



CONCERNED CATHOLICS CANBERRA GOULBURN MEDIA RELEASE

Parish pastoral councils - building blocks of future church

11 October 2019

Parish pastoral councils should be established in every parish, a process which should be central to improving church governance structures.

This and other themes which focused on the future of the church emerged from discussions with a number of parish pastoral councils in the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese last night, hosted by Concerned Catholics and facilitated by Jacinta Carroll from the Bungendore Parish.

Speaking shortly after the forum which was held in the Parish of the Transfiguration in Curtin, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn Chair, Professor John Warhurst AO said the feedback will contribute to a broader public forum to be hosted by Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn on 28 November this year.

Forty delegates attended last night from Batemans Bay, Queanbeyan and Bungendore, Cooma and Yass, and from a number of parishes in Canberra. Attendees included a number of parish priests, members of parish pastoral councils, and members of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn.

Discussion focused on issues affecting parishes, but broader issues were also heard which impact on the relevance and credibility of the church in the Australian community.

Emerging themes include:

- The need to re-engage with the basic principles of our faith;
- Many Catholics are not practicing their faith because of increasing conservatism in the Church and a focus on exclusion, rules and regulations;
- The diminishing number of priests and the consequent lack of pastoral care;
- All roles should be open to women including as priests and deacons;
- Former priests who left the church to marry should be welcomed back;
- Lay people should be able to host the liturgy in the absence of an available priest;
- Parish pastoral councils should be structured to enable cross-parish engagement;
- Parishes can initiate significant change without waiting for the Plenary Council

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A full report is available of the evening's proceedings is available and has been sent to the parishes which participated.

A context paper is being prepared and will be available ahead of the general public forum to be held in Canberra on Thursday 28 November.

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn is a group in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese concerned about a number of governance, cultural and structural issues arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We seek an effective voice for lay people in the administration and direction of our church.

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn Submission to the Plenary Council is available [here](#).

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