



**Pastoral  
Discernment**  
Central Coast

# Project Summary Report

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Report prepared by: Patti Beattie

Pastoral Discernment Project Facilitator

[Patti.Beattie@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Patti.Beattie@bbcatholic.org.au)



**CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY**



*Behold,*  
I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth;  
do you not perceive it?

ISAIAH 43:19

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# Executive Summary

As part of the 35th anniversary of the Diocese of Broken Bay, Bishop Anthony Randazzo invited the region of the Central Coast to journey forward together as pilgrim and missionary People of God. The Central Coast region was identified as a particular context for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel, for evangelisation and catechesis, and pastoral creativity. This initiative is referred to as the Pastoral Discernment Central Coast project (PDCC).

The project of pastoral discernment invited each to recall how the Spirit has guided the Church's journey over time and called the community to be together, as witnesses of God's love, to recognise the region's particular pastoral circumstances, opportunities, and challenges. The project was a major strategic pastoral initiative and was conducted over several phases. It required the support and commitment of a range of people and agencies across the Diocese and the integration of several existing planning processes.

## Project Beginings

In early 2022, the Central Coast community was invited to provide feedback via local community listening and dialogue sessions at the service of shaping a pastoral discernment submission for Bishop Anthony's consideration.

This pastoral discernment envisaged a sustained and prayerful study of the various factors which give the region of Central Coast its unique character, amongst which are:



**Demographic trends**



**Social and economic issues**



**Parish trends of affiliation and participation**

The project process and themes drew on the language and ideas presented for the 2023 Synod of Bishops. The General Synod ran parallel to the PDCC project. Submissions received from the PDCC project assisted with the Diocesan Synod response.

## Project Aim

The ongoing aims of the Central Coast Project, is to renew the life of the Church, recognising and appreciating the gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon the community and the family of God.



**To develop more effective strategies for evangelisation in a parish context, focusing on parish renewal and discipleship.**



**To develop inclusive ecclesial processes which allow and offer everyone the opportunity to express themselves and be heard, resulting in a renewal of the life of the Church, ensuring a sustainable and thriving community.**



**The project and its process will provide a future template for discernment in other regions of the Diocese.**

## Listening and Dialogue

Parish and community groups were invited to participate, discern, and journey together, through listening and dialogue forums, resulting in the development of a Pastoral Discernment submission.

More than 1,500 people participated in the listening and dialogue consultation sessions and a total of fifty-two submissions were received. The opportunity to participate in the consultation phase of the project was widespread and included CSBB staff and students, CatholicCare, Parishes, youth and young adults, and Chancery staff.

The Pastoral Discernment project submissions opened on January 31, 2022 and closed on March 31, 2022. Of the submissions received, seven themes emerged.

## Emergent Themes

1. Inclusion and Dialogue
2. Youth
3. Customs and Practices, including Liturgy
4. Building Community
5. Social Outreach
6. Community Resourcing
7. Difficulties of the past and present

**In addition to the emergent themes several considerations have been identified that require pastoral attention. These include:**

1. Future Parish Sustainability
2. Pastoral Responses
3. Emerging Critical Areas for Attention
4. Specific Areas for Attention

A summary of each of the emergent themes, and further considerations are outlined in the Final Report.

The Final Report was prepared by Mrs Patti Beattie, Diocesan Pastoral Discernment Project Facilitator. The four sections of the Report provide an overview of the emerging themes, the opportunities, and obstacles that the local listening and dialogue sessions identified, a SWOT analysis and the fourth section outlines areas have been identified that require pastoral attention.

## Next Steps

- A Task Group with Terms of Reference be appointed to consider the Report and to make recommendations to Bishop Anthony in respect to the implementation of the findings of the Report.
- A new Pastoral Discernment Project Facilitator for the implementation of the PDCC recommendations and to lead the Northern Beaches Deanery Pastoral Discernment be appointed.
- The appointment of the Pastoral Discernment Project Facilitator will also undertake the role of the Executive Officer (EO) to the PDCC Implementation Task Group, to lead the Task Group in the formulation of recommendations, and then implementing those determined by the Bishop.



**Patti Beattie**

PDCC Project Facilitator

Director Evangelisation Broken Bay



# Final Report

## Emerging themes

Of the 52 submissions received through the local consultations, the following themes emerged.

### Inclusion and Dialogue

There was a strong desire for a Church that is welcoming, inclusive, and non-judgemental, particularly when journeying with young people and vulnerable members of the community.

Responders spoke of the need to include those on the margin and those that are sometimes forgotten. Groups that were identified include the divorced, people with a disability, non-attendees at Church, different cultural heritage, single-sex relationships, ESL, LGBTQI, refugees, families from low SES, women and young people, low education levels, busy families, mental needs of members of the community, Aboriginal people/families, victims of domestic violence, children in foster care and blended families.

**Responders felt the desire and need for the Church to find greater opportunities to engage with Aboriginal families to participate in the Church. The following possibilities were named; a real welcome into the Church, engagement through song, dance, and puppets, a review of the language used so that Aboriginal people can connect with the passages of the Bible that are relevant and meaningful for them, greater consistency across parishes regarding engagement and connection with Aboriginal people. Mass on 'Country' and inviting Elders to attend, liturgies and Masses for Sorry Day, Reconciliation, and NAIDOC week. and greater consultation with the community.**

Whilst there were many responders who saw that the inclusion of support for the vulnerable was required, one responder requested support for a local charitable organisation that provides support for people within the community who suffer mental health difficulties. This request is in the form of raising awareness of the local organisation across the community, financial support, and a possible land grant.

Many submissions indicated a longing for a Church that is more visible in the community, one that reaches out to members of the wider community who 'are not in the pews on Sundays'. Linked to this was a yearning for more opportunities and an invitation for people to utilise their gifts, skills, and talents more widely, for example, retired parishioners.

Some responders felt that to have true and authentic opportunities for inclusivity and dialoguing together requires the development of opportunities and processes, where people's voices are heard, listened to, and valued, without judgment. There was a strong sense that the community would value continued opportunities

for dialoguing and listening together. It was also suggested that as a Church we provide education on encouraging diversity, in order to take an active role in combatting negative stereotypes.

There was a desire for authentic processes that allowed for inclusivity, including opportunities to listen to others, especially to speak of the issues that are real and present on the Central Coast. Listening to ways that support can be provided, as well as knowing what support services are available to assist those on the margin.

Whilst many submissions called for faith formation opportunities, there was also a strong desire for opportunities to be provided for the Church to listen more deeply and authentically to the people. Responders felt that when we as a Church 'listen and dialogue, we learn' and move forward together.

## Youth

There was a strong desire, that came through in many submissions, for increased and greater opportunities for the youth of the Central Coast, across all parishes and communities of the region. There was a strong desire for the establishment of a Youth Office to be developed and located on the Central Coast.

It was strongly felt that there should be greater and more effective strategies developed to reach out to youth. Responders named that the utilisation of our schools was an important avenue to consider. Inviting students in our schools to participate in listening and dialogue opportunities regularly, providing processes that listen to teenagers rather than just talking at them.

**One response highlighted that 'our ability to grow together as companions is dependent on ongoing education and belief systems which are instilled in our students', particularly in our schools. There was a general sense from the submissions received that more opportunities need to be 'provided that foster more Youth Group events and opportunities on the Central Coast' which included opportunities for socialisation, faith formation, and opportunities that promote ecumenical and interfaith dialogue amongst the young.**

There was a desire to develop music programs both in schools and in Church that related more specifically to young people, one responder felt that 'music is identified as the principal key to attracting and holding teenagers and young families'.

Responders spoke of the desire to investigate how other Churches, especially Pentecostal / Evangelical Churches relate to and engage youth and young families. Opportunities to learn from and understand effective ways of engagement with the youth, considering what could be done in local parishes that mirrors the same results other Churches successfully achieve.

There was a strong desire for additional resourcing support to develop post-school programs for leavers from Catholic schools as well as an ongoing strategic engagement strategy for the 18+-year-old community members, across the region.

Responders voiced the need and desire for a paid Youth Ministry Coordinator, to support the work between schools and parishes, including strategic opportunities to engage with young families. Participants felt that the support of a Youth Ministry Coordinator would take some of the extra work burdens from teachers, who are time-poor and burdened with competing and increasing demands of the classroom.

## Customs and Practices, including Liturgy

Many responders felt a desire for a change and application of the liturgy to assist with re-engaging young families and young people, such as through the review of music. Responders shared a desire for more engaging and relevant homilies, which are proclaimed rather than a homily that is read from a printed script. Responders' insights revealed a desire for a review of Clergy formation, which included empowering Clergy to empower their community to support and enliven ministry initiatives and projects within their communities.

Responders believe that the Church must accept that women have a vital role to play and voiced the need and desire for more opportunities for leadership roles for women to be created.

It was identified by some responders that the Central Coast community 'lacks Catholic Identity and Culture' with a sense that this needs to be strengthened. One responder felt that 'keeping Christ at the Centre – and not to be misguided by what is heard throughout the media and in the news' was an area that could be strengthened within parishes and the community.

Respondents felt that to keep Catholic Faith and identity strong within the community there needs to be a strong sense of celebrating our story, loudly and proudly. One respondent felt that additional resourcing support and the development of a social media profile would assist with increasing visibility within the community, leveraging communication of the many events that take place, and providing greater engagement opportunities for events across the Central Coast. There was also a sense that the Diocesan Communication strategy is improved to enhance marketing and PR opportunities.

## **Building Community**

Some responders felt that the needs and priorities of families have changed over time and attending Mass on the weekend wasn't the priority. Sporting commitments and going to the beach were an important part of the family lifestyle and the culture of the Coast. Some responders named families as 'time poor'.

There was a desire for greater connections between the various arms of the Diocese, and this was a common theme across the responses received from schools, parishioners, CatholicCare, and clergy. One submission suggested the development of a parish-school 'one-site complex', for the East Gosford community as a way of bridging the divide between this parish, school, and the community.

Whilst many responders shared a strong desire to develop and support youth engagement many responders also felt a strong need to re-engage and connect with families. One response stated 'while I believe there is a popular demand for youth ministry, that probably isn't exactly the silver bullet. It only invites the children into the Church, not the family'.

Responders felt that an increased presence of both Clergy and teachers across each of the communities would help to build community and relationships across communities. Some responders felt that clergy needed to be more present in schools and classrooms whilst other responders felt that school staff needed to be more present and active participants in the ministry life of the parish, with regular attendance at Mass, inclusive of ongoing mandatory participation in faith formation programs for teachers. Several responses indicated a desire for stronger relationships with Clergy; one respondent indicated dissatisfaction with the 'caretaker' attitude of some Clergy.





## Social Outreach

Some responders felt that there need to be avenues and ways for Social Justice initiatives to be strengthened, promoted, and supported on the Central Coast, working beyond 'what's on our doorstep' with support from Clergy and Diocesan staff to initiate this work.

It was felt that strengthening Social Justice initiatives will bridge the gap between intergenerational discourse currently experienced in faith communities across the region. Such initiatives will help to build the divide between young and old people, as well as serve the purpose of supporting those who are less fortunate, together.

There was a desire from responders for greater support from Diocesan staff to support the many Social Justice initiatives, inclusive of resources to raise awareness of the range of initiatives available and the importance of community participation in outreach service.

Responders identified specific initiatives that may support and strengthen outreach opportunities including a Catholic Diocese 'food truck' that travels across the Coast to areas in need as well as a 'floating boat' that visits Central Coast communities by water, bringing Church to the people.

There was a desire from the community of responders to strengthen collaborative opportunities across the region by combining parish groups, initiatives, and resources, to create one Catholic community working and supporting each other, for the community, rather than many separate parishes all trying to do the same thing, at their own local level.

## Community Resourcing

Many responders called for additional resourcing to both assist and provide guidance for the many ministries across the Coast, inclusive of schools and parish support. There was a strong desire for a Central Coast team dedicated to supporting the 'on the ground' work, supporting and working alongside parish and school communities.

Alongside additional resourcing support, there was a strong desire for Increased support from Diocesan staff to support Parish work, as well as a strategy that raises the visibility of the services of the support available from CatholicCare agencies. Many responders called for additional support and care for the vulnerable people, which encompasses both out-of-hours support, as well as weekend access points. Responders felt that the Central Coast CatholicCare office needed to be moved from West Gosford to a more central and localised location, to best serve the needs of the community and particularly the needs of the Northern end of the Central Coast.

**Responders identified the cultural and socio-economic differences experienced between the Northern and Southern ends of the coast and identified homelessness as a particular need that is under-served on the Northern end of the coast, considering that this is the community that is most in need. There was a call for additional support and resources to assist those that are less fortunate, and a clear communication strategy around where support, and what supports can be accessed on the Central Coast with consideration of re-positioning the support to where the greatest need is.**

Increased resourcing and support to engage the community through the digital platform, including financial support for digital resources i.e., formed.org. Responders felt a strong desire for the Diocese to use the digital platform to be able to communicate events and provide engagement opportunities for the people of the region.

There was a strong desire for a Church that is relevant to the people and needs of the families of the coast, who name that they are time-poor, have many competing weekend commitments, and are burdened due to commutes to Sydney to seek work.

Responders felt that the formation of Clergy will assist in helping to support engagement with Mass attendance through engaging homilies that are not scripted and read, music that is engaging, and an

openness of acceptance of attendance by all community members where they are felt welcome to attend and belong.

A review of the sacramental program to enhance and foster engagement strategies that go beyond the program and provide opportunities for families to continue the engagement and connection to the Church. Some responders felt that the current structure and format of the sacramental program were cumbersome and frustrating.

### **Difficulties of the present and past**

Historical abuse and suffering were identified throughout the submissions as an area of great pain and hurt from the wrongdoings of the past. Some responders felt the need for the Church of today to rebuild that trust, to enable moving forward together. It was felt that there has been a loss of trust over the years, with what has been and is portrayed in media, and to help build Church and community, this trust needs to be re-built.

There was a desire and call for Clergy to speak up and show that they are faithful disciples, to outwardly show a different perspective to what has been portrayed in the media over the years. Responders saw a need for all to work together, as a pastoral community to influence and dialogue, to lead by example, to build the trust, of all, once again within the community, about the Catholic Church.

Responders identified the difficulties that COVID has presented, inhibiting Church attendance and participation to grow, several responders strongly urged for additional resourcing which explicitly supported schools and parishes to focus on parent and young family engagement due to the difficulties over the past 2 years. Responders identified that 'covid has broken the ties between parish and school - and work, time and effort needed to be put into building the divide and providing a welcome to Church faith.'

There were many social and complex difficulties that members of the Central Coast community faced and were identified through the submissions. Responders specifically identified and named; high rates of domestic violence, homelessness, a high number of people suffering mental ill-health, lack of disability support services, the aging demographic, lack of support and support that is not easily accessible by the people who need it most, and low SES rates experienced by many people of the Central Coast.

### **Additional thoughts beyond the themes**

School teams particularly voiced concerns about the difficulty experienced in their attempts to engage school parents and families throughout the PDCC consultation process. One school reviewed and changed their communication and engagement strategy, in alignment with their community needs and still had very little, to no parent engagement within the community. It was shared that the lack of parent engagement within the school context was felt by more projects and initiatives beyond the PDCC project, and the lack of engagement was perhaps more a picture of where families are currently at.

# Opportunities and Obstacles

The following summary is a collation of ideas presented through the 52 submissions received. They have been categorised into either opportunities or obstacles and the facilitator has clarified or interpreted statements where she felt necessary.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Solutions / Considerations

#### Inclusion and Dialogue

- Increase inclusivity.
- Greater support for the vulnerable; i.e., students with disability, mental health needs of the community – beyond 9-5 pm on weekdays.
- Processes for ongoing consultation: i.e., Listening and dialogue sessions.
- Better representation of minority groups.
- Support groups for people caring for a person with a disability.
- Collaborative planning between Parish/schools/CC to educate the community on the vulnerable needs of members of the community – inclusive practices.
- Diocesan forum – explore how parish resources can assist – DV and the vulnerable needs of the community.
- Resourcing support for disadvantaged and vulnerable i.e., Wayside chapel style service providing facility.
- Access to Women’s and children’s shelters.

#### Youth

- Paid Youth Ministry Leaders
- Establishment of a youth office on the Central Coast
- Youth coordinators in each parish – reaching out, proactive work.
- Youth gathering – with all denominations to promote ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
- Provide voice to youth and allow connection and involvement.
- Inter-parish youth group activities.
- Resourcing a Community Mission role – liaise between CatholicCare, youth, and family services.

#### Customs Practices and Liturgy

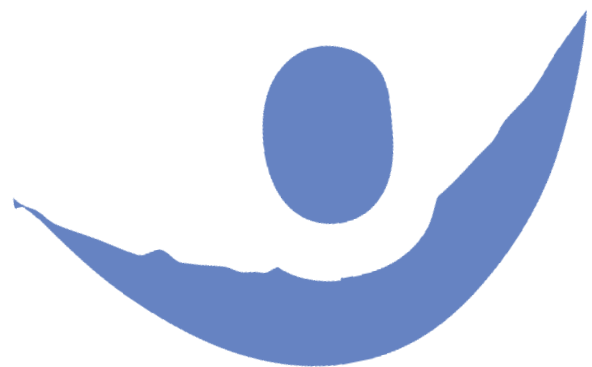
- Review of Sacramental program in schools.
- Deep dive into engagement strategies of other churches to explore what works well in other places of worship.
- Increased presence of Clergy in schools i.e., regular

## OBSTACLES

### Difficulties / Challenges

#### Inclusion and Dialogue

- Exclusion of people with a disability by clergy and Catholic schools that some families have experienced.
- Homelessness crisis on the Central Coast.
- High levels of Domestic Violence rates on the Central Coast.
- Large proportion of elderly on the Central Coast bring it to an ageing population.
- Low SES across areas of the Central Coast.
- Less support on the northern end of the coast where greater needs are experienced i.e., homelessness difficulties.
- People in need who are unaware of how to reach out and where to reach out for support.
- Opportunities to listen to the people who have left the Church.



#### Customs Practices and Liturgy

- Church that lacks relevance to the community on the Coast.
- Lack of Catholic identity and culture.
- Leaders in schools who do not practice their faith nor involved in Parish life.

visits to classrooms, staffrooms.

- Provide education and faith formation opportunities for all.
- Modernising traditions to connect to the Church of today i.e., language that isn't too high level for the people who may be less churched, clearly explain the scripture readings so that people can understand the language of the Bible.
- Role of women i.e., increasing their profile and leadership within the Church.
- Mandatory faith formation of teachers.
- Financial support for digital resourcing platforms i.e., formed.org
- Contemporary 'evangelisation' – relevance to all that suits the needs and current needs and context of the community.
- Teachers' attendance at weekend Mass.
- Teachers' active participation in faith communities and provided with faith formation.
- Priests' homilies to be more engaging rather than following a script i.e., speak to the people rather than read something.
- Parish Leadership teams collaborate with other Parishes.
- Re-evaluate the formation of Clergy, the desire to have Priests with energy, vision, and capacity.
- Strong music programs in parishes inclusive of resourcing needs.

- Difficulty in engaging young people in meaningful weekend Mass.
- Increased school enrolment numbers against the decreasing Mass attendance figures.
- School families disconnected from the Church.
- When Homilies are read from a script - and not proclaimed.
- Inclusiveness of all in the community i.e., the Indigenous, refugees.
- Ageing leadership in the Church – inability to lead.
- Difficulty accessing language/texts: simple and accessible language.
- Parents find the format of the sacramental programs in schools frustrating – does not foster a sense of community with no link and encouragement back to the church.

### **Building Community**

- Creation of welcoming communities.
- Strengthening parish/school/parishioner relationships.
- Increasing Catholic visibility within the community i.e., Catholic public processions.
- Increased support for the elderly.
- Strategy and support for engagement of 18+ year-olds.
- Strengthening of relationships between the three Diocesan agencies.
- Supporting the Parish priest in creating vibrant, contagious communities.
- Engagement strategy of Aboriginal families to participate in church.
- Breaking down the divide between communities and parishes across the region i.e., parishes working together rather than being compared against each other.
- Utilising the gifts and talents of the community and provide a mentorship program.

### **Building Community**

- Difficulties in being mobile enough to attend Mass.
- Strong personalities/fear of embarrassment and humiliation when attending Mass and trying to get involved, lack of welcome and openness.
- Catholic schools aren't Catholic anymore.
- Lack of leadership capacity within the Parish impedes the mission of the Church.
- Intergenerational gaps amongst parishioners – mostly elderly and at times; judgmental, condemning, not open minded, especially about young people.
- Lack of support from members of the parish to volunteer for ministry work.

### Social Outreach

- Involvement and collaboration in activities outside the community 'gates' and across communities
- Improved Diocesan communication, PR, and marketing opportunities.
- Catholic Social Justice programs and initiatives that look to and support those on the margins.

### Social Outreach

- Diocesan support in mission and social outreach support is lacking, ie; suggestion that staff spend too much time in the office.
- Climate change issues.

### Community Resourcing

- Re-development of school/Parish community site – East Gosford.
- Financial support for teachers and students in Independent Catholic Schools to attend events such as WYD.
- New revenue-raising strategies i.e., creative ways to raise funds for different charities and organisations.
- Additional resourcing for students with special needs in Catholic Schools.
- Collaboration across communities across the Coast.
- Greater support for Parishes from staff in the Chancery i.e., Parish visits from members of the EBB team to support local needs within the Parish and support for what their particular needs are and a recognition that one size doesn't fit all.
- Increased visibility of CatholicCare agency across the Diocese i.e., knowing what services are available to people of the Coast.
- Additional funding to support the Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care program on the Central Coast.
- Resourcing support and financial assistance – housing needs.
- Resourcing: Mission priest – aged care facilities to provide communion and outreach beyond the walls of the Church.
- Increased media profile i.e., an online platform to communicate events and engagement opportunities.
- Strategy that engages and reaches out to the secular community i.e., developing a strategy that responds to the communities needs and connects them to the life of the Parish with groups such as the Indigenous community and those facing homelessness.
- Culture of encounter' that is parish focused including the strengthening of Clergy and PPC teams which are led by someone with firsthand experience of the Central Coast with sound ecclesiology, consistent with the documents of the Second Vatican Council.
- Provide a better sense of a family ministry within the Church. While services of the diocese do provide counselling, foster care, etc., there needs to be a ministerial service or group within parishes that provides a more communal approach to the issue with spiritual development.

### Community Resourcing

- Outdated equipment to enhance social media visibility.
- Workloads of teachers and competing demands.
- Lack of awareness of what programs are run and available and how parishes and schools can access support from the Chancery office.

### Difficulties of the Past and Present

- Difficulties of the past.
- Impact of Covid.
- Mental Health concerns.
- Resourcing.
- Parent engagement and the difficulties to engage parents in aspects of schools and parish life.
- Poor Mass attendance figures.
- 'Time poor' families.
- Lack of trust in the Church due to past difficulties.
- Drug-related issues experienced by some members of the community of the Central Coast.
- Safeguarding/child protection issues 'hotspots' on the Central Coast and increased services and supports are required.
- Families needing to travel to Sydney for work and the demands that this places on families.
- Increased number of non-Catholic family's enrolments in schools.



# SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was undertaken to highlight opportunities for improvement which will help to guide future planning and resourcing needs.

## Strength

- Template that has flexibility
- Template that can be used across Diocese/individual parish setting
- Engagement of the project across the community and agencies
- Desire for cross-agency collaboration
- Many ministries across Coast
- Strong Youth engagement
- Innovative
- Relationships that have developed
- Authentic natural progression to 'plan' in some instances

## Weakness

- Leadership capacity
- Limitations due to COVID implications
- Declining Mass attendance
- Ageing population
- Agency ownership and engagement
- Resourcing
- Overburdened / understaffed parishes
- Competing demands

## Opportunity

- Pastoral creativity across the region
- For the community to be listened to
- Follow-up action as part of the process
- Faith formation
- Strengthening relationships across agencies
- Support for critical areas of need, i.e., homelessness

## Threat

- Resourcing/funding to enact the plan in moving forward
- Change in leadership
- Resistance to change
- Ageing church population
- Another COVID-19-like situation
- Competing agendas
- Not adhering to the communicated plan



## Critical Areas of Development

In addition to the themes that emerged through the consultations, several additional areas have been identified that require pastoral attention.

*These areas include:*

### 1: Future Parish Sustainability

The critical financial situation and the various sustainability of the parishes on Central Coast will require further review, particularly the parishes of Wyoming, Kincumber, and Warnervale with an outcome to be determined following this review. This will also be inclusive of understanding parish boundaries as they currently are, with consideration of what may be adapted into the future as a result of this discernment work and other factors.

### 2: Pastoral Responses

#### **Hospital Chaplaincy**

Strengthening the hospital chaplaincy support on the Central Coast, considering the health needs of Central Coast residents and the cry out for medical health needs of the region.

#### **Historical Past**

Vulnerable areas of the Coast affected by sexual abuse: the woundedness experienced in areas of the Coast, particularly the southern end of the Coast.

#### **Volunteer Engagement program**

The Central Coast has a vast and varied volunteer, participation, and engagement rate, across parishes, where lay people provide time and their gifts to support the mission of the church. Regarding current demographics, a well-structured volunteer engagement program is required, inclusive of induction, formation, development of role descriptions and opportunities for volunteers to support and mentor other lay parishioners. Inclusive of centralised advice regarding management of volunteers, including risk assessments.

### 3: Emerging Critical Areas for Attention

#### **Health needs and medical supports**

1 in 4 people (24.3%) of people living on the Central Coast experience mental health and behavioural

conditions (Includes organic mental problems, alcohol and drug problems, mood (affective) disorders such as depression, anxiety related problems and other mental and behavioural problems) which is higher than NSW average of 19.1%

*(Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017-18, National Health Survey, TableBuilder. Findings based on use of ABS TableBuilder data).*

In 2017, the suicide rate was 1.4 times higher than the NSW average. In 2017-2018, young females aged 15-24 years were three times as likely to be hospitalised for self-harm. The Central Coast has high percentages of adults who drink alcohol at levels posing an immediate or long-term risk.

*(Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence. Alcohol consumption at levels posing: long-term risk; immediate risk, to health by Primary Health Network, persons aged 16 years and over, NSW 2018 [electronic dataset]. Sydney: Health Stats NSW, NSW Ministry of Health; 2019 (accessed 2019 Oct 22).*

### **Homelessness**

There is a housing crisis on the Central Coast and the impact of the housing market since COVID has impacted this with significant increases to housing prices, a contributing factor due to the migration of residents from Sydney during the COVID pandemic. There has been a 25% rent increase and 300% increase in demand on the housing market on the Central Coast.

### **Domestic Violence**

The Central Coast has the second-highest incidences of domestic violence in the state. Wyong is the second-highest suburb for police callouts in NSW due to domestic and family violence. 66% of domestic and family violence incidences go unreported (BOCSAR, 2020). Over the 12 months to March 2022, the number of domestic violence-related assaults was 1 in 516.

### **Disability**

The Central Coast has around 5,500 Catholics who have a disability and who need assistance with core activities. Whilst many are elderly, there are many other adults and young people who require assistance. There are around 8,600 Catholics who provide unpaid assistance to someone with a disability.

Many Catholic schools on the Central Coast have a large number of students with disabilities, particularly cognitive and social-emotional disabilities.

### **Growth in Tertiary Education opportunities on the Central Coast**

The NSW Government announced, in April 2022, that the University of Newcastle will be its university partner to deliver a new university campus in Mann Street, Gosford. In conjunction with this announcement, TAFE NSW has also proposed an upgrade of the current precinct site at Gosford.

## **4: Specific Areas for Attention**

### **Juvenile Justice**

Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre is the largest youth justice centre in the state with a capacity for 120 young people and is located at Kariiong near Gosford. The centre was opened in October 1999 and accommodates males aged 16 to 21 years, mostly on control orders and who have generally been convicted of less serious offences. The centre offers a range of health, educational and spiritual services to the young people, including individual case management, specialised counselling, and training in job and living skills. Currently there is no Diocesan involvement at the Centre.

### **Relationship and Connection with First Nation people**

Commitment to continuing to work towards recognition, reconciliation, and justice through the implementation of the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan.



# Appendix 1

## An overview of the Central Coast Region

The first Catholic settlers on the Central Coast date back to the 1820s with the establishment of the first parish on the Central Coast identified as Holy Cross Kincumber. The first recorded mass was in 1838, celebrated by Fr McEnroe at the home of Thomas Humphreys, a sizeable local landowner, and supervisor of convicts who donated land for Holy Cross church and cemetery. The parish was part of the Brisbane Water ecclesiastical district and was founded in the 1840s. Holy Cross Church Kincumber was opened by Archbishop Polding in 1842.

The Central Coast is New South Wales's third-largest urban area and Australia's ninth-largest urban area.

With more than 215,000 Catholics and an area of 2,763 square kilometres the Diocese of Broken Bay comprises 26 Parishes managed by their respective Parish Priests or Parish Administrators (Parish Priests). Diocesan schools and welfare services are managed by separate agencies – the Catholic Schools (CSBB) and CatholicCare.

### The Central Coast Deanery

The Broken Bay Diocese was established in 1986. The Central Coast makes up one of three deaneries of the Diocese.

Bishop Anthony outlined a new Deanery structure with all Clergy at their conference on 4 November 2021. The structure saw a shift from five deaneries to three. The Central Coast Deanery was invited to participate in a Synodal journey of engagement in the pastoral discernment initiative.

The Central Coast Deanery is the northern part of the Diocese and incorporates nine parishes, from Woy Woy to Toukley, Wyong, and Warnervale. The Central Coast Dean is Fr Brian Moloney who is also Parish Priest at OLOR The Entrance.

The Central Coast Deanery consists of the following parishes, including two hospitals where chaplaincy support is provided.

### Central Coast Parishes

|                          |                                |                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Kincumber</b>         | <b>Wyoming</b>                 | <b>Warnervale</b>   |
| <b>Woy Woy Peninsula</b> | <b>Toukley – Lake Munmorah</b> | <b>The Entrance</b> |
| <b>Gosford</b>           | <b>Wyong</b>                   | <b>Terrigal</b>     |

### Hospital Chaplaincy

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Wyong Hospital</b> | <b>Gosford Hospital</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|

## Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB)

Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) schools cover an expansive geographical area including the Central Coast, Sydney's Northern Beaches, and North Shore. CSBB is a system serving 44 Catholic Schools with around 17,000 students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

There are 15 Catholic schools on the Central Coast, 14 CSBB, and 1 Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) independent Secondary College. 2021 figures indicate 7,754 enrolments at CSBB schools on the Central Coast. St Edward's, (EREA), located in Gosford with 2021 enrolment figures of 1,030 boys, with enrolments from both local CSBB and Department of Education schools.

### Primary

|                   |                   |                      |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Warnervale</b> | <b>Terrigal</b>   | <b>Lake Munmorah</b> | <b>The Entrance</b> |
| <b>Wyoming</b>    | <b>Tumbi Umbi</b> | <b>East Gosford</b>  | <b>Woy Woy</b>      |
| <b>Kincumber</b>  | <b>Toukley</b>    | <b>Wyong</b>         |                     |

### Secondary K-12

|                   |
|-------------------|
| <b>Warnervale</b> |
|-------------------|

### Secondary 7-12

|                      |                 |                     |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Lake Munmorah</b> | <b>Tuggerah</b> | <b>East Gosford</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|

### Independent

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| <b>St Edward's Secondary College</b> |
|--------------------------------------|

## CSBB Special Project - Eileen O'Connor School

Catholic Schools Broken Bay is currently reviewing and refining its strategic vision about Learner Diversity to provide a purpose-built and resourced K-12 school. The school will enhance the support currently provided in mainstream CSBB schools, for students with disability and highly individualised learning needs.

The **Eileen O'Connor School** will include a K-12 Base School situated at Tuggerah and Support Classes accommodated across the Diocese in existing CSBB schools. The Base School will be built in 2 stages and commence enrolment for K-3 students in 2025 (Stage 1 build); Yr. 5 in 2027, and Yr. 7 in 2028 (Stage 2 build). Two pilot Support Classes will commence operation with kindergarten students in 2023 - Eileen O'Connor St Martin's Davidson, and Eileen O'Connor St Brendan's Lake Munmorah, overseen by an interim Eileen O'Connor School Principal.

## CatholicCare

Since 1987 CatholicCare has served the communities of Northern Sydney, Northern Beaches, and Central Coast, providing services and support to more than 26,000 people every year to create a brighter future. CatholicCare welcomes everyone, regardless of circumstances, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, or ability.

In 2021/2022, CatholicCare delivered over \$48 million of services, providing care to 2,600 children, young people, individuals, and families. With funding from the Government, individual supporters, and other sources, as well as a workforce of more than 800 people, CatholicCare Broken Bays offers the following.

|                                   |                            |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Family Supports</b>            | <b>Service for Seniors</b> | <b>Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care</b> |
| <b>Permanency Support Program</b> | <b>Children's Services</b> | <b>Disability and NDIS Supports</b>          |

## Appendix 2

# The Pastoral Discernment Project Framework

### The Framework

#### Advisory Support

A Pastoral Reference Group was established during 2020 to undertake strategic planning and guide the implementation process.

#### The 2020 Pastoral Reference Group included.

- **Vicar General:** Very Rev Dr Fr David Ranson
- **Diocesan Financial Administrator:** Ms Emma McDonald
- **Chancellor and Executive Officer of the Office of the Bishop:** Mrs Kelly Paget
- **Director for Evangelisation:** Mr Tomasz Juszcak
- **Diocesan Director for Communications:** Ms Katrina Lee
- **Director of Catholic Schools Broken Bay:** Mr Danny Casey
- **Executive Director of CatholicCare Broken Bay:** Mr Tim Curran

#### Following the launch, additional membership to the Pastoral Reference Group was extended to include:

- **Clergy representative from the Central Coast – Dean of the Central Coast:** Fr Brian Moloney
- **Lay representative from the Central Coast - Catholic School Broken Bay Principal:** Mrs. Yvette Owens

Bishop Anthony appointed Mrs Kelly Paget, Executive Officer of the Office of the Bishop as Convenor of the Pastoral Reference Group.

Additional Committees were also required to ensure the needs of specific groups (such as schools) were adequately addressed. An Implementation Task Group was established to provide strategic advice and direction and met regularly with the Project Facilitator.

#### Members of the Implementation Task Group included.

- **Vicar General:** Very Rev Fr David Ranson
- **Diocesan Financial Administrator:** Ms Emma McDonald
- **Chancellor and Executive Officer of the Bishop:** Mrs Kelly Paget
- **Stewardship: Property and Infrastructure Project Manager:** Ms Tania van der Vegt

#### Budget

A budget was outlined for the PDCC project to the amount of \$50,000.

#### Over summary of budget spend.

**Estimated** \$50,000.00

**Actual Spent** \$32,898.46

# Project Scope

## Phases of implementation

The project was undertaken in 4 distinct phases

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>Phase 1 Preliminary analysis</b><br>Bringing together existing research and data to obtain a profile of the region.  | July - Oct 2021 |
| <b>Phase 2 Consultation</b><br>Establishing widening circles of dialogue to draw from the experience and wisdom of clergy and people.                               | Nov - May 2022  |
| <b>Phase 3 Evaluation and Recommendations</b><br>Identifying opportunities for renewal and developing a pastoral strategic plan for Bishop Anthony's consideration. | June 2022       |
| <b>Phase 4 Implementation</b><br>Initiating new structures and processes at the service of renewed Evangelisation and ecclesial life in the region.                 | From July 2022  |

## Project Timeline

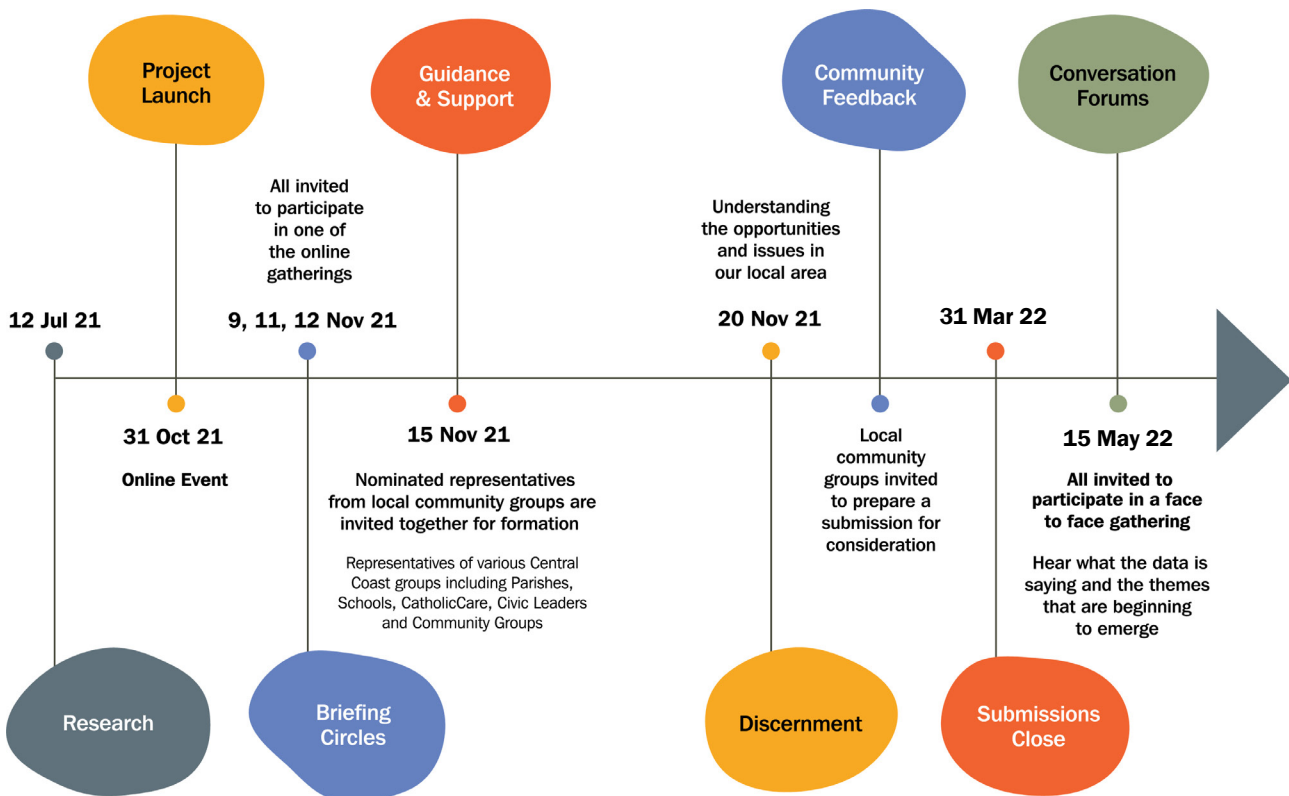


Figure 1: Project Timeline: launch to close of the consultation phase

The Project commenced mid-July 2021. The Project was officially launched 31 October through an online event due to the current covid restrictions at the time of the launch, initial planning set the closing date for submissions on 14 February, with a Conversation Forum event planned for the week of 26 April. Participants at the online Briefing Circles, raised concerns about the timing of the closing date of submission. Following this feedback, the date was recalibrated to 31 March 2022, which also aligned to the change of closing date for the 2023 General Synod submissions.

The concerns raised by Briefing Circle participants included impeding covid restrictions, the busyness of a new school year and the opening of Church communities following lockdowns and difficulties that January 2022 presented.

## Communication

The Pastoral Discernment Central Coast Project Stakeholder Engagement plan outlined the vision for the project as well as the engagement strategy of the project. A Communication plan was developed to outline the necessary tasks required across the 12 months, ensuring that key messaging was consistent and delivered to key stakeholders in a timely manner.

A Promotional Brochure was developed to communicate clear and consistent messages to the community and designed by the Chancery Communications team. 5,000 Promotional brochures were delivered, via courier, to all Central Coast schools, parishes, and CatholicCare service areas for distribution to their communities for the launch of the project.

Ongoing regular communication was provided to the community of the Diocese through regular social media posts, articles in BBNeighbourhoods, Ad Clerum, and BBNews. Regular updates were provided to key stakeholders, including communication at Twilight Clergy gatherings throughout the 12 months.

Communication was also prepared for external communication providers, such as Catholic Weekly, and CathNews who featured news stories of the project progress.

Click here to read stories:

[Catholic Weekly: Launch](#)

[Catholic Weekly: Report](#)

A fortnightly Project Newsletter was distributed via email to each communities Project Facilitator and uploaded to the project webpage to keep each community group informed of latest news, planning and upcoming dates to assist with local planning and engagement.

Embedded on the Diocese of Broken Bay website a Pastoral Discernment project webpage was developed that was updated regularly.

Click here to view:

[Project Newsletter](#)

# Project Phases

## Phase 1

### Preliminary Analysis

The National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) was commissioned to compile correlating statistical data on the Central Coast and has produced the Central Coast Social Profile report of the region.

The data presented in Social Profile Report is from several different sources, including:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- CatholicCare
- Catholic Schools Broken Bay
- Catholic Schools NSW
- Central Coast Local Health District
- Education Services Australia
- NCLS Research
- NSW Central Coast Aboriginal Community
- NSW Government
- The Diocese of Broken Bay
- Mass attendance data is from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference National Count of Attendance 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021, and 2022.

The 2021 ABS Census data, which will support and assist in shaping the project’s implementation phase and will contribute to the Social Profile report outlining and contributing to the Central Coast’s unique story. An updated research piece will need to be undertaken prior to a Project implementation plan is developed.

### Project Launch

Due to COVID19 restrictions, the project was launched as an online event. Bishop Anthony attended Gosford’s Parish Mass on Sunday 31 October to officially launch the project. [Project Launch](#)

### Briefing Circles

Following the launch of the project, the community were invited to participate in one of four Briefing Circles. Registrations were through a Try Booking form, embedded within the project webpage, on one of the four repeated sessions.



**9 November 2022, 11 am**



**9 November 2022, 7 pm**



**11 November 2022, 7 pm**



**12 November 2022, 11 am**

Through these online gatherings, participants had the opportunity to learn more about the project and had an opportunity to discuss together the following three questions.

1. What questions do you have about the project?
2. What are the opportunities that you see?
3. What are your hopes for the project?

Approximately one hundred participants joined one of the four, repeated, Briefing Circle events. Each Briefing Circle session was represented by a cross section of members from the Diocesan agencies, as well as the community. Breakout Room facilitators were used to guide and support the conversation and take brief notes.

Following the Briefing Circles, community leaders (Parish Priests, Principals, and CatholicCare leaders) were invited to nominate a Community Facilitator. The nominated community facilitators were provided with formation, training, and resources, to assist them to lead the consultation, listening, and dialogue sessions within their communities.

Phase 2 of the project invited community groups to participate in listening and dialogue consultation sessions at the service of shaping a Pastoral Discernment submission for Bishop Anthony's consideration. Local consultation sessions were held throughout February and March 2022.

## Resource Guides

The resources developed to guide the consultation journey included: a Facilitator Guide, Facilitator Toolkit, Individual Reflection Guide, and Participant Handbook.

All resource guides and supporting material were uploaded to the project webpage for easy access for all community members.

Click here to view:

### [Resource Guides](#)



**Facilitator Guide:** Outlined the role of facilitator and the consultation methodology which supported the local pastoral discernment conversations.



**Facilitator Toolkit:** provided several resources to assist facilitators to plan and facilitate the local consultation sessions. Resources such as Bulletin notice templates, checklists, prayers, follow up letters etc.



**Individual Reflection Guide:** developed to support individuals within the community, who may wish to discern and make an Individual Pastoral Discernment Submission for consideration.



**Participant Handbook:** developed to provide participants with a space to review, reflect, and respond during the listening and dialogue rounds.



Pastoral Discernment Themes resources were developed for each of the six themes, to support community facilitators to lead the consultation sessions within their communities.

### The structure of the Themes resources included:

- Acknowledgement of Country
- An invitation to prayer together – scripture reference related to the theme
- Song of praise - related to the theme
- Unpacking the theme

## Phase 2

### Consultation

#### Listening and Dialogue Sessions

To support local community conversations six themes were chosen to guide listening and dialogue sessions. Community Groups were invited to discern which theme most suited their context. Sample questions were developed to support and guide local listening and dialogue conversations.

Community Groups discerned how many themes their community would respond to.

Following formation and training with the nominated Community facilitator, each community group leader then planned their, one or more, Pastoral Discernment listening and dialogue session/s.

#### Structure of consultation sessions

Community groups were invited to consider the circumstances, opportunities, and challenges to support a sustainable and thriving ecclesial community in the Central Coast region of the Diocese. It was envisaged that each theme would take approximately one hour to discern. Guiding questions were developed to assist with the discernment.

Community leaders were invited to nominate a skilled facilitator to lead the conversation and a note-taker to capture the responses. Community groups were encouraged to consider the invitation to all in the community, to ensure the participation of as many people as possible, to be able to listen to the voice alive of all People of God in this region of the Diocese.

In the group listening and dialogue rounds, community facilitators were encouraged to invite active participation, attentive listening, reflective speaking, and spiritual discernment.

During the listening and dialogue sessions, participants were invited to:

#### **RECALL THEIR EXPERIENCES:**

by reflecting on the following questions.

#### **RE-CONSIDER THESE EXPERIENCES IN GREATER DEPTH:**

What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered?

What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?

#### **GATHER THE FRUITS TO SHARE:**

Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us?

What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our local community on the Central Coast?

Participants then were invited to participate in a spiritual conversation, structured by three rounds.

#### **Listening and Dialogue Round 1 – REVIEW:**

Everyone takes equal turns to share with each other the fruit of their prayer, in relation to the reflection questions circulated beforehand for each chosen theme. There is no discussion or ‘response’ in this round. All participants simply listen deeply to each person and attend to how the Holy Spirit is moving within themselves, within the person speaking and in the group as a whole. This is followed by a time of silence to reflect on what others are saying and how this is informing each person’s own thoughts in response to the questions presented in each theme.



## Listening and Dialogue Round 2 – REFLECT:

Participants share what struck them most in the first round and what resonated with them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can occur, at the same time attentiveness to what is being said and heard by others is maintained. Once again this is followed by a time of silence.

## Listening and Dialogue Round 3 – RESPOND:

Each participant is invited to share with the group what seems to be resonating in the conversation of the group, from what they are hearing from the group and what moved the group most deeply. New insights are also taken note of.

## Submissions

Following the local listening and dialogue sessions, Community Facilitators synthesised the small group conversations at the service of shaping a Pastoral Discernment Submission. Submissions opened on January 31, 2022.

Group submissions as well as Individual submission were welcomed.

The submission template was designed as a SharePoint, Microsoft application and a link was provided to all community members through the project webpage.

Embedded within the webpage was also a link that allowed the community to upload additional documentation to support their submission.

## Project Video and Photography

A videographer was commissioned to capture the story of the project, for future use in regard to communication as well as form a historical perspective. A Video Project Brief was developed to outline the scope of the work. The final project video is due to be completed by the end of August 2022 and has been commissioned to Kind Media productions.



# Appendix 3

## Demographic Analysis

### Summary of Submissions received

The following table provides an overall summary of the submissions received.

- i. Submissions received
- ii. Submissions received across community groups
- iii. Participation across Diocesan agencies
- iv. Demographic characteristics of respondents
- v. Themes discerned

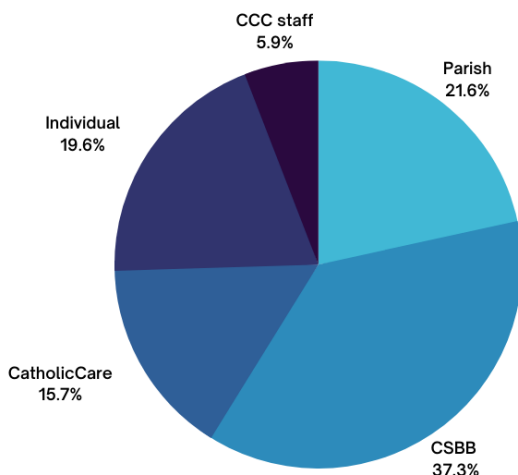
#### i. Submissions received

| Submissions received                 | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Total Number of submissions received | 52    |
| Community Submissions                | 42    |
| Individual Submissions               | 10    |

#### ii. Submissions received breakdown across community groups

| Submissions received across communities | # Received |
|---|------------|
| Parish                                  | 11         |
| School                                  | 19         |
| Catholic Care                           | 9          |
| Individual                              | 10         |
| Caroline Chisolm Centre Staff           | 3          |

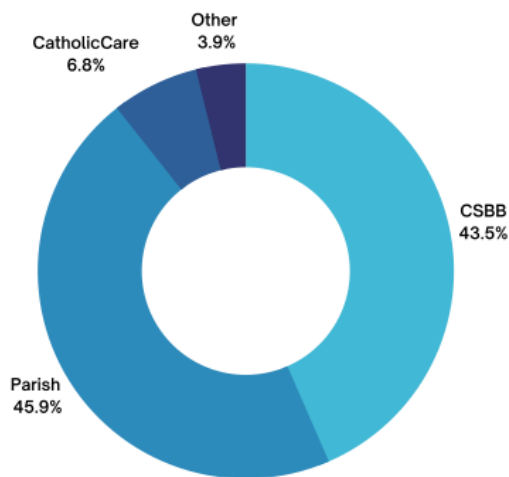
**Figure 2** shows the **percentage number of submissions received** across the Diocesan agencies, with most submissions received from Parish groups which included a number of the individual submission received), of which made up almost 46% of the total number.



An invitation was extended to all staff, who work within the Caroline Chisolm Centre, to attend a listening and dialogue consultation session. Each agency participated in a small group discussion, within their agency, and formulated a submission as a group.

**Figure 2:** Submissions received from each community group

### iii. Participation across Diocesan agencies



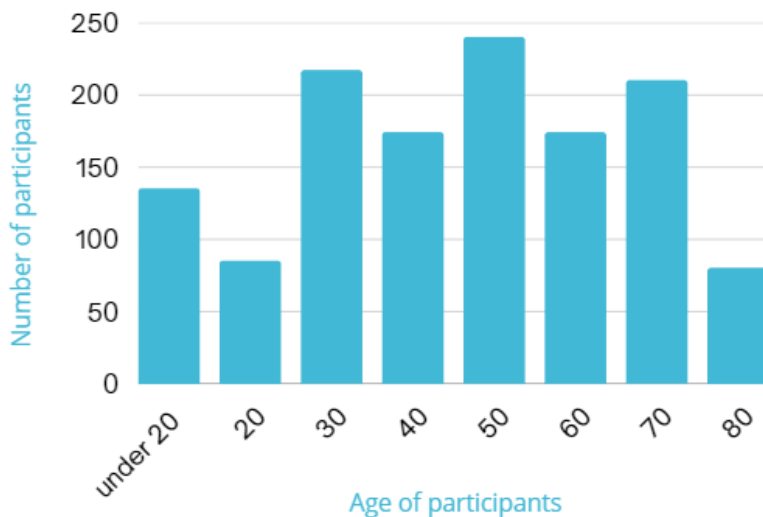
The following figure 3, outlines the **percentage of participation across each of the agencies** within the Diocese. 'Other' includes both individual and non-CSBB school submissions received. Parish participation made up 46% of the total number of participants.

**Figure 3:** Percentage of participation across each agency

### iv. Demographic characteristics of respondents

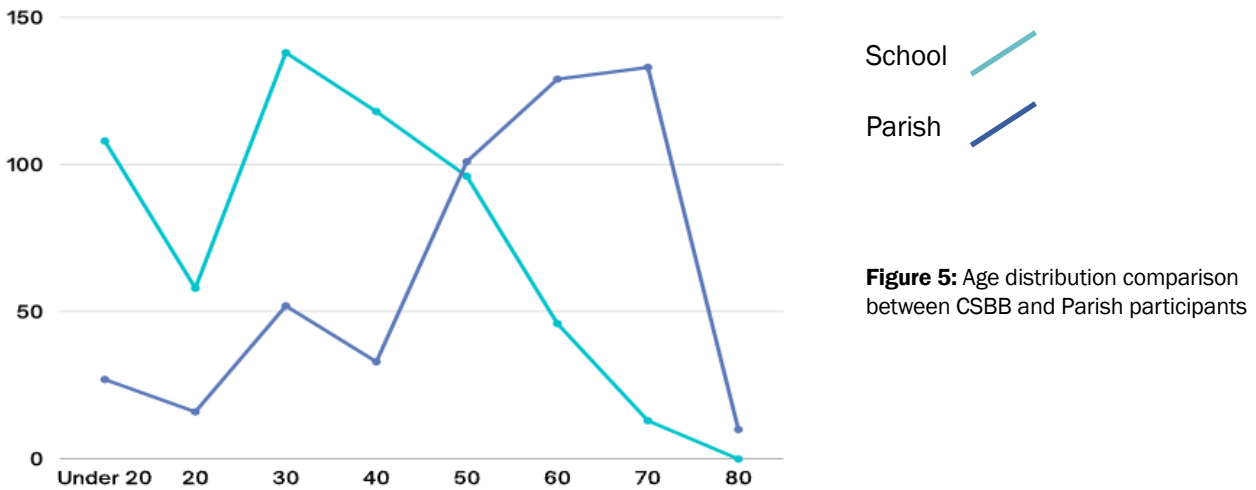
The following table provides a demographic overview of the age of people who responded to the Pastoral Discernment consultation across the Diocese, across all agencies. Figures showed a similar number of participants for the under 50 as was the over 50-year-old age groups.

The 50-year age group were the highest represented age group.



**Figure 4:** Demographic characteristics of respondents

**Figure 5**, on the following page, outlines the age demographic difference between parish and school participation. Most participants in parishes were above 50 years, compared to below 40 years for school participation in the listening and dialogue consultation sessions.



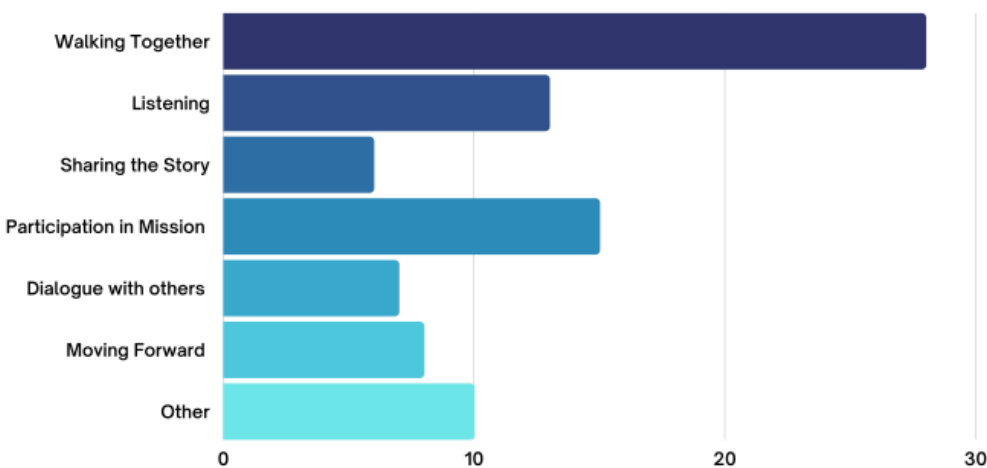
**Figure 5:** Age distribution comparison between CSBB and Parish participants

## v. Themes discerned

Submissions were made in response to the question **How is God calling the people of the Central Coast to journey forward together as a pilgrim and missionary people of God?**

Central Coast community groups were invited to choose one or more of the six identified consultation themes. Of the 52 submissions received, a total of ninety-four responses were received which aligned with one or more of the consultation themes. Some individuals and community groups responded to multiple themes within the one submission made.

The following, figure 6, outlines the themes that community groups chose to respond to. 30% of submissions received discerned **Walking Together**, followed by the theme of **Participating in Mission**, which represents 16% of the responses received. Some community groups and individuals provided a response for more than 1 of the consultation themes. A total of 94 themes were discerned.



**Figure 6:** Themes responded to

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CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY

Phone: 02 8379 1600  
2/423 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills  
PO Box 340 Pennant Hills NSW 1715  
[www.bbcatholic.org.au](http://www.bbcatholic.org.au)