



**Australian Catholic Bishops Conference**  
National Centre for Pastoral Research

# Catholic Religious Institutes in Australia

The 2018 Survey of Religious Congregations

Dr Trudy Dantis

In association with



**NCPR**  
National Centre for Pastoral Research



**CRA**  
Catholic Religious Australia

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**PARISH SOCIAL PROFILE**  
Based on the 2015 Australian Census  
Annandale Parish  
Archdiocese of Sydney  
Census ID: 103840



**2016 NATIONAL COUNT OF ATTENDANCE**



**CALLED TO FULLNESS OF LIFE AND LOVE!**  
Mission Profile for the Suburban Context  
Sydney (St. Mary's) 2017  
TRUDY DANTIS  
STEPHEN EHR



**A HANDBOOK FOR BUILDING STRONGER PARISHES**  
TRUDY DANTIS



*Listen to what the Spirit is saying*  
FINAL REPORT FOR THE ALBANY COUNCIL  
PHASE 1: LISTENING AND DIALOGUE  
Trudy Dantis  
Paul Reynolds  
Stephan Reed  
Leah Shaffield



**Our Work Matters**  
Catholic Church employees and employees in Australia  
ACCC

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**See, I am Doing a New Thing! - 2009**

**SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING!**  
A report on the 2009 survey of Catholic Religious Institutes in Australia

**Understanding Religious Vocation in Australia Today - 2018**

Understanding Religious Vocation in Australia Today  
Report of a Study of Vocations in Religion 1 to 2000-2018  
For a 2018 Vocations Ministry Australia  
February 2018

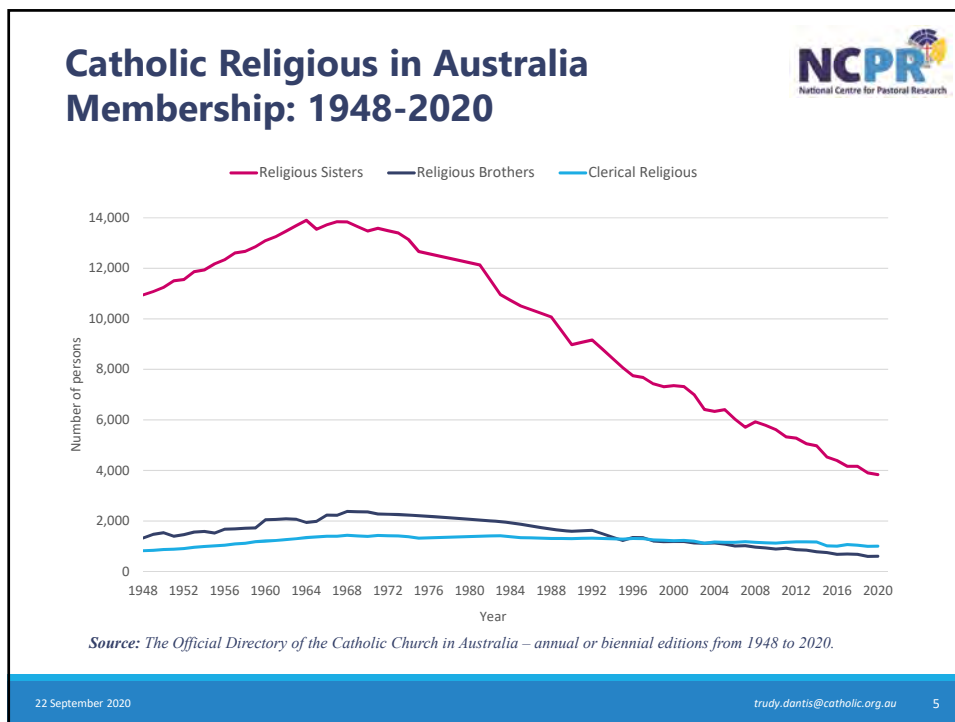
**Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia - 2019**

**2018 Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia**  
Final Report to Catholic Religious Australia  
Trudy Dantis, Stephen Reid and Sarah Sheehy  
December 2019

Available at [ncpr.catholic.org.au](http://ncpr.catholic.org.au)

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# Demographics

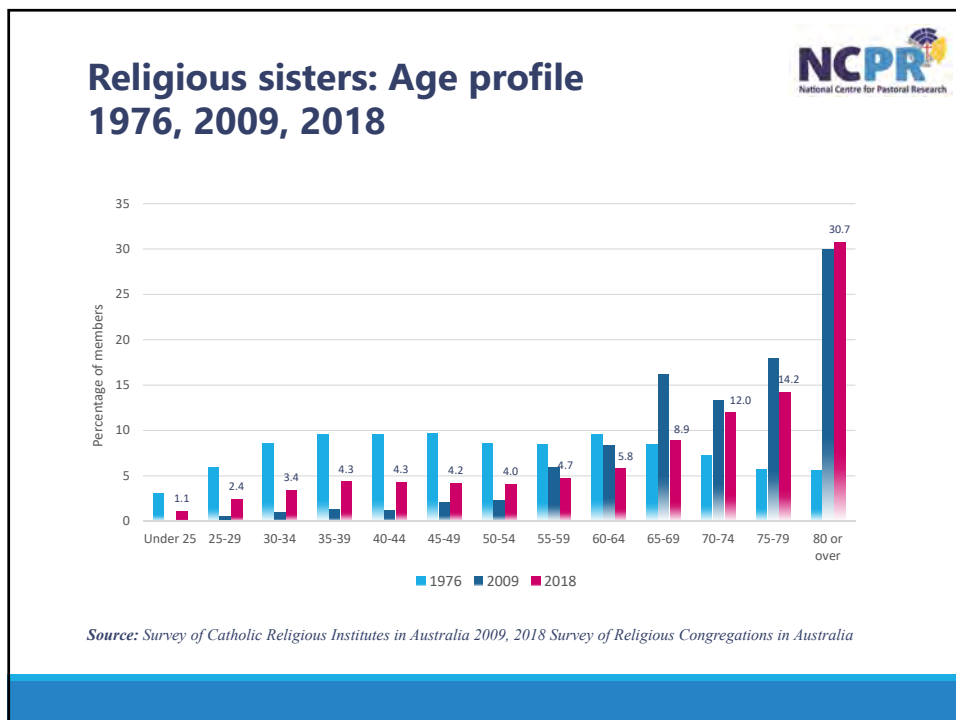
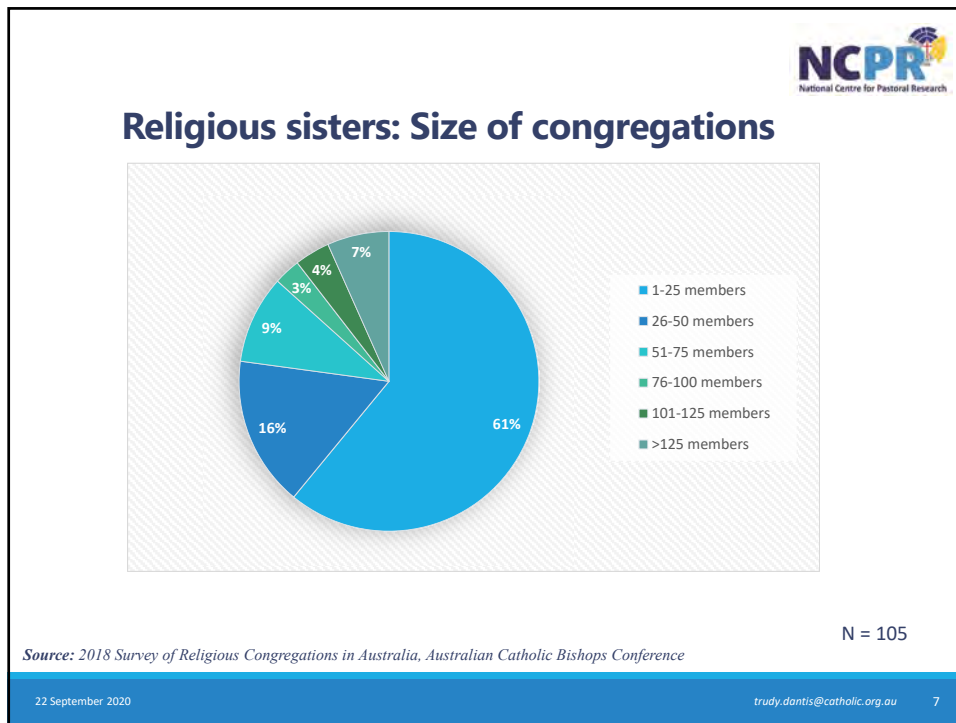



### Total membership as at 1 January 2018

Total membership	Number
Religious sisters	6,018
Religious brothers	637
Clerical orders	1,505
Institutes	46
Societies	153
Associations	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,431</b>

**Source:** *2018 Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*

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## Deaths and Departures: All Catholic religious

Deaths of professed members (1 Jan 2009 - 1 Jan 2018)		Departures
<b>Religious sisters</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>102</b>
Religious brothers	217	24
Clerical orders	286	109
Institutes	5	8
Societies	55	7
Associations	10	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,390</b>	<b>259</b>

*Source: 2018 Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*

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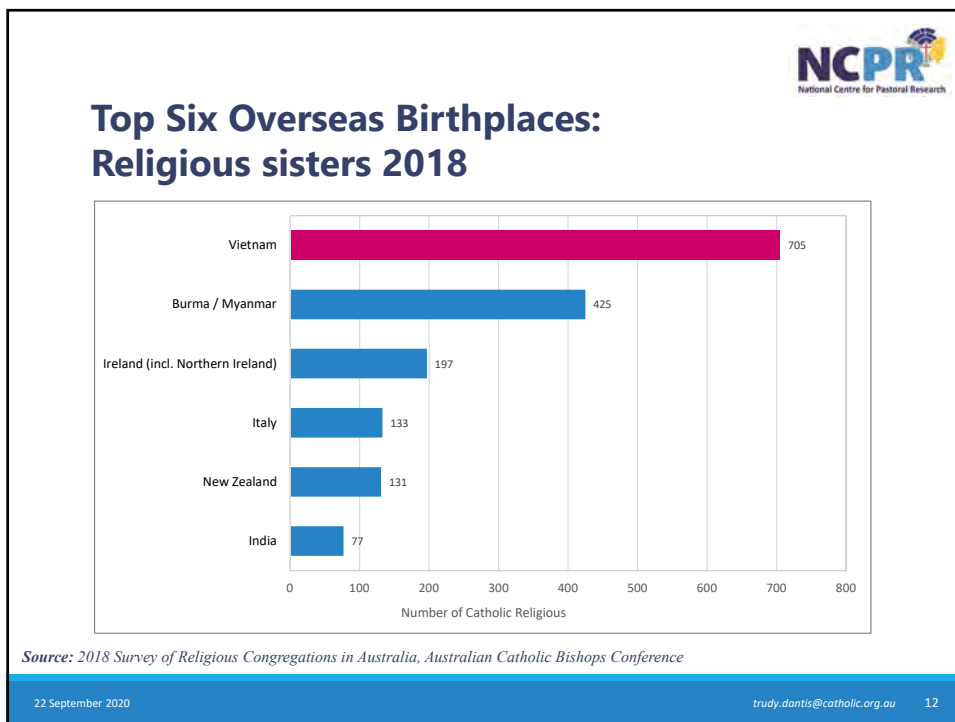
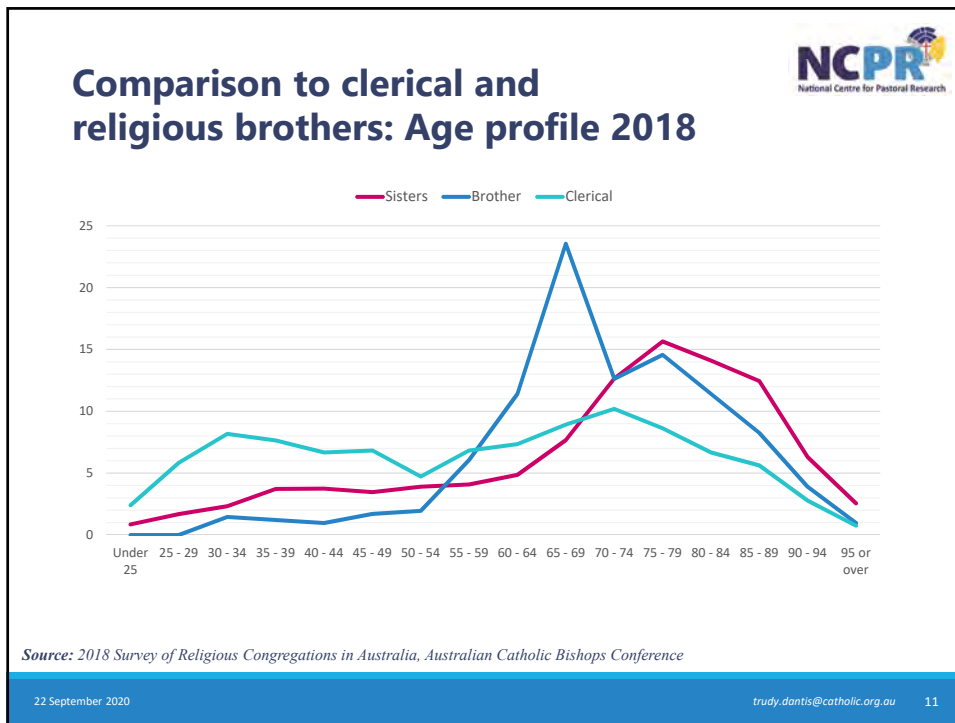


## Vocations: All Catholic Religious

Number of first professions (1 Jan 2009 - 1 Jan 2018)		Still members at 1 Jan 2018
<b>Religious sisters</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>318</b>
Religious brothers	20	7
Clerical orders	289	200
Institutes	3	3
Societies	30	26
Associations	22	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>567</b>

*Source: 2018 Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*

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## Organisational Change

### Congregational change over the next 10 years (2009)



#### Declining numbers

*Decline due to deaths* 11

*Decline in numbers (reason unspecified)* 34

**Reduced capacity due to ageing (retirement)** 8

#### Activities restructured

*Integrating ministries* 1

*Unspecified partnerships* 2

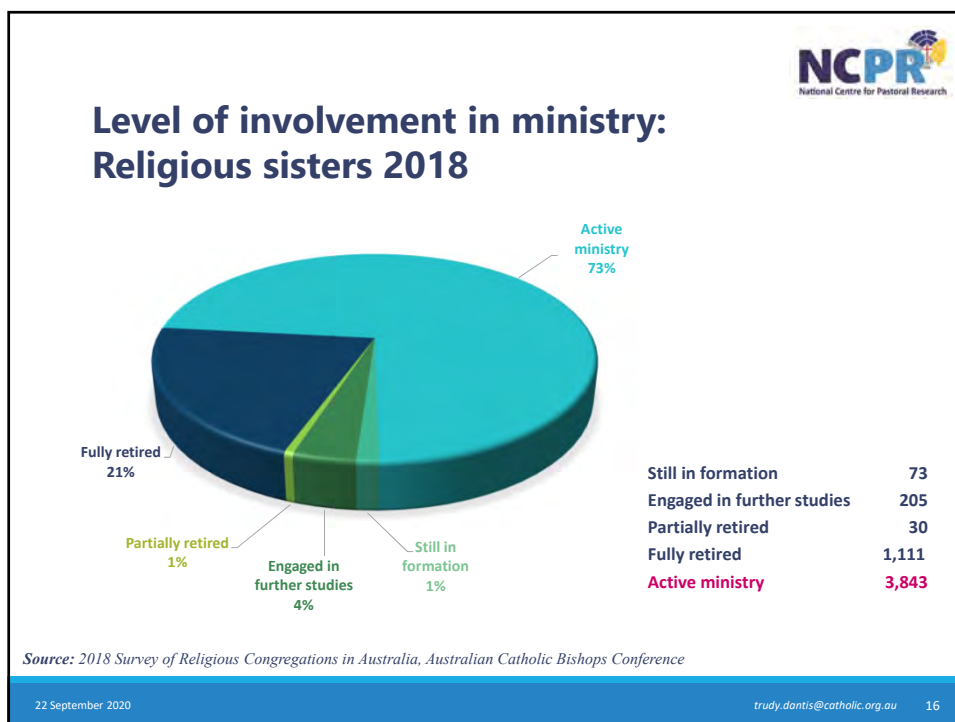
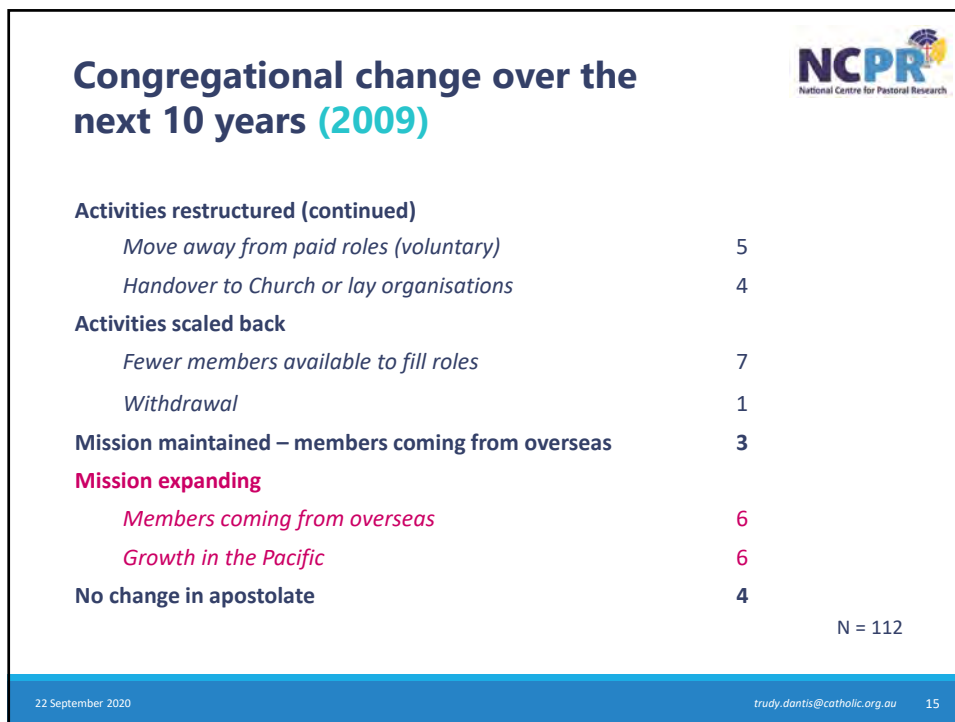
*Partnerships with other congregations* 23

*Partnerships with other organisations* 3

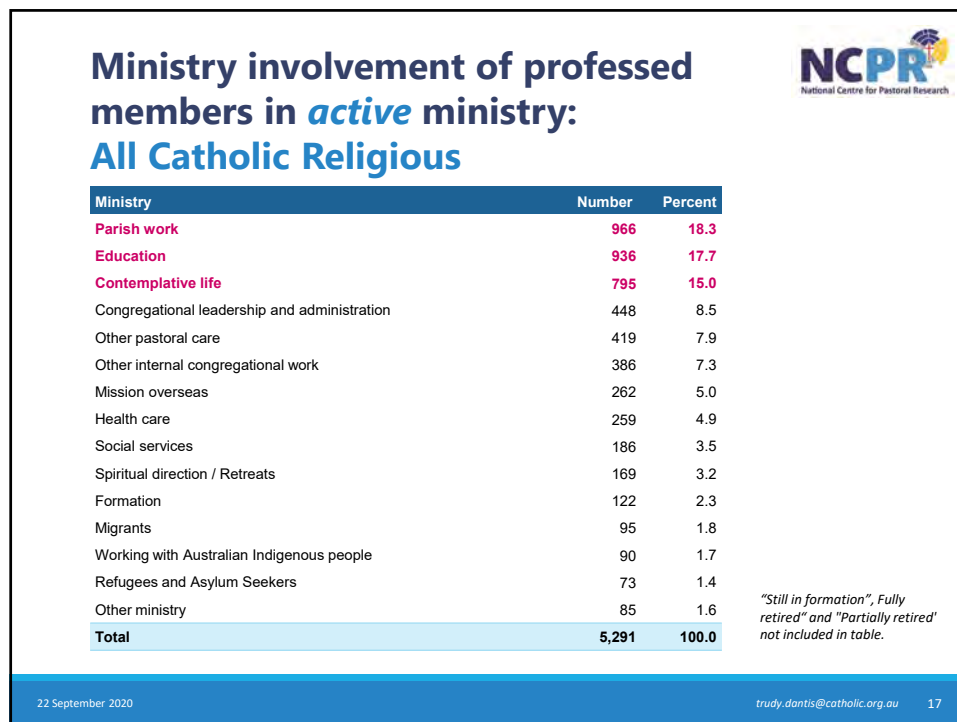
*Partnerships with lay people* 7

*Public Juridic Persons (PJPs)* 3

N = 112










## Other ministries: Religious sisters (*active*)

<p><i>Missionary animation-promotion</i></p> <p><i>Youth ministry</i></p> <p><i>St Vincent de Paul</i></p> <p><i>Visitation</i></p> <p><i>Retreat centre</i></p> <p><i>Atrium</i></p> <p><i>Canon law</i></p> <p><i>Tutoring</i></p> <p><i>Liturgical Apostolate</i></p> <p><i>Soup kitchen</i></p> <p><i>Apostolic Nunciature</i></p> <p><i>Voluntary tuition</i></p> <p><i>ACRATH</i></p> <p><i>Refuges for women &amp; children</i></p> <p><i>Province leadership</i></p> <p><i>Homeless</i></p> <p><i>Social Justice</i></p>	<p><i>Care of the Earth</i></p> <p><i>Music teaching</i></p> <p><i>Receptionist</i></p> <p><i>Chaplaincy work</i></p> <p><i>Director of Professional Standards</i></p> <p><i>Prison</i></p> <p><i>University chaplaincy</i></p> <p><i>Early learning centre</i></p> <p><i>Diocesan Coordinator</i></p> <p><i>Royal Commission related work</i></p> <p><i>Art/icon painting</i></p> <p><i>Vocation promotion</i></p> <p><i>Psychology</i></p> <p><i>Voluntary School Support</i></p> <p><i>Healing retreats</i></p> <p><i>School counsellor</i></p> <p><i>Children's services</i></p>	<p><i>Art/Spirituality</i></p> <p><i>Diocesan Chancellor</i></p> <p><i>Family carer</i></p> <p><i>Counselling</i></p> <p><i>Family day care centre</i></p> <p><i>Translator</i></p> <p><i>Secretarial work</i></p> <p><i>Welfare, support of families</i></p> <p><i>Leading prayer groups</i></p> <p><i>Cana communities for poor and ex prisoners</i></p> <p><i>Advancement of women - Mission overseas</i></p>
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## Ministry involvement of professed members in *partially retired/volunteer* ministry: Religious sisters

Ministry	Number	Percent
Prayer support	167	42.8
Sister Pastoral Companions	35	9.0
Pastoral care	24	6.2
Mainly charitable organisations	19	4.9
Refugees	18	4.6
St Vincent de paul, parish work	12	3.1
Household duties	9	2.3
Aged Care	6	1.5
Visiting the sick and elderly	5	1.3
Asylum seekers	5	1.3
Ministry to families/Phone counselling, visits etc	4	1.0
Other ministries	86	22.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>


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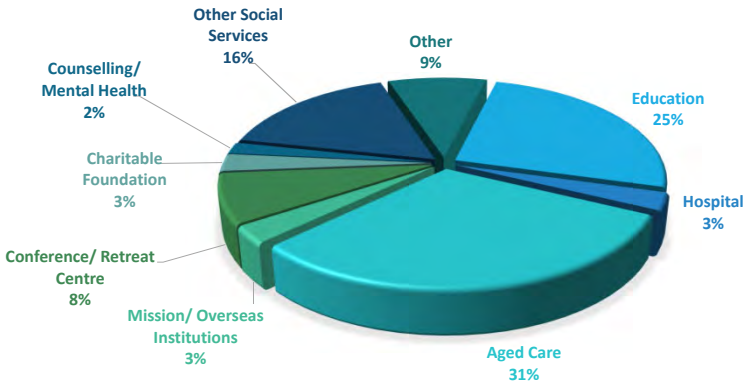
## Other ministries: Religious sisters (*partially retired/volunteer*)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>St Vincent de Paul</i></li> <li><i>Social outreach</i></li> <li><i>Hospital volunteer</i></li> <li><i>Ex-prisoners</i></li> <li><i>Indigenous</i></li> <li><i>Counselling</i></li> <li><i>Disability support</i></li> <li><i>Homeless and Street People</i></li> <li><i>Tutoring in schools</i></li> <li><i>Religious education for children</i></li> <li><i>ESL</i></li> <li><i>Sundry pastoral care &amp; social services</i></li> <li><i>volunteering</i></li> <li><i>Chinese community</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Prison ministry</i></li> <li><i>Archives</i></li> <li><i>Tertiary theological college</i></li> <li><i>Smith Family</i></li> <li><i>Receptionist</i></li> <li><i>Tutoring</i></li> <li><i>Pastoral care for Primary school</i></li> <li><i>Hospitality Auxiliary</i></li> </ul>
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## Type of institutions owned, sponsored or operated (Religious sisters)



Institution Type	Percentage
Aged Care	31%
Education	25%
Other Social Services	16%
Other	9%
Conference/Retreat Centre	8%
Hospital	3%
Charitable Foundation	3%
Mission/Overseas Institutions	3%
Counselling/Mental Health	2%

N = 212

*Source: 2018 Survey of Religious Congregations in Australia, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*

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## Major transitional changes in congregations identified in 2009

**Withdrawal from ministries – 6 congregations**

**New governance structures**

- Not contemplating change – 40 congregations*
- Yes, but not specified*
- Boards*
- PJPs – 19 congregations**
- Incorporated bodies*
- Trusts*
- Lay partners**
- Partnerships with other church entities*
- Reconfiguration*
- Planning (unspecified)*

N = 109

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## CRA Governance Collaborative (CRAGC) 2019

- *established to provide support services to religious institutes that will be unable to take full responsibility for their own congregational leadership in the foreseeable future.*
- *works closely with religious institutes in transition offering a suite of services and supports which will focus on two key priority areas: supporting canonical congregational leadership and provision of shared services.*
- *works with religious institutes to establish their specific needs and tailor an approach that will ensure their requirements are understood and met.*

More info: [www.catholicreligious.org.au](http://www.catholicreligious.org.au)



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## Partnerships with other congregations identified in 2009



*No partnership with other congregations – 49 congregations*

- Formal partnership*
- Work closely with other congregations*
- Loose association with member group (e.g., Benedictines)*
- Reconfiguring*

*No formal partnership but as the need arises – 17 congregations*

- Cooperate in aged care, health*
- School boards*
- Specific ministry agreement*
- Individuals work with other congregations*
- Cooperation has diminished over the years*

N = 118

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## Emerging Situation in 2020



1. Religious institute *partnerships with the laity* are increasing significantly
2. A key area of *inter-congregational collaboration* will be the provision of services for a fee by some of the larger congregations
3. Many *ministries have been handed* to dioceses/CEOs in recent years
4. *Cross-congregational transfers* are also occurring.
5. More *Ministerial PIPs*

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## Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (PJP)

- A *juridic person* is a legal entity under Canon or Church Law which is set up for one or more specific purposes – within Church law. It is the Church's equivalent to a corporation or a company within civil law.
- Such ecclesial entities are designated as *public* juridic persons when their purposes have been formally sanctioned by a Church authority and are carried out publicly under its auspices. (these can include parishes, dioceses and religious congregations)
- A *ministerial* PJP (religious congregation PJP) has the role and responsibilities of stewardship or sponsorship of ministries, enabling the ministries to relate directly to the Church. This is comparable to when they were sponsored by the religious institute/s which instigated each PJP.

More info: [www.ampjps.org.au](http://www.ampjps.org.au)

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## Additional PJPs created by congregations (2009-2018)

Congregation	PJP	Purpose	Established
• Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation	Mercy Partners	Ministry of congregation / Education, Health, Aged Care and Community Welfare	2008
• Sisters of Charity	Mary Aikenhead Ministries	Ministry of congregation - Health and Aged Care, Education & Welfare	2009
• Missionary Sisters of Service	John Wallis Foundation (a company limited by guarantee) Not a PJP	Ministry of congregation	2010
• Holy Family of Nazareth Sisters	Nazareth Care	Ministry of congregation / Aged Care	2010
• The Corporation of the Little Company of Mary	Calvary Ministries	Ministry of congregation / Health	2011
• Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea	Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAMPNG)	Administration of amalgamated congregations	2011
• Good Samaritan Sisters, Australia	Good Samaritan Education	Education	2012
• Brigidine Sisters	Kildare Ministries	Ministry of congregation - Education & Community Works	2014
• Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands	Dominican Education Australia	Education	2016
• Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Sophia Education Ministries	Education	2017

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## CRA Interculturality: Leadership, Community Life and Ministry initiative 2019: *why is it needed?*

- *There are an increasing number of overseas-born religious institute members either joining and strengthening Australian provinces or bringing new congregations to Australia with a small groups of 'pioneers'.*
- *Growth in the Pacific has led to new challenges for Australian religious institutes to provide leadership of and support for their members in Oceania and, in many instances, there is the lack of capacity for indigenous leadership.*

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## **More information**

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