



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY REPORT

MAY 2022



Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

In the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle we acknowledge the following Aboriginal Tribal Groups – Awabakal, Biripi, Darkinjung, Gweagul, Kamilaroi, Wonnarua and Worimi.

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Introduction

The synodal journey for the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle began over 30 years ago when parishes were exploring the Renew process. Following the Renew journey, and on the advice of the Council of Priests, Bishop Leo Clark decided to hold a Diocesan Synod in 1992-93.

In *Diocesan Pastoral Councils: An Australian historical study*, Damian Gleeson wrote:

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is an outstanding example of a diocese that understood and implemented the spirit of lay participation post-Vatican II. 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. (2021)

Background

Story has been the most significant aspect of our ongoing diocesan synodal journey. We are a people of story, a pilgrim people, called to listen to the voice of the Spirit in each other and those on the edge. Led by the Spirit, this pilgrimage is an emergent process. We seek to respond faithfully and creatively as missionary disciples, one in faith, hope, trust and love.

An overview of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is in **Appendix A**.

The timeline of our ongoing synodal journey is found in **Appendix B**. It involved the ordained, laity and religious in assemblies, gatherings and conversations looking at issues facing the church and wider community.

On the 8 August 2019, the late Bishop William (Bill) Wright convoked a Diocesan Synod. Its purpose is outlined in his words:

Very frequently synods are convened for a special purpose, one particular issue.

But this one that we will hold is like the Second Vatican Council, convened more generally to reflect on the state of the church, the faith of Christ among us, to find ways to more faithfully fulfil our calling to be the body of Christ.

The synod is not simply an event, nor is it simply an assembly of people.

It is a process by which the people of God walk together on a journey trying to respond more fully to God.

Our synod aligns with the Plenary Council of Australia and the Synod of Bishops on Synodality.

COVID-19 and the death of Bishop Bill created particular challenges for the present diocesan synodal journey.

The current Diocesan Synod process has the theme: ***Building the Kingdom of God Together.***

The key question is: ***As disciples of Christ, what needs to happen in our hearts and in our minds and in our community for us to be a Christ-centred Church?***

The process adopted is reflected in Diagram 1.



Table 1 provides an overview of the sessions of synod:

SESSION	PROCESS	DATE	ATTENDANCE
Session One	Celebration	23 Nov 2019	400 (Open Assembly)
Session Two	Discernment	22 May 2021	280 (Members, Participants, Observers)
Session Three	Further Discernment	TBA	
Session Four	Implementation	TBA	

The death of our Bishop, Bill Wright, in November 2021 has suspended our planned synod processes and assemblies. The consultative work however, begun by Bishop Bill, the Council for Mission, the Council of Priests, and the Synod Working Party continues as we await the appointment of a Bishop to shepherd us.

More detailed information about our synodal processes can be found on:

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Website – www.mn.catholic.org.au

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Synod website – www.domnsynod.com.au

This report draws upon the material gathered from our numerous diocesan assemblies and gatherings, the listening and dialogue reports from the Plenary Council and the consultation phase of the Bishop’s Synod on Synodality.

Body of Synthesis

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle developed a Pastoral Planning Framework for parishes and the diocese (Diagram 2) based on the life of the early Christian communities recorded in Acts 2: 42-47.

Our response to the Bishops' Synod on Synodality is informed by:

- ▶ Our diocesan pastoral planning framework
- ▶ Our synod processes and documentation including:
 - Summary of Responses
 - Our Foundational Statements
 - Recommendations to Synod
- ▶ The Plenary Council processes
- ▶ The Diocesan Structures of Participation (**Appendix C**).

ACTS 2:42-47

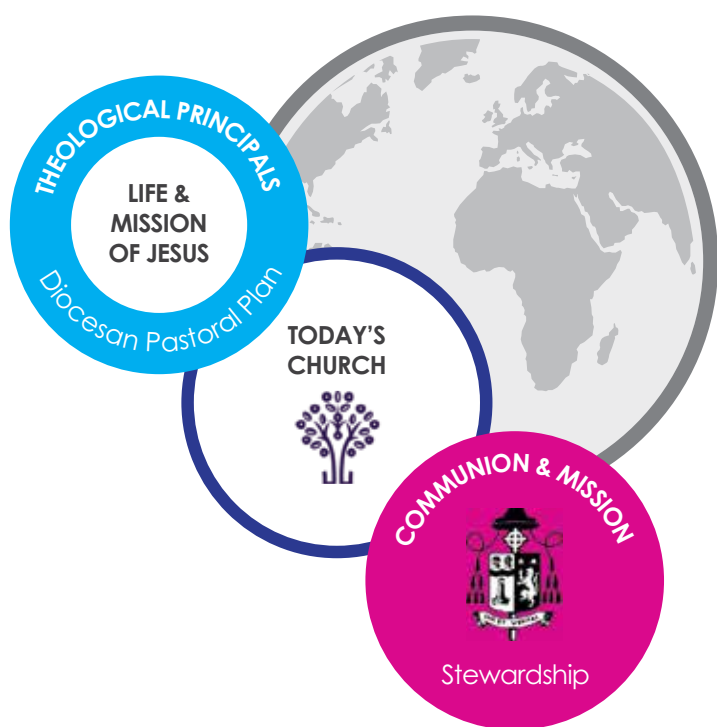
42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. **44** All who believed were together and had all things in common;

45 they would sell their possessions and goods and

distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Diagram 2 – Five Foundations.



THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS (ACTS 2:42-47)

FOUNDATION 1: Identity and Community

- ▶ Fosters Christian community, hospitality, welcome and respect – an identity ground in 'communio'.

FOUNDATION 2: Worship and Prayer

- ▶ Gathers people for prayer, sacrament and liturgical celebration... is Eucharistic in life and worship.

FOUNDATION 3: Formation and Education

- ▶ Facilitates spiritual growth and promotes empowerment through education and formation.

FOUNDATION 4: Mission and Outreach

- ▶ Engages people in the transformation of society – outreach through mercy and justice – to build the kingdom of God.

FOUNDATION 5: Leadership and Structure

- ▶ Fosters effective Christian leadership, communication, organisational and maintenance structures.



Identity and Community

Summary of Responses

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue emphasised the hope that we as a diocesan Church would be recognised not as a powerful institution, but as a community of Jesus' missionary disciples, prioritising mission over maintenance, reflecting the gospel values of justice, compassion, forgiveness, peace, equality, and freedom.

Respondents recognised the need for all of us to build relationships with God, others, self, and creation, to honour and value each person and their gifts, respect our differences, face our prejudices, and value others without judgment.

We need to explore new models of community, open to the needs of all: the elderly, the poor, young people, newcomers, singles, those with a disability, the marginalised, the vulnerable and those at risk, single parents, divorced/remarried people, refugees, and asylum seekers, those of other cultures, of different faiths, survivors of sexual abuse, those of different sexual orientation, the disconnected, the disillusioned, the confused and those with whom we disagree.

Foundational Statements

1. We are a people of faith, "intentional disciples" of Jesus, entrusted with a mission by God – the mission of proclaiming the Good News of God's love.
2. We are called to be a welcoming, listening Church for all, attending to wounds of hurt and rejection, poor with the poor.
3. We are a people who respect and support the diversity of roles and functions in the community, while maintaining the equality of each individual before God.

The Way Forward

We encourage each parish and diocesan body to be a community of communities, seeking to address the varied needs of **all**.

We seek to and are challenged to address this through:

- ▶ Intentionally strengthening relationships, e.g. our diocesan synodal journey
- ▶ Identifying opportunities to go out and connect, e.g. Young Mother's Group
- ▶ Affirming, honouring, and supporting families, e.g. Family Ministry Coordinators
- ▶ Seeking to create places of inclusivity and welcome, e.g. the Refugee Hub, Food Programs, the LGBTIQ Forum
- ▶ Listening to the voices and experiences of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and people of other cultures e.g. Reconciliation Action Plan
- ▶ Listening to real stories without bias or agenda e.g. the use of contemplative dialogue
- ▶ Discerning, embracing, and celebrating the diversity of gifts, e.g. Celebration of Galilee Day
- ▶ The endeavours of our Diocesan Council of Ministry with Young People and the Council for Women, e.g. Magdalene Awards.



Summary of Responses

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue spoke of the need to deepen our relationship with God, our understanding of the Eucharist, and our commitment to the mission to which the Eucharist sends us.

Respondents expressed concern about falling Mass attendance, about the language of the Liturgy, about the need for engaging homilies that speak to the lives of those listening, and about preparation for and celebration of the sacraments.

Some expressed the need for more contemporary and less structured gatherings for prayer and worship that would give people the opportunity to share their faith and life experiences and to address social concerns and national tragedies.

Some recognised in our society today, coming to Mass can be a challenge for families, shift workers and the elderly. Could we look for a different response, for example using technology, to create experiences to enrich faith experiences?

Foundational Statements

1. We gather in community – to pray, to break open the Word, to celebrate, to encourage and support one another, to mourn our losses, to be nourished and strengthened for mission
2. We believe that our mission finds its source and summit in the Eucharist (Lumen Gentium 11). When lived in everyday life and celebrated in the liturgy, the Eucharist is the living symbol of Christ's life, death and resurrection and celebrates the deepest identity of the Church as a communion of life, love, and truth
3. We know that life has a sacramental dimension and that our sacramental rituals are moments of deeper communion with the God who created us for love.
4. We know that as a country, we are diminished without prayerful inclusion of First Australians.

The Way Forward

To recognise the diversity of the Catholic community and the challenges that this presents. The reality is that most Catholics have little or no attachment to the worshipping community. In this context we seek to nurture the full, conscious and active participation of **all** the faithful in the breadth and depth of our Catholic treasury of prayer and worship.

We seek to and are challenged to address this through:

- ▶ Promoting Catholic prayer and liturgy including the celebration of Mass, the various rites of the Church, and prayer focused on the Word of God
- ▶ Reimagining the ministry of Christian Initiation grounded in the vision and principles of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- ▶ The ministry of the Office of Worship and Prayer, the Diocesan Liturgy Council and its various forums and groups which seek to involve a diversity of the faithful
- ▶ Engaging the community on issues identified in some areas of our Catholic life including areas within the Sacrament of Penance, the ministry of preaching, various forms of community prayer and faith sharing
- ▶ Reimagining liturgical ministry – including the ministry of lay liturgical leadership – through accompaniment, mystagogical reflection and formation.



Formation and Education

Summary of Responses

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised that while the faith formation of children has been a priority, many Catholics have had little or no ongoing faith formation since leaving school.

While faith formation opportunities are available in the Diocese, few access them. There were calls for a Faith Formation Centre with adequate resources of finance and personnel to provide face-to-face and online formation opportunities in a wide range of topics for a wide range of people appropriate to their stage of faith development and their life circumstances.

Respondents expressed concerns about the role of our Catholic schools, the formation of staff and parents, and the need for better communication and collaboration between school and parish communities.

The process of selection and training of candidates for the priesthood and the enculturation of overseas priests were also issues of concern.

Foundational Statements

1. We believe formation in faith is an essential and life-long process and the heritage and responsibility of every Christian.
2. We understand that formation for mission is respectful, experiential and relevant, building on participants' personal stories and everyday realities.
3. We are nourished and inspired by formation that is scripturally rich and ecclesially grounded, and deepens our relationship with Jesus, the living Word of God.

The Way Forward

Faith formation for **all** in our diocese continues to be a serious endeavour, as it has been, throughout the whole diocesan synodal journey. Efforts are made to provide opportunities that are invitational, accessible, Christ-centred, theologically sound and connected to contemporary life.

We seek to and are challenged to address this through:

- ▶ The supportive work of the Diocesan Formation and Education Office and the Catholic School's Religious Education and Spirituality Department
- ▶ The endeavours of the Faith Formation Council
- ▶ Establishing a Diocesan Resource Centre
- ▶ Empowering young people through the Pastoral Placement Program
- ▶ Forming leaders e.g., Graduate Certificate in Mission and Culture
- ▶ Parish formation initiatives, e.g. Alpha
- ▶ Initial and ongoing formation opportunities for our clergy
- ▶ Discerning vocational pathways for **all** the faithful – clergy and laity.



Mission and Outreach

Summary of Responses

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised the need for us as a Church to look at ways of raising awareness about significant social issues, of collaborating with other social justice-minded groups, of reaching out to the poor and needy, those suffering isolation, loneliness, discrimination and mental health issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, homeless people, people with a disability, gender diverse people, those of other cultures and faiths, as well as all families, young people, the elderly, and volunteers.

Some respondents called for our Church communities to be a more visible presence both at local level and diocesan level in addressing social issues such as the gap between rich and poor, the care for creation, the defence of human rights and religious freedom, and the physical and spiritual needs of those on the margins.

Some called for the need to recognise, support, and collaborate with Catholic health, aged-care, and social services organisations.

Foundational Statements

1. We regard every individual as having equal dignity and worth.
2. We acknowledge and seek to be enriched by the history and wisdom of Indigenous peoples while acknowledging that reconciliation for past injustices remains a goal rather than an achievement.
3. Because we believe the Spirit is at work throughout the world, we respect those whose beliefs differ from our own, and seek to deepen our bonds with them.
4. As co-creators we are called to be stewards who nurture, share and are responsible for God's gifts.

The Way Forward

Our missionary and outreach activities need to be grounded in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the desire to spread the Good News of God's love for **all**.

We seek to and are challenged to address this through:

- ▶ Recognising and affirming the missionary and evangelising activities of parishioners in their everyday lives
- ▶ The mission and outreach activities of the parish
- ▶ The creative work of the Diocesan Communications Team, e.g. *Aurora* publication, *mnnews.today*, *DioUpdate*
- ▶ The supportive work of the Diocesan Mission and Outreach Office, e.g. Church without Walls series
- ▶ The endeavours of our:
 - Social Justice Council
 - Ecumenical and Interfaith Council
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry Group
- ▶ The work of CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning and its outreach to those in need
- ▶ The outreach provided by our chaplains
- ▶ Raising awareness and promoting the care of creation.



Summary of Responses

Diocesan respondents to the Plenary Council and our Synod Listening and Dialogue recognised the need at all levels for servant leaders who are open to conversion, renewal, and reform. In particular, respondents called for renewed leadership, reformed governance, accountability, and transparency.

They want leaders who demonstrate dialogue, discernment, accountability, humility, inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication.

Respondents want a Church whose members work collaboratively and co-responsibly to address the pastoral needs of Australian Catholics and the broader society.

They want a Church whose members actively support those who are on the periphery and provide stewardship of creation.

They also spoke of the need to address clericalism and institutionalism, the equal participation of women and just remuneration of lay ministers.

Many expressed gratitude and encouragement for our clergy.

Respondents spoke of the need to address our personal and institutional failures and the resulting shame, loss of credibility and trust in our Church. They asked for recognition of what the Diocese continues to do to support victims and survivors.

Foundational Statements

1. We seek to discover the signs of God's presence and purpose in our world. This includes being open to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the hearts and minds of God's people.
2. We see leadership as a ministry of service, emulating the servant leadership of Christ.
3. We welcome Pope Francis' insistent call for a synodal Church that involves the whole People of God in its life and mission.
4. We embrace the principle of subsidiarity: involvement and decision making belong as close as possible to those the decision affects.
5. We seek to arrive at decisions that **all** can accept gracefully and support wholeheartedly – even if some wish the decision had been different – because they know the group honestly searched together for the Spirit of God in and for the life of the community.
6. We accept individual and communal responsibility for our decisions and actions, our personal gifts, and the gifts of creation.

The Way Forward

Transformation of culture takes place when we live from Christ. It requires a change and development of language, attitudes, behaviour and skills of **all** the baptised. Embracing the servant leadership is needed to achieve this transformation.

We seek to and are challenged to address this through:

► Our current synodal process

- Diocesan Advisory Board and the proposed Synodal Council
- Structures of Participation – Many parts. One body. One mission.
- Governance principles and documentation Focus Group
- Development of parish resources including a Parish Handbook
- The identification and application of the principles of delegation, accountability, and transparency, e.g. Delegations matrices.

► Leadership

- Faith and pastoral formation of leaders
- Continuous Professional Development of **all** leaders
- Professional supervision
- The Commission for Orders and Ministry
- Women's right to participate in leadership, decision-making and ministry in Church governance.

► Sexual Abuse and the Royal Commission

- Acknowledgement of the great damage done by sexual abuse and cover-up, and commitment to reconciliation, healing, and keeping people safe
- Establishment and functioning of the Office of Safeguarding.

Conclusion: A Journey of Opportunities, Tensions and Challenges

Some considerations that inform the key points:

- ▶ The death of Bishop Bill and the consequent cessation of the key pastoral bodies and processes
- ▶ The fear, anxiety, hermeneutic of suspicion, frustration, hope, loss of morale of our priests etc.
- ▶ The polarisation of views which overrides unity strengthened by diversity
- ▶ Aging church population and declining participation
- ▶ Effective communication in a world saturated with words and images
- ▶ The expanding consciousness of humanity that includes all of creation
- ▶ Living in the gap between pastoral practice and Church teachings
- ▶ The role of the Church in the modern secular age
- ▶ The poverty of understanding of our faith tradition
- ▶ The change of an era and the need for transformation of church culture.

Key Points

Communion

1. A constant challenge on our synodal journey has been the tension between wanting to live by our Community and Identity Foundational Statements and the difficulty of finding ways and means of engaging with and listening to those who are disconnected and alienated. Many expect 'the church' to do this but do not recognise that as baptised members we are all called to be missionary disciples, to reach out to, and be inclusive of those on the periphery.
2. We want our people to speak with courage, but the reality is that, even for those who gather each week for Sunday Eucharist, few opportunities are explored to listen to one another apart from Mass.
3. We want our communities to respect and embrace diversity and be open to the needs of all creation. Some find it difficult to accept others who are different, and some are frustrated by what they perceive as the rigidity of church teachings.
4. Eucharist is considered 'the source and summit of the Christian life' and attendance at Sunday Mass the principle criterion for 'belonging to a parish community'. The reality is that most baptised Catholics do not attend Mass. They find attending Mass irrelevant and less attractive than other more engaging Sunday activities, especially if they are time poor.
5. Many long for life-giving, faith-supporting celebrations with the opportunity to share their faith, and to heal and build community relationships.

Participation

1. Our people, especially those in positions of leadership and authority, endorse the synodal values contained in our Leadership and Structure Foundational Statements. However, their day-to-day practice and decision-making do not always reflect synodality: dialogue, discernment, accountability, humility, inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication. This causes frustration and anger for those not involved in decisions that affect them.
2. There are tensions between the ordained and non-ordained members of our local church, with some reacting negatively to any perceived criticism in feedback. Loss of morale, the effects of the sexual abuse crisis, inadequate training and formation for leadership, cultural differences – all contribute to these tensions.
3. We have attempted to use face-to-face, written, and technological means of facilitating dialogue with **all** in our communities. A relatively small proportion of our people are truly engaged. The challenge is how to encourage more to enter into dialogue with others and become channels of communication.
4. While many recognise the need for ongoing faith formation beyond school years, few take up opportunities to participate in such formation.
5. Seminary and ongoing formation were considered a significant issue if clericalism is to be addressed and we are to exercise genuine pastoral leadership.

Mission

1. While our Mission and Outreach Foundational Statements express the aspirations of many in our communities, we do not have a culture in which **all** the baptised are even aware of, much less committed to, the call to be missionary disciples.
2. While our diocesan councils and agencies address social issues and individuals are generous in their day-to-day response to people, there is an ongoing need for our parish communities to continue to discuss issues of politics, economics, ecological responsibility, culture, and civil society.

Appendix A – Diocesan Overview

Established in 1847, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle serves the people of the Newcastle, Hunter, and Manning regions in New South Wales, which has a total population of approximately 800,000 people of, whom there are about 155,000 Catholics (22%). In the 2016 census the median aged of Catholics was 41 years and the number of Catholic families was about 63,000. 10% of Catholics in the diocese were born overseas.

Through its parishes, pastoral groups, and its agencies of Catholic Schools, CatholicCare Hunter-Manning, St Nicholas Early Education and other agencies the diocese provides faith, spiritual, pastoral, educational, social welfare, and community development. The Diocese employs approximately 4,000 staff across its parishes and agencies. Parishes live in relationship with and are at the service of the wider neighbourhood.

There are 38 parishes served by both priest and lay leaders. Within the diocese there are 32 priests in active ministry with 11 coming to serve here from overseas. There are also 11 permanent deacons. About 150 men and women belonging to Religious Institutes reside in the Diocese.

In 2020, 692 baptisms and 37 marriages took place in the diocese. These numbers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2019 there were 1203 baptisms, 892 confirmations, and 610 First Holy Communions. A total of 95 marriages were celebrated in 2019. In our 58 schools, there are approximately 21,000 students of whom 58% identify as Catholic and in St Nicholas Early Education, 1,000 children. More than 50% of Catholic students attend other schools in the diocese. Catholic aged-care agencies care for 1,307 in residential aged-care facilities.



9,480

COUNSELLING AND ASSESSMENT SESSIONS

SUPPORTING

190+

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE



11,224

PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

8,866

SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS



22

TRAINING SESSIONS DELIVERED TO

1,100

PERSONNEL

12

AUDITS OF SCHOOLS INCLUDING 6 COSI CHILD PROTECTION AUDITS



4,600+

EMPLOYEES IN THE DIOCESE ACROSS ALL AGENCIES

38

PARISHES

10

DEACONS

39

PRIESTS

6,000+

VOLUNTEERS

Our Community
154,481
CATHOLICS



St Nicholas OOSH

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

5,400+

ST NICHOLAS OOSH STUDENT ENROLMENTS

35

SERVICE LOCATIONS



OVER
2,000

CLIENTS WITH THE CDF

MORE THAN
2,750

ACCOUNTS



St Nicholas Early Education

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

1,400+

ST NICHOLAS EE CHILDREN ENROLLED

11

CENTRES

300+

EMPLOYED
EDUCATORS



St Nicholas Pathways

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

80+

ST NICHOLAS PATHWAYS
TRAINEES

2

CAMPUSES

Appendix B – Synodal Processes leading to change and renewal

Synodal Processes Leading To Change & Renewal

2021	Appointment of Administrator Rev Greg Barker	2010	Diocesan Assembly – "Moving Forward Together"
2021	Death of Bishop William Wright	2008-10	Consultative Process on Stewardship Planning
2021	Second Session of Diocesan Synod "Building the Kingdom of God Together"	2008	Establishment of Diocesan Stewardship Committee
2020	Pandemic – COVID 19	2007-08	Stewardship Forums
2019	First Session of Diocesan Synod "Building the Kingdom of God Together"	2008	Focus Group Meetings
2019	Office of Safeguarding established	2007	Diocesan Assembly – "It's Time to Celebrate"
2018	Establishment of the Council for Mission	2006-07	Working Parties: Workers for the Harvest Evangelisation Faith Formation Sacrament of Reconciliation Assembly Representation
2018	Plenary Council announced, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?"	2005	Diocesan Child Protection and Professional Conduct Unit established
2017	Many parts. One body. One mission.	2004-05	Diocesan Assembly – "Towards the Dawn"
2014-16	Regional Gatherings with Bishop Bill Wright	2003-04	Regional Assemblies in 10 Pastoral Regions of the Diocese
2013	Bishop's Leadership Forum		
2012	Exploring Models of Parish Lay Leadership		
2011	Appointment of Bishop William Wright as eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle		
2011	Retirement of Bishop Michael Malone		
2011	Deanery Gatherings with Bishop Michael Malone		

2016	40 Parishes	177 Sisters
	80 Churches	11 High Schools
	42 Diocesan Priests	47 Primary Schools
	8 Religious Priests	19,235 school students
	9 Deacons	154,474 Catholics
	4 Brothers	

2010	42 Parishes	228 Sisters
	80 Churches	11 High Schools
	55 Diocesan Priests	45 Primary Schools
	10 Religious Priests	17,248 school students
	8 Deacons	159,151 Catholics
	7 Brothers	

- 2000** Diocesan Assembly to consider the "New Wine into Fresh Wineskins" Pastoral Planning Report
- 1998-99** Inter-Parish Strategic Planning
- 1997** Diocesan Assembly – Review of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, and the Permanent Diaconate, and "Preparing Parishes for Change" Consultations
- 1996** Discussion Paper – "Principles and Models for Re-structuring Parishes"
- 1995** Diocesan Assembly to discuss the Diocesan Policy on the sacraments of Initiation
- 1995** Bishop Michael Malone becomes Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle
- 1995** Retirement of Bishop Leo Clarke
- 1995** Renaming of Diocese to Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, and transfer seat of Diocese to Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton
- 1992** Diocesan Pastoral Plan – First Diocesan Synod to involve lay and religious adopted first Diocesan Pastoral Plan

- 1988** Plan for alternative models of parish staffing
- 1985** Council of Priests initiated diocesan pastoral planning
- 1976** Consecration of Bishop Leo Clarke
- 1975** Death of Bishop John Toohey

1990

53 Parishes	11 High Schools
92 Churches	51 Primary Schools
88 Diocesan Priests	15,794 school students
19 Religious Priests	115,327 Catholics
15 Brothers	
313 Sisters	

1970

57 Parishes	12 High Schools
170 Churches	62 Primary Schools
115 Diocesan Priests	15,728 school students
19 Religious Priests	87,662 Catholics
52 Brothers	
561 Sisters	

Appendix C – Diocesan Structures of Participation

Many parts. One body. One mission

In May 2017, Bishop Bill Wright met with senior leaders from across the diocesan chancery with the intention of taking active steps in aiding the Curia to serve the diocese better and to work more effectively together.

Consequently, it was decided to embark on a significant change management project known as **Many parts. One body. One mission**. This proposed and ongoing project has four parts:

1. Council for Mission (replacing the DPC)
2. Diocesan Leadership Group
(includes Directors of Agencies)
3. Governance review
4. Shared Services.

Synodality and Co-responsibility

In order to walk together, the Church today needs a conversion to the synodal experience. It needs to strengthen a culture of dialogue, reciprocal listening, spiritual discernment, consensus, and communion in order to find areas and ways of joint decision-making and to respond to pastoral challenges. In this way, co-responsibility in the life of the Church will be fostered in a spirit of service....Synodality is a constitutive dimension of the Church. We cannot be Church without recognising a real practice of the *sensus fidei* of all the People of God. (Amazonian Synod n. 88)

In honouring synodality, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle continues to explore its structures of participation as a consequence of the *Many parts. One body. One mission*. project.

The Diocesan Curia consists of those institutions and persons that assist the bishop in governance (c. 469). Additionally in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle the Curia also assists in providing services and pastoral care that parishes are no longer able to provide. Thus, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Curia includes:

► **Diocesan Offices:**

Bishops Office, Office of Safeguarding, Pastoral Ministries and CEO Office.

► **Diocesan Agencies:**

CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning, Catholic Schools Office, St Nicholas Early Education, Community Housing, Catholic Development Fund, and Diocesan Shared Services.

► **Diocesan Governance Bodies:**

These bodies are responsible for the governance of and for the quality compliance, risks, policies and projects of their respective parts of the diocese.

- The Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
- Canonical Advisor (Chancellor)
- The College of Consultors
- The Diocesan Finance Council
- Diocesan Audit and Risk Committee
- CDF Board.

Diocesan Pastoral Bodies:

- Council of Priests
- Council for Mission
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry
- Council for Women
- Diocesan Council of Ministry with Young People
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Council
- Faith Formation Council
- Liturgy Council
- Social Justice Council.

Diocesan Shared Services

- Assets, Property & Housing
- Communications and Marketing
- Data and Analytics
- Enterprise Portfolio Management Office
- Finance
- Governance, Legal and Risk
- Human Resources
- Information Management
- Office of Safeguarding
- Technology Services.



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