had 2 seminarians.

Pastoral ministries: A Diocesan Pastoral Council was established in 2010, reconfigured in 2013, and re-established by the new bishop in 2021. Its *2000-2010 Pastoral Goals* were followed by a *Pastoral Plan for 2014-2017*, and by a *Strategic Plan for 2020-2022*. This Plan provides a vision and practical framework for its ministries and agencies, with 9 stated goals and strategic initiatives for leadership and direction.⁵ Parish pastoral councils are encouraged. While most pastoral ministry is carried out in the parishes, there are special diocesan ministries for Aboriginal peoples, aged persons, prisoners, the clergy, and youth and young adults.

Plenary Council: A total of 367 persons from the diocese – 38 as individuals (61% women) and 329 in 20 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 (especially for persons with a disability); better faith formation; greater involvement of the laity; ending mandatory celibacy and allowing priests to marry; ending LGBTIQ discrimination; modernising church teachings; care for neighbour; ordination of women; greater role for women; and better teachers in Catholic schools. No one from Port Pirie was selected for the Discernment and Writing Groups, but 4 persons have been called to participate in the Council sessions: the Bishop and Vicar General and 2 lay persons (Mr David Green and Mrs Nicola Mardon).

Education: At end-2021 the diocese had 13 Catholic schools: 8 primary and 5 combined. They were educating 3,886 students: 2450 primary and 1436 secondary. Of all Catholic children of school age in 2016, 53.0% attended Catholic primary schools and 57.1% attended Catholic secondary schools.⁶ Five of the school principals (38.5%) are women. The SA Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) oversees 101 Catholic schools across the Adelaide and Port Pirie Dioceses delivering high quality education to approximately 17% of all school students in SA. Catholic Education SA (CESA) is the executive and policy implementation arm of SACCS and its Standing Committees. Government, Catholic and Independent education sectors collaborate closely. The SACCS *2018 Annual Report* shows a decrease in enrolments in all SA Catholic schools from 2014 onwards and in Port Pirie schools from 2005, particularly in primary schools.⁷ However, Indigenous enrolments in

⁵ [CDPP - Strategic Plan A4.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#)

⁶ ACBC, NCPR, *Diocesan Social Profile, Based on 2016 Australian Census: Diocese of Port Pirie*, Canberra, September 2019. <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Port-Pirie-2016-Diocesan-Profile.pdf>

⁷ [SACCS Annual Report 2018 - Final v1.2 lowres.pdf \(cesa.catholic.edu.au\)](#), pp. 65-69

SA Catholic schools have increased significantly over the last 30 years. The *2018 SACCS Financial Report* shows income of \$505.2 million for both Adelaide and Port Pirie dioceses (no break-up) with \$497.9 million coming from government grants. There is no Catholic tertiary institution in the diocese.

Health and welfare Services: The principal diocesan agency providing social and welfare services is Centacare Catholic Country SA with 6 offices in dispersed locations providing a range of services across much of SA. A core part of its work is engaging and sustaining the participation and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. St Vincent de Paul also provides services, and Yourtown assists young people who are marginalised. There is a natural family planning centre in Port Lincoln. The percentage of Catholics aged 65 years and over has increased significantly, from 11.6% in 1996 to 19.7% in 2016. There are now 2 Catholic nursing homes, 2 hostels and residential aged care accommodation offered at 3 locations.

Finances: The diocese is registered with the Charities Commission (ACNC) as The Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie Inc. The annual financial report of the diocese to 30 June 2020, published on the ACNC website, shows total comprehensive income of \$2.04 million, and net assets of \$9.0 million. Included in liabilities is \$672,000 for 'possible redress and civil claims'.⁸ The diocese has its own Catholic Development Fund (CDF) which provides loans to Catholic schools, parishes and other diocesan entities. The *CDF 2020 Annual Report* shows total assets of \$61.2 million, net assets of \$5.3 million and a profit of \$995,000.⁹

Communications: The diocese has an official website and publishes a bi-monthly magazine titled *The Witness*. Each edition contains a message from the bishop and mostly local news. The latest edition on the website is August 2021.

Safeguarding and Child Sexual Abuse: The Royal Commission's data report shows the Diocese of Port Pirie as a significant setting of abuse. In its June 2017 *Analysis of Claims* it records the diocese as having the third highest overall proportions of priests (14.1%) who were alleged perpetrators, taking into account the duration of ministry.¹⁰ To June 2017 the diocese had made 12 payments for claims totalling \$459,363 (average of \$38,280 per payment). Since the Royal Commission the diocese has made a firm commitment to the care, wellbeing and protection of its children and young people and has established a Diocesan Child Protection Council which works closely with the Child Protection Unit, Professional Standards Office, and Screening and Verification Authority (SAVA) of the Adelaide Archdiocese. It also has its own Child Safeguarding Policy.¹¹ Port Pirie Diocese, with 133 other diocesan entities, is a registered participant in the National Redress Scheme as part of Australian Catholic Redress Limited.

Following recommendations of the Royal Commission, the SA Parliament has included ministers of religion as 'mandatory notifiers' from December 2017 under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. In May 2020 the *Statutes Amendment (Mandatory*

⁸ [signed 2020 Chancery financials with audit report 21102020142457-0001.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#) This report is called an 'audited Chancery account'. Four are published on the diocesan website.

⁹ [signed CDF financials and audit report DOC200720.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#) .

¹⁰ 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, pp. 16, 31 :

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/CARC.0050.025.0001.pdf>

¹¹ [CDPP Child Safeguarding Policy.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](#)

Reporting) Bill 2020 (SA) was introduced which proposes to further amend the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* requiring ministers of religion to notify the civil authorities if they acquire knowledge of abuse through a religious confession.¹²

Table 1: Statistical data for Port Pirie Diocese: 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2020 and 2021

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2020	2021 at 29 August	Change 2001- 2020
Total Population (at Census)	166,713	162,530	166,707	166,871			-0.1%*
Catholic Population (at Census) (%)	28,653 (17.2%)	27,174 (16.4%)	28,056 (16.8%)	27,069 (16.2%)			-1,584* -5.5%*
Number of Parishes	23	23	19	16	14	14	-39.1%
Diocesan priests	27 (75.0%)	26 96.3%)	23 (95.8%)	28 (93.3%)	19 (86.4%)	17 (85%)	-18.5%
Religious priests	9 (25.%)	1 (3.%)	1 (4.2%)	2 (6.7%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (15%)	-66.7%
Total Priests	36	27	24	30	22	20	-44.4%
Priests in active parish ministry			23		17	16	-30.4%**
- Australian-born			18 (78.3%)		11 (64.7%)	10 (62.5%)	-44.4%**
- Overseas-born			5 (21.7%)		6 (35.3%)	6 (37.5%)	+20%**
Parishes with full-time resident priest			11 57.9%)		6 (42.9%)	6 (42.9%)	-45.5%
Catholics per priest in parish ministry			1,220		1,691 (est.)		
Permanent deacons	0	0	1	1	2	2	+200%
Religious Sisters	18	24	18	16	12	12	-33.3%
Religious Brothers	1	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
Diocesan Seminarians	0	0	1	1	2	2	+200%
Diocesan Pastoral Council in operation		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Last Diocesan Synod (Diocesan Assembly)	1950s? (2001)	1950s (2006)	1950s (2012)	1950s (2016)	1950s (2019)	1950s (2021)	
Diocesan Pastoral Plan in place			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Catholic schools	15	15	13	13	13	13	-13.3%
Students in Catholic schools	4,432	4,557	4,360	3,849	3,886	3,886	-12.3%
Hospitals	0	0	0	0	0	0	No change
Nursing & Convalescence Homes	0	3	3	3	3	3	+300%
Regular Mass attendees (% of all Catholics)		3,760 (13.8%)	2861 (10.2%)	2,857 (10.6%)			-903*** 24.0%***

Source: *Official Catholic Directory* for 2002/03, 2007/08, 2012/13, 2016/17, 2020/21 and 2021/22. Data is accurate at 31 December of the previous year, namely, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2019; ACBC, PRO, *Mass Attendance in Australia – A Critical Moment*, 2013; ACBC, NCPR, *2016 National Count of Attendance- National Summary*, 2019. Notes: * 2001-2016, ** 2011-2021, *** 2006-2016

Sources:

Port Pirie Diocese website: <http://www.pp.catholic.org.au/>

Diocesan financial reports:

[http://www.pp.catholic.org.au/files/d/9379/CHANCERY%202019%20Audit%20%20%20%20%20%20%2020200123_09014216.pdf](http://www.pp.catholic.org.au/files/d/9379/CHANCERY%202019%20Audit%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%2020200123_09014216.pdf)

The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia, 2021/22 and 2010/11 (data is accurate at 31 December of previous year)

ACBC, NCPR, *Diocesan Social Profile, Based on 2016 Australian Census: Diocese of Port Pirie*, Canberra, September 2019. https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Port-Pirie_2016-Diocesan-Profile.pdf

¹² SA Parliament, <https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Legislative-Council/Index-to-Bills-and-Acts>

Mass attendance: <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Pastoral-Research-Online-Edition-44-April-2019.pdf#page=2>

ACBC, NCPR, *Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue A Report to the Diocese of Port Pirie*, Canberra, January 2020. https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Diocesan-Final-Report-Phase-1-Port_Pirie.pdf

Plenary Council: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/?s=delegates>

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)

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

Broken Rites: <http://brokenrites.org.au/drupal/search/node/broome>

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

Note: This draft profile of the diocese was forwarded to Bishop Kulczycki SDS with an invitation to correct any errors and to advise of any recent changes made or future plans being contemplated in relation to the recommendations in *The Light from the Southern Cross*. In his response he suggested some changes and these have been incorporated in the text and table.