

Diocesan Pastoral Councils:

An Australian historical study

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Archival repositories

AAA	Archdiocese of Adelaide Archives
ABA	Archdiocese of Brisbane Archives
ACBCA	Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Archives
ACGA	Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn Archives
AHA	Archdiocese of Hobart Archives
APA	Archdiocese of Perth Archives
DMNA	Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Archives
DPPA	Diocese of Port Pirie Archives
DSA	Diocese of Sale Archives
DTA	Diocese of Toowoomba Archives
RDA	Rockhampton Diocesan Archives
SAA	Sydney Archdiocesan Archives
TDA	Townsville Diocesan Archives

1.0 Term of Reference

This research project was commissioned by the National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) and conducted between 10 August 2021 and 13 September 2021. The NCPR expressed:

The aim of our overall project is to collate information for the Bishops Conference about the experiences of diocesan and parish pastoral councils in Australia, with a view to assisting them in developing models that can be adapted to local circumstances.¹

The specific project's scope was to develop a Literature Review focusing on historical aspects, with two broad main areas:

1. **Diocesan Pastoral Councils (DPCs)** (*this is the main area of investigation*)— Their historical development in Australian dioceses, models or structures for pastoral planning, changes over the years, consultation and participation of clergy and laity, and approaches to co-responsibility best suited to local needs and circumstances.
2. **Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs)** (*this has a slightly lessor focus*)- their development in Australian parishes and dioceses, their role, forms/ models/structures, membership, participation of the laity, changes over the years, etc.²

This report, therefore, presents a historical overview of the formation and early development of Diocesan Pastoral Councils (DPCs) and relationships, where they existed, with regional (deanery) pastoral councils (RPCs) and parish pastoral councils (PPCs).

¹ National Centre for Pastoral Research. Email letter from Dr Trudy Dantis to the author, 4 August 2021.

² *Loc. cit.* The NCPR gave approval to proceed on the project on 10 August 2021.

2.0 Introduction

Given the tight timeframe for research and writing and the 'lockdown' arrangements impacting many dioceses along the eastern seaboard of Australia, the usual approach of consulting archdiocesan and diocesan archives, the Australian Catholic Documentation Centre of the Veech Library³ and salient manuscripts and secondary publications at State Libraries and the National Library of Australia (excepting database research) was not possible.

However, the author is grateful for co-operation, at short notice, from many people, especially diocesan archivists, clergy and lay people across Australia's Catholic dioceses (see Acknowledgments section). As a result, considerable materials, predominantly primary sources, have been provided. Within the constraints of time and space, those documents have been synthesised within this report. It was not possible to examine pastoral councils in each diocese in detail, however, the report aims to be as inclusive as possible, within the parameters mentioned above.

A number of people, clergy and lay people, agreed at short notice to read *several* draft sections of this report. Their helpful comments are appreciated. It was not possible, due to time constraints, to ask any individual to read the full report.

Any errors in this report are unintentional and rest with the author.

³ For example, the extensive collection of Archbishop Eris O'Brien.

3.0 Literature Review

This ‘desk-based’ literature review did not identify a scholarly historical study of Diocesan Pastoral Councils (DPCs) in Australia. This was also the advice received from a highly experienced researcher in the area of pastoral research.⁴ As a result, much of the history of Australian DPCs appears to have been forgotten or overlooked, including their significant achievements within the church and representations made to secular bodies, including parliaments, on family and ethical issues. In 2000, for example, when the (then) Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby established an ‘Archbishop’s Pastoral Council’, he said at the first council meeting:

Archbishop Rush came back from Vatican 11 imbued with the spirit of Vatican 11 and he saw parish pastoral councils as a visible expression of this spirit. We have had gatherings of parish pastoral councils but not broad-based forum of advice that would allow for broad representation by the members of the Archdiocese to discuss issues and give advice to the Archbishop.⁵

As the Brisbane Case Study (Section 6.7) will outline, the second half of Archbishop’s Bathersby’s statement was a major error, given his predecessor, Archbishop Francis Rush had established a Diocesan Pastoral Council in the Archdiocese of Brisbane in 1974. That council played a major role in the lives of Brisbane Catholics and intersected with and lead parish pastoral councils (PPCs) and in making representation to state and federal governments on issues including abortion, unemployment, family life, and pornographic films.⁶

In 2017, several metropolitan archbishops gave evidence to *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* that DPCs had ‘run out of steam’, were not ‘successful’, or ‘quite dysfunctional’.⁷ The *Bishops’ Response to The Light*

⁴ Telephone interview with Dr Bob Dixon, 1 September 2021.

⁵ Minutes, Archbishop’s Pastoral Council, 18 November 2009, Archdiocese of Brisbane Archives (hereafter ABA).

⁶ Analysis of the Minutes, Brisbane Diocesan Pastoral Council, 1974-1979, ABA.

⁷ *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse*. Case Study 50: Institutional Review of Child Sexual Authorities.

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/case-studies/case-study-50-institutional-review-catholic-church-authorities>

from the *Southern Cross* (n.d.) [ca 2021] acknowledged the existence of some DPCs, though did not critique *why* such councils had ceased to exist.

It is noted in several Australian Dioceses that had diocesan pastoral councils for a time, these bodies withered in energy, membership and function after some years.⁸

Australian publications concerning pastoral councils have usually focused on best practice models at a *parish* level. The earliest identified publications were by Ballarat Bishop, Ronald Mulkearns (1971);⁹ Sydney Bishop, John Heaps (1993),¹⁰ and Sr Cecilia Anning and Ellen Mallon of Brisbane (1994; 1997, 2007).¹¹ Of these documents, Sr Cecilia's writings are best known, not only in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, but across a number of dioceses.¹² Another early document 'An ideal Parish Council' was developed by the Adelaide DPC and widely distributed across that archdiocese.¹³

Significantly, no publication pertaining to the formation, structure or operating basis for diocesan pastoral councils could be located. Several bishops noted that when setting up a DPC they were effectively entering unfamiliar territory. In the absence of any guidelines or 'precedent' to establish DPCs, Australian dioceses sometimes looked to a limited number of international resources. In 1970 the Diocese of Rockhampton, for example, drew upon 'helpful' articles by Fr John Fitzsimons, which explained the inauguration of a DPC at Liverpool (England),¹⁴ and a lecture by Fr Michael Fannon, which had been reprinted in the *Catholic*

⁸ *Bishops' Response to Light from the Southern Cross* (n.d. ca 2021)

⁹ Bishop R.A. Mulkearns, *Our Local Parish* (Ballarat, May 1971). [This publication does not appear in the *Trove* database, suggesting that a copy was not deposited with the National Library of Australia].

¹⁰ Bishop John Heaps, *Parish Pastoral Councils: co-responsibility and leadership* (Newtown, Sydney, 1993).

¹¹ Ellen Mallon & Cecilia Anning, *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils*, Second Edition, (Brisbane, 1999).

¹² Sr Cecilia provided support to the Diocese of Sale, for example.

¹³ Minutes of the Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 30 June 1968, p 2. Archdiocese of Adelaide Archives (hereafter AAA).

¹⁴ *Clergy Review*, September 1968.

Herald.¹⁵ In the mid-1970s the Archdiocese of Brisbane encouraged clergy and laity to read William Rademacher's 1972 study entitled 'The Parish Council'.¹⁶

Not only was there no guidance as to how to establish a DPC in Australia, but there has also been little scholarly analysis of the historic experiences. Some exceptions include a series of articles published in this country's leading Catholic academic publication, *Australasian Catholic Record*, including Sr Patricia Egan's account of pastoral planning in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese¹⁷, and a critical reflection by leading South Australian layman, David Shinnick that focused on parish pastoral councils.¹⁸ The eminent Queensland historian Fr T.P. Boland, briefly examined the Rockhampton DPC under the stewardship of Bishop Bernard ('Bernie') Wallace.¹⁹ More recently, Terry Fewtrell has provided good coverage of Australia's first DPC, Canberra Goulburn.²⁰

Unpublished documents consulted for this research study included Dr Sergio Giudici's 1987 account of the foundation of the Hobart DPC,²¹ Bishop Leonard Faulkner's 1976 reflection on the Townsville DPC,²² 'foundations' of an

¹⁵ *Catholic Herald*, 4 May 1968. Fr Fannon's lecture was reprinted in 'Towards a Pastoral Council', MSS, Diocese of Rockhampton, January 1970.

¹⁶ William J. Rademacher, 'The Parish Council', *The Priest*, vol 27. No. 12, January 1972, pp: 1-8. This publication was circulated in Brisbane in 1974.

¹⁷ Sr Patricia Egan, 'Pastoral Planning in Maitland-Newcastle Diocese: Signs of Life and Hope', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no. 4, 1996, p. 422-432.

¹⁸ David Shinnick, 'Parish Pastoral Councils: What of their future', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no 4, 1996, p. 439.

¹⁹ Fr T.P. Boland, *Bishop Bernard Wallace - Bishop of Rockhampton 1970-1990*. (Rockhampton: Diocesan Catholic Education Office, 2008. See Chapter 16 on Diocesan Pastoral Council.)

²⁰ Terry Fewtrell, 'Diocesan Pastoral Councils: A Canberra-Goulburn review and a brief national overview: Background Paper', April 2021, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, <https://www.concernedcatholicscanberra.org/new-page-5>

²¹ Dr Sergio Giudici, 'Talk', ca. 1987, 8 pages, Archdiocese of Hobart Archives (hereafter AHA).

²² Bishop Leonard Faulkner to Fr Adrian Noonan, Cleve, South Australia, 'Some reflections on Diocesan Pastoral Council – Toowoomba', 12 April 1976, Townsville Diocesan Archives

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council in Perth (n.d.)²³ and a 1992 brief summary of the Rockhampton Diocesan Council, 1971-1991.²⁴ In commenting on the Townsville experience, Bishop Faulkner emphasised the essential linkages between pastoral councils at a parish and diocesan level.

As a Bishop, I find the Diocesan Pastoral Council well worthwhile, especially with regard to building up a spirit of family within the Diocese. I do feel that the Diocesan Pastoral Council would be more effective if there were effective and working Pastoral Councils in each parish. However, those very good Parish Pastoral Councils, through their delegates do have a big influence on the whole Diocesan Council, and certainly they contribute a lot to us all.²⁵

In terms of this report, as the literature review demonstrates, there has been little scholarship analysing the role and history of DPCs across Australia. As one recent report noted:

Some [Australian] church leaders regard the history of diocesan pastoral councils to have been one of failure. These views should be examined to see what evidence exists for such a conclusion.²⁶

However, there are examples of dioceses creating quality documents that explain the role and purpose of pastoral councils. The Diocese of Maitland and Newcastle has paved the way,²⁷ while more recently, the Diocese of Parramatta, as part of a long overdue pastoral renewal, has published a *Handbook* that covers pastoral councils at deanery and diocesan levels.²⁸ There may well be similar publications in other dioceses, but no others were brought to the author attention.

(hereafter TDA).

²³ 'History [crossed out] Foundations of an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council in Perth', n.d. Archdiocese of Perth Archives (hereafter APA).

²⁴ "Brief History of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Rockhampton, MSS, 4-pages, ca 1992, Rockhampton Diocesan Archives (RDA).

²⁵ Faulkner to Noonan, 1976, p. 3.

²⁶ *Light from the Southern Cross*, p. 104.

²⁷ Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, *Handbook of Background Information for Diocesan Pastoral Council Members*, June 1999, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Archives (hereafter DMNA).

²⁸ Diocese of Parramatta, *Handbook: Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils* (Parramatta, 2020).

In a 2020 study, only 10 Australian dioceses replied that they have a DPC, while a greater percentage (67%) did not.²⁹ In considering the salient question as to *why* pastoral councils have often not continued, ‘failed’ or possibly were never given a chance in the first place, apart from attributions of ‘withering’, the laity ‘lacking energy’, and ‘dysfunctional interactions’, there has been no rigorous Australian study. This is in contrast to the situation in the United States, where writers and historians, have debated the philosophy of how Vatican 11 pertains to DPCs.³⁰ This report might provide some insight into the question of why so many Australian DPCs no longer exist.

The Australian Catholic Church, which administratively is divided into 28 dioceses, has large differences in population and geographic size, factors that facilitated or impeded pastoral and lay initiatives. So, too, the fundamental attitude and culture of diocesan bishops played a large role, exemplified by, at various times, and in a number of dioceses, the discontinuation of DPCs. This paper, therefore, examines the formation of DPCs and PPCs parish within the context of these factors. While PPCs had an earlier base, in the guise of church committees, there was no historical precedent for DPCs.

²⁹ *Light from the Southern Cross.*

³⁰ These debates, whilst important, are outside the immediate focus of this paper. An interested reader might consider Mark. F. Fisher, ‘How Should Councils Spend Their Time?’ Part II, *Today’s Parish*, October 1991, pp: 18-20; Mark. F. Fisher, ‘What was Vatican 11’ intent regarding Parish Councils’, *Studia Canonica*, Vol. 33, 1999, pp: 5-25. Very Reverend John A. Renken, ‘Diocesan/Eparchial Pastoral Councils: Historical Development, Canon Law, and Practical Considerations’, 2002, https://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/upload/Historical-Development-Canon-Law-and-Practical-Considerations_09-25-2017.pdf;

4.0 Vatican 11

Dioceses across Australia responded to the spirit of Vatican 11, with a differing sense of speed and initiatives that impacted governance structures and the role of laity. One of the outcomes of Vatican 11 was a new or renewed momentum towards the inclusion of laity in decision making, situated, not just importantly at a parish level, but also at a diocesan level, but something that has been forgotten in an Australian context is that the laity played tangible roles in the church from the earliest days of the penal colony in New South Wales. In 1832, the ‘Trustees for the Roman Catholic inhabitants of New South Wales’, were William Davis, Fr Christopher Dowling, James Doyle, Roger Murphy, Thomas Ryan and Edmond Redmond.³¹ Throughout the 19th century, and before the advent of parishes *per se*, Irish Catholics, often the sons of convicts, held positions as ‘Trustees’ in districts where they generously donated land for churches and graveyards³², such as Appin (James Burke),³³ Burragorang (Patrick Carolan),³⁴ and Windsor (James Doyle).³⁵

While the ‘spirit’ of Vatican 11 may well have been influential, it is instructive that the Council did not mandate that pastoral councils were essential. As a result, in countries, including America, dioceses DPCs may have emerged quickly, whilst others have been relatively recent in origin, coming to fruition after a crisis, such as in the Diocese of Philadelphia (2012).³⁶ In 2003, about half of America’s dioceses had a DPC.³⁷

³¹ *Sydney Gazette*, 10 January 1832, p. 1, cited in Damian J. Gleeson. ‘Wealth without Happiness: Catherine Miles and William Davis of Charlotte Square, Part 2’, manuscript under editorial review for publication, August 2021]

³² The word ‘graveyard remains the Irish preference for Australian ‘cemeteries’.

³³ *Sydney Gazette*, 16 June 1825, p.3.

³⁴ *Australasian Chronicle*, 15 November 1839, p .3

³⁵ James Doyle to Fr John Therry, 14 April 1826, letter, Fr John Therry General Correspondence Collection, ML MSS 1810, vol. 10 p.73, State Library of New South Wales. [This large collection is currently the author’s main research study].

³⁶ Tom Gallagher, ‘Parish Councils are a work in progress’, *National Catholic Reporter*, vol. 48, no. 15, 2012, p. 19.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 19.

Australian parish-based organisations had some co-ordination before Vatican 11. Indeed, the Catholic Action movement encouraged diocesan activities. Added to this, welfare organisations, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society were then fully integrated with the Catholic Church and operated administratively along the lines of parish conference (branches), regional, metropolitan, and diocesan councils. Such initiatives predated DPCs. Parish-based branches that were organised at diocesan level included the Catholic Women’s Guild, Holy Name Society, and the National Catholic Rural Movement.

At a diocesan level, clergy councils had operated in dioceses such as Adelaide and Brisbane from the 1930s.³⁸ Bathurst organised annual diocesan clergy retreats.³⁹ Diocesan synods existed with the express ‘purpose of doing and deliberating concerning what belongs to pastoral care’.⁴⁰ There was also a linkage between dioceses with strong existing lay associations across a diocese, such as Young Christian Workers in Adelaide and future developments at a diocesan pastoral level.⁴¹

Another overlooked aspect in Australian Catholic history is the valuable role played by the honorary Church Secretary and Church Committees. At St Patrick’s Mortlake (NSW)⁴², layman Timothy O’Connor McCarthy led a committee that built a church for the Irish workers engaged at the nearby Gas Works.⁴³ In the 1970s, under the leadership of Fr Eris Tierney (brother of international scholar, Fr Clem Tierney), parishioners at Mortlake (NSW) spent a year reading and discerning Vatican 11 documents, before 22 enthusiastic lay people contested 16 positions in a 1976 election for the first PPC. Not surprisingly, Mortlake was one

³⁸ *Catholic Press*, 12 July 1934, p. 20

³⁹ For example, Bathurst Diocese Clergy retreat, *Catholic Weekly*, 26 January 1950, p. 6.

⁴⁰ *Catholic Press*, 22 September 1927, p. 22; *Catholic Weekly*, 15 April 1964, p. 10

⁴¹ *Southern Cross* (Adelaide), 30 October 1953, p. 15

⁴² Not to be confused with “Mortlake Parish” i.e., St Colman’s Parish, Mortlake, Diocese of Ballarat, Victoria.

⁴³ Damian J Gleeson, *An Enduring Flame: St Patrick’s Mortlake, 1885-2020: An Irish-Australian working-class community*, Second Edition (Mortlake, NSW, 2021).

of Sydney's first parishes to train and commission Acolytes.⁴⁴ In the large southern Sydney parish of Rockdale, successive generations of the Walz family have been loyal servants since the 1850s. A 13-member church committee in 1922 included two Walz descendants of this German pioneer family, and James Burgess, the long-standing Church Secretary for several decades.⁴⁵

While Cardinal Norman Gilroy, as archbishop of Sydney, also saw the Church Secretary role as pivotal, his preference was for large church committees to be streamlined to three or four men. At Five Dock, a cantankerous Monsignor John Peoples, who, despite serious personal flaws, was pastor and then parish priest for a combined fifty-nine years, received unquestioning support from Thos. J. Gleeson *erenagh*, a local schoolteacher, for more than forty years. The cardinal, in meetings with junior clergy, praised Five Dock's administration as a model approach.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 69.

⁴⁵ Damian J Gleeson, *The Rock of St George, Celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the first St Joseph's Church-School Rockdale* (Rockdale City, Sydney, 2017).

⁴⁶ Interviews with the [now late] Fr Peter Morrissey, August 2019 and January 2020.

5.0 National Conference of Laity

As early as 1968 the Australian Episcopal Conference (AEC) responded to Vatican 11 through the establishment of a Council of the Laity. The council's original members were inspirational Catholic Women's League leader, Mrs Phyllis Chandler (Sydney), a prominent Adelaide laymen, Mr William Byrne, and a Victorian, Mr Peter Lay.⁴⁷

A major milestone in lay participation across the Australian church culminated in the National Conference of the Laity, held in Sydney on the ANZAC weekend in April 1976. The conference attracted 78 delegates from 21 of Australia's then 26 dioceses,⁴⁸ as well as several observers including Bishop Len Faulkner of Townsville, representing the AEC and Fr Les Cashen, representing the National Council of Priests.⁴⁹

Some two years earlier, the idea of a national gathering had been mooted by Bill Neville, a leading figure in social justice activities movements. In 1971 the bishops had appointed Mr Neville to the inaugural Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and as a Catholic representative on the national ecumenical Action for World Development Campaign.⁵⁰ As an executive member of the Newman Association, Mr Neville became associated with *Pax Romana*. His idea for a national laity conference gained currency from the 1975 Holy Year and Pope Paul's Encyclical on the Development of Peoples.⁵¹

In September 1974 the Australian Episcopal Conference (AEC) gave in-principle support for a national gathering of the laity.⁵² In May 1975 the AEC noted that

⁴⁷ Minutes of Meeting, Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 30 June 1968, p.2. AAA.

⁴⁸ John Scanlon, 'How can laity speak out in the Catholic Church', *The Swag*, Autumn 2016.

⁴⁹ Gill, 'Pope inspired'.

⁵⁰ Bruce Duncan, 'Stalwarts for social justice: Bill Neville and Bernard Carey', *Social Policy Connections*, 29 October 2016, <https://www.socialpolicyconnections.com.au/?p=10883>

⁵¹ Alan Gill, 'Pope inspired Catholic laity national conference', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April 1976, p. 10.

⁵² Minutes of the Australian Episcopal Conference, 30 September 1974, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Archives (hereafter ACBA).

the conference was booked to be held at the Sisters of Charity, Wahroonga in April 1976, and that the ‘organiser’, Mr Neville was asked to ‘liaise with diocesan bishops’ presumably in relation to lay attendance.⁵³ In August 1975 the AEC appointed Sydney auxiliary bishop, David Cremin to be their ‘liaison’ with the organising committee which included John Scanlon, president of the Sydney Newman Graduate Association, Rob Brian, and Thomas Whelan. Supporting the conference, as public relations officer, was experienced radio journalist, Barry Morris. The organising committee received support from Cardinal James Freeman of Sydney, who was also chair of the AEC’s committee for the laity.⁵⁴

During 1975 and early 1976 the national committee contacted dioceses across the country and supplied a survey seeking input as to the topics to be discussed. Illustrative of the Vatican 11 mood, most dioceses were supportive. Where they existed, diocesan pastoral councils (DPCs), were largely instrumental in actively supporting the conference and drawing together the laity to submit topics for discussion (with the exception, a little ironically, of Sydney).

Table 1:

Australia’s first Diocesan Pastoral Councils

1966	Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
1967	Archdiocese of Sydney
1967	Archdiocese of Hobart
1968	Archdiocese of Adelaide
1971	Diocese of Rockhampton
1973	Archdiocese of Perth
1973	Diocese of Townsville
1974	Archdiocese of Brisbane

⁵³ Minutes of the Australian Episcopal Conference, May 1975, ACBCA.

⁵⁴ The Episcopal Committee of the Laity came into being in January 1974, superseding the Committee for the Apostolate of the Works. Bishop Thomas Muldoon (Sydney) was the committee’s secretary until early 1975.

In Brisbane, Terry Moynihan, a DPC member, took the lead in promoting the conference. After the DPC agreed to support the national event⁵⁵, the DPC coordinated submissions from 41 parish councils and work groups under the subject of 'Family Life Today'. From such consultations, a special fundraising appeal enabled five Brisbane delegates to attend the National Conference.⁵⁶

In Hobart, Archbishop Guildford Young spoke enthusiastically of the proposed event. Following consultation with parish pastoral councils and members of the Hobart DPC, the council elected DPC chair, Neville Brehens and a second delegate to represent Tasmania, and prioritised the following topics for discussion:

- Christian family life
- Parish community
- The Christian response to a changing society
- Catholics schools
- Liturgy/Spirituality
- The Church and evangelisation⁵⁷

The Archdiocese of Adelaide prepared for the national conference by holding in preparation its first ever diocesan conference on the role of the laity.⁵⁸ Written reports by lay women and men, religious sisters and priests, formed the basis of a successful event, at which Archbishop James Gleeson expressed:

Probably a major barrier to laity development is the range of interest and responsibilities involved. It is a real challenge to the imagination and resources of

⁵⁵ Brisbane Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Minutes of Meeting, 1975, ABA.

⁵⁶ Brisbane Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Minutes of Meeting, 12 February 1976, p. 2. ABA.

⁵⁷ Minutes of the Archdiocese of Hobart Diocesan Pastoral Council, no. 1, 13 March 1976, AHA.

⁵⁸ Adelaide Laity Conference, 'Unity in Diversity', 2-4 April 1976, conference program and brochure, AAA.

our archdiocese to crystallise those issues in church life and in the world that deserve priority in the church's combined effort.⁵⁹

Adelaide's representatives included leading lay person, David Shinnick, who as a member of the National Commission for Justice and Peace had been involved in the bishops' 1973 *Social Justice Statement*.⁶⁰ Adelaide delegates, arguably the most ecumenical in the country under Archbishop Gleeson's leadership, had sought observers from the Australian Council of Churches to attend the national conference. The organising committee, however, rejected the recommendation, arguing that delegates at this first Catholic laity conference may prefer to discuss matters without external observers.⁶¹

In Canberra, the early fruits of a DPC under Archbishop Eris O'Brien's enthusiasm had waned under his successor, Archbishop Cahill. Nevertheless, interested Catholics organised a Diocesan Conference of Catholic Laity at the Australian National University in mid-February 1976, which elected delegates to attend the national conference.⁶²

From the Diocese of Townsville, there was likewise strong interest in a national meeting. The Townsville DPC distributed the national organising committee's survey to all parish priests, parish councils, and nominees to the conference. Respondents were asked to state 'what aspects of Christian life they would like included in a nation-wide series of conferences'.⁶³ They were given a large number of topics grouped under the following three headings, but also could nominate anything else:

- Laity and the church's mission in the modern world
- Participation of laity in the life of the church

⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁰ Minutes, Australian Episcopal Conference, August 1973, ACBCA.

⁶¹ Gill, 'Pope Inspired'.

⁶² *Canberra Times*, 16 February 1976, p. 7.

⁶³ National Council of Catholic Laity Survey, Conference, April 1976, Diocese of Toowoomba Archives (DTA).

- Life of faith and formation of the laity for their mission in the world today.⁶⁴

Seven people were nominated to represent Townsville, but with only two delegate positions available, Bishop Faulkner and the DPC elected its chair Mr Cris Dall'Osto and diligent secretary, Mr Robert (Bob) Witham.⁶⁵

In the large archdiocese of Sydney, signs of a weakened DPC were at play by 1975. Mr Whelan sought to enlist support, but the Sydney DPC did not give much tangible support and had no role, as in other dioceses, in the election of delegates to the conference. The Sydney DPC, which had laboured under the blustery style of Bishop Thomas Muldoon, had by 1975 lost core members and the reformist gravitas of the late 1960s.⁶⁶

Mr Scanlon and colleagues directly engaged with Sydney's five regional areas and groups were established to discuss topics and agenda items for the conference. Those local groups organised 25 workshops which attracted a total of more than 1,000 people, including many women, of whom 120 were nominated to attend an archdiocesan laity conference, which was held in December 1975. From that conference delegates were elected for the national conference.⁶⁷

Most dioceses submitted reports to the conference and the job of synthesising these fell to the experienced educator, Barry Dwyer of Sydney.⁶⁸

The three-day conference produced nine well researched documents that had been voted on in plenary sessions. The topics included the liturgy, Christian family life, Catholic education and catechists, Catholic adult education, the role of women in

⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁵ Minutes of the Townsville Diocesan Pastoral Council, 23 November 1975, p. 3, DTA.

⁶⁶ By 1975 Cardinal Freeman had made changes to the Sydney DPC. The inaugural chair, Bishop Muldoon was replaced by Fr Neil Collins, the President of St Patrick's College, Manly.

⁶⁷ Scanlon, 'How can laity'.

⁶⁸ *Catholic Weekly*, 28 April 1976.

the church, Christian formation and spirituality, the church and economic and social life, and communication, consultation and participation.

Mr Scanlon recalled that ‘the tone of discussions was generally civilised but not obsequious; the Melbourne delegation tried to bring in a standing order that “no discussion shall take place on motions that are contrary to the church’s teachings or derogatory of its leaders or its practices”, but this was felt unnecessary by the rest of the membership’.⁶⁹

Despite lethargy from Sydney’s DPC it is noteworthy that the diocese’s official publication, the *Catholic Weekly*, provided solid coverage of the event on successive Sundays.⁷⁰ With a front-page heading “‘Treat us as Adults’ Plea from the Laity”, the newspaper articulated the concern of many dioceses.⁷¹ Mr Neville, the ‘national chairman’ told the *Catholic Weekly*:

The Catholic lay people are saying to the bishops, in a fraternal sort of way, that the laity has a role to play, not in opposition to the bishops, but in a spirit of dialogue.⁷²

At a media conference, Bishop Faulkner said the event would ‘challenge and stimulate’ the bishops.⁷³

I don’t mean in a spirit of defiance but in a spirit of sharing with all in the church, laity, clergy and religious, the total pastoral care of all.

He was surprised by the cross-section of people from all walks of life who had been able to produce a consensus of opinions on so many topics.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Scanlon, ‘How can laity’.

⁷⁰ *Catholic Weekly*, 28 April 1976; 6 May 1976.

⁷¹ *Catholic Weekly*, 28 April 1976, pp 1-2.

⁷² *Catholic Weekly*, 6 May 1976, p. 3.

⁷³ *Catholic Weekly*, 6 May 1976, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

The Canberra Times noted debates at the conference but remarked that it was not an ‘occasion for bishop bashing... or for radicalism; in the decision-making plenary sessions, the moderate forces held sway’.⁷⁵ On the matter of pastoral councils:

Delegates of all shades made it quite clear they wanted a greater say for laity and sought more effective working of diocesan and parish pastoral councils.⁷⁶

One of the conference’s key recommendations was the formation of a national pastoral council comprising laity, clergy, religious and the bishops. The AEC consider this (and other) conference recommendations at its May 1976 meeting. Agreement was reached that a ‘small representative working group’ be set up to ‘examine the feasibility of a National Pastoral Council’.⁷⁷ Shortly afterwards Bishop Faulkner confirmed the members of the working party: Bishop O’Connell, Fr Champion Murray OFM, Fr John Heaps, Bishop Faulkner and Mr John McCarthy.⁷⁸ There is, however, nothing further on record about this working party. If Bishop Faulkner provided a written report to the AEC, it has not survived in several potential archives.⁷⁹

After the conference a delegation from the national organising committee, met with Bishop Muldoon. Mr Brian, a now retired NSW State Parliamentary Librarian, recalls the 1976 meeting:

The bishop was not really interested in listening to us. He told us first to make sure that we had organised catechists in all State schools and then we could come back to him, and he would give us our next task.⁸⁰

Outside of Sydney, several dioceses, such as Townsville distributed copies of the resolutions to parishes and pastoral councils.⁸¹ Enthusiastic delegates from Adelaide organised a diocesan conference in the wake of the national conference. In supporting the conference resolution for a national pastoral council to be

⁷⁵ Dennis Green, ‘Catholic laity questions leadership’, *Canberra Times*, 13 May 1976, p. 21.

⁷⁶ *Loc. Cit.*

⁷⁷ Minutes, Australian Episcopal Conference, May 1976, ACBCA.

⁷⁸ Minutes, Australian Episcopal Conference, August 1976, ACBCA.

⁷⁹ Thanks to archivists at ACBC, DTA.

⁸⁰ Robert Brian, email to author, 25 August 2021.

⁸¹ R. Whitham to parishes, with papers from the ACCL, 17 June 1976, TDA.

established, it was also desired that national conferences of the laity occur at least every two years.⁸² Such plans, however, did not materialise: the answers for said might be found in archives yet to be accessed due to the lockdown.

Nevertheless, in the words of Mr John Dwyer:

This national conference represents a most significant point in the history of the Catholic Church in Australia.⁸³

⁸² Brian Moylan, Recommendations referring to the Australian Episcopal Conference, ca 1976, AAA.

⁸³ Cited in *Catholic Weekly*, 6 May 1976.

6.0 Archdioceses

6.1 Overview of Archdiocesan Pastoral Councils

This section outlines the history of Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPCs) across the Australian Catholic Church, with a focus on the early decades. Overall, the history of the councils, while results orientated, has been inconsistent. Few DPCs survived beyond their initial bishop; Adelaide being the major exception. Although Adelaide’s developments were significant and remembered as the ‘model’ for DPCs, earlier initiatives in Canberra-Goulburn, Hobart and Sydney have been largely overlooked or forgotten in historiography as Table 2 overviews.

Table 2: Archdiocesan Pastoral Councils, 1966-2021

Archdiocese	DPC planning commenced	DPC established	DPC (first) ceased to operate)	DPC currently operating (2021)
Adelaide	1967	1968	2017	No
Brisbane	1972	1974	ca. 1996	No
Canberra- Goulburn	1966	1966	1967	No
Hobart	1966	1967	1988	No
Perth	1971	1973	Ca 1994	No
Sydney	1966	1967	1980	No

A review of the early DPCs shows that they differed in size, composition, intent, and responsibilities. This was accentuated by there being no official guidelines about their *modus operandi*. Most archdioceses engaged in some type of planning before officially establishing a DPC. As befitted the first and largest archdiocese in term of Catholic population, the Archdiocese of Sydney established a broad-based DPC under the chair of Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Muldoon in 1967. Other dioceses permitted a lay person to chair meetings, while the archbishop/bishop ‘presided’ (Hobart and Townsville are two early examples). Hobart conceived a DPC in 1966 but it did not come into fruition until 1967. Perth, likewise, undertook

detailed planning, sponsored by the Senate of Priests, before its council was inaugurated two years later (1973). Townsville, which benefited from the experience of South Australian laymen, David Shinnick, also was well organised and diocesan entities were required to submit formal reports before the first meeting.⁸⁴

These and other dioceses also gave due regard to the lay, clerical and religious composition, and timelines, of the councils. Sydney's Cardinal Gilroy, for example, chose to appoint three clergy members to its first council, while the Council of Priests nominated another two.⁸⁵ Lay members in Sydney were representatives of apostolic works and there was, in its formative years, no direct representation from parishes, which may have been difficult given the archdiocese's size. Perth, in contrast, believed that the 'best 22 lay people' should be elected to the council – if they had an association with existing organisations that was an added factor, but it was unnecessary.⁸⁶

In Australia, the earliest archdiocesan leaders in forming DPCs was Canberra-Goulburn (1966), followed closely by Hobart and Sydney (1967) and Adelaide (1968). Councils in Perth (1973) and Brisbane (1974) were formed after detailed planning. The first non-metropolitan dioceses to establish DPCs were Rockhampton (1971) and Townsville (1973). Some dioceses have never established a DPC, including Armidale⁸⁷, Geraldton⁸⁸, and Melbourne.⁸⁹

A key challenge has been the lack of definition as to what councils are expected to do. Are they to be apostolic or pastoral, and to what were they expected to co-

⁸⁴ Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocese of Townsville, Timetable, 27 May 1973, TDA

⁸⁵ Archdiocese of Sydney, Minutes of Diocesan Pastoral Council, 1967, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives (hereafter SAA).

⁸⁶ n.a. 'Formation of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council in Perth', n.d. 4-page typescript, APA.

⁸⁷ Monsignor Ted Wilkes, Vicar General, Diocese of Armidale to author, 8 September 2021.

⁸⁸ Fr Robert Cross, Chancellor, Diocese of Geraldton, email to the author, 24 August 2021.

⁸⁹ Advice from Fr Max Vodola to Fr Joe Caddy, Vicar General, Melbourne, relayed to the author, 26 August 2021.

ordinate or oversee pastoral activities as diocesan, regional, or parish levels? The challenge for the setting up of parish pastoral councils was succinctly expressed in Adelaide in 1968, and may equally have applied to challenges for diocesan pastoral councils:

The problem encountered at all levels with parish councils is that the documents of Vatican 11 tell us what a Council is 'for' but do not give a clear formal definition of 'what' a Council is, nor does it help I how to set one up.⁹⁰

After the promulgation of the *Code of Canon Law* in 1983, the Archdiocese of Sydney Archdiocese, introduced a finance committee. This small committee of laymen provided beneficial advice to successive archbishops and focused squarely on finance and administration. One former senior diocesan cleric recalls that it became a 'very effective Financial Council'.⁹¹ In December 2014, Archbishop Fisher approved a change of name from Archdiocesan Finance Committee to the Archdiocesan Finance Council, following canonical advice that this more closely reflects contemporary English translations from the authoritative Latin version of the Code of Canon Law.⁹²

⁹⁰ Parish Councils' sub-committee Report, 20 June 1968, presented to the Archdiocese of Adelaide Pastoral Council, 30 June 1968, AAA.

⁹¹ Interview with Fr Brian Lucas, 10 August 2021. Fr Lucas was appointed Secretary of the Archdiocese of Sydney, in August 1990.

⁹² Advice from the Sydney Archdiocesan Archivist to author via email, 19 August 2021.

Table 3: Early advocates of Diocesan Pastoral Councils

Archdiocese/Diocese	Advocates and Leaders
Adelaide	Archbishop Matthew Beovich Bill Byrne Archbishop James Gleeson Brian Moylan David Shinnick
Brisbane	Sr Cecilia Anning RSJ Bishop James Cuskelly Fr Tom Hegerty Ellen Mallon Archbishop Francis Rush Eileen Thompson
Canberra-Goulburn	Archbishop (later Cardinal) Clancy Archbishop Eris O'Brien
Hobart	Neville Brehens Dr Sergio Giudice Betty Picot Peter Roach Fr Denis Quin Archbishop Guildford Young
Perth	Archbishop Launcelot Goody Jack Shanahan Sr Sonia Wagner SGS
Rockhampton	Sr Ursula Brown RSM Bishop (later Archbishop) Francis Rush Rev Dr Noel Hynes Fr John Leahy Bishop Bernard Wallace
Sydney	Professor Michael Blunt Roy Boylan Fr (now Monsignor) Tony Doherty Mary Lewis
Townsville	Bishop Leonard Faulkner Cris Dall'Osto Bob Witham

Tenure

Another early consideration across dioceses was the tenure of council members. Hobart councillors were initially appointed for one year, with renewal. Most early DPCs had membership of two or three years, seen as beneficial to engendering new ideas yet ensuring continued momentum of the councils. Changes in bishops, however, would have the most profound influence on the longevity and influence of councils.

Relationship with Catholic education

In most archdioceses and dioceses, the Catholic education authorities or offices had either an ex-officio seat on the DPC or were expected to provide regular reports on Catholic education to council members.⁹³ A clear exception was Sydney, whose emerging education bureaucracy from the mid-1960s tended to operate separately. In other dioceses, much closer connections were apparent, such as will be outlined in the case studies of Hobart, Adelaide, Perth and Townsville.

Relationship with Financial authorities

Dioceses such as Adelaide, Hobart, Rockhampton and Townsville, included archdiocesan financial experts at DPC meetings to provide advice and to answer questions about school funding, development of new parishes, priests' subsidies etc.⁹⁴ A different model existed in Sydney, where the DPC focused squarely on non-financial pastoral matters.

Relationship with Senate of Priests

In nearly every dioceses, the establishment of a Senate of Priests preceded the formation of a DPC.⁹⁵ Most bishops sought and received senate approval, in principle at least, for a DPC.

⁹³ See for example the dioceses of Adelaide, Rockhampton and Townsville.

⁹⁴ Minutes of the Hobart Diocesan Pastoral Council, 1967-1970, AHA.

⁹⁵ Shinnick, 'Parish Pastoral Councils', p. 6.

Longevity

Some DPCs survived the transition of a bishop and appeared to become more effective over time. This was notably the case in Adelaide, where Archbishops Len Faulkner and James Gleeson succeeded the founding DPC leader, Archbishop Matthew Beovich. The Adelaide DPC also continued under Archbishop Philip Wilson, although in his previous appointment (Wollongong) there had not been a DPC.

Canberra-Goulburn's early enthusiasm under the leadership of Archbishop Eris O'Brien did not survive his immediate successor Archbishop Cahill. However, a DPC was reinaugurated by Archbishop Clancy, and expanded upon by his successor, Archbishop Francis Carroll, who placed great emphasis on the DPC, which included two representatives from each parish plus a representative from all major archdiocesan organisations. Flowing from this was two large and successful Synods in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn, in 1989 and 2004.⁹⁶ However, the archdiocese has no current Diocesan Planning Council.

Questions

When examining the history of Australian DPCs some fundamental questions have emerged:

- What is the precise role of the DPC?
- Is a DPC advisory/consultative or authority-based?
- Are members appointed and/or elected?
- Is there a direct linkage with parish pastoral councils (PPCs) and regional parish councils (PPCs)?
- What is relationship with other diocesan entities, such as diocesan finance committee/councils and Catholic education offices?
- Does or should a pastoral council take precedence over a finance committee/council or vice-versa?

⁹⁶ Advice from Canberra-Goulburn Archivist, Denis Connor, email 12 August 2021.

6.2 Canberra-Goulburn

Under the leadership of one of the few Australian bishops to hold an *earned* doctorate, Archbishop Eris O'Brien established a Diocesan Pastoral Council – most probably Australia's first⁹⁷ – in the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn in late 1966. In a media statement, Fr Kevin Barry-Cotter, the archbishop's secretary, who would also serve as the council's first secretary, said the inaugural council would comprise 24 members – equally divided between clergy, religious, and lay people.⁹⁸ In addition, the archbishop, assistant bishop, vicar-general and Fr Barry-Cotter would be council members.

In mid-1966 Archbishop O'Brien, one of Australia's leading 20th century Catholic historians, commenced planning a council and scheduled the first meeting, intentionally, on 11 October 1966, the anniversary date of the opening of the Vatican Council.⁹⁹ A concelebrated Mass was held at St Christopher's Cathedral, before the first meeting commenced at 7.00pm. During the meeting, the archbishop presented a signed copy of *The Documents of Vatican II* to each council member.¹⁰⁰

Early enthusiasm was relatively short lived as an increasingly unwell Archbishop O'Brien was forced to retire in the early months of 1967. The DPC did not continue under his successor, Archbishop Cahill¹⁰¹, who one church historian said was 'not a reformer by nature' and a 'shy man' with the laity.¹⁰² However, evidence of parish

⁹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 October 1966, .p. 6; *Canberra Times*, 8 March 1967, p 12.

Some writers suggest that Hobart, for example, established a DPC in 1966, but that is when planning commenced. Hobart's first DPC commenced in 1967.

⁹⁸ *Canberra Times*, 8 October 1966, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Denis Connor, 'Recalling the first Diocesan Pastoral Council', *Catholic Voice* [n.d.].

¹⁰⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Terry Fewtrell, 'Diocesan Pastoral Councils'.

¹⁰² Brian Maher, 'Cahill, Thomas Vincent (1913-1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, 1993.

pastorals councils in the archdiocese can be seen, for example, in initiatives taken at Curtin Parish as early as 1972.¹⁰³

After being appointed to Canberra-Goulburn in 1978, Bishop Edward Clancy reinstated a DPC. In 1980 the DPC and Archbishop Clancy agreed to form a pastoral assembly, which would meet annually, comprising two representatives of each parish. A small secretariat of seven was also appointed and the DPC was recast at between 25 and 30 people, the majority of whom would be elected by diocesan organisations.¹⁰⁴ The numerical influence of the clergy, therefore, was lessened, with the archbishop appointing only a small(er) number. In an interview on his departure from Canberra in April 1983, Archbishop Clancy commented that the Pastoral Council he had established was ‘still finding its way but it was a very dedicated group’.¹⁰⁵

Archbishop Clancy’s successor in Canberra-Goulburn, Francis Carroll, who had been bishop of Wagga Wagga since 1968, was described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1970 as a ‘progressive’ and a possible successor to Sydney’s Cardinal Gilroy.¹⁰⁶ Under Archbishop Carroll the archdiocese held a large assembly of 720 people in 1984. A diverse range of views, including the ‘great personal tragedy of excluding women from being Acolytes’ was exchanged.¹⁰⁷ In 1986 a smaller assembly of 170 members from parishes and church organisations affirmed the value of marriage, noting that a lack of commitment by some young people to marriage was due to ‘society pressures and society’s pessimism about marriage’.¹⁰⁸

Two decades after Vatican 11, Archbishop Carroll announced plans for a Synod, which would be both the first held in the archdiocese in more than half a century

¹⁰³ *Canberra Times*, 17 June 1972, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ *Canberra Times*, 1 April 1980, p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Harold W. Fry, ‘Archbishop Clancy to leave Canberra after four years’, *Canberra Times*, 10 April 1983, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 December 1970, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ Graham Downie, ‘Archdiocese takes itself to task’, *Canberra Times*, 27 May 1984, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Canberra Times*, 23 April 1986, p. 27.

and the first in the Australian Church since the Vatican Council.¹⁰⁹ After two years extensive planning, including the involvement of 6,000 people in pre-synod discussions,¹¹⁰ the September 1989 Synod attracted two hundred delegates. Archbishop Carroll noted that:

I believe that the Church generally, and certainly our local Church, is looking to involve lay people far more in the life of the Church. That itself will affect both men and women.¹¹¹

The 1989 Synod attracted a demonstration, with a group entitled ‘Those seeking justice in the church’ raising issues of language, attitudes and church structures in relation to women.¹¹² A second successful Synod was held in 2004.¹¹³ A study of this period concluded that ‘...the structure and work of the DPC was large and ambitious - its output significant in terms of relevance and quality. There was enthusiastic and supportive engagement by the Catholic community’.¹¹⁴

Archbishop Carroll was succeeded by Melbourne-born, Archbishop Mark Coleridge in 2006. The DPC then entered a pattern of ceasing in 2007, before being re-started in 2011, but discontinued when the bishop left. There has been no re-establishment of the DPC in the last decade.

6.3 Sydney

It is more than 40 years since a diocesan pastoral council in Sydney operated and few clergy remember its existence or the work it undertook.¹¹⁵ The development of a diocesan pastoral council (DPC) in Australia’s oldest archdiocese, reflected to some extent a degree of obedience to Rome – rather than heartfelt enthusiasm –

¹⁰⁹ *Canberra Times*, 28 October 1987, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ Graham Downie, ‘Pastoral Concern to top Synod Agenda’, *Canberra Times*, 27 September 1989, p. 26.

¹¹¹ Graham Downie, ‘Catholic Synod begins Friday’, *Canberra Times*, 26 September 1989, p. 9.

¹¹² *Canberra Times*, 30 September 1989, p 5.

¹¹³ Connor to the author, 12 August 2021.

¹¹⁴ Terry Fewtrell, ‘Diocesan Pastoral Councils’.

¹¹⁵ With one exception, no Sydney cleric interviewed for this research project was aware that Sydney had ever had a DPC.

from Sydney's episcopal leaders. Cardinal Norman Gilroy of Sydney, who had entered Vatican 11 with little personal motivation for reform, hoped for a streamlined, efficient and non-contentious gathering.¹¹⁶ He remarked:

I am very much one of those who believes that the church as we know it today is the best representation of the church of the past and presents the best pattern of organisation for the church of the future. I do not see any necessity for changes in the hierarchical structure, or in the matter of authority.¹¹⁷

The Sydney council's structure, composition and *modus operandi* would reflect the centrality of clerical decision making that characterised the archdiocese's culture.

The seeds of the Sydney DPC were preceded by the formation of a Senate of Priests. In late 1966, some 300 clergy of the Archdiocese of Sydney voted to elect 20 members to a proposed Senate of Priests.¹¹⁸ Fr Les Cashen was believed to have received the highest vote.¹¹⁹ At the senate's first meeting, shortly afterwards, an agenda item included consideration of a diocesan pastoral council [DPC].¹²⁰ The meeting duly elected a committee to study the formation of a pastoral council of clergy, religious orders and laity.¹²¹ In January 1967, the 32-member senate formally approved a diocesan pastoral council,¹²² and also moves for 'a pastoral year' of study for newly ordained priests.¹²³ DPC planning continued over a number of months and the formation of 'sub-committees' even before the first

¹¹⁶ An analysis of the attitudes of Australian bishops to Vatican 11 is outside the scope of this research, save their role in understanding and implementing more inclusive lay structures, such as pastoral councils. For an introduction to the attitudes of Gilroy and some other bishops, see the excellent discussion by Kevin J. Walsh in *Yesterday's Seminary: A History of St Patrick's Manly* (St Leonards, Sydney, 1998).

¹¹⁷ Gilroy cited in XXX

¹¹⁸ At least another eight priests were appointed by the archbishop.

¹¹⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1966, p. 6.

¹²⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December 1966, p. 5.

¹²¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December 1966, p. 5.

¹²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 1967, p. 1; *Ibid*, 3 August 1967, p. 8.

¹²³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 1967, p. 16. Lecturers in the 'pastoral year' included Fr (later Bishop) Bill Murray and Fr (now Monsignor) Anthony Doherty.

council meeting exemplified the Gilroy approach for matters to be tidy and effectively well in train *before* a formal meeting occurred.

At the council's first meeting on 8 August 1967, Cardinal Gilroy, as the 'president', cited the Vatican document that spoke of pastoral councils being 'highly desirable' and said the purpose would be '...to investigate and weigh matters which bear on the pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them'.¹²⁴ The cardinal however, emphasised that the DPC's focus would be '... to labour for the strengthening of the Faith and religious life of all the people in the Archdiocese'.¹²⁵

Contextually, the DPC provided some strategic and political advantages for the cardinal. First, it solidified a degree of co-ordination over the diverse activities of lay apostolates and sent a clear message that the laity, through the DPC, reported to the Cardinal. Second, in the appointment of Roy Boylan as the pastoral council's inaugural secretary, Cardinal Gilroy had invested in a loyal and trustworthy lay person, whom more than a decade earlier he had similarly entrusted to establish the Pauline Association. Mr Boylan, to some extent, represented 'Sydney's answer to B.A. Santamaria'.¹²⁶ Third, in appointing Bishop Thomas Muldoon as chair, the cardinal was giving another prominence to an otherwise unhappy bishop, who despite being one of the main official spokesmen for the Australian Episcopal Conference, sought a high profile. Conversely, and fourthly, this decision reduced potential criticism of the cardinal (again) relying on his most senior auxiliary, Archbishop James Carroll. While Bishop James Freeman and Archbishop James Carroll were named as ex-officio members of the first DPC, they do not appear to have participated (directly at least) in its formative years.

Some 22 people attended the initial meeting, including clergy, religious sisters¹²⁷ and brothers, and lay representatives from various apostolates, held at Marian

¹²⁴ Cardinal Norman Gilroy, 'Summary of His Eminence's Address to the Inaugural Meeting of the Pastoral Council, 8/8/1967', p. 1. SAA.

¹²⁵ Gilroy, 'Summary' p. 2.

¹²⁶ Telephone interview with Monsignor Tony Doherty, 20 August 2021.

¹²⁷ Unfortunately, the Minutes did not state their membership of religious congregations.

House, 161 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Lay representatives increased to 28 by October 1967,¹²⁸ despite an earlier clerical view that membership be split 50-50 between clergy/religious and laity.

Although Bishop Muldoon chaired the council it was clear from the beginning that the cardinal would make any decisions:

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body. After due deliberation on matters that it will consider, it will make recommendations to the Cardinal the Archbishop. Having weighed the problems and recommendations it is for him to decide what is to be done. The Council will do its very best to implement the decisions arrived at.

Cardinal Gilroy stressed that the council be a ‘WORKING GROUP’ [caps in original] and not a mere talking group. Some undated notes considered the council’s purpose and composition, including a question, should it be an open forum or an executive arm of the government, and how clergy were to be appointed. The cardinal resolved that he felt that the council could examine the ‘problems’ listed in table 4:¹²⁹

Table 4: Problems for the Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council to examine
The mission of the church in the inner-city
Apostolic endeavours in new areas
The church and industry
The decline of the sodalities
The apostolate of the Guilds
Increasing personnel and resources for the missions
Aborigines in the inner-city area
Youth

Lay members of the council had been nominated by various groups and apostolates operating across the archdiocese. In some respects, this made sense given the large

¹²⁸ Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Pastoral Council, 14 October 1967, SAA.

¹²⁹ Gilroy, ‘Summary’ p. 5.

size of the (then) archdiocese,¹³⁰ although it may have created in some instances a question as to whether these lay people had an independent voice or were bound to follow the views of the respective organisations. Other archdioceses, such as Adelaide and Perth adopted a different model of lay representation.

The Sydney council's clerical representatives included two elected by the Council of Priests: Fr Bede Heather, an academic (later foundation Bishop of Parramatta Diocese) and Fr A.L. (Tony) Doherty (now Monsignor Doherty); the cardinal appointed three clergy: Fr Brian Cosgrove from the Catholic Missions Office, and two parish priests: Fr John Power and Fr James (Jimmy) Munday.

Given the council's size, members 'elected' an 'executive', consisting of Bishop Muldoon, Mrs Mary Lewis, Sr Peter, Fr Brian Cosgrove, Professor Michael Blunt, Mr John Dwyer, and Mr Roy Boylan.¹³¹ Within the first six months, the council, also known as the 'Sydney Catholic Pastoral Council',¹³² had seconded experts in various fields into action orientated sub-committees. In the words of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, '... housewives, builders and solicitors sat down with brothers and nuns from classrooms and hospital wards and a number of priests to discuss the pastoral needs of the diocese with their bishop'.¹³³

Among a broad range of lay representatives were the dynamic Mrs Lewis, an outstanding woman and a trained social worker attached to the (then) Catholic Family Welfare Bureau,¹³⁴ Mr Boylan,¹³⁵ and Mr John Harrington, a solicitor,

¹³⁰ Prior to the creation of the dioceses of Broken Bay and Parramatta in 1986.

¹³¹ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, CUSA House, 18 October 1967, SAA.

¹³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 September 1967, p. 8.

¹³³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November 1970, p. 19.

¹³⁴ Patrick Lewis (comp.), *Always Begin with a Story: Memoirs of Mary Lewis* (Glebe, NSW, 2001). For some analysis of Mrs Lewis' outstanding contribution, see D.J. Gleeson, 'The Professionalisation of Australian Catholic Social Welfare, 1920-1985', PhD Thesis, 2006. The CFWB has gone through numerous organisational name changes and is currently known as CatholicCare in some dioceses.

¹³⁵ The Paulian Association was officially constituted in 1958.

representing the St Vincent de Paul Society, was responsible for drawing up the terms of reference for the council's executive.¹³⁶

Mr Boylan was a former prisoner of war, who after being captured by German forces in Crete and spent three and a half years in a Bavarian prison camp.¹³⁷ His later mentor and friend, Fr Cyril Hally (1920-2010), summed up the situation:

Undoubtedly the way experience affected Roy both as a person and as a Christian. Despite the hysteria and propaganda associated with total modern warfare, Roy returned to Australia not only with a respect, but even with an affection for his German captors. He was able to penetrate the linguistic, cultural, social and military barriers to reach the common humanity shared with his captors.¹³⁸

Under Fr Hally's guidance, Mr Boylan studied the writings of Cardinal Cardijn and the Young Christian Worker movement, and through the establishment of the Paulian Association in 1956, brought theory into action. His interest in serving the church through practical works coalesced with Cardinal Gilroy's desire for a non-political, Catholic Action movement in Sydney, which could minimise the divisions associated with lay action in Melbourne, for instance. In 1956 the cardinal had installed Mr Boylan as head of a new lay apostolate, the Paulians, working out of CUSA (Catholic United Services Auxiliary) House in Sydney.¹³⁹ In this unique role Mr Boylan showed utmost loyalty to Cardinal Gilroy, so he was a natural choice to become a DPC member in 1967.¹⁴⁰ In some respects, too, Mr Boylan, in the words of another foundation DPC member, may have been 'Sydney's answer to Santamaria'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Mr Harrington of Strathfield, died at Cardinal Freeman Nursing Home, Ashfield on 30 November 2013. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 December 2013.

¹³⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 August 1946, p. 9.; *Standard* (Frankston, Victoria), 5 July 1945, p.1 picture after Mr Boylan's release).

¹³⁸ Fr Cyril Hally, 'Preface to Paulian 25th Anniversary Booklet' (Sydney, ca 1983). The author thanks Roger O'Halloran of PALMS for providing a copy of this publication.

¹³⁹ The Paulian Association was formally constituted in 1958.

¹⁴⁰ Boylan to Gilroy, letter, 7 November 1967, SAA.

¹⁴¹ Telephone interview with Monsignor Tony Doherty, 20 August 2021.

In an interview, Msgr Doherty vividly recalled that the first Pastoral Council had a great sense of dynamism and that ‘strong lay voices were given space to be heard’.¹⁴² He nominated Mrs Lewis, Professor Michael Blunt, a professor of anatomy with a ‘very sharp mind who was unfazed by the hierarchy’, and Mr Boylan, as indicative of this.

Although the cardinal’s original brief had not included Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs), an unnamed sub-committee had by the first meeting, prepared a discussion paper entitled ‘The Pastoral Council and Parish Councils’.¹⁴³ At a parish level, depending on size, it was suggested that ‘parish councils’ comprise the priests of a parish, one brother and one nun, a representative from each lay apostolate group (five) and five other elected parishioners.¹⁴⁴ The sub-committee of the DPC placed emphasis on the importance of an education campaign for laity, clergy and religious as being essential to the development of the various councils.

At the DPC level, one option explored a ‘simplified structure’ wherein the clergy would dominate, viz. four bishops, six clergy and five lay representatives.¹⁴⁵ The effect would be to reduce the DPC’s 35 plus members to a more streamlined 15.

While council meetings in 1967 considered *some* of Cardinal Gilroy’s suggested ‘problem’ areas, they also reflected a broader interest in ‘pastoral’ needs. Thus, for example, consideration was given to an adult psychiatric centre, a Catholic Information panel that would enable the church to increase its profile and to clarify its position in the mass media, and a training facility for lay people.¹⁴⁶ Professor Blunt’s suggestion the council should ‘launch a sociological and educational study of the results of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of

¹⁴² *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴³ ‘The Pastoral Council and Parish Councils: Some subcommittee suggestions: (Supplement No 10)’, Paper No 3, SAA.

¹⁴⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴⁵ ‘The Gradual Setting up of the Councils’, ca 1967, SAA.

¹⁴⁶ Pastoral Council, Archdiocese of Sydney, Agenda, Tuesday 24 October 1967, SAA.

Sydney', in conjunction with the Catholic Education Board, did not appear to gain the latter's support.¹⁴⁷

Another prominent council member was Mrs Phyllis Chandler¹⁴⁸ who, having been a leading member of the Legion of Catholic Women, which transformed into the Catholic Women's League, became the latter's first state president in 1958. She was also keen member of Meals on Wheels.¹⁴⁹ In 1965, Mrs Chandler was instrumental in the establishment of Marian Villa at Strathfield for unmarried and widowed women over the age of 55.¹⁵⁰ In 1968, Mrs Chandler was one of three lay members – and the only women – appointed to the first National Council for Laity (Lay Apostolate) by the Australian Episcopal Conference.¹⁵¹

At the Sydney DPC, Kevin Coen, Ken Paul, and Mrs Joan Vespers from the Legion of Mary led research into a Training Centre for Laity. Meanwhile, Mother M. Herlihy of Rose Bay Convent led an analysis of the inner-city area, constructively supported by Mrs Lewis.¹⁵² This was expanded into a proposed ecumenical endeavour and given the name 'Inter Church Inner Area Commission', consistent with a similar body that had been recently established in Melbourne.¹⁵³ A focus on Aborigines was deferred until 1969, when a sub-committee led by Pallottine priest,

¹⁴⁷ Minutes of Executive Committee, 18 October 1967, p. 2. SAA.

¹⁴⁸ As was the (then) custom, she was listed in the Minutes as Mrs W [Wal] Chandler.

¹⁴⁹ *Newcastle Sun*, 29 November 1949, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Parliament of New South Wales, Hansard, Legislative Assembly Hansard, 6 August 2015,

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-60326>

¹⁵¹ Minutes of the Australian Episcopal Conference, April 1968, ACBA). Mr William Byrne from Adelaide was also appointed to this committee. Mr Peter Lay (Melbourne) also joined this committee. See advice from Archbishop Matthew Beovich to Adelaide Archdiocese Pastoral Council, Minutes of Meeting, June 1968, AAA.

¹⁵² Mother M. Herlihy (Rose Bay Convent), 'Random Observations and findings in my recent months of humble but loving endeavour in the inner-city', PC6, 14 October 1967, attached to Agenda, SAA.

¹⁵³ Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, 14 October 1967, SAA.

John Winson, argued that the archdiocese should appoint a chaplain for Aborigines living in the inner-city areas. *The Sydney Morning Herald* quoted Fr Winson as saying that ‘There is nothing in the Catholic Church that is specialised for Aborigines’.¹⁵⁴

Social worker, Valda Ferns, was a voice for people living with a severe mental illness and her advocacy for a psychiatric facility for adults and youth led to the appointment of a specialist sub-committee comprising Dr Paul Lush, Monsignor Frank McCosker (NSW Director of Catholic Charities), Fr John Davoren (Catholic Family Welfare Bureau), and Mrs Lewis.¹⁵⁵ In December 1967, the Senate of Priests, chaired by Fr Cashen, was very much interested in the council and asked to receive minutes of meetings.

In its first six months, the Sydney council also examined the church’s low profile in the media. ‘Dissatisfaction’ with reporting of the council’s activities extended to the *Catholic Weekly*, which hitherto the council felt had not been as supportive as Catholic paper should be.¹⁵⁶ The council proposed that suitable representation be made to both secular and Catholic media, under the leadership of council member, Mr John Dwyer.

The council attracted suggestions and concerns from letter writers, both lay and religious. From Springwood Seminary, Fr Ray Weaver voiced concern about the church’s low profile in the media and the need for a panel of experts to represent the church comprising three priests and three lay people, experts in medicine, social questions, and mass media techniques.¹⁵⁷ In one of Cardinal Gilroy’s few comments on the council’s work in 1967, the archbishop appeared to miss the broader sentiments expressed by Fr Weaver and replied:

¹⁵⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 December 1969, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, 20 November 1967, SAA.

¹⁵⁶ Minutes of the Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, 6 December 1967, SAA.

¹⁵⁷ Fr Weaver to Secretary, DPC, 21 September 1967, SAA.

Fr Weaver seems to assume that spokesman, Rev. Dr Murray¹⁵⁸, Dr Farrar and Father McAuliffe make statements on their own authority. Actually, they always consult an expert in the matter regarding where there is a question. Whether it would be better for the experts in question to make the replies is a matter that might be examined [by the DPC].¹⁵⁹

All in all, it had been a clear and strong start by the Diocesan Pastoral Council of the Archdiocese of Sydney in its first six months. The council, intentionally or not, had brought together a degree of co-ordination in Catholic activities, likely unprecedented in the archdiocese's history. Its role drew welcome interest from some parishioners, for example, who questioned why parishes did not co-ordinate their schedules of Sunday mass times, so as to accommodate a diverse Catholic community.¹⁶⁰

Encouragement was also given to establishing pastoral councils at a parish level, however, whether it was a lack of communication or understanding, there was a 'lukewarm response from priests to the request to publicise the pastoral council from suburban pulpits'.¹⁶¹

In these initial years, a gulf seemed to emerge between the theology expounded by the chairman and the pastoral vision of some lay members of the Sydney council. Bishop Muldoon, like Cardinal Gilroy, had an interest in inner-city areas of Sydney, but with a focus on the fall in church attendance, rather than social welfare issues.¹⁶² So, too, this articulate bishop represented the church, locally and nationally, in warning people that while the 1968 Vatican document *Humanae Vitae* was not an infallible statement '...it was gravely binding on pain of mortal sin'.¹⁶³ Bishop Muldoon, who had much lay support from his 'home' region that covered Sydney's northern suburbs, appeared to court the media, despite the criticism his orthodoxy attracted. An intelligent prelate, with a passion for late

¹⁵⁸ Press Liaison Director, Archdiocese of Sydney.

¹⁵⁹ Archbishop Gilroy to Mr Boylan, 18 November 197, SAA.

¹⁶⁰ Minutes of the Sydney Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, November 1967, SAA.

¹⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November 1970, p. 19.

¹⁶² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 September 1967, p. 8. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1967, p. 82.

¹⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 July 1968, pp: 1, 12.

evenings, was unhappy being an ‘auxiliary’, but hoped the impending retirement of Cardinal Gilroy might open a new opportunity for him.

By 1970, frustration amongst some diocesan council members had begun to set in. The laity, for example, had no role in the planning for Pope Paul’s visit to Australia, as one disenchanted member of the Sydney DPC told the media:

We are just going through the motions of playing the collegial game. When the matter of the Pope’s visit has never been listed on the council’s agenda how can we believe the bishops take us seriously?¹⁶⁴

Professor Patrick O’Farrell, a scholar of labour history before moving into Catholic history, was equally critical:

The whole style of (Sydney) archdiocesan administration, evidences — despite the priests’ senate and pastoral council — no great progress in effectively implementing and operating Vatican II machinery to widen the process of consultation and decision-making within the Church.¹⁶⁵

Meanwhile, aware of the rumblings, the Senate of Priests vetoed any prospect that the laity be consulted about a possible successor. The most likely body for consultation, the DPC, perhaps unfairly, was judged to have ‘failed to prepare [for consultation] amongst the rest of church members’.¹⁶⁶ As is sometimes the case, a speculative media article on the cardinal’s successor was well off the mark. It named seven probable bishops/archbishops as contenders, including Bishop Muldoon, but omitted James Freeman, whom Rome would subsequently appoint.¹⁶⁷

In the first half of the 1970s, the DPC, with a change in personnel, reflected to some degree, the new archbishop’s interest in education for state school children and adult education. Frs Noel Molloy and Peter Neville went to America to gain a broader appreciation of lay education, and on return provided training for the laity

¹⁶⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November 1970, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ Patrick O’Farrell; ‘Protest without Anarchy: The Church in Australian History’, *Bulletin of Christian Affairs*, vol. 1, no 5, 1970, pp: 1-16.

¹⁶⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 December 1970. p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 December 1970.p. 13.

each weekend at Dundas.¹⁶⁸ Fr Doherty undertook post-graduate studies in adult education and returned in 1976 to establish the archdiocese's Catholic Adult Education Centre. The Institute of Counselling was also established, with former council member, Mrs Lewis, being an instrumental advocate.¹⁶⁹ The fruits of the DPC was seen across the archdiocese.

The new archbishop appeared less concerned with the DPC's direct role in social welfare activities. Perhaps, this was due to his deference to the emerging role of the Catholic Welfare Bureau, under the titular head of his close friend, the brilliant but unorthodox, Monsignor McCosker, who as the director of NSW Catholic Charities and founding secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Committee.¹⁷⁰

So, too, in the 1970s an expanding Catholic education office, under the mentorship of Archbishop James Carroll, was unlikely to have favoured close liaison with the DPC, despite that being the case in numerous other dioceses. In its *Quinquennial Report* to Rome in ca 1974, Cardinal Freeman noted that the DPC, which met bi-monthly was focused on religious education, and strategies to combat the rise of pornography and to combat the proposed Family Law Act.¹⁷¹ 'Parish renewal' was mentioned, but no details were furnished.¹⁷²

By that time also, Fr Neil Collins, formerly Cardinal Gilroy's private secretary and by then the president of St Patrick's Seminary at Manly, chaired the DPC. The council's new members, representatives of organisations, had an array of experience, but the passion of the original council appeared to be slipping. Nor perhaps was their encouragement to pursue the activities of previous years?

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Fr Noel Molloy, telephone, 17 August 2021.

¹⁶⁹ The late Patrick Lewis, says his mother, Mary, proposed to the DPC the establishment of the Institute of Counselling. See Patrick Glynn Lewis, 'Epilogue' in *Memoirs of Mary Lewis*, p. 190.

¹⁷⁰ Damian J. Gleeson, 'The foundation and first decade of the National Catholic Welfare Committee', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 85, January 2008, pp: 15-36.

¹⁷¹ Archdiocese of Sydney, *Quinquennial Report*, ca 1974, SAA.

¹⁷² *loc. cit.*

It is noteworthy that plans for a National Conference of the Laity, which came from several Sydney-based but non-DPC members, received only a small mention at the Sydney DPC in September 1975,¹⁷³ unlike archdioceses such as Adelaide, Brisbane and Hobart, whose respective DPCs played an instrumental role in developing topics and papers, and guiding the selection of delegates sent to the 1976 Conference.¹⁷⁴

Around this time, Fr Collins developed a serious illness, which would cost him his life in late 1978.¹⁷⁵ Whether this had an impact on the future of the DPC is unknown at this stage. It appears, on the basis of records yet to be seen that the Sydney DPC may have continued until ca 1980, though, if someone succeeded Fr Collins as chair, their identity remains (currently) unknown.¹⁷⁶ The reasons for the council's discontinuation, also are currently unknown.

Interestingly, the next archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Edward Clancy, who had a well-functioning DPC in Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, did not re-establish a similar council after his arrival in Sydney in May 1983.

6.4 Hobart

Tasmania may lay proud claim to having the most forward-thinking pastoral council in Australia in the decades immediately after Vatican 11. Indeed, it was one of few Australian dioceses that actively prepared for Vatican 11. First appointed as a bishop at the tender of age of 31, Archbishop Guilford Young was appointed Archbishop of Hobart in 1955. He created a 'real sense of enthusiasm' amongst the laity in the leadup to Vatican 11, through for example, all-night vigils

¹⁷³ Pastoral Council, Archdiocese of Sydney, Minutes of 63rd meeting, 1- September 1975 (5 pp). [These minutes are held at the Diocese of Toowoomba. The author thanks the archivist, Gabrielle Saide for identifying and supplying these minutes].

¹⁷⁴ Scanlon, 'How can laity'.

¹⁷⁵ Fr Collins died on 10 December 1978. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 1978.

¹⁷⁶ Advice from Sydney Archdiocesan Archivist, Lienntje Cornelissen, email, 19 August 2021.

to pray for the council's success.¹⁷⁷ From 1962-1965 the archbishop played a key role at the council.

Back in Hobart the archbishop set into train planning for a diocesan pastoral council, which held its first meeting on 28 October 1967.¹⁷⁸ While it was not Australia's first DPC, as some Tasmanian writers later claimed,¹⁷⁹ it was likely the largest with eight priests, eight religious, four person appointed by the archbishop, a representative from the advisory bodies of Liturgy, Education, Finance and Ecumenism, and a representative elected by each parish council.¹⁸⁰

Archbishop Young stated that the council's role was to '...investigate all aspects of pastoral work and make practical conclusions on such'.¹⁸¹ Clear and effective communication was another hallmark of Archbishop Young, who wrote in the *Catholic Standard*:

It is natural for us, particularly us Australian with our practical - matter of fact - minds to want detailed specifications for structures. This the [Vatican] Council did not give and this I am pleased it did not give. For this kind of [PDC] structure is new... let [it] grow in its own environment and out of its own life of the community it serves.¹⁸²

The archbishop spoke of potential blockages to effective pastoral administration:

...impersonalisation, paternalism and over-conservatism are weaknesses and evils that again and again eat into administrative effort.¹⁸³

In a sign of democratic overtures, the archbishop went further than the Vatican's view that pastoral councils be 'merely consultative'. Archbishop Young described the council, which consisted of seven priests, nine religious and twenty-two lay

¹⁷⁷ Telephone interview with Neville Brehens, 30 August 2021.

¹⁷⁸ Minutes of the First Meeting, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Hobart, 28 October 1967, Archdiocese of Hobart Archives (hereafter AHA).

¹⁷⁹ For the claim that Tasmania established the first DPC, see Sergio Giudici, 'Talk', p. 2. AHA; Fr Southerwood also incorrectly dates the first council from 1966.

¹⁸⁰ [Draft], Constitution of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, ca 1967, AHA.

¹⁸¹ Minutes of the First Meeting, AHAH.

¹⁸² *Catholic Standard*, 29 September 1967.

¹⁸³ *Catholic Standard*, 29 September 1967.

people – mainly parish representatives – ‘as a sort of a parliament for the Catholic Church in Hobart’.¹⁸⁴ In practical terms, this meant that the archbishop would allow decisions made in a secret ballot and with a two-thirds majority, even if he opposed the matter, and ‘...would only disregard the decision... if there was some reason he could not reveal’.¹⁸⁵ According to a council member from its inception, the respected Rhodes Scholar, Dr Sergio Giudici:

...on many occasions I knew that the archbishop’s view on matter was contrary to what was coming up in council – he kept his peace – and in fact, honoured the statement that he would not act contrary to the council’s wishes.

Other core members of the first Hobart council included his private secretary, Fr Dennis Quinn¹⁸⁶, a dynamic Catholic Women’s League president, Mrs Betty Picot, who convened the council’s management committee; Italian-born engineer, Dr Giudici, who chaired the sub-committee that analysed the work of Catholic support organisations in Tasmania,¹⁸⁷ and Peter Roach, a lawyer, who in 1970 became the council’s first lay chairman.¹⁸⁸ This later role enabled the archbishop to ‘preside’ and not be totally consumed with the charring responsibilities of the meeting.¹⁸⁹

Among the early issues the council examined were Catholic education and religious education of Catholic children in State schools, diocesan finances, clergy fees, adult education, young people in the church, and the importance of parish pastoral councils. In that era of transparency and collegiality, the DPC was not afraid to investigate a broad range of issues and make comments, internally and publicly, where appropriate. In the area of Catholic education, for example, in August 1968 the council recommended that:

¹⁸⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸⁶ Fr Quinn died relatively young in 1979.

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.soue.org.uk/souenews/issue2/personalia.html>

¹⁸⁸ *Catholic Standard*, 20 March 1970.

¹⁸⁹ Giudici, ‘Talk’, p. 2.

Catholic Schools of Tasmania publish accounts annually so as to give a public accounting for the application of grants by the State and Commonwealth from public moneys [sic].¹⁹⁰

Mrs Picot, a supporter of greater female involvement in the liturgy, asked that women be allowed to read at Mass and for teenagers to be altar servers in Catholic girls' boarding schools.¹⁹¹

In 1975 Neville Brehens succeeded Mr Roach as chair. Mr Brehens recalls that Archbishop Young showed considerable and consistent 'trust' in lay people, through sub-committees empowered to take on responsibilities and also the laity organising major events, such as the Liturgical Conferences of 1967 and 1969. Among the DPCs achievements, he says, was a parliamentary submission on victimless crime to the Tasmanian Parliament.¹⁹² The DPC flourished for many years because the archbishop recognised it as a 'very important body'; he gave it 'teeth and energy'.¹⁹³

Illness and age slowed Archbishop Young in the late 1980s, and after two decades some of the impetus of the DPC had eased. Nevertheless, things did not come to an (immediate) standstill as in some other dioceses. In 1984 a priests' assembly agreed to form a Diocesan Forward Planning Committee. Meanwhile another working party had commenced a review of the DPC. Following a successful assembly of 350 Tasmanian Catholics in 1976, three Regional Pastoral Councils were established: each one would provide three representatives for a 'reformation' of the DPC, planned to occur during 1988.¹⁹⁴ This momentum was curtailed by archbishop's death in March 1988, as renewal was not a priority of the next

¹⁹⁰ Minutes of the Sixth Meetings, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Hobart, 1 August 1968, AHA.

¹⁹¹ Minutes of the Second and third Meetings, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Hobart, 1968, AHA.

¹⁹² Interview with Neville Brehens, 30 August 2021.

¹⁹³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁹⁴ Most Reverend Guildford D Young, Archbishop of Hobart, *Quinquennial Report of the Archdiocese of Hobart, 1983-1987 for the Sacred Congregation of Bishops*, February 1988 [editorial notation: 'Completed by Archbishop Young before his death on 16 March 1988'], pp: 8-9.

archbishop. The DPC remained in abeyance for nearly two decades. Under Archbishop Adrian Doyle, an island-wide assembly was held in 2008. An attempt was then made to reconstitute a DPC, but it was unsuccessful. There has not been a DPC since.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the Hobart DPC (1967-1988) was a major success and exemplified what Archbishop Young's biographer meant:

Perhaps his greatest achievement was to inspire bishops, priests and lay people with the spirit and teachings of the council.¹⁹⁶

6.5 Adelaide

The Adelaide diocesan pastoral council set the country's benchmark in terms of an integrated approach to pastoral works, ecumenism, and social justice. It is noteworthy, also for its longevity (1968-2017) and having transitioned, fairly effortlessly, between four successive archbishops (Matthew Beovich, James Gleeson, Leonard Faulkner and Philip Wilson).¹⁹⁷ The council's peak, in terms of pastoral influence and merit, was during the Gleeson¹⁹⁸ and Faulkner eras, the later having the added experience of instituting and mentoring a pastoral council in the Diocese of Townsville for more than a decade before his appointment to Adelaide. Nevertheless, credit belongs to the aged Archbishop Beovich for founding the DPC at a time when Adelaide's nearest archdiocese, Melbourne, would not even consider such a move. So, too, the archbishop founded commissions for liturgy, ecumenism, and the Lay Apostolate Liaison Committee (LALC) which sought to foster co-operation amongst lay organisations across Adelaide.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Trish Hindmarsh, email to the author, 18 August 2021.

¹⁹⁶ W.T. Southerwood. 'Young, Sir Guilford Young Clyde (1916-1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 18, 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Archbishop Beovich, 1939-1971; Archbishop Gleeson, 1971-1985; Archbishop Leonard Faulkner, 1985-2001; Archbishop Philip Wilson, 2001-2018.

¹⁹⁸ Descended from an O'Glissane family of north Tipperary.

¹⁹⁹ David Shinnick, 'Parish Pastoral Councils: What of their future', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol 73, no. 4. 1996, pp: 439-447.

The first meeting of the diocesan Adelaide DPC, comprising eight lay women and two religious sisters out of a total of 30 members, was held on 31 March 1968 at St Francis Xavier's Seminary. Members, like the senate of priests, initially held three-year appointments,²⁰⁰ and included William Byrne, Dr Peter Davis, David Shinnick, and Fr Peter Travers. Archbishop Beovich acknowledged the unfamiliar territory for the pastoral council:

As the Bishops were at the commencement of the [Vatican] General Council, so we are apprentices in this Pastoral Council, but we will gradually find our feet.²⁰¹

The council's purpose and relationship with the archbishop and other diocesan groups was explained by his loyal co-adjutor, Archbishop Gleeson.²⁰²

While other some dioceses talked of *creating* a relationship between the DPC and the Senate of Priests, in Adelaide the bonds between clergy and laity were already close, and good working relationships quickly emerged between the two bodies. In the important area of parish councils, LALC representatives had already been meeting with a group from the priests' senate to 'facilitate the setting up of parish councils'.²⁰³ They were therefore building upon parish councils or committees that had been established by some clergy from the late 1950s.²⁰⁴

The first meeting reflected the council's broad-based role. In addition to consideration of lay people being appointed to commissions on sacred liturgy, ecumenism, music and arts, sites and architecture, the archbishop also raised the 'current controversy' interstate of 'proposed legislation to liberalise laws on abortion' for 'inevitably this problem will arise in South Australia'.²⁰⁵ In

²⁰⁰ Archdiocese of Adelaide, *1969 Quinquennial Report*, p. 11. AAA.

²⁰¹ Archbishop Matthew Beovich, Minutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Adelaide, 31 March 1968, AAA.

²⁰² Minutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Adelaide, 31 March 1968, AAA.

²⁰³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰⁴ Fr John Dobson, 'Changing Church', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no 4, 1996, pp. 415-421.

²⁰⁵ Minutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Adelaide, 31 March 1968, AAA.

subsequent meetings, a Newman Association sub-committee on ‘induced abortion’ provided detailed reports on the legislative and theological aspects.²⁰⁶

Archbishop Beovich insisted that new parish councils be called pastoral. His post-Vatican 11 focus on pastoral was to separate these councils from administrative and financial matters, notwithstanding their importance, which could be addressed by a finance committee. Indeed, in Adelaide in the decades after Vatican 11, financial and education issues were less likely to develop into silos as they became sub-committees of the DPC and integrated within the church’s broader pastoral activities.²⁰⁷

The momentum to lay leadership was exemplified by the appointments of three outstanding people: Bill Byrne, Brian Moylan and David Shinnick. Their main role was to foster “the lay apostolate,” to encourage Catholics to develop a greater sense of responsibility for spreading Christianity in the world, and to “form” them to carry out this mission.²⁰⁸

But not all matters gained consensus in those early days of the DPC. In late 1968, the Newman Association and Archbishop Beovich came to blows about the Papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In an attempt to reassert authority, the archbishop chose, perhaps unwisely, the end of a DPC meeting to send a message. The background was that Newman Association and its articulate spokesman, Dr Davis, a lecturer in clinical biology at the University of Adelaide and a delegate to the 1967 world congress on laity, had angered Archbishop Beovich with his candid public remarks that artificial birth control ‘had not been allowed to be discussed by the first meeting of the Synod of Bishops, the majority conclusion of the special commission had been rejected, and the resolution of the world congress of the laity had not even been acknowledged’.²⁰⁹ Dr Davis’s further criticism, reported in the

²⁰⁶ Minutes of Meeting, Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 30 June 1968, p.2. AAA.

²⁰⁷ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰⁸ *Southern Cross*, 24 February 1966, 3, cited in Josephine Laffin, ‘Sailing in Stormy Waters: Archbishop Matthew Beovich and the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide in the 1960s’, *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 34, iss. 3, 2010, p. 296.

²⁰⁹ *Canberra Times*, 15 August 1968, p. 4.

media²¹⁰, that ‘many Australians feel deeply disappointed and let down by the actions of the spokesmen for the Church in the past fortnight’,²¹¹ would have likely also sparked a reaction from Sydney’s Bishop Thomas Muldoon, who was the Australian bishops’ spokesman on *Humanae Vitae*. Archbishop Beovich warned Dr Davis that ‘if the Newman Association expects to receive recognition as an official body of the lay apostolate, it must accept the teaching of the Holy Father’.²¹² Officially, at least, the matter rested there in terms of not being formally on the DPC agenda²¹³ though the archbishop may have regretted that that he had publicly engaged in discord with Dr Davis.²¹⁴ This issue may have explained, in part, Mr Shinnick’s recollection of early meetings:

A common feeling after meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council was one of frustration, because we never seemed to be clear about the purpose of the Council, except in general terms. There was no doubt that a lot of personal formation and development of a broader diocesan perspective took place among members. But the Council was only advisory and lacked participation in any real decision making. It was not directly responsible either for its own recommendations. These seemed to be two weaknesses which kept it in a confused state.²¹⁵

In terms of parish pastoral councils, in the face of little information, a DPC sub-committee examined international models.

The problem encountered at all levels with Parish Councils is that the documents of Vatican 11 tell us what a Council is ‘for’ but do not give a clear formal definition of ‘what’ a Council is, not does it help in ‘how’ to set one up.²¹⁶

²¹⁰ Adelaide Advertiser, 14 August 1968, p. 3.

²¹¹ *Canberra Times*, 15 August 1968, p. 4

²¹² Minutes of Meeting, Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 15 September 1968, AAA.

²¹³ Archbishop Gleeson behind the scenes was a conduit for peace on the council. The archbishop’s secretary, Fr Peter Travers, who had carriage of the DPC agenda, also played an important role. Dr Laffin reports that Dr Davis left the DPC as a result.

²¹⁴ For a broader and deeper analysis of this and other issues in the 1960s see Laffin, *op. cit.*,

²¹⁵ David Shinnick, *Journey into Justice* (Adelaide, 1983), p. 28, cited in Laffin, *op. cit.* p. 298.

²¹⁶ Sub-Committee on Parish Council, report to Minutes of Meeting, Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 30 June 1968, AAA.

In 1969 the DPC gave careful and thorough preparation for setting up pastoral parish committees, 'which came into effect in 1970.'²¹⁷ So, too, Archbishop Gleeson, keen for the DPC not to become derailed on the contraception issue, sought to focus the council's attention on other pressing matters, such as migration²¹⁸ and to include specialists such as Fr Terry Holland, who had headed the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau since 1960.²¹⁹

Somewhat distinct from other perfunctory diocesan reports to Rome, Archbishop Gleeson was able to speak from direct experience when he commented that the Adelaide DPC '...has also helped to create a climate of opinion which makes possible a spirit and readiness for renewal'.²²⁰ An executive committee was comprised of lay people with the archbishop as nominal president

In 1977 the DPC covered a range of topics such as Religious education, social and charitable works, image of the church, concerns of justice and peace, formation of laity through small groups, vocations, parish life and ministry, especially to the poor and alienated.²²¹

By then there were 40 members on the DPC: elected by the Senate of priests, religious orders, by regional groups of parish councils, by the Lay Apostolate movements in the Archdiocese. In another first for Adelaide, all appointments were simply 'confirmed' by the archbishop. In 1982 Archbishop Gleeson reported that the DPC's key topics included various ministries, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and renewal programs at both diocesan and parish levels.²²² The Council also sponsored a social justice statement entitled 'House and Home': A Christian call for housing justice.' The Diocesan Renewal Effort was held in partnership with the Conference of Major Superiors and the Senate of Priests.

²¹⁷ Supplement of Report and Recommendations of the Parish Council sub-committee, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Notice of Meeting, 21 March 1969. AAA.

²¹⁸ Report on Migration Diocesan Pastoral Council, Notice of Meeting, 3 August 1969. AAA.

²¹⁹ For discussion of Fr Holland see Gleeson, 'The Foundation', *op. cit.*

²²⁰ Archdiocese of Adelaide, *1973-1977 Quinquennial Report*, p 5. AAA.

²²¹ *Loc. cit.*

²²² Archdiocese of Adelaide, *1982 Quinquennial Report*, AAA.

The Adelaide model encouraged the employment of lay advocates as it integrated pastoral care, social justice and ecumenism. It was not uncommon, therefore, for lay Catholics to participate in multi-faith events at a time when it would have been frowned upon, if not outright disallowed in many other dioceses.

Mr Shinnick was a prominent Adelaide layman. After a decade in the South Australian Public Service, Mr Shinnick became involved with the Catholic Social Studies Movement, The Newman Institute of Christian Studies, and the Young Christian Workers Movement. In 1965 he began employment as Assistant Secretary of the archdiocese's Newman Institute.²²³ In 1969, Mr Shinnick, described as the full-time secretary of the Christian Life Movement and Diocesan promoter of project compassion which assists overseas hunger campaigns and Austcare, addressed a combined men's fellowship organised by the Congregational Church.²²⁴ In 1972 he was South Australian chair of Action for World Development.²²⁵

Mr Shinnick was one of numerous lay people who helped the diocese implement the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, working on diocesan advisory bodies spanning liturgy, ecumenism, justice and peace, and the DPC.²²⁶ Indicative of Adelaide's culture of working harmoniously with other Christian denominations, Mr Shinnick represented Dr Beovich on the State Committee of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign and at the Australian Council of Churches.²²⁷

In the mid-1970s Adelaide responded enthusiastically to the first National Conference of Laity. Before the national event, Adelaide held a laity conference entitled 'Unity in Diversity'.²²⁸ From this event, credible research papers were produced and submitted to the national organising committee.²²⁹ [see Section 5 of

²²³ Briefing Note from Archdiocese of Adelaide to the author, August 2021.

²²⁴ *Victor Harbour Times*, 14 November 1969, p. 4.

²²⁵ *Victor Harbour Times*, 28 April 1972, p 3.

²²⁶ Shinnick, *Journey*.

²²⁷ *Victor Harbour Times*, 14 November 1969, p. 4.

²²⁸ Archdiocese of Adelaide, Laity Conference, 'Unity in Diversity,' 2-4 April 1976, AAA.

²²⁹ Minutes of the Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Council, 30 May 1976, AAA.

this Report] Disappointment in aspects of the national conference, especially the lack of ecumenical inclusion, led Mr Moylan, secretary of the pastoral council to be fairly strident in their feedback to a second Adelaide assembly, held in June 1976.²³⁰

Reflective of the close ties in Adelaide between pastoral and practical, Mr Shinnick had held the position of diocesan director of Project Compassion (1964-1972). This position extended to his involvement in the archdiocese's Life Campaigns (1963-1970), Life and Worship Congresses (1969, 1971 and 1974), the Anti-Abortion campaign (1968-1969), and Laity Congresses (1967, 1968). In the mid-1980s Mr Shinnick developed a diocesan approach to education in faith for adults, leading to the creation of the Adelaide College of Divinity, based at Flinders University.²³¹

The DPC and broader lay momentum continued after Archbishop Faulkner succeeded Archbishop Gleeson in 1985. Fr Denis Edwards and Mr Shinnick were engaged to develop a diocesan renewal program. Drawing on these, Archbishop Faulkner in 1988 presented a diocesan vision statement.²³² Archbishop Faulkner, says, Wilkinson:

pointed out that the priest and parish pastoral council, representing the bishop, had a key role in deciding on, supporting and forming Basic Ecclesial Communities.²³³

In 1981, Pope John Paul II conferred on David Shinnick the honour of Knight of St. Sylvester, and in 1996, he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to Church and Community.

In 2003 Archbishop Wilson succeeded Archbishop Faulkner. In the *2011-2017 Quinquennial Report*, the DPC had been streamlined to 12 women and 9 men, of whom a total of 16 were lay people.²³⁴ The council was chaired by Mrs Heather

²³⁰ Brian Moylan, Talk at the Adelaide Diocesan Assembly, 27 June 1976, AAA.

²³¹ Briefing Note *op. cit.*

²³² Father P.R. (Bob) Wilkinson, 'Adelaide's Basic Ecclesial Communities Project', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no 4, 1996, pp 448.

²³³ Wilkinson, 'Adelaide Basic Ecclesial', p. 451.

²³⁴ *2012-2017 Quinquennial Report*, Adelaide, p 15.

Carey, Chancellor of Adelaide Archdiocese, 2009-2019.²³⁵ At the hearings of the *Royal Commission* on 17 February 2017, Archbishop Wilson was the only bishop able to comment that a functioning DPC existed in his diocese, and that it met every six weeks.²³⁶ He did not make the point, or perhaps was unaware, that the Adelaide DPC was on the precipice of 50 years' continuous service to the community. Alas, this did not occur as Archbishop Wilson discontinued the DPC in November 2017. The re-establishment of a diocesan pastoral council is currently on the agenda of the Adelaide Archdiocese.²³⁷

6.6 Perth

The Archdiocese of Perth undertook detailed research and extensive consultation before it preceded to form its first Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) in 1972. On 17 June 1970 Archbishop Launcelot Goody first raised the matter of a DPC at a Senate of Priests meeting, at which the matter was allocated to be examined by the senate's pastoral activities committee. That committee resolved that some lay people be added to the analysis 'because of their Christian lives, not for what they were expert at'.²³⁸ While the archbishop was hopeful that the DPC could be established within 12 months, the pastoral activities committee felt longer time was required to research the experiences of other councils such as 'Adelaide, Brisbane²³⁹ and Auckland'.

A seminar involving clergy, nuns, and laity led to the establishment of a steering committee, involving:

²³⁵ <https://thesoutherncross.org.au/news/2019/01/30/retiring-chancellor-leaves-unique-imprint/>

²³⁶ *Royal Commission in Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Case Study 50.

²³⁷ <https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-people/archbishop-patrick-o-regan-dd/messages?article=40245>

²³⁸ n.a. 'Formation of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council in Perth', n.d. 4-page typescript, APA.

²³⁹ The reference to 'Brisbane' may have been a typo as the Archdiocese of Brisbane did not form a council until 1974. Perhaps Perth was drawing on the experience of *Parish Pastoral Councils* in the Archdiocese of Brisbane?

- Eight clerical members from the Pastoral Activities Committee
- One Christian Brother
- One religious sister
- Fourteen lay people.²⁴⁰

In a clear move away from other councils (e.g., Adelaide; Sydney), where most representatives represented a lay apostolate organisation, the Perth steering committee voted that the 22 pastoral people proposed for the council should not be appointed by the archbishop but be the ‘best people available...and not necessarily be chosen from existing organisations. However, if they were chosen from the ‘Zones’ [of the Archdiocese] and they did come from existing organisations’ that would be beneficial.²⁴¹

These twenty-two-lay people, with a least one representative from each of the eleven zones, would be joined by two religious priests, two diocesan priests, one brother, two sisters and Bishop Peter Quinn, Perth’s Auxiliary bishop²⁴² as ex-officio. Although there was heavy lay representation, and election occurred in local Catholic communities, the DPC’s mandate was clearly expressed as ‘advisory only’ to the archbishop. But unlike other dioceses, or perhaps benefiting from their experiences, the Perth ‘model’ placed emphasis on engagement across the archdiocese through an education campaign, which included a pastoral letter from the archbishop.²⁴³ By the end of 1971, parish pastoral councils were also strongly recommended.

6.7 Brisbane

The last archdiocese²⁴⁴ to establish a pastoral council was Brisbane (1974), though in some respects it was the most successful Australian council in its initial decades. Considerable energy was brought to fruition and evident in Brisbane,

²⁴⁰ ‘Formation’, p. 1.

²⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴² Bishop of Bunbury, 1982-2000.

²⁴³ ‘Formation’, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ Excludes Melbourne.

where the meetings of the diocesan pastoral council from the 1970s demonstrated a desire by members to explore a full range of matters impacting people's faith, welfare, and society. Each meeting seemed to have a special 'character' as they considered enthusiastically a multitude of contemporary issues impacting family, the church, and the broader community. The diocesan council worked effectively in tandem with parish pastoral councils (PPCs).

Indeed, unlike many dioceses, the Brisbane Archdiocese had a solid track record of promoting the establishment of and supporting PPCs through a co-ordinating committee *before* the establishment of a diocesan steering committee that led to the formation of a pastoral council (DPC).²⁴⁵ Thus, there were 40 PPCs in operation across Brisbane when Archbishop Francis Rush announced the formation of a DPC in March 1974. A central plank of the DPC was to mentor thriving pastoral councils in every parish as well as to be an effective co-ordinating body.²⁴⁶

In a pastoral letter, which was prominently republished in the *Catholic Leader*, the archbishop articulated his vision for the council. Drawing on the words of the late Pope Pius XI, the archbishop noted that 'lay men and women must grow in the conviction not so much that they belong to the Church, but that they ARE the church'²⁴⁷. The archbishop said:

The setting up of a Pastoral Council in a diocese, whose people did not see themselves as an integral, responsible part of the church would be just as meaningless as any other off-handed gesture made out of deference to the expressed wishes of the Second Vatican Council.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ T.A. Hegerty, Report from the Secretariat', Fourth meeting of the Archdiocese Pastoral Council, 1975, Archdiocese of Brisbane Archives (hereafter ABA).

²⁴⁶ Cecilia Anning, *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils*, Third Edition, (Brisbane, 2007)), p. 74.

²⁴⁷ Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Special, *Catholic Leader*, 24 March 1974. See also *Catholic Leader*, 3 March, 1974. [Caps in original]

²⁴⁸ *Catholic Leader*, 24 March 1974, p. 1. [Caps in original]

Archbishop Rush emphasised that:

Its members – lay people, religious and priests gathered around the bishop – will be concerned with the TOTAL mission of the church. A Pastoral Council is not just another gimmick.²⁴⁹

Central, also, to the Brisbane model was close communication and sharing of ideas across Catholic organisations working in the archdiocese. Finance and welfare arms of the archdiocese, while separate entities, provided regular reports to the council. A secretariat led by the diligent and energetic Fr Tom Hegerty²⁵⁰, addressed matters and represented both the council within the church and to many external stakeholders, notably government leaders.²⁵¹ In this respect, the Brisbane council reflected a similar path as Adelaide and Hobart in being a living witness in a rapidly changing external landscape. Other dioceses, such as Sydney, briefly engaged in ecumenical work in the inner-city area, but essentially its DPC remained inward looking when it came to entering social policy debates, which reflected the style of Cardinal Gilroy.

The Brisbane DPC in the 1970s operated differently from other diocesan councils in so far it met twice a year in an almost *assembly format*, serviced by the secretariat and an effective executive committee, which met monthly. At DPC meetings, delegates reflected not just a willingness to listen to speakers but a desire for engagement through discussion and debate.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁵⁰ Fr Hegerty (sometimes incorrectly spelt Hegarty) died on 10 July 2000. He was the longstanding Parish Priest of Our lady of Lourdes, Parish, Sunnybank.

²⁵¹ Fr Hegerty had also benefited by being the archbishop's observer at a meeting of the Rockhampton DPC in early 1972.

²⁵² Extracted from the Minutes of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, 1974-1976

Table 5: Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Brisbane, 1974-1979²⁵³

Year	Main issues/Advocacy
1973	Co-ordinating Pastoral Councils Committee
1974	Liturgy, Ecumenism. Education, 'Family Life Today'; Parish Pastoral Councils education, Family Law Bill
1975	Training days: 'Role of laity in the Church', research focus on Vatican 11,
1976	Training days; <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act</i>
1977	Outreach to migrants
1978	Youth Unemployment
1979	Abortion legislation

Soon after becoming Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane in 1982, E.J. (James) Cuskelly MSC, was appointed head of pastoral planning for the Brisbane Archdiocese. Unlike his fellow MSC colleague, Bishop Kelly of Toowoomba, Bishop Cuskelly had an enriched vision for the role of the laity. In a contextualised speech in 1988, Bishop Cuskelly spoke of the obstacles to enhanced lay involvement in the church:

Firstly, there were 'too many priests' – and, secondly, there was not a strong sense of a 'changing church' with the conviction that all were called to contribute positively to the change. Slowly people began to sense the need for change... a significant moment occurred last year when the Priests' Council studied some facts and figures of the Archdiocese, concerning the increase in population and the proportionate lack of priests.²⁵⁴

Arising from the Priests' Council study, more than 140 Brisbane priests met at Banyo in 1987. This meeting's most significant recommendation was for an archdiocesan assembly, which Archbishop Rush and Bishop Cuskelly responded to with enthusiasm. Fr Brian Traynor CP was appointed co-ordinator of 'Witness to the Future', a successful 1989 Archdiocesan Assembly, which resulted in 53

²⁵³ Extracted from Minutes of Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, 1974-1979, ABA. [The Minutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council from 1980-ca 1994 are regrettably missing.]

²⁵⁴ Bishop E.J. Cuskelly, 'Pastoral Planning in a Changing Church', speech, forum, 9-10 July 1988, ABA.

proposals/recommendations, including reaffirming the diocesan pastoral council as ‘a principal body for collaboration, dialogue and discernment’.²⁵⁵

In December 1991 Archbishop Rush retired. One of the major legacies of his outstanding leadership had been an effective DPC and an inclusive relationship between clergy, religious and laity. Throughout the 1990s pastoral planning remained a priority in the Brisbane Archdiocese. The highly regarded Josephite, Cecilia Anning, who had been a formative pastoral care member in several parishes, including Sunnybrook, brought valuable perspectives to a diocesan role. In 1994, Sr Cecilia of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Secretariat published the first of several editions of the *Handbook of Parish Pastoral Councils*.²⁵⁶ This publication was adopted in other parts of Australia, and Sr Cecilia played a much-valued role in supporting pastoral councils in a number of dioceses, such as Sale.²⁵⁷

By 1995 Brisbane’s pastoral council had transitioned into a diocesan pastoral planning committee within the Centre for Church Life and Mission.²⁵⁸ The eleven committee members comprised five clerics, three lay men and three lay women, including an executive secretary and Bishop Cuskelly as vicar. A few years later pastoral work for deaneries and parishes came under an Office for Deaneries and Parish Pastoral Councils.

In 2000, when he announced plans for a Synod, Archbishop Bathersby was ‘excited’ to establish an ‘Archbishop’s Pastoral Council’.²⁵⁹ At the first council meeting, Archbishop John Bathersby stated:

²⁵⁵ Brisbane Archdiocesan Assembly 1989, Papers, ABA.

²⁵⁶ The second edition was co-authored with Ellen Mallon (1994) and the third edition by Cecilia Anning (2007).

²⁵⁷ Owing to ill health it was not possible to interview Sr Cecilia. The Sisters of St Joseph (Queensland Region) kindly authorised release of the following biographical information. Sr Cecilia was engaged in parish pastoral ministry from 1986 to 1994. She was then appointed to a diocesan role.

²⁵⁸ Fr Ron McKiernan, Chairman, Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Committee, letter to Archbishop Bathersby, 11 July 1995, ABA.

²⁵⁹ Statement by Archbishop Bathersby, Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting, Archbishop’s

Archbishop Rush came back from Vatican 11 imbued with the spirit of Vatican 11 and he saw parish pastoral councils as a visible expression of this spirit. We have had gatherings of parish pastoral councils but not broad-based forum of advice that would allow for broad representation by the members of the Archdiocese to discuss issues and give advice to the Archbishop.²⁶⁰

According to the historical evidence, the second part of this statement was incorrect, and unfairly understated Archbishop Rush's leadership support for a DPC. It appears strange that Archbishop Bathersby did not know of the existence of the former DPC and its secretariat, which had undertaken extensive and 'broad-based' pastoral work for more two decades.

The new Archbishop's [not Archdiocesan] council, with a 'consultative role', included one lay person elected by each of the ten deaneries.²⁶¹ A larger number of mainly clergy were appointed by the archbishop, while the heads of Catholic organisations, such as Education, Centacare, Church Life and Mission, and Archdiocesan Services would also be ex-officio members in attendance.²⁶² While the council brought together people with 'particular experiences and backgrounds' they 'did not have any accountability back to those who had nominated them'.²⁶³ The relationship between the pastoral council and the council of priests was raised by concerned lay members. Any major changes in the 'mission' of the archdiocese would require discussion and approval by the Council of Priests, which, some lay members expressed as 'very frustrating'.

The 2003 Archdiocesan Synod was a success. Sr Cecilia Anning RSJ reflected:

... pastoral councillors have assisted with the Let Your Light Shine Review of Synod initiatives, which has provided an overview of the wide range of good works being done across the archdiocese together with a review of what has been achieved so far.

Pastoral Council, 18 November 2000, ABA.

²⁶⁰ Minutes, Archbishop's Pastoral Council, 18 November 2000, ABA.

²⁶¹ Archbishop's Pastoral Council, Terms of Reference, May 2000. ABA.

²⁶² *Loc. cit.*

²⁶³ Statement by executive director, Church Life and Mission at the 18 November 2000 Meeting, ABA.

Ongoing Pastoral Planning within the archdiocesan and deanery framework provides a clear focus for the good works throughout the parishes across the archdiocese.²⁶⁴ The early Brisbane diocesan pastoral council, as briefly overviewed in this case study, was a standout success and is deserving of further examination by historians of the Brisbane Archdiocese and the wider Australian church.

6.8 Melbourne

The Archdiocese of Melbourne was the only Australian archdiocese not to create a DPC. In other aspects of lay involvement and pastoral care, Melbourne has had an impressive track record. Archbishop Sir Frank Little was acutely aware of the pastoral challenges facing families and parishes, as well as a looming shortage of clerics. In 1990 he established the Catholic Research Office for Pastoral Planning (CROPP) to assist in providing specialist advice.

In 1992 Archbishop Little appointed a task group to advise him about the future of pastoral leadership in the archdiocese.²⁶⁵ The thirteen-member group, chaired by Bishop Joseph O'Connell, produced an informative report, entitled *Tomorrow's Church: A Plan for Leadership*,²⁶⁶ which among other attributes, led to the formation of a Pastoral Leadership Board consisting of eight people.²⁶⁷ A real sense of responsibility prevailed, and deaneries work in active unison.²⁶⁸ A focus on parishes and deaneries, led to the writing of *Parish Pastoral Councils: Guidelines and Resources* (1996)²⁶⁹, with strong endorsement from Archbishop Little.

²⁶⁴ Cecilia Anning, *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils*, Third Edition, 2007 (Brisbane).

²⁶⁵ Robert Dixon, 'Australian Catholics in a time of change', *Compass: A review of topical Theology*, vol. 29, Summer 1995, p 12. [Thanks to Dr Dixon for making this report and other documents available to the author].

²⁶⁶ Pastoral Leadership task Force, *Tomorrow's Church Report :a plan for leadership*, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, 1994. [Available at the State Library of Victoria.]

²⁶⁷ Archbishop Frank Little, letter of introduction, 1 March 1994, inserted in *Tomorrow's Church Report*.

²⁶⁸ *Network 25: the Newsletter for Deaneries*, August 1994.

²⁶⁹ ISBN 1 86420 069 3.

One of the clear requests from parishes, which I accepted as part of the *Tomorrow's Church report* was the development and support of Parish Pastoral Councils.²⁷⁰

However, this publication was not 'promulgated' when a change of bishop occurred. Melbourne remains the only archdiocese in Australia never to have set up a diocesan pastoral council.

²⁷⁰ Foreword (letter) by Archbishop Little in *Parish Pastoral Councils: Guidelines and Resources* (Pastoral Leadership Board, Archdiocese of Melbourne, 1996).

7.0 Dioceses

7.1 Overview of Diocesan Pastoral Councils

In the early years after Vatican 11, pastorals councils were first established in the Queensland dioceses of Rockhampton (1971) and Townsville (1973). The only continuously operating DPC, 1994 to the present day is Maitland-Newcastle.

Table 6: Diocesan Pastoral Councils

Diocese	DPC planning commenced	DPC established	DPC (first) ceased to operate)	DPC re- established
Ballarat	1994	1994	ca. 2003	Ca 2018
Broken Bay	1995	1996	2013	No
Maitland- Newcastle	1990	1991	n/a/	Ongoing
Parramatta	ca 1986	ca 1987	Ca 1997	2018
Port Pirie	2010	2011	2020	2021
Sale	1995	1996	Ca 2008	No
Sandhurst	2004	2004	2010	No
Townsville	1972	1973	Unk.	Unk.
Toowoomba	1980	1980	ca. 1990	1999
Wollongong	ca. 1997	ca. 1997	2002	No

7.2 Ballarat

The Ballarat Diocese had been firmly unconvinced of the need for Vatican 11. In 1959, for example, Bishop James O'Collins of Ballarat remarked:

The state of the Church is so healthy in this place that there is no need for me to get involved in the arguments which will arise in the future Council. I have discussed this with senior prudent priests who advise that it is unheard of to review the workings of the Church.²⁷¹

Nevertheless, his successor, Bishop Ronal Austin Mulkearns, on the issue of lay participation, showed good insight amongst the Victorian hierarchy, when during his first year at Ballarat (1971), Bishop Mulkearns published a handbook for parish pastoral councils (PPC).²⁷² In parishes such as Warrnambool, where there was support for improving communication and also a more integrated approach to pastoral care, the PPC published a parish directory.²⁷³

It is unclear at this time of research if a DPC was considered in the 1970s or 1980s. The first known DPC commenced in 1994.²⁷⁴ Unlike some dioceses, the Ballarat DPC survived the transition from one bishop to another. Peter J. Connors, who had been a vicar general of Melbourne and a bishop since 1987, was appointed to Ballarat in May 1997: the council continued for several years, but it eventually ceased, though not from a lack of 'energy' of the lay faithful. In recent years, Ballarat's Bishop Paul Bird CSR has reconstituted a DPC²⁷⁵, but its operations, like so many church and civil functions, has been constrained by exogenous forces outside of the church's control, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting

²⁷¹ Cited in Walsh, *op. cit.*

²⁷² See also R.A. Mulkearns, 'The scope for canon law in a frontier church situation' *Tjurunga*, no.15, May 1978, p.39-46.

²⁷³ *St Joseph's, Warrnambool Parish Directory* (St. Joseph's Parish Pastoral Council, Warrnambool, 1988).

²⁷⁴ Interview with Vicar General, Fr Kevin Maloney, 20 August 2021

²⁷⁵ <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/pastoral/diocesan-pastoral-council/>

significant periods of lockdown that continue to impact Victoria at this time of writing.

7.3 Broken Bay

Broken Bay is one of the youngest dioceses in Australia. Unfortunately, by the time it and Parramatta Dioceses were created in 1986, the once vibrant DPC of their ‘mother’ diocese, Sydney, had ceased to exist. In 2005, when Bishop David Walker, the second bishop of Broken Bay, sought to establish a DPC, he met resistance from a church operations group.²⁷⁶ Despite this, Bishop Walker persisted and in 2006 a DPC for Broken Bay Diocese was created. It continued until the bishop’s retirement (2013) but has not operated under the two subsequent bishops.²⁷⁷

7.4 Geraldton

In the 1960s, when new Catholic parishes were being created in the vast rural Diocese of Geraldton (Western Australia), parish councils, elected by parishioners, played pivotal roles in supporting such establishment.²⁷⁸ By the mid-1970s they were titled ‘parish pastoral councils’.²⁷⁹ The Diocese of Geraldton has never had a Diocesan Pastoral Council, ‘essentially as it is so geographically large with huge distances between parishes making it nigh impossible to have meetings’.²⁸⁰ Another relevant factor that has mitigated against a DPC is that many mining towns in the northwest portion of the diocese have a transient population and there is little or no identity with the diocese. Nevertheless, in the past three decades, the bishops had held diocesan pastoral conferences at various times.²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of the Church Operations Group, Broken Bay Diocese, 2005.

²⁷⁷ Telephone interview with Fr David Ranson, Vicar General, Diocese of Broken Bay, 19 August 2021.

²⁷⁸ *Beverley Times* (Western Australia), 21 November 1969, p. 2; *Ibid.* 3 June 1976, p. 2.

²⁷⁹ *Beverley Times* (Western Australia), 12 December 1974, p. 2.

²⁸⁰ Fr Robert Cross, Chancellor, Diocese of Geraldton, email to the author, 24 August 2021.

²⁸¹ *Loc. cit.*

7.5 Maitland-Newcastle

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is an outstanding example of a diocese that understood and implemented the spirit of lay participation post-Vatican 11. For nearly 40 years this diocese has had a continuous DPC that has created an underlying sense of unity and represents an applaudable achievement in the Australian Catholic Church. A strong consultative and reflective approach preceded and influenced the diocese's establishment of a DPC in 1994. This staged approach began in the late 1980s when the diocese's Council of Priests established a pastoral planning committee, whose main brief was to survey pastoral needs on a parish basis, in the face of challenges, including a shortage of priests.²⁸² In doing so, this committee, astutely recognised the need to have more inclusive membership, i.e., lay representation. The diocese undertook a comprehensive survey of priests, laity and organisations, and amongst the feedback was the need for a DPC, operating with a 'clear mandate'. However, during this consultation at least one priest noted:

I do not think we can have a successful Assembly until (1) we establish Parish Pastoral Councils and (2) we establish deanery relationships, not just with the priests but also the people, where both are prepared to work side by side. There seems to be a reluctance by some priests to let people fulfil their baptismal mission.²⁸³

A resulting report on parishes, organisations and communities recommended to Bishop Leo Clarke in August 1990, recommended the establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee (DPPC), and the appointment of an executive secretary. Subsequently, a Sister of St Joseph, Patricia Egan was appointed to

²⁸² Sr Patricia Egan RSJ, 'Pastoral Planning in Maitland-Newcastle Diocese: Signs of Life and Hope', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no 4, 1996, p. 422-423.

²⁸³ Cited in 'Diocese of Maitland, Pastoral Planning, Final Report, Review of Diocesan Parishes, Organisations and Communities', 20 June 1990, DMNA.

that role, which she executed professionally.²⁸⁴ The DPPC comprised six lay people, three religious and three priests.²⁸⁵

Concurrently, the diocese continued to proceed towards a diocesan synod, with the DPPC playing a leading role. In an Australian-first, the synod was held over *two* stages, 1992 and 1993, and attracted 160 delegates. The synod established teams to make reports and recommendations for:

- Faith Development of Adults
- Faith Development of Children
- Spiritual and Pastoral needs of Youth and Young Adults
- Spiritual and Pastoral needs of Those Not Actively Involved in the Church
- Minority Groups, Those in Poverty, Those Who Suffer Discrimination and the Alienated

The synod's reports and recommendations were presented at the second session, again, something unusual in the Australian church. As a result of such detailed planning, a Diocesan Pastoral Plan was published, which included clear recommendations for pastoral councils at parish and deanery levels, and their relationships with an intended DPC.²⁸⁶

As a result, a DPC was formally established and held its first meeting on 30 April 1994. It consisted of 13 members: bishop, vicar-general, a priest elected by the diocesan clergy, co-ordinator of the diocesan pastoral team, one religious orders' representative, one lay representative from each of the six deaneries and two delegates appointed by the bishop.

²⁸⁴ 'Diocese of Maitland, Steps towards the establishment of a diocesan pastoral planning committee and the appointment of an executive secretary for that committee', MSS.
Bishop Clarke correspondence, 22 November 1990, DMNA.

²⁸⁵ Egan, 'Pastoral Planning', pp: 422-423.

²⁸⁶ Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, *Diocesan Pastoral Plan*, adopted by the 1992-93 Diocesan Synod, DMNA.

Under the subsequent leadership of Bishop Michael Malone several diocesan-wide assemblies were held, such as in 1997 and 2000. Only ‘minimal changes’ to the original diocesan pastoral plan occurred as a result.²⁸⁷

In 2018 Bishop Bill Wright reconfigured the DPC into a Council for Mission, which ‘fulfils the canonical role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council’.²⁸⁸

The council’s underlying philosophy is that:

People will be chosen and called, because of their specific gifts. The intention is that the Council be a representative group not a group of representatives. By building up a sense of trust and unity among all peoples, the diocese will be recognised as a visible and credible sign and instrument of communion with God and so fulfil its mission.²⁸⁹

In 2021 the Maitland-Newcastle Council for Mission has a total of 28 members (including ex-officio), which appears large by contemporary governance standards, but with understandable good measure. The Maitland-Newcastle experience has demonstrated that a one size for all DPCs is not always the most appropriate or efficient model for Australian dioceses. The belief that a parish-regional-diocesan structure is the preferred model may be offset by consideration about a. the availability of the best qualified people to be on the DPC and b. a realisation that volunteers have limited time and to expect people to attend up to three meetings (depending on the roles) in a confined timeframe is unrealistic.²⁹⁰

At the time of writing, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is one of the eve of having a well-functioning DPC, operating for nearly 40 years, continuously. Apart

²⁸⁷ Bishop Michael Malone, Introduction to revised *Diocesan Pastoral Plan* (Newcastle, August 2000), DMNA.

²⁸⁸ Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/about/pastoral-planning/council-for-mission/>

²⁸⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁹⁰ These themes emerged from a discussion with the Chancellor of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Reverend Matthew Muller, and are also drawn from the author’s review of documents provided by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

from the Archdiocese of Adelaide, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has proven to be at the forefront of pastoral care overseen by a DPC.

7.6 Parramatta

The Catholic Diocese of Parramatta was established in 1986 under the leadership of Bishop Bede Heather, from a well-respected family of the Strathfield Parish, noted for being a strong reservoir of vocations.²⁹¹ There is a ‘general consensus’ that Bishop Heather created a DPC at Parramatta, but no specific date could be confirmed due to the Covid-19 lockdown.²⁹² The date his council ceased is also unknown, but it was not later than the bishop’s retirement in 1997. A DPC did not operate during the tenure of his two immediate predecessors.

Upon his appointment in 2017 as the fourth bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long OFM, commenced a renewal of pastoral focus, which included the formation of pastoral councils at deanery and diocesan levels in 2018.²⁹³ In 2021, also, the Parramatta Diocese, in an apparent Australian-first, undertook a comprehensive governance review.²⁹⁴

7.7 Port Pirie

The Diocese of Port Pirie (named Port Augusta when created in 1888)²⁹⁵ is a vast rural diocese encompassing most of South Australia:

There are the communities of the Riverland, those of the Mid North, the far North, the urban communities around the Gulf, those of Eyre Peninsulas and west Coast. Each community has a somewhat different profile.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Damian J. Gleeson, *Faith, Hospitality and Service: St Martha’s Catholic Parish, Strathfield, 1916-2016* (Strathfield, 2016).

²⁹² Advice from Parramatta Diocesan Archivist to the author, email, 19 August 2021.

²⁹³ *Review of Governance, Diocese of Parramatta, June 2020-February 2021*, <https://parracatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Governance-Report-A4.pdf>

²⁹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

²⁹⁵ *Christian Colonist*, 13 July 1888, p 3; *The Recorder*, 8 August 1951, p. 1

²⁹⁶ Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ to members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, 14 October 2010, Diocese of Port Pirie Archives (hereafter DPPA).

In the last quarter century Port Pirie has taken positive strides in co-ordinating pastoral ministry and drawing together, whilst respecting individual characteristics, its diverse constituent communities. In 1997 Bishop Peter De Campo formed a *Jubilee 2000 Commission*. After 2000, Bishop Eugene Hurley continued this commission as a Diocesan Life Commission, with a focus on the development of diocesan strategic plans and planning of annual diocesan assemblies which have played a significant part in the development of a great spirit in the diocese.²⁹⁷ Successful assemblies have been held in 2006 and 2011. Also arising from the Diocesan Life Commission was a strong desire to create a diocesan pastoral council. In a letter to members of the proposed council Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ noted:

In our diocese, with its great distances, we have in a way several communities called together to be Church. We are a far-flung diocese, and our Diocesan Pastoral Council must reflect that, as we must also reflect various ministries undertaken as part of the Church, and we must be able to have male and female, young and old.²⁹⁸

The DPC first met on 12 February 2011. In recognition of the vast distances and the difficulties of getting people together the diocese moved to have less frequent DPC meetings and to create vicariate or regional pastoral councils (RPCs) in the four regions of The Riverland, The North, The Cathedral and The West (Eyre Peninsula).

Each Region will set up a Regional pastoral Council according to the context and capacity of the region. There is no 'one size fits all' structure.²⁹⁹

Through these RPCs the aim was to develop more effective communication and co-ordination at a diocesan level, including the sharing of resources through council meetings, combined programmes, gatherings, assemblies, and networks for

²⁹⁷ Advice from Archivist of Port Pirie, Greg Slattery to the author, 2 August 2021. Thanks also to the Vicar General, Fr James Monaghan, for helpful background discussion.

²⁹⁸ O'Kelly, 14 October 2010.

²⁹⁹ 'Reconfiguring the Pastoral Council of the Port Pirie Diocese', 2-page MSS, 17 November 2012, DPPA.

spirituality, retreats, liturgy, RCIA, ecumenical relations, social justice and youth ministry.³⁰⁰

In 2015 the DPC had 28 members, including 8 members representing the regions.³⁰¹ In May 2021, the twelfth bishop of Port Pirie, Bishop Karol Kulczycki SDS announced a new DPC to meet four times a year, consisting of Bishop, vicar-general, two priests and up to six lay people.

7.8 Rockhampton

Rockhampton did not rush, nor shy away from the importance of pastoral councils, but it took several years and a fair amount of cajoling at parish and regional levels before a diocesan pastoral council came to fruition in December 1971. Importantly, Rockhampton has the distinction of being the first non-metropolitan diocese to establish a pastoral council.³⁰²

The history of the Rockhampton DPC dates to the foundation meeting of the diocese's Senate of Priests in April 1967:

Pastoral Councils: Discussion of this hinged on Article 27 of Decree on Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church. It was suggested it would be unwise to hurry into this when already structures exist covering its field. Common opinion was we should leave such a Council until we feel we need it.³⁰³

Bishop Francis Rush and some clergy were not dissuaded, however, towards the end of 1967, the bishop brought to the senate's attention that 'Parish Councils should be formed as soon as possible'³⁰⁴ and by May 1968 deaneries and parish

³⁰⁰ 'The Pastoral Council of the Port Pirie Diocese, Diocesan and Regional, Hopes for a reconfigured diocesan pastoral council', 3-page MSS, 13 December 2012, DPPA.

³⁰¹ Diocesan Pastoral Council, List of members, April 2015, DPPA.

³⁰² In this respect, Rockhampton preceded the larger Archdiocese of Brisbane by three years. The Diocese of Townsville commenced a DPC in 1973. Queensland dioceses therefore were more advanced in respect to DPCs than the southern states of NSW and Victoria.

³⁰³ Minutes of the Senate of the Diocese of Rockhampton, 12 April 1967, RDA. [Underlining in original document].

³⁰⁴ Minutes of the Senate of the Diocese of Rockhampton, 15 November 1967, RDA.

councils were asked for advice on the ‘membership, pattern and functions of the proposed Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC).’³⁰⁵ While deaneries discussed the merits and scope of DPC, the senate resolved again that ‘parish councils’ were a ‘necessity’.³⁰⁶

In May 1969 the senate agreed that the formation of *regional* parish pastoral councils may be a staging point before moving to a diocesan pastoral council.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, two deaneries opposed the decision, believing regional councils were ‘impracticable’, preferring instead to move straight to a DPC.³⁰⁸

In the Rockhampton deanery (region), a steering committee was led by Fr John Leahy, who already had an impressive reputation for his pioneering leadership in the establishment of the co-operative movement (credit unions) in Rockhampton.³⁰⁹ Fr Leahy’s enthusiasm and a supportive steering committee planned a convention for late 1969, with a focus on educating laity, religious, and clergy about the benefits of pastoral councils. However, support for the convention was indifferent with a low response in terms of registering for attendance: only 5 out of 15 parishes replied; 5 out of 35 priests; 1 out of 5 community of brothers; 3 out of 15 religious sisters’ convents; and, of 252 lay people then involved in parish councils, only 47 expressed interest, including 30 from a single parish.³¹⁰ The committee cancelled the proposed convention due to a lack of support.³¹¹

Despite the setback, the vision of a DPC remained. In January 1970, Bishop Rush approved distribution of a discussion paper, which included an excellent lecture

³⁰⁵ Secretary of Rockhampton Senate to Deaneries, letter, 31 May 1968, RDA.

³⁰⁶ Rockhampton Diocesan Senate, Minutes of the Fourth Meeting, 20 November 1968, RDA.

³⁰⁷ Rockhampton Diocesan Senate, Minutes of the Fifth Meeting, 31 May 1969, RDA.

³⁰⁸ Rockhampton Diocesan Senate, Minutes of the Sixth Meeting, 12 November 1969; Minutes of the Steering Committee, Regional Pastoral Council, Wandal, 12 June 1970, RDA.

³⁰⁹ ‘The Capricornia’s proud history’, <https://cqtoday.com.au/news/2020/12/29/the-capricornians-proud-history/>

³¹⁰ (Rev.) J. M. Leahy, Report of Pastoral Council Steering Committee to Rockhampton Deanery, ca September 1969, RDA.

³¹¹ *Loc. cit.*

by English priest, Fr Michael Fannon, which was originally published in the *Catholic Herald* (4 May 1968).³¹² Fr Leahy, with the bishop's endorsement, played a key role in setting up the DPC. Some 45 delegates attended the first meeting of Rockhampton's DPC on the weekend of 4-5 December 1971.³¹³ Bishop Rush expressed:

To talk of limits to what you may discuss, is to my mind, idle. As I see it, nothing concerning the life of the Church, nothing touching the life of the people of Central Queensland, is excluded from your consideration and concern. This Pastoral Council of which you are members has to do with the total mission of the Church. You will reflect on the actual situation of the People of God in Central Queensland, the problems that face them, the needs they should answer. You will assess the value of what has been done, the steps that should be taken to do what has not been done. The Pastoral Council is the whole Diocese in miniature facing its task of making Christ present in every human situation.³¹⁴

At the council's second meeting, Bishop Rush emphasised:

The Council you and I envisage will not be negative, stagnant and complacent, but positive, dynamic and never completely satisfied with itself.³¹⁵

In September 1972 the senate's secretary, Fr C.L. Ballard, supported by Fr Leahy, the DPC secretary, gained support for lay representation from all parishes on the proposed DPC.³¹⁶ The initial focus would be 'Aboriginals [sic], Youth and the Family'. Another early focus was promotion of vocations to the priesthood and the

³¹² Fr Fannon's lecture was reprinted in 'Towards a Pastoral Council', MSS. Rockhampton, January 1970. Newspaper article [Catholic], 'Inaugural Meeting of Diocesan Pastoral Council: Report to the People, n.d. [ca December 1971], RDA.

³¹³ Rockhampton Diocesan Senate, Notice of December 1971 Meeting, 5 November 1971, RDA.

³¹⁴ Bishop Rush, quoted in *ibid.*

³¹⁵ Minutes of the Meeting of the Rockhampton Diocesan Pastoral Council, 15-16 April 1972, RDA.

³¹⁶ Rockhampton Diocesan Senate, Minutes of the Twelfth Meeting, 14 September 1972, RDA.

religious life. The DPC in May 1972 affirmed that the success of a plan to increase vocations was ‘entirely dependent on response from parish councils’.³¹⁷

In its formative years the DPC struggled to some extent. Bishop Rush in the last meeting before he left to become Archbishop of Brisbane noted that the DPC elaborated policy but ‘its efficacy is maimed unless it is paralleled in the parishes by Parish Councils that are real and operative. Quite a number of parishes either do not have a Council or have a Council that is relatively ineffective’.³¹⁸

The Rockhampton DPC under Bishop Bernard Wallace took up the clear vision of Bishop Rush and overcame the tyranny of distance between parishes, regions and the diocese.³¹⁹ The DPC was at its most effective when practical resolutions reflected the advice from parishes/regions and what could be readily implemented on a local level. Under Bishop Wallace the DPC evolved into being governed by a 16-person executive. The bishop, 4 representatives from each of the 6 regions (deaneries), 4 representatives of the bishop, and 9 other observers comprised the full council.³²⁰ For two decades Sr Ursula Brown RSM was a key member of the DPC, including being the council’s efficient and energetic secretary for more than a decade.³²¹

After a long tenure Bishop Wallace had become quite ill by 1989. The DPC evaluated its position and options for a new model were put on hold consequent with Bishop Wallace’s death. In 1992, Bishop Brian Heenan reevaluated the DPC and worked to again strengthen the parishes and parishes as a means of

³¹⁷ Rockhampton Diocesan Pastoral Council resolution, April 1972, cited in Vocation Report to the Senate of Priests, 14 September 1972, RDA.

³¹⁸ Bishop Rush, cited by Fr T.P. Boland, *Bishop Bernard Wallace - Bishop of Rockhampton 1970-1990*. Rockhampton: Diocesan Catholic Education Office, 2008. See Chapter 16 on Diocesan Pastoral Council.

³¹⁹ *Loc. cit.* See Fr Boland’s work for more detailed discussion.

³²⁰ Diocesan Pastoral Council, 28-31 August 1981, Roll Call, RDA.

³²¹ Sr Ursula Brown RSC to clergy members of the DPC, letter, 28 September 1981, RDA.

rebuilding a DPC.³²² The tenth bishop of Rockhampton, Bishop Michael McCarthy, has reinvigorated the DPC and its operation in most regions.³²³

7.9 Sale

In 1986-87 the Diocese of Sale under the leadership of Bishop Joseph D’Arcy commenced a diocesan renewal process. His successor, Irish-born, Bishop Jeremiah Coffey expanded this work. In January 1995, Bishop Coffey announced the prospect of a diocesan pastoral council. In a subsequent pastoral letter entitled ‘Seeds of Hope’ the bishop began to lay out a plan for pastoral renewal.³²⁴

This period could be called the time of the laity. It is a great paradox that laity show great commitment in a time when there is a sharp decline in religious vocations and religious practice.³²⁵

A second document from the bishop paved the way for *Parishes in Partnership* to address the challenges of endeavouring to cover the expanse of the Diocese with fewer priests.³²⁶

The bishop called for nominations for pastoral leadership and for the development of a pastoral strategic plan.³²⁷ More than 30 representatives from across the diocese attended a gathering in October 1995. Among the ideas discussed was a Diocesan Assembly, the development of social welfare office, and a diocesan liturgy team.

In January 1996 the bishop formally invited nominees for a 12 person DPC, which would serve for two years initially. He hoped to attract people from different

³²² n.a. ‘Brief History of the Diocesan Pastoral Council’, Rockhampton, MSS, ca 1992, 4-
Pages, RDA.

³²³ Lyle Mitchell, Rockhampton Diocesan Archivist to the author, letter, 31 August 2021.

³²⁴ ‘Signs of Hope’, Part 1, Pastoral letter to the People of God in the Diocese of Sale’, 24 May
1995, Diocese of Sale Archives (hereafter DSA).

³²⁵ *Loc. cit.*

³²⁶ ‘A Proposal to the Church in Gippsland to meet the challenges of the Year 2000’, DSA.

³²⁷ Bishop Coffey, letter to interested participants, 19 September 1995, DSA.

regions of the dioceses, as well as different ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds and with different aspects of ‘competence, interests and gifts’.³²⁸

The first meeting of the DPC was held on 20 July 1996 at Warragul. The number attending may have been larger than intended, with one proposal suggesting up to 25 representatives from parishes.³²⁹ For further consideration was whether representatives of welfare organisations such as Centacare, the St Vincent de Paul, Caritas and social justice would attend the DPC or form a separate diocesan social welfare council.³³⁰

In the October 1996 edition of the diocesan newspaper, Bishop Coffey’s editorial reflected a vision for the DPC:

It is hardly possible for a Bishop of a Diocese to accomplish the mission of the church entrusted to him, unless he can promote and organise a common and apostolic program of the people of God, for its whole Diocese and special regions.³³¹

The DPC in 1996 consisted of 20 members: 10 lay people from parishes/regions, 2 religious sisters, 1 brother, 3 clergy including the bishop, and four people yet to be co-opted.³³² A pastoral co-ordinator was appointed during 1997.³³³ At the time of writing there has not been a DPC for some years, pending perhaps the spirit flowing from the Plenary Council.

7.10 Sandhurst

The Pastoral Council for the Diocese of Sandhurst was formally established in 2004 with its inaugural meeting held on Saturday 7 February. The DPC consisted of two elected members from each of the diocese’s six regions and the deans of the three deaneries, the Vicar General of the Diocese, the Chair of the Council of Priests and a Religious Order representative. An executive committee of six was

³²⁸ Bishop Coffey, letter re seeking nominations, 9 January 1996, DSA.

³²⁹ Diocese of Sale, Diocesan Pastoral Council, 4-page MSS, n.d., DSA.

³³⁰ *Loc. cit.*

³³¹ *Catholic Life*, August 1996, p. 2.

³³² *Loc. cit.*

³³³ *Loc. cit.*

led by Bishop Joseph Grech. The DPC was dissolved in December 2010 when Bishop Grech died and was not re-established by Bishop Tomlinson (2012).³³⁴

7.11 Toowoomba

The first two pastoral councils in Toowoomba had quite different characteristics: the original (1980) council had a particularly strong focus on family life; the second DPC (re-established in 1999) resembled a broader pastoral focus consistent with the experience of early DPCs in other dioceses.

In late 1980 the Bishop of Toowoomba, Bishop Edward Kelly MSC ‘nominated’ 18 people to form a diocesan pastoral council, which included four priests, three religious sisters, one brother and eight members of the laity.³³⁵ The council was split into representatives from the ‘country’ and ‘Toowoomba’. Each member received a copy of the 1979 document *Report on the National Consultation of the Family*, prepared by the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, which formed the basis of initial council’s discussions. While a report was also from the local Catholic Education Office, the DPC from its inception focused on marriage and family life.³³⁶ This was evident when Bishop Kelly emphasised that:

Natural Family Planning is very relevant for the whole Diocese. If a family is good, a Parish is good – a Diocese is good, and a State is good.³³⁷

A practical work in the formative years was publication of a Catholic Directory of Services. Specific pastoral projects received considerable scrutiny. A hostel for homeless youth was frowned upon as it ‘could encourage more itinerant’ youths in Toowoomba.³³⁸ Bishop Kelly, while not dismissive, felt children would be better cared for in their own community.³³⁹

³³⁴ <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/138-vision-and-goals>

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/138-vision-and-goals>

³³⁵ Bishop Kelly to prospective members of the DPC, 5 September 1980, DTA.

³³⁶ ‘Minutes from the meeting of 21 March 1981 of the Diocesan Pastoral Council’, DTA.

³³⁷ Minutes of meeting of Diocesan Pastoral Council, 25 July 1981, DTA.

³³⁸ Minutes of Diocesan Pastoral Commission, 28 August 1982, DTA.

³³⁹ Minutes of Diocesan Pastoral Commission, 23 October 1982, DTA.

It is unclear when the first DPC ceased to operate, perhaps with Bishop Kelly's retirement in 1992. In 1999, his successor, Bishop Bill Morris, after considerable planning reinstated the DPC. The new council had twelve members in total, including one priest and one religious sister, as well as the bishop and Sr Monica Cavanagh (ex-officio members).³⁴⁰ The remaining eight people were lay, six of whom were from a wide cross section of parishes. They were selected after a 'prayerful selection process, led by Sr Cecilia Anning from the Office for Parish and Deanery Councils in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.'³⁴¹

7.12 Townsville

The Diocese of Townsville was the second Queensland diocese to form a DPC in 1973.³⁴² Among the factors influencing momentum in Townsville was Bishop Leonard Faulkner, who had been in the diocese for six years and had a solid grasp of pastoral needs. The bishop also received support from the impressive Adelaide lay leader, David Shinnick.

In a clear articulation of the question of *when* to form a DPC, Bishop Faulkner remarked:

Every diocese seems to be faced with the problem – Do we wait until all or most parishes have active parish councils, or do we go ahead and establish a diocesan council?³⁴³

In the lead-up to 1973, the bishop has encouraged the formation of parish pastoral councils (PPCs). About half of his diocese had active councils when he formed the DPC. Regardless, every parish was invited to send two delegates to the first meeting: where there was a PPC the representatives would be delegates; if there was no PPC the representatives would be observers.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he further advised '...all representatives that no distinction will be made between those who

³⁴⁰ Bishop Morris to Members of Diocesan Groups, 9 August 1999, DTA.

³⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴² *Townsville Catholic News*, April, June, July & August, 1973

³⁴³ Bishop Leonard Faulkner to Fr Adrian Noonan, Cleve, South Australia, 'Some reflections on Diocesan Pastoral Council – Toowoomba', 12 April 1976, TDA.

³⁴⁴ Bishop Faulkner to parish priests, 5 April 1973. TDA.

have nominated as Delegates and those who are Observers' in terms of speaking the DPC.³⁴⁵

The bishop was also aware of the importance of regional pastoral councils or at least ensuring regional representation.³⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that an early agenda item came from Mount Isa: 'How can we turn our 'dead' parishes into loving, living communities'.³⁴⁷ So, too, the Townsville inclusive model meant that the heads of diocesan works such as education, finance, liturgy and vocations were *full* members of DPC.³⁴⁸ The DPC's inaugural meeting held in St Mary's Hall, West Townsville on 27 May 1973, attracted some 80 people in total. Much of the focus was on reports from these diocesan directors.³⁴⁹

A document circulated prior to the second meeting in September 1973 sought to clarify the role and expectations of the DPC.³⁵⁰ Presumably the bishop had a hand in or approved the document, although it may well have been drafted by an individual (s) with a more traditional view of church governance.

There is no longer a need to distinguish between the mission of the hierarchy in spiritual matters and the mission of the laity in temporal matters.³⁵¹

But in a clear sign he added:

A common misconception is to see the Pastoral Council as a democratization [sic] effort in the part of the hierarchy, as a concession made by an all-powerful authority following sustained pressure on behalf of the people. We must realize [sic] that the Catholic Church, by virtue of its Divine mandate, is essentially hierarchical and cannot be democratic in matter of faith and authority... nevertheless the Diocesan Council acts initially as an efficient means of dialogue

³⁴⁵ Bishop Faulkner, 14 May 1973.

³⁴⁶ Bishop Faulkner to parish delegates, letter, 'Priests' information copy', 14 May 1973, TDA.

³⁴⁷ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴⁸ Bishop Faulkner, letters to heads of diocesan agencies, 9 May 1973, TDA.

³⁴⁹ Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocese of Townsville, Timetable, 27 May 1973, TDA.

³⁵⁰ Diocese of Townsville The Diocesan Pastoral Council – Authority, Aims, Objectives – Some Guidelines' n.d. [ca September 1973], TDA.

³⁵¹ *Loc. cit.*

between Bishops, Priests, Religious and Laity. This, however, is a means and not an end in itself.

Since the DPC is under the bishop's jurisdiction, it clearly has no authority over him, ultimately the final decision must always be his. However, the responsible voice of the Pastoral Council obviously cannot and will not be ignored.

It is the inherent right of the Council as a whole and members individually, to offer constructive criticism, a right that has never been forbidden by the Church...the DPC in a sense must oversee pastoral works as a check of their conformity with the message of the Gospel, but not to interfere with their internal government. In principle, its competence is unlimited as regards pastoral work, but it must act without prejudice to the competence of any other apostolic movement or body.³⁵²

Mr Bob Witham was elected at the DPC's first chairman. By 1974 the council was firmly focused on 'specific problems' in the life of the diocese and there was strong emphasis on parish councils and pastoral renewal, generally.³⁵³

From the first meeting Bishop Faulkner had felt that regional representation might facilitate a more efficient working of the DPC. As he would later reflect:

The delegates were very definite in insisting that they wished to maintain Parish representation, at least for the time being.³⁵⁴

As a result, an executive of eight or nine members was developed, comprising one representative from each of the five regions, the senate of priests and the diocesan office.³⁵⁵ Bishop Faulkner continued to lead the DPC until the appointment in 1986 to assist Archbishop James Gleeson in their native archdiocese of Adelaide.

7.13 Wollongong

The first DPC in the Wollongong Diocese started in ca 1997.³⁵⁶ It was discontinued in about 2002 for reasons unknown. During Bishop Peter Ingham's tenure, a DPC commenced in 2012, and its constitution provided for both ex-officio members (senior clergy and lay staff of the diocese) and two representatives from each of the

³⁵² *Loc. cit.*

³⁵³ Diocesan Pastoral Council, Agenda, Third Meeting, 1 May 1974, TDA.

³⁵⁴ Bishop Faulkner, 12 April 1976.

³⁵⁵ *Loc. cit.*

³⁵⁶ Information supplied by the Diocese of Wollongong, September 2021.

four regions of the diocese.³⁵⁷ This council had concluded by the end of 2019. Plans for a new council have been delayed due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19.

³⁵⁷ Diocese of Wollongong, Diocesan Pastoral Council, *Constitution*, November 2016.

8.0 Historical Conclusions

This research report represents the first historical survey of Australian diocesan pastoral councils (DPCs). As stated in the Introduction, the report was constrained by a short timeframe and resources, as well as limited access to extant primary and salient secondary sources in the midst of lockdown provisions resulting from the worsening pandemic (Covid 19). Arising from a survey of all archdioceses and many dioceses, this report makes the following main conclusions, which, it is suggested, may be understood in the context of the full report.

Role of the Bishop

8.1 The attitude, energy, and enthusiasm of a bishop are the largest factors influencing the existence, meaningfulness, and longevity of a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC).

Historical inaccuracies

8.2 The view expressed in *The Light from the Southern Cross* that the function of DPCs ‘has been rarely exercised’³⁵⁸ in Australia overlooks clear historical existence and significant achievements by DPCs in six of the seven archdioceses, and in quite a few dioceses, since Vatican 11.

8.3 So, too, the *Bishops’ Response*³⁵⁹ appears at variance with the contribution of DPCs in the life of the Australian Catholic Church. The dominant view that pastoral councils ‘withered’, lacked ‘energy’, were ‘dysfunctional’ and/or lacked purpose, appears an inaccurate stereotype or an incomplete assessment. Such views about the decline of DPCs appear to place responsibility almost exclusively on lay council members yet avoids a broader analysis of other possible contextual factors and questions of authentic leadership.

Archdioceses and Dioceses

8.4 While the earliest pastoral councils were established by archdioceses (Canberra-Goulburn, Hobart, Sydney and Adelaide), non-metropolitan

³⁵⁸ Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, *The Light from the Southern Cross*, 2020, p. 104.

³⁵⁹ *Bishops’ Response to The Light from the Southern Cross* (n.d.) [ca. 2021].

dioceses were not constrained by ‘metropolitan’ archdioceses. Developments in Rockhampton and Townsville, for example, preceded developments by the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Victorian rural dioceses at various times have operated quality DPCs (Ballarat, Sale, Sandhurst) despite the larger Archdiocese of Melbourne never instituting a DPC.

- 8.5 In the past two decades, the most effective DPCs have been collaborative efforts between bishops, clergy, religious, and the laity in non-metropolitan or rural dioceses (Ballarat, Maitland-Newcastle, Rockhampton).

Significant achievements

- 8.6 Diocesan pastoral councils have generally had a solid track record of shared decision making, respectful engagement between clergy, religious and laity by working in ‘harmony’ with the Ordinary, and implementation of faith-focused and broad pastoral services across the Australian landscape.
- 8.7 In the years immediately following Vatican 11, DPCs flourished where there was a combination of supportive episcopal leadership, executive committees, and motivated sub-committees to drive and implement actions (Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Rockhampton, Sydney, Townsville).
- 8.8 Councils with a majority of *elected* lay representatives demonstrated high level achievements (Brisbane, Hobart, Townsville).

Models

- 8.9 While most dioceses researched the composition and *modus operandi* of potential DPCs, including seeking approval from Councils (Senate) of Priests, exemplary models show extensive consultation across clergy, religious and laity before formation of DPCs (Brisbane, Maitland-Newcastle, Perth, Rockhampton).
- 8.10 The composition, size and purpose of Councils has varied considerably during the past 55 years. More successful diocesan councils had strong inter-connecting relationships with parish and regional pastoral councils (Port Pirie, Townsville).

- 8.11 Where a diocese actively engaged in diocesan and parish renewal programmes, DPCs were more likely to have flourished (Adelaide, Brisbane).³⁶⁰
- 8.12 In some dioceses, new or reconstituted councils have been an outcome of broader engagement with the laity, through successful Diocesan Synods (Canberra-Goulburn, Maitland-Newcastle) or Diocesan Assemblies (Adelaide, Brisbane, Rockhampton).
- 8.13 Whilst distance and isolated communities have restricted the development of DPCs in in some large rural dioceses (Armidale, Geraldton), successful efforts have drawn together diverse representatives from parishes and vicariates (regions) to form DPCs (Port Pirie, Townsville).
- 8.14 There is no perfect or singular model for a DPC. Unique cultures and commitment to regular analytical review are paramount to improving or refining the model adopted by individual dioceses.
- 8.15 History shows different but successful approaches in the formation and composition of DPCs. DPC members may have been appointed, elected, or a hybrid system of membership existed.

Relationship with Regional (Deanery) and Parish Pastoral Councils

- 8.16 Pastoral councils have operated at deanery or regional levels since the late 1960s, starting in the Archdiocese of Hobart, and Rockhampton (1971).
- 8.17 DPCs that have moved away from the election of at least *some* lay members from regional pastoral councils, have been less successful in connecting with parishes.
- 8.18 A comprehensive review of governance and a renewed focus on linkages between pastoral councils at parish and deanery levels with a newly formed DPC represents a solid model (Parramatta).

³⁶⁰ In September 2021 the Archdiocese of Adelaide is holding a Synod, at which a DPC may be reconstituted.

Relationships with other diocesan organisations

- 8.19 A clear delineation of the responsibilities of financial and pastoral councils was envisaged by Australian DPC pioneers (Archbishops Matthew Beovich, Leonard Faulkner, James Gleeson, Lancelot Goody, Eris O'Brien, Francis Rush, and Guildford Young), in the spirit of Vatican 11.
- 8.20 From the earliest days of DPCs, relationships with other diocesan bodies have been crucial. Lukewarm co-operation or haphazard co-ordination have tended to weaken DPCs.
- 8.21 The evidence suggests that a bishop with a high regard for an inclusive DPC, has encouraged collegiate relationships with other diocesan bodies, especially finance and education (Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville).
- 8.22 Conversely, where financial councils and diocesan educational authorities have become well-resourced and largely independent bureaucracies, co-operative relationships have been less evident or a DPC was perceived as unnecessary (Melbourne; Sydney).
- 8.23 Corresponding with a decline in DPCs has been the increasing rise of influential diocesan finance committees/councils, which in some circumstances appear to act as *de facto* pastoral councils (Broken Bay; Sydney).
- 8.24 A surge in professional Catholic diocesan organisations (education, welfare, health) has led to an increase in the number and influence of ex-officio members on DPCs. It appears important that ex-officio input does not outweigh those voices that represent clerical, religious and lay members of parishes, regions and deaneries.

DPC discontinuation

- 8.25 The decline and discontinuation of pastoral councils, at a diocesan and pastoral level, has attracted diverse opinions, but has not been subject to academic or systematic historical research. The strongest critics of pastoral councils might not have directly experienced a DPC.

8.26 While the reasons for intermittent discontinuation or permanent cessation of DPCs are complex and require a more detailed study than this one, early DPCs usually did not survive due to:

- Death of a bishop (Sandhurst)
- Lack of interest by the replacement bishop (Canberra-Goulburn)
- Lengthy time period in the appointment of a new bishop (Sale)
- Blustery episcopal leadership and inadequate formation and renewal of members (Sydney)
- Narrow understanding of Vatican 11 (Toowoomba)
- Councils where the majority of members were appointed by the bishop (Brisbane)

Current situation

8.27 As of September 2021, no archdiocese has a DPC, and fewer than half the remaining dioceses do. This is in stark contrast to the 1970s and 1980s.

8.28 While American literature has often debated the nature of councils - be they 'apostolic' or 'pastoral' and the extent of their role in co-ordinating pastoral activities, the Australian context has increasingly become focused on whether DPCs serve *any* role or purpose.

8.29 In the wake of the current pandemic, the tyranny of distance, especially for large, rural dioceses, may be offset by utilisation of videoconferencing as a possible *first* step towards enhanced communication and spreading of ideas across such dioceses in the guise of a diocesan pastoral council.

Historical attributes

8.30 If a diocese was considering an 'ideal' model for a diocesan pastoral council in 2021, the lessons of history might suggest a *combination* of the following aspects and attributes:

- Selecting the 'best available lay people' (Perth)
- A broad pastoral and social justice paradigm (Adelaide)
- Fruits of parliamentary decision making (Hobart)

- A focus on the 'total mission of the church' (Brisbane)
- An effective secretariat or sub-committees to drive initiatives (Brisbane, Rockhampton).
- An integrated model of partnership between pastoral councils at parish, deanery (regional) and diocesan levels (Brisbane, Maitland-Newcastle; Parramatta, Rockhampton).
- Chairmanship vested in lay people (Hobart, Perth)
- Representations to Government (Brisbane, Hobart)
- Synod inspired (Canberra-Goulburn, Maitland-Newcastle)
- Pastoral implementation (Ballarat)
- Diocesan initiatives (Sale; Townsville)

9.0 References

9.1 Primary sources and manuscripts

The main archival repositories that sent primary sources materials were: the Archdioceses of Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Perth and Sydney; and the Dioceses of Maitland-Newcastle, Port Pirie, Rockhampton, Sale, Toowoomba, Townsville.

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10.0 Appendices

10.1 Interviews

Due to COVID 19 pandemic and strict lockdown laws in Sydney, all interviews were conducted by telephone.

Fr Brian Lucas, Monsignor John Boyle, Monsignor Tony Doherty, Mr David McGuire, Mr Peter Johnstone, Fr Ian McGinnity, Fr Paul Crowley, Monsignor John Usher, Dr Peter Wilkinson, Fr Noel Molloy, Fr Kevin Maloney VG, Fr David Ranson VG, Fr James Monaghan VG, Fr Joe Caddy VG, Fr Robert Cross, Chancellor, Fr Matthew Muller, Chancellor, Monsignor Ted Wilkes VG, Robert Fitzgerald AM, and Professor John Warhurst.

10.2 Archivists

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Any, and all conclusions, as well as any errors, which are unintended, in this report, rest with author, within the parameters that have been outlined in the Introduction.

10.4 Non-contributing dioceses

The following dioceses could not be contacted and/or chose not to respond to this research study.

- Bathurst
- Broome
- Bunbury
- Cairns
- Lismore
- Wagga Wagga
- Wilcannia Forbes