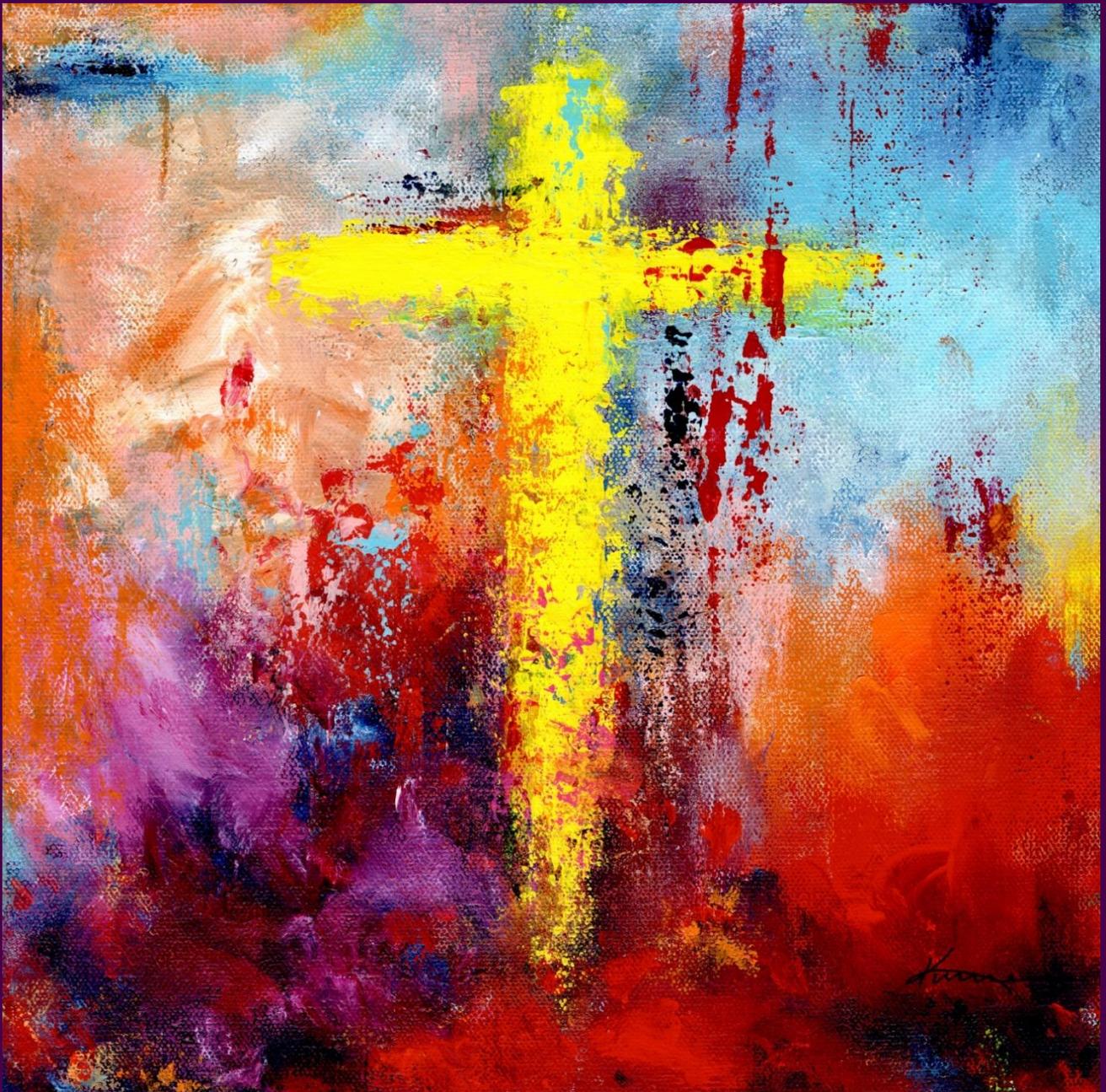


CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AUSTRALIA 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, CRA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their elders, past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

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CRA IS AN ECCLESIAL
COMMUNITY WITHIN THE
UNIVERSAL CHURCH. IT
IS A COLLABORATIVE
AND INCLUSIVE
ORGANISATION,
ENCOURAGING
RELIGIOUS TO
CELEBRATE THEIR
DIVERSE CHARISMS IN
THE SERVICE OF THE
GOSPEL AND
SUPPORTING EACH
CHARISM TO CONTINUE
TO EVOLVE IN NEW
TIMES.

THE APPROACH OF CRA
ALIGNS WITH POPE
FRANCIS' VISION OF A
SYNODAL CHURCH WHERE
WE LISTEN TO AND
LEARN FROM EACH
OTHER, TAKING SHARED
RESPONSIBILITY FOR
PROCLAIMING THE
GOSPEL.

OUR VISION

To animate Christ's Gospel through the prophetic voice of religious.

OUR MISSION

As the representative body of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Australia, CRA animates contemporary religious life and gives expression to the prophetic voice of religious by facilitating collaboration and supporting leaders to meet emerging challenges.

OUR VALUES

- Attentiveness to the Spirit
- Compassion
- Courage
- Inclusivity
- Integrity
- Service

WELCOME

PRESIDENT'S REPORT PETER CARROLL FMS

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends

CRA holds a special and privileged position among Religious and the Church in Australia. It's one we take with the utmost seriousness. However, at times, it's imperative to reflect on what it means to be a Religious today and the nature of CRA's role as a representative body.

CRA's vision is to animate Religious life in its prophetic vocation to live the Gospel. Its mission is to give expression to that prophetic voice.

In contemporary literature "prophetic" is regularly used to describe Consecrated or Religious Life. I like the simple definition offered by Sandra Schneider OSB: "Religious Life...is a charismatic life form, called into existence by the Holy Spirit, to live corporately the prophetic charism in the Church". We stand in contrast to the hierarchical tradition of the Church. Sandra goes on to state that the "distinguishing mark of the prophetic vocation...is its task of focusing the Word, the proclamation of the Reign of God, directly on and in a particular situation. Prophetic witness involves discerning and responding to what the Council, following Jesus, called "the signs of the times" (Mt. 16:3)".

I suspect many Religious are cautious about claiming this 'prophetic' dimension. In genuine humility, they don't see themselves as prophets, and Australian Religious – maybe in particular – are too grounded to claim such a mantle. The reluctance may also be due to the tendency for 'prophetic statements' to be focussed on judgement or condemnation. This isn't an approach with which many Religious are comfortable. It's here where clarity of terms is essential: it's the life-form, not the individual Religious, that is 'prophetic'. As we all know, not every Religious is prophetic, and Religious Life can't claim any monopoly on this charism. However,



corporate witness to this dimension is, and has been from its earliest forms, part of the fabric of Religious Life.

So, what are the implications of this for CRA, the representative body of Religious Institutes? Our Statutes inform us that "The purpose of the Conference is to promote and support Religious life in the Australian Church. By combined effort, it works to achieve more fully the purpose of each institute, while respecting the autonomy, nature and spirit of each".

We adopt a range of strategies to achieve our goals, and this Annual Report records some of them. Let me focus on just one. CRA helps to give Religious Institutes a "collective voice" for their prophetic stance in the world. As a representative group, it adds weight to the position that individual Religious Institutes take on significant issues. It's our contention that the Australian Church and broader society needs to hear the voice of Religious, and that we, corporately, have something significant to say in response to pressing needs and contemporary issues.

Of course, discernment is important in determining on what issues we speak. There are so many issues that deserve attention. While we focus on national issues, we also express our solidarity on international issues. We also need to be balanced, well-researched and educative in what we say, as we represent such a broad range of Members. While Gospel approaches to contemporary issues can't help but engage the political dimension, it's inappropriate for CRA to be party-political. Sadly, we've seen throughout history what unfortunate

results can flow from the Church aligning itself too closely with one political party, ideology or regime. Our task is to examine an issue in light of the Gospel message, and to work at building the Reign of God here and now. We focus on Gospel principles. We must be the voice of Jesus in society. This is our charismatic calling.

The voice of Religious is needed so that we can stand with those most in need, particularly the lost, least and last.

The voice of Religious is needed to question prevailing materialistic and secular priorities and offer an alternative vision of life.

The voice of Religious is needed to promote greater inclusivity in our Church so that the dignity of all is respected.

The voice of Religious is needed because Jesus and his Gospel must continue to be heard; this is the only way the reign of God will be realised.

These are just some of the reasons why it's imperative that CRA makes the voice of Religious heard in our Church and society. I'm confident that it will continue to do this in the years ahead.

This Annual report summarises the activities taken by CRA on your behalf, and there have been a multitude.

Our work wouldn't be complete, or our priorities taken forward, without the dedicated and generous efforts of many people. I wish to acknowledge:

- Members of Council: All carry heavy responsibilities as leaders within their own Congregations but are still willing to respond generously to multiple issues for CRA. Their contribution is much more than attending Council meetings. I thank each of them: Asaeli Rass SVD, Anne Boyd CSB, Cath Reuter RSM,

Eveline Crotty RSM, Mary-Clare Holland OP, Mel Dwyer FdCC, Monica Cavanagh RSJ, Paul O'Keeffe FSP, Peter Jones OSA, Philippa Murphy FDNsc, Trevor Trotter SSC.

- CRA Executive: Patty Fawkner SGS, Mary-Clare Holland OP and Fr Tom McDonough CP who have been generous and reliable collaborators. I thank them for their encouragement and counsel.
- National Executive Director: Anne Walker has created a cohesive and efficient Secretariat team and manages them with great skill. She continues to offer very practical assistance to Leaders and members of Congregations. I thank her for her dedication, energy, insight and professional expertise. This she puts at the service of CRA each day.
- Our small and effective CRA Team: Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook, Emma Carolan, Kaylie Beuchat, Stephen Middleton, Taylor Coutinho, and Teresa Pirola, for all that they have undertaken on our behalf in the past year.
- Our Committee Chairs and members, who carry out targeted work for CRA.
- And of course, to our Sister and Brother Leaders, for their goodwill, support and encouragement.
- It has been a privilege to serve as President of CRA over the past three years. I have learned much and, hopefully, contributed a little to this enterprise, CRA. Special appreciation to all who have supported me and offered encouragement.
- I look forward to seeing you at our Assembly in Melbourne in August 2022.

With every blessing,



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
ANNE WALKER

During this past year, we have experienced two historic and distinctive events, at a global and national level: Pope Francis' invitation to enter into a synodal journey towards the 2023 Synod of Bishops and the Fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia. Both are in keeping with Pope Francis' vision for an inclusive, participatory and evangelising Church, which calls us to encounter, listen, discern: *'One listening to the others; and all listening to the Holy Spirit.'*

CRA has been a pilgrim on both journeys, walking alongside its 150 Members, the Leaders of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Australia. While each Congregation has its particular charism and expression, CRA strives to support and facilitate the collective pathways of religious life in Australia, cognisant of the specific challenges of this era in the history of the Church. As each Congregation walks its particular vocational path, CRA acts as a collective voice or mirror to the spirited approach of its Members. Together, we encourage Religious presence in the world we share.

Emanating from CRA's clearly stated vision, mission and values, there are five strategic priorities that shape CRA activities: animation; professional services; advocacy and leadership; strategic collaboration and governance and operational efficiency. There are significant achievements across all those priorities, some of which are highlighted in this Annual Report.

CRA continues to amplify the prophetic voice of Religious on issues that impact society's most vulnerable. This is in keeping with the call of Religious to live counter-cultural gospel lives, and to be close to the poor and to those on the margins of society.



While much of the Secretariat's work is focused on the five strategic priorities, we are conscious of the countless quiet and 'hidden' ways that Religious carry the poor and the marginalised, and the many needs of the world, in their daily rhythms of prayer and worship, and through simple acts of kindness and hospitality, within and beyond their communities.

The content of CRA's voice is broad and multifaceted. This year, for example, CRA has called for changes to be made to immigration detention for asylum seekers; for the reform of the Government's climate change policies and for environmental laws that work; for prioritisation of the elderly in our COVID response and for pharmaceutical companies to allow equitable access to COVID vaccines globally; for an intake of 20,000 Afghan refugees into Australia after the Taliban insurrection; for revisions to the *Fair Work Amendment Bill*; and for the government to ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons after announcing the nuclear submarine deal.

We have taken both a prayerful and an educative approach to complex issues. CRA worked with people among religious networks closely engaged

with the conflicts in Myanmar/Burma and in Ukraine, to gather our Members to learn more about the historical background to these conflicts and to participate in prayer services for peace. An online seminar by James Martin SJ explored how our Catholic communities can more clearly demonstrate God's love through greater affirmation and inclusivity of people within their own Church community who negotiate sensitive issues relating to their sexuality and may identify with the LGBTQI+ community. We are currently exploring a follow-up response to this event which was well received and attracted participants well beyond CRA membership.

Also in the realm of highly sensitive issues, CRA's Annual Day of Sorrow and Promise, was held on Sunday 24 October 2021, acknowledging survivors of abuse within the Catholic Church and all those who have been hurt by that abuse. The theme chosen was "At the Foot of the Cross", drawing on reflections on the Gospel of John and stories of survivors of abuse.

CRA has expressed itself across multiple channels, through well-researched submissions and letters to government; media statements; publications such as *Just Now* and the *Bulletin*; opinion pieces in external publications such as *Aurora* and *Eureka Street*; through online and in-person seminars and through collaboration with Catholic and non-Catholic entities and media outlets. Increasingly, individuals and organisations are seeking out CRA for assistance and collaborative effort or making public reference to our work. "CRA is on the map!" someone commented to me recently. It seems that people are noticing what Catholic Religious have to say!

CRA continues its collaborative efforts by becoming an official partner of ICAN, by joining leaders of faith communities in NSW to oppose the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021*, by supporting the ACTU when it called on the Government to provide free

and accessible rapid antigen tests for the entire community, and by supporting Catholic agencies and groups such as Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (as a member), and the Refugee Council of Australia. Our collaborative efforts are varied, within and outside of the Church such as working with Women and the Australian Church, ACU and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

CRA has grown into an organisation that can respond flexibly and swiftly to the changing and complex landscape in which we live, due to the capacity and passion of its staff – we respond personally and relationally to members and non-members, partners and collaborators, those in the Church and those outside it, federal and state governments, the media and the community.

Of the key events, the 2021 National Assembly demonstrated why Interculturality is so vital to Australia, and how we can 'do' interculturality inclusively, lovingly, in a way that enriches the future of religious life and indeed, the life of the Church and the world. The theme of the 2021 National Assembly called its participants to be open to the God who created diversity, and who calls us to embrace our differences within a life of *communio*.

A common theme underlying all of the year's events was that the Jesus we meet in the Gospels is merciful and inclusive, that he worked at the margins, that he embodied God's love and compassion, tenderly and boldly, through a way of life that we are called to follow. A simple message, yet one that we continue to struggle with 2000 years later.

And what propels our team forward, every day, is that there is still so much to do! And that Jesus

continues to be present with us, and in us, on the continuing Spirit-led journey.

Through the words and images of this report, I trust you will see reflected your own footsteps along that path.

With Thanks

I thank Peter Carroll FMS, CRA's President, for his pastoral leadership, vision and commitment over the past three years, during which time he has nurtured CRA's leadership role in the Church at a national level and encouraged CRA to express the prophetic voice of religious.

My sincere thanks to the Executive team, Peter Carroll FMS, Patty Fawkner SGS, Tom McDonough CP and Mary-Clare Holland OP, I am grateful for their insight and readiness to work through any obstacles to fulfill the mission of CRA, amidst ever-changing challenges caused by COVID and other factors.

I am also very grateful to the Council of CRA, for the variety of gifts, expertise and wisdom each member brings to the table, enabling the mission of CRA – to honour religious life, supporting its vitality, vibrancy and evolution – to be fulfilled.

Thank you to our Leaders and their Congregational Members, for their on-going engagement, enthusiasm and support. It is a pleasure and a privilege for our Secretariat team to serve you.

To our volunteers who make up the CRA Committees, giving of their time, energy and talents - thank you for supporting the mission of CRA.

I thank each one of my staff members for their wonderful support, intelligence, insight and care – : Sylvia, Kaylie, Emma, Teresa, Taylor, Stephen and Carmel.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GOVERNANCE

THE PEAK BODY

CRA is the peak body for Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life who reside in Australia. Leaders of 150 Congregations of sisters, brothers and priests living and working in all States and Territories of Australia are members of CRA. Our Religious Congregations comprise about 5,000 Catholic religious women and men. Our members and their lay colleagues work in education, health care and social services. They minister with indigenous people, refugees and asylum seekers, people surviving on the margins and many others.

CRA represents Religious Leaders in the Australian Church and in society through its submissions to, and meetings with government, encounters with media, and strategic collaboration with Church and secular bodies.

Member support services are tailored to religious and responsive to the emerging issues of religious, especially in the area of governance, legislation, policies, Vatican edicts, professional standards requirements and more.

CANON LAW

CRA was established as a public juridic person by the Holy See. CRA's Statutes were approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). CRA's Statutes and the norms of canon law outline the responsibilities of CRA. The CRA Statutes are currently under review.



2021-2022 CRA EXECUTIVE TEAM:

L to R: Peter Carroll FMS (President), Mary-Clare Holland OP (Vice-President from February 2022), Tom McDonough CP (Executive Member), Patty Fawcner SGS (Vice-President to February 2022)

COUNCIL

The Council of CRA governs the organisation and comprises the Executive and Councillors who are elected from the membership of CRA.

CIVIL STRUCTURE

The civil structure of CRA is a statutory body corporate created under the *Roman Catholic Church Communities Lands Act (NSW)1942*. CRA is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission.

NATIONAL COUNCIL



President
Peter Carroll FMS
 Provincial, Marist Brothers Province of
 Australia



Vice President
Mary-Clare Holland OP
 Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Eastern
 Australia and the Solomon Islands



Executive Member
Tom McDonough CP
 Provincial, Passionist Fathers



Peter Jones OSA
 Congregational Leader
 Augustinian Fathers



Anne Boyd CSB
 Deputy Congregational Leader
 Brigidine Sisters



Melissa Dwyer FdCC
 Delegation Leader
 Canossian Daughters of Charity



Philippa Murphy FDNSC
 Provincial Leader, Daughters of Our Lady
 of the Sacred Heart



Asaeli Rass SVD
 Provincial
 Divine Word Missionaries



Patty Fawkner SGS
 Congregational Leader Good Samaritan
 Sisters



Eveline Crotty RSM
 Institute Leader, Institute of the Sisters of
 Mercy of Australia & Papua New Guinea



Trevor Trotter SSC
 Regional Director - Oceania
 Missionary Society of St Columban



Paul O'Keefe FSP
 Province Leader
 Patrician Brothers



Catherine Reuter RSM
 Congregational Leader
 Sisters of Mercy Brisbane



Monica Cavanagh RSJ
 Congregational Leader
 Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart

SECRETARIAT



Anne Walker
National Executive Director



Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook
Director of Communications & Engagement



Emma Carolan
Justice Research Officer



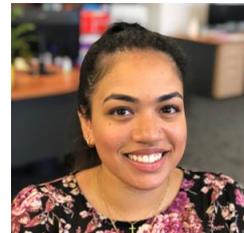
Teresa Pirola
Publications & Projects Officer



Stephen Middleton
Committees & Projects Coordinator



Kaylie Beuchat
Executive Administrator



Taylor Coutinho
Team Administration Assistant

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CRA's role is to address issues of importance to religious, to the Church and to society.

Its purpose is to fulfill and execute its vision, mission and strategic goals through:

ANIMATION:

to animate and enrich religious life and support its continuing evolution through intercongregational connection, stimulating events and thought-provoking content.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:

to advise, support, provide resources and information to Religious Institutes about current issues.

ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP:

to bring alive a Gospel spirituality that gives expression to the prophetic voice of religious, through advocacy on issues, as the recognised representative of religious nationally.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION:

to represent Religious Institutes and publicly express their views and voice in dialogue and negotiations with Church, Government and other agencies.

GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY:

to operate with transparency and accountability within the framework of civil and canon law.

MEMBERS

NEW AND RETURNING LEADERS

The following leaders have been elected or re-elected by their Congregations during the past 12 months.

Peter Jones OSA
Augustinian Fathers

Louise Cleary CSB
Brigidine Sisters

Esther Mwai DSA
Daughters of St Anne

Sesimani Teresa Topui OCD
Discalced Carmelite Nuns, Nedlands

Dominic Murphy OP
Dominican Fathers

Shirley Mackin OP
Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide

Dora Sepulveda Hincapie FSSA
Franciscan Sisters of St Anthony

Kathleen Cotterill LCM
Little Company of Mary

Gail Reneker SM
Marist Sisters

Isabell Naumann ISSM
Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary

Maria Amalamo PDDM
Sisters of the Disciples of the Divine Master

Annette Lepcha RSJ
Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny

Ann Thị Tuyết Van Sương Nguyen LHC
The Lovers of the Holy Cross

Alan Gibson CM
Vincentians



150 CRA Members



About 5,000 Religious



68% Female/32% Male



4 Publications



12 submissions



20 Media Releases



32 Events



12 CRA Committees

M E M B E R S

Adorers of the Blood of Christ	Congregation of St Michael Archangel	Dominican Sisters – Western Australia
African Mission Fathers	Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul	Dominican Sisters of Malta – NSW
Antonine Sisters – Maronite Congregation	Daughters of Divine Zeal	Dominican Sisters of Malta – VIC
Augustinian Fathers - Order of St Augustine	Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion	Faithful Companions of Jesus
Augustinian Recollect Sisters	Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart	Family Care Sisters
Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation	Daughters of St Anne	Franciscan Friars - Order of Friars Minor
Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary	Daughters of St Paul	Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Australian Ursulines	De La Salle Brothers District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan	Franciscan Missionaries of Divine Motherhood
Basilian Chouerite Sisters	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Gelorup WA	Franciscan Sisters of St Anthony
Basilian Nuns	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Goonellabah NSW	Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus
Benedictine Abbey – (Benedictine Nuns)	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Kew (VIC)	Friars Minor Conventual (Greyfriars)
Benedictine Monks New Norcia	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Launceston TAS	Good Samaritan Sisters of the Order of St Benedict
Benedictine Monks Arcadia	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Nedlands WA (OCD)	Good Shepherd Sisters
Benedictine Nuns Tanby	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Ormiston QLD	Handmaids of Our Lord
Blessed Sacrament Fathers	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Semaphore SA	Holy Family Sisters
Blessed Sacrament Sisters - Servants of the Blessed Sacrament	Discalced Carmelite Nuns – Toronto NSW	Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Brigidine Sisters - Congregation of St Brigid	Divine Word Missionaries	Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation
Camillians - Order of the Minister of the Infirm	Dominican Fathers - Order of Preachers	Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
Canossian Sisters - Canossian Daughters of Charity	Dominican Sisters - Holy Cross Congregation (OP)	Institute of the Sisters of Reparation
Capuchin Franciscan Friars	Dominican Sisters – Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands)	Jesuits - Australian Province of the Society of Jesus
Carmelites	Dominican Sisters – North Adelaide	La Salette Missionaries
Carmelite Friars - Order of the Discalced Carmelites		Lebanese Maronite Order
Cenacle Sisters (RC)		Little Company of Mary Sisters
Christian Brothers (CFC)		Little Sisters of the Poor
Cistercian Monks		Loreto Sisters - Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Claretian Fathers		Lovers of the Holy Cross
Confraternity of Christ the Priest		

MEMBERS

Marist Brothers – Province of Australia

Marist Fathers - Society of Mary

Marist Missionary Sisters

Marist Sisters - Congregation of Mary

Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family

Missionary Society of St Columban

Missionaries of Charity

Missionaries of God's Love

Missionaries of God's Love Sisters

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Missionary Sisters of Christ the King

Missionary Sisters of The Blessed Virgin, Mary Queen of the World

Missionary Sisters of Service

Missionary Sisters of St Anthony Mary Claret

Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver

Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart

Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Cabrini Sisters)

Missionary Society of St Paul

Norbertine Canons - Canons Regular of Premontre

Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor

Pallottines - Society of the Catholic Apostolate

Passionist Fathers - Congregation of the Passion

Passionist Sisters

Pastorelle Sisters - Sister of Jesus Good Shepherd

Patrician Brothers - Congregation of the Brothers of St Patrick

Pauline Fathers

Poor Clares Contemplative - Bethlehem Monastery

Poor Clares - Order of St Clare

Presentation Sisters – Lismore

Presentation Sisters – QLD

Presentation Sisters – TAS

Presentation Sisters – VIC

Presentation Sisters – WA

Presentation Sisters – Wagga Wagga

Priestly Fraternity of St Peter

Redemptorists - Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Salesian Sisters - Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

Salesians of Don Bosco

Salvatorian Fathers

Scalabrinian Fathers

Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary

Servite Friars - Order of the Servants of Mary

Servite Sisters

Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate

Sisters of Charity of Australia

Sisters of Charity of St Anne

Sisters of the Disciples of the Divine Master

Sisters of the Holy Faith

Sisters of Mercy – Brisbane

Sisters of Mercy – North Sydney

Sisters of Mercy – Parramatta

Sisters of Nazareth

Sisters of Our Lady of Sion

Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions

Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

Sisters of St John of God

Sisters of St Joseph Lochinvar

Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny

Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition

Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart

Sisters of St Paul de Chartres

Sisters of the Resurrection

Society of Christ

Society of Christian Doctrine (Preca Community)

Society of St Paul

Society of Presentation Sisters of Australia & PNG

Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Spiritans - Congregation of the Holy Spirit

St John of God Brothers

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth

The Sisters of the Nativity

Ursuline Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Verbum Dei Missionaries

Vincentians – Congregation of the Mission

CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS LIFE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God,

We give thanks for all who have given their 'Yes' to you through living the vocation of consecrated life.

We thank you for the 'Yes' of their youth, for their dreams and zeal and whole heartedness for Christ and his Church.

We praise God for their willingness, and for those who inspired them to take the step.

We give thanks for those who formed them, who enabled their 'Yes', who 'let go' of them, who offered encouragement and support, and who welcomed them into community and mission.

We give thanks for the continuing 'Yes' of consecrated men and women, for their years of loving and serving, of leading and following in crowded places and along the 'edges', through fertile fields and barren deserts.

We give thanks especially for their 'Yes' amidst tears and heartbreak, dark nights and silence, in the encounter at the Cross, perhaps known only to God.

We give thanks for their staying the course, for their forgiveness and humility, for their patience and hope, joy and humour, for their prayer and labour, questions and trailblazing; and for their relentless fidelity to this life, this people, this Church, this community, this mission, this God of the Eternal Yes.

We praise God for all consecrated women and men.

For their relentless 'Yes', spoken and unspoken, prophetically voiced and authentically lived, we give thanks.

And we say, Amen.



Little Sisters of the Poor



Council Members at Council dinner



CRA President and Executive with incoming and outgoing Presidents of ACBC and Deputy President of ACBC



Little Sisters of the Poor at a celebratory occasion



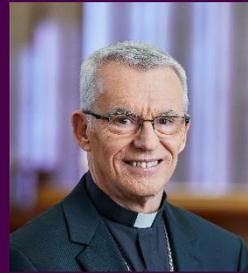
Australian Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions support the education of young sisters from Vietnam



Columbans at the Second Assembly, Plenary Council 2022, Second Assembly

ARCHBISHOP TIMOTHY COSTELLOE SDB

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB reflects on his appointment as President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) in an interview with the ACBC Media Blog, July 2022.



Q: *In another first, no other president of the Conference has been a member of a religious order. What do you make of your election and the presence of many bishops from religious institutes within the Conference?*

A: The real significance of this lies not so much in the election of a member of a religious congregation as the president as in the fact that now about one quarter of the bishops come from religious orders. This is a recognition of the importance of religious life in the Church, not so much because of the work religious have done, and continue to do, in the Church, but because of the role religious life plays in the Church as a living sign of the fundamental values which should underpin the lives of every disciple: poverty and detachment from material things as the “be all and end all” of life; chastity as a way of living our relationships with others with respect and reverence for each person as someone created in the image of God; and obedience as radical openness to all that God is asking of us. Every Christian is called to live this way. Religious, by the quality and radical nature of their lives, remind all of us of this. And the presence of a number of bishops who come from religious life means that this reminder is “front and centre” for the bishops as well.



Norbertines at their 900-year anniversary

ANIMATION

EVENTS

- **Roots and Wings: The Emergence of a Synodal Church with Joan Chittister OSB**, CRA Seminar with Parramatta Diocese, 25 May 2022
- **Formators and Interculturality** with Tim Norton SVD, CRA Online Seminar, 28 October 2021
- Gathering of Temporary Professed Religious, 11 December 2021
- **Embracing Mission – Interculturality and Prophetic Leadership**, CRA National Assembly: 22-25 November 2021
- **Religious Life in the Here and Now with Juliet Mousseau RSCJ**, CRA Webinar, 19 February 2022
- Health & Well-Being Retreat for Male Leaders of Religious Institutes, 1-3 April 2022
- **Centred in God, Sent on Mission: CRA Continuing Education eCourse for Vocation & Formation Ministers**, 5 sessions, commencing 16 June 2022
- World Day for Consecrated Life, 2 February 2022: Launch of new CRA Project: **Our Stories. Our Lives. Our Mission – Catholic Religious in Australia**
- **CRA Commissioning of Religious Institute Leaders participating as Members of the Plenary Council** (4 August 2021) and Discernment process (21 March 2022)



Roots and Wings - The Emergence of a Synodal Church with Joan Chittister OSB



CRA 2021 National Assembly with Teresa Maya CCSI and Kevin O'Neill SSC



Initial Formation Committee Interculturality seminar with Tim Norton SVD

ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

- **Weekly eBulletin** – with intercongregational news and notices relevant to Members, their teams and staff
- **Pathways** – celebrating religious life in Australia across congregations (e.g., *Jesus at the Centre of Carmelite Sisters' 'lockdown' life of prayer*, 13 August 2021; *New Era for Mercy Ministry*, 13 December 2021; *Benedictine Sister challenges Catholics to step up, speak up*, 16 June 2022)



Male Leaders' Retreat, April 2022



Victorian Leaders' Networking Dinner, May 2022



South Australian meeting on Plenary and Diocesan Assembly, November 2021



West Australian Hybrid Seminar – 'Creation Spirituality,' September 2021



NSW Leaders' Networking Dinner, December 2021

ENGAGEMENT WITH STATES

- *Creation Spirituality - Teilhard de Chardin with Kathleen Duffy SSJ, WA Seminar, 28 September 2021 – CRA supported*
- QLD Ritual of Remembrance, 3 November 2021, honouring deceased Religious – *CRA supported*
- Victorian Networking Group – annual schedule of gathering – *CRA advertised*
- NSW Leadership Dinners – December 2021, May 2022
- WA & SA Religious consultation on Synodality, 21 March 2022 – *CRA supported*
- Celebratory moments in *Pathways* and other CRA communications honouring individual Religious and Congregational milestones – including honorary doctorates and awards such as Australia Day and Queen's Birthday Honours listings

RESOURCES CREATED

- CRA liturgical resources for National Day of Sorrow & Promise, 24 October 2021
- CRA webpages promoting *Laudato Si'* Action Platform
- Synodality resources – 101 Ways to Live Synodality
- World Day for Consecrated Life CRA webpages
- National Assembly keynote speaker videos
- 2021 Annual Report
- New Leaders' Handbook
- CRA YouTube channel videos:
 - Plenary Council Commissioning
 - Synodality & Co-Responsibility series
 - Prayer Service for Myanmar/Burma
 - Prayer Service for Ukraine

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

EVENTS

- CRA Health & Wellbeing Seminar: *Creating a Culture of Supportive Care*, 15 June 2022
- CRA Stewardship Seminar: *ACNC Governance and External Standards*, 6 October 2021
- CRA Safeguarding Community of Practice Meetings – every two months

SAFEGUARDING

- Responding to those who have been abused and those who support them
- Advising Members with safeguarding issues
- Assisting Members and MPJPs with redress matters as they arise and training on National Redress Scheme
- Negotiation with Department of Social Services (Redress)
- Apportionment negotiations
- Joint Report with ACBC to National Office for Child Safety annually
- Outline of child protection jurisdictional legislative requirements

VARIOUS

- Assisting with queries re ACNC, employment issues, GST, stipends, JobKeeper, LSAP sign-up, aged care, cross border movement, COVID-19, as examples
- CRA acts as a liaison for intercongregational requests for sharing of resources, ideas and expertise – e.g. seeking a healthcare worker; a professional standards officer; addressing issues related to aged care requirements.

RESOURCES CREATED

The CRA website includes a stipends webpage; weekly Bulletin; Communique - President's report; a Members-only site with information such as safeguarding templates, human resources, finance, External Conduct Standards guide, supervisors, facilitators, retreat centres and more.



ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP

EVENTS

- *Building Bridges: Reaching out to our LGBTQIA+ community with James Martin SJ*, 26 October 2021 and continuing the conversation with Religious
- National Prayer Service for Ukraine, 28 June 2022
- National Prayer Service for Myanmar, 24 August 2021
- *Ecology and Economics: Everything is Connected*, 24 May 2022
- *The Light from the Southern Cross:*
 - *Mission & Church*, 7 July 2021
 - *Synodality & Co-Responsibility*, 1 November 2021
 - *Accountability & Transparency*, 18 May 2022



Building Bridges: Reaching out to our LGBTQIA+ community with James Martin SJ, October 2021

CRA SUBMISSIONS

- Joint Standing Committee on Migration - *End Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2021*
- Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs References - *Family Reunions*
- Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process in support of an Indigenous Voice protected in the Constitution
- Federal Government - *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2021*
- Federal Government - *Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill*



Ecology & Economics: Everything is Connected, Hybrid Seminar with 9 speakers, May 2022

LOBBYING GOVERNMENT

- CRA letter to Prime Minister on climate change, March 2022
- CRA urges the Federal Government to prioritise the elderly in their COVID-19 response, February 2022
- Letter from The Hon Ben Morton MP to CRA on nuclear-powered submarines, December 2021
- Letter from Prime Minister to CRA on Afghanistan, September 2021
- CRA letter to Prime Minister on nuclear-powered submarine deal, September 2021

MEDIA RELEASES

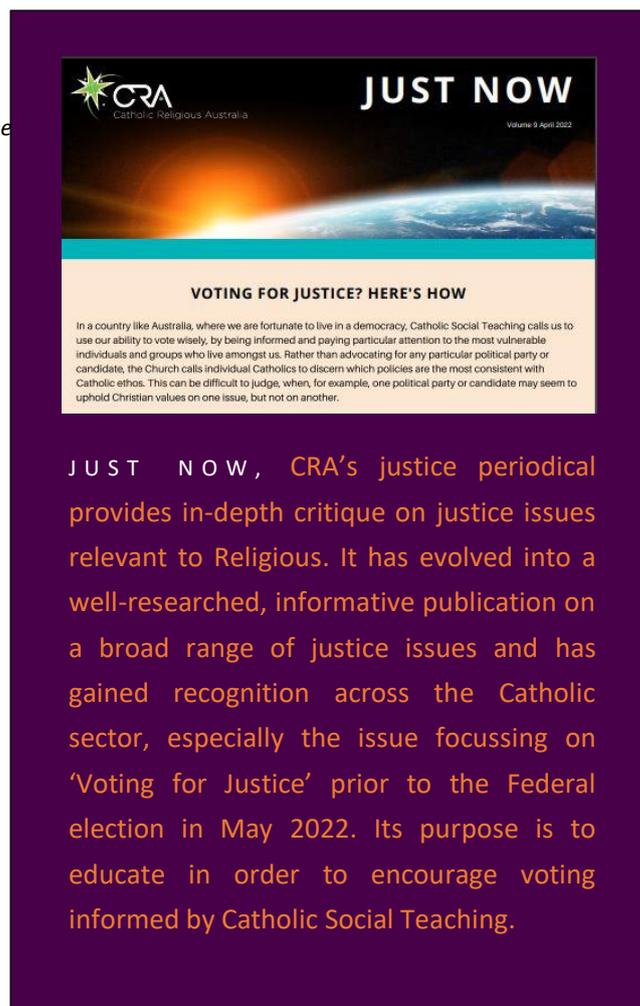
- *Religious call for a vote for justice this Federal Election*, 12 April 2022
- *Catholic Religious urge Government to drastically reform Climate Change policies*, 6 April 2022



Three online seminars with 8 speakers, July 2021, November 2021 and May 2022

MEDIA RELEASES CONTINUED

- *A catalyst for conversation that focuses on a transparent and vibrant Church*, 28 March 2022
- *Catholic Religious join calls for prayer, dialogue and peace for the Ukraine*, 28 February 2022
- *CRA urges the Federal Government to prioritise the elderly in their COVID-19 responses*, 23 February 2022
- *CRA supports new Bill to transform Australia’s migration policies for the better*, 15 February 2022
- *Catholic Religious Urge Pharmaceutical Companies to Prioritise People Over Profits*, 7 November 2021
- *Church shores up ability to support victims, survivors*, 7 November 2021
- *Catholic Religious – Building Bridges with our LGBTQIA+ Communities*, 3 November 2021
- *Catholic Religious urge Australia to commit to a culture of peace*, 21 September 2021
- *Catholic Religious call for greater assistance for Afghans*, 10 September 2021
- *Catholic Religious gather to pray for the people of Burma/Myanmar*, 31 August 2021
- *Catholic Religious urge Government to reform refugee and asylum seeker policies*, 20 July 2021 [+Follow up to Senate Enquiry recommendations which vindicated CRA’s concerns]
- *A Catalyst for Conversation that Leads to Renewed Hearts and Minds*, 13 July 2021



JUST NOW, CRA’s justice periodical provides in-depth critique on justice issues relevant to Religious. It has evolved into a well-researched, informative publication on a broad range of justice issues and has gained recognition across the Catholic sector, especially the issue focussing on ‘Voting for Justice’ prior to the Federal election in May 2022. Its purpose is to educate in order to encourage voting informed by Catholic Social Teaching.

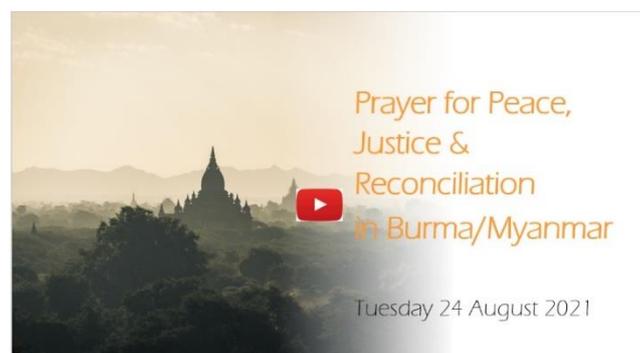
RESOURCES CREATED

- Video recordings of *Light from the Southern Cross events: Mission & Church; Synodality & Co-Responsibility; Accountability & Transparency*
- Practical Ways to Support Australia’s First Nation Peoples
- CRA YouTube channel with videos: James Martin SJ; CRA-ICAN seminar; prayer service for Ukraine
- Interculturality videos on website



PUBLICATIONS

- *JUST NOW*
- CRA webpages dedicated to Justice



STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

EVENTS

- co-hosted *Mission - One Heart, Many Voices Conference*, 1-4 September 2021 with Catholic Mission
- co-presented with ICAN: *Why Australia Must Ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, 13 September 2021
- co-presented with Parramatta Diocese: *Roots and Wings: The Emergence of a Synodal Church with Joan Chittister OSB*, 25 May 2022
- co-sponsored three events with WATAC and ACU: *Strengthening the voice of female members of the Plenary Council*

WIDER COMMUNITY LIAISON

- AMPJP – working with individual MPJPs and their Boards to discuss Redress
- MPJP representatives on CRA’s Safeguarding Community of Practice
- CRA has a representative on CAPSA’s Advisory Group and has been a signatory on various communications, supporting the Refugee Council of Australia; urging Australia to take a leadership position regarding Afghanistan (August 2021); pleading for a more compassionate Afghanistan resettlement response (February 2022); advocating for people on Temporary Protection Visas (May 2022)
- CRA representatives on seven external bodies
- Australian Bureau of Statistics – Certificate of Appreciation from ABS Census 2021 for assistance with pre-Census and post-Census activities in relation to homelessness
- ACTU - *Joint Statement on the need for free and accessible rapid antigen tests to protect public health and the economic recovery*, 14 February 2022
- Catholic Health Australia – to facilitate easier access to aged care beds for our members
- Evidence of “extended reach” in the following CRA events:
 - James Martin SJ event attracted a broad audience beyond Members
 - Prayer for Myanmar involved family, friends, students related to Burmese religious and to ministries of Australian religious
 - National Day of Sorrow and Promise liturgical materials were shared beyond religious communities, and into parish networks



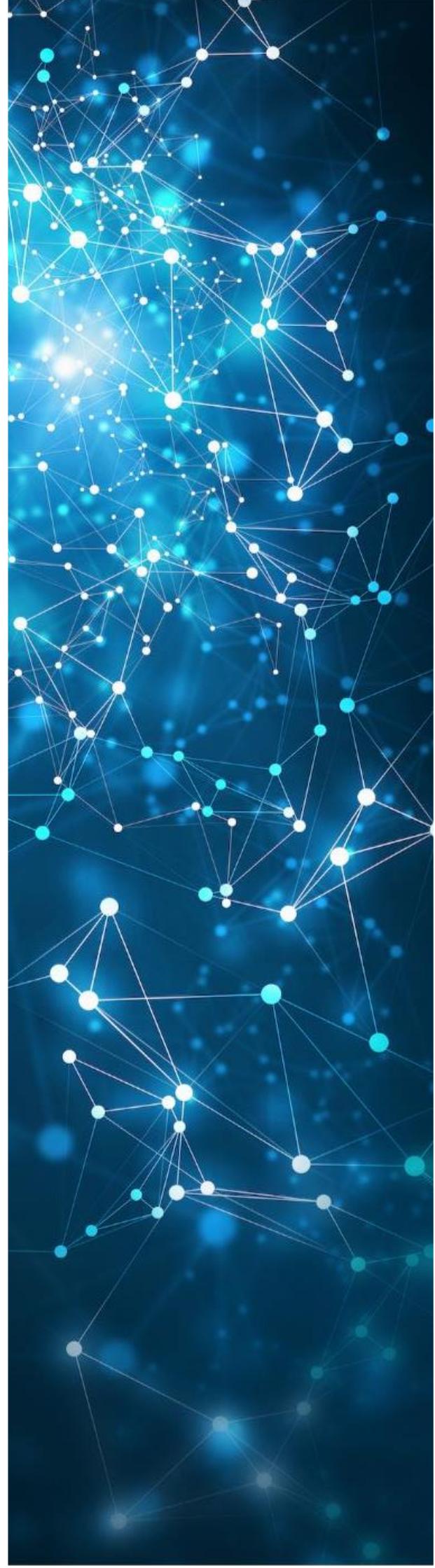
- Ukraine prayer gathering engaged Ukrainian Bishop, Religious with ties to Eastern Europe, Iona Presentation College (Perth), in addition to Members

CRA was a liaison point for community networks such as:

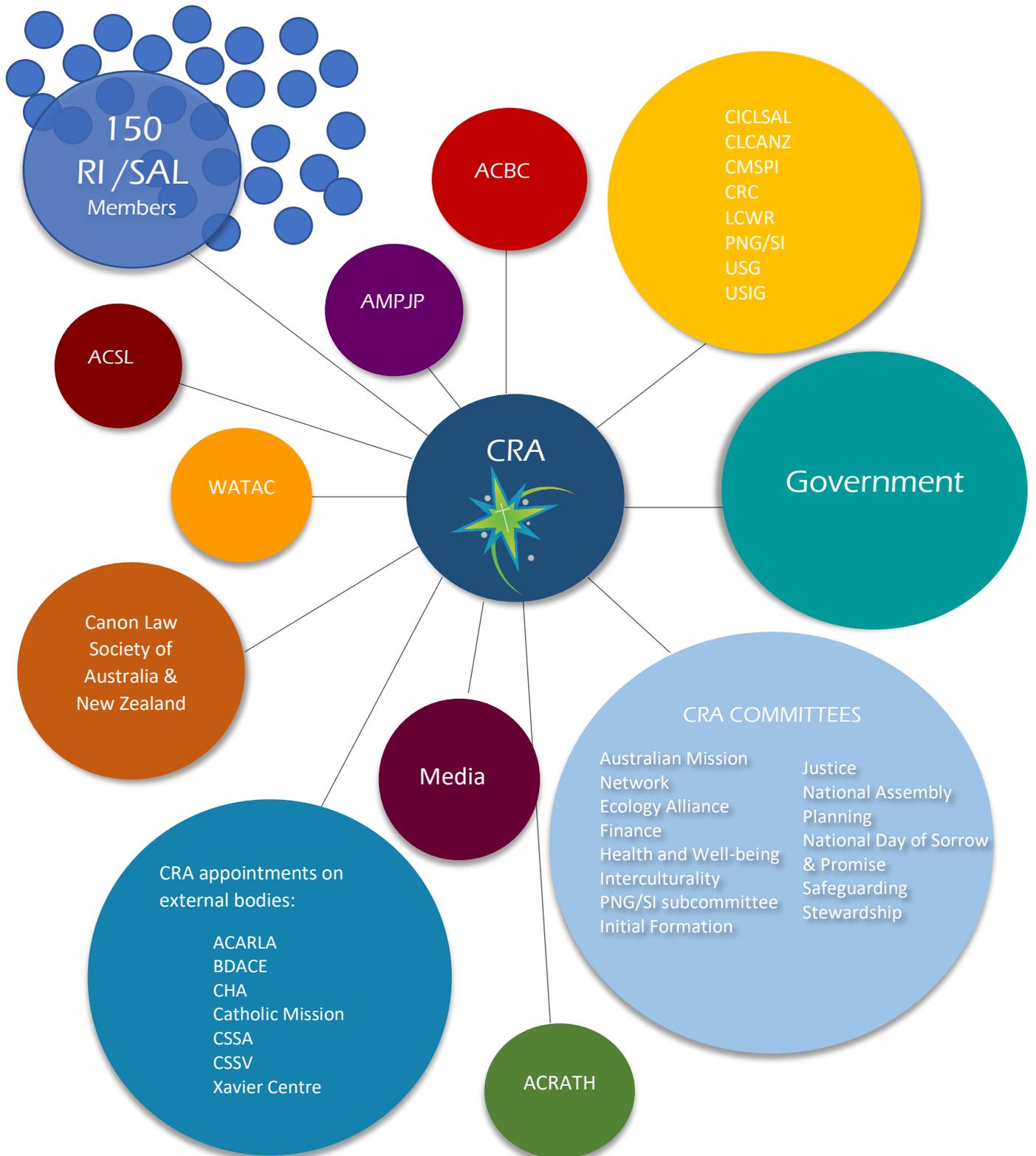
- CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn (on behalf of ACT government) seeking under-utilised buildings for emergency housing during COVID.
- Salvation Army/Victorian Jobs programme - referrals for asylum seekers and others in need of employment assistance
- CRA staff member presented 'Teaching without Unintended Prejudice' at Sydney Catholic Schools short course on Catholic-Jewish relations, March 2022

MEDIA RELEASES

- *Catholic Leaders Call for Action on Climate Change Ahead of COP26 Summit (Catholic Outlook, 16 October 2021)*
- *Catholic Religious Learn Why Australia Must Ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 14 September 2021*



STRATEGIC COLLABORATION



GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

PROCEDURES & INITIATIVES

- External financial audit
- External reporting to Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- Council and Secretariat training in safeguarding
- CRA Statutes review
- Election Process for new CRA National Council
- Secretariat training in various policies
- Annual staff appraisals and performance reviews
- COVID policy for working from home
- Staff induction procedure
- Procedure for appointment of CRA committee members
- New Leaders process – data update and welcome

MEDIA RELEASES

- *Church leaders: Child safety is central to mission*, 15 December 2021 [4th Report of ACBC & CRA to National office for Child Safety]
- *New National Council of Catholic Religious Australia Elected*, 21 December 2021
- *Shaping the future of CRA with New Strategic Priorities and New Council*, 14 February 2022

RESOURCES CREATED

- Members-only log-in section
- President's regular Communique
- New Leaders Handbook
- Handbook for Council



RELIGIOUS AT THE PLENARY COUNCIL



“THE GIFTS WE BRING”

I bring respectful courage

I bring a longing for a communion of disciples

I bring a passion for those on the margins of society

I bring an open heart full of hope

I bring hope to those who have lost hope in the future of the Church

I offer a voice of inclusion

I bring a passion to empower the voice of young people and women in the Church

CRA COMMISSIONING CEREMONY
FOR PLENARY COUNCIL MEMBERS
4 AUGUST 2021



COMMITTEES REPORT

CRA Committees are an important part of the life of CRA and provide various avenues through which CRA delivers services to Leaders and responds to the emerging needs of Religious Institutes. The work of the Committees is generally focused on education and awareness raising, with an eye to networking and resource sharing among Religious Institutes. CRA is grateful to Committee members, who have graciously volunteered their time to serve our Members and provide Leaders with ways to support their ministries. The following is a snapshot of CRA Committee activity over the past 12 months.

The event, *“Ecology and Economics: Everything is Connected,”* was significant as it was CRA’s inaugural hybrid event, allowing participants to choose their method of attendance. Importantly, it was also a collaboration of three Committees, the Ecology Alliance, Stewardship and Justice Committees. This event explored the intersection of theology, ecology, and economics and took its lead from Goal 3 of the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform (LSAP): *Ecological Economics. Why and how do religious institutes make economic decisions consistent with their mission and charism?* There is an interrelationship in all that CRA is involved in, and we actively encourage collaboration between our Members, Committees and external bodies. Feedback on this event was extremely positive.

The **Australian Mission Network Committee** promotes mission formation opportunities, such as the *One Heart Many Voices Conference* held every two years, which CRA co-hosts, and which energizes participants with a vision of mission. AMN aims to enable an ongoing conversation on global mission in the Australian Church and to be a forum for sharing mission activities and challenges.

The Committee has also supported the formation of a mission Community of Practice as a way for lay people who minister in mission roles, to network and support one another.

The **Ecology Alliance Committee** aims to build a mission of integral ecology and eco-justice. It has a LSAP-oriented event in the pipeline for 2023, to provide assistance in tracking the journey to live *Laudato Si’*. The work of the Committee is primarily focused on developing interchange within existing ecological networks and resource-sharing among CRA Members.

The **Finance Committee’s** focus over the past year has been on evaluating CRA’s investments with a view to increasing returns and securing CRA’s future. The Committee provides strategic financial advice and oversight to CRA Council and the National Executive Director.

Through the work of the **Health & Well-Being Committee**, CRA’s long-awaited Weekend Retreat for Male Leaders of Religious Institutes, took place at Mittagong, NSW. The Committee also delivered another seminar in June 2022 in response to a call from participants after the 2021 CRA Seminar on Dementia Care to assist Congregations to navigate the complexities of the aged care system.

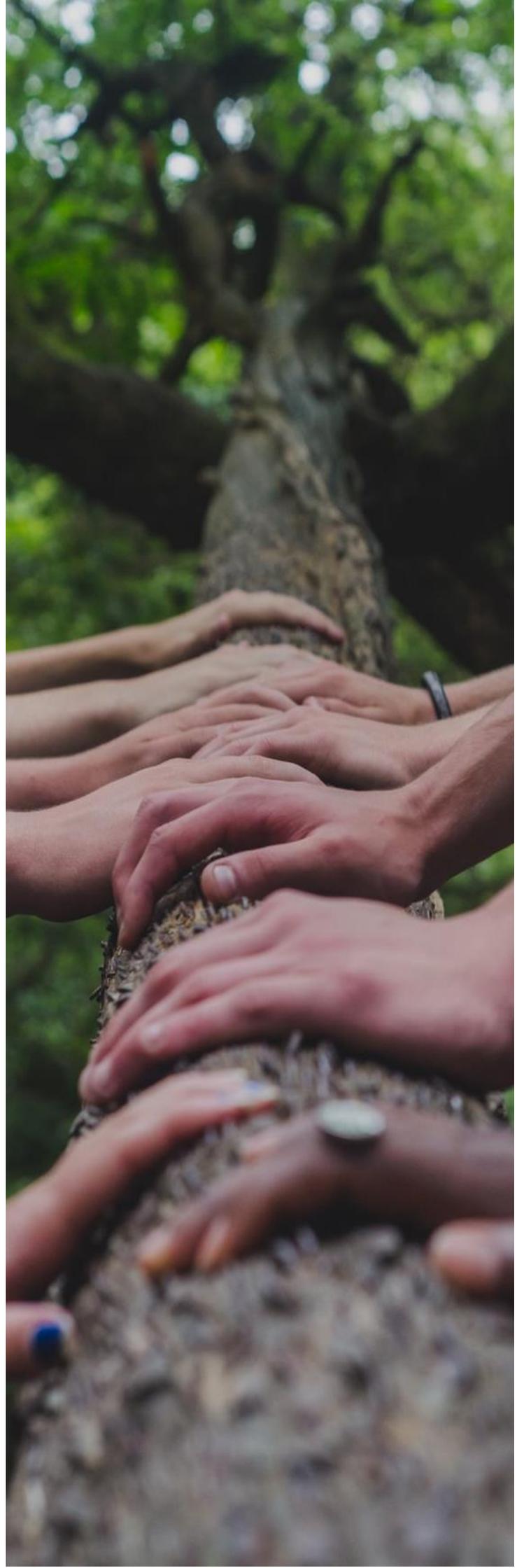
The **Interculturality Committee** has been active in eliciting feedback from Leaders, Leadership Teams and participants, during two facilitated online forums held in April and June 2022. Interculturality is an issue of growing importance for congregational provinces that extend beyond Australian shores, to places such as the Solomon Islands, Vietnam, Kiribati, Philippines, Pakistan, and New Zealand. Leaders who previously may not have expected to work in an intercultural space, are now embracing the gifts that interculturality brings. In most cases, programmes simply cannot progress without close attention to cultural sensitivities. Providing resources has been an area

of an ongoing focus of the Committee. It has a growing library of short videos promoting a deeper cultural awareness. Recently added to the series is a guide for using the material with groups.

The **Leadership Dialogue (PNG/SI and Australia) Subcommittee** of the **Interculturality Committee** meets via Zoom connecting participants in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Australia. Despite various internet and related communications issues, participants have expressed how highly they value the opportunity to interact with each other in a way they had not been able to before. Initial formation is an emerging topic, for which Leaders seek support.

The **Justice Committee** has been planning the rescheduled Justice Seminar in Melbourne on October 2022, covering treaty-making, refugee advocacy and a youth panel on climate change and ecology. The Committee has taken on a role as a think-tank and focusing on future seminars.

Following a well-received online event presented by Tim Norton SVD in November 2021, the 2022 year started strongly for the **Initial Formation Committee**, having developed from a working group, with regular Saturday Zoom events bringing Temporary Professed Religious together for support and networking. In February 2022, an online seminar with Juliet Mousseau RSCJ, (Franciscan School of Theology, San Diego, CA) on *“Religious Life in the Here and Now”* attracted 70 participants. With an influx of new members to Religious Institutes tending to come from outside Australia, there is an emerging appreciation for a convergence of themes between the Initial Formation Committee and the Interculturality Committee. Including a wide range of Religious experience, the Initial Formation Committee harnesses energy and optimism for Religious vocations. These are people at the coalface of the new growth in religious life; the passion and excitement is often palpable. A five-part Zoom Seminar *“Centred in God, Sent on Mission”* facilitated by Mary Pat Garvin RSM runs from June until September and offers support for the fifty Formators attending. Looking ahead, while the focus of the Initial Formation Committee to date has been on Temporary



Professed Religious and their formators, the question has arisen: What other stages and issues of formation might require similar focused attention?

The **2022 National Assembly Planning Committee** decided on an entirely new format this year, with multiple speakers and high levels of facilitation aimed at producing a highly engaging event. The format is shaped by the theme *‘Daring to Lead with Hope and Gratitude – the role of Religious Life in the 21st Century.’* There are lay and Religious speakers providing their reflections, including a scriptural reflection and witness stories. Council appoints a new committee each year and this committee has had less time than previous committees, due to COVID-19 rescheduling. Nevertheless, there has been much excitement from Leaders and their teams about resuming an in-person Assembly, after a three-year hiatus.

The **National Day of Sorrow & Promise Planning Committee** has emerged as a significant annual CRA event to acknowledge survivors of abuse within the Catholic Church and all those who have been hurt by that abuse. Religious Institutes are invited to pray with the liturgy produced by the Committee within their own communities. In 2021, the theme was, *‘At the foot of the Cross’*. The CRA Commitment Statement promises a better, safer future, and is shared among Members for use in their own Institutes.

The **Safeguarding Committee** addresses particular issues of professional standards and safeguarding. The expertise of this group is acknowledged by CRA which utilises the wisdom and experience of its members, who meet when needed.

The **Stewardship Committee** provides support to CRA Members on practical matters associated with business and resource management relevant to Religious Institutes. The Committee arranged a webinar with the ACNC in October 2021 which focused on providing an overview of the civil obligations and compliance requirements of a Religious Institute, as a registered charitable organisation. The Committee met with CCI to discuss changes in CCI practices and to highlight some challenges members are facing.

*“We are to be
God’s leaven
in the midst
of humanity.”*

*(Pope Francis,
EG, 114)*

COMMITTEE	MEMBERS
Australian Mission Network Chair Marion Gambin RSJ	Marilyn Bellett Albano Da Costa SVD Peter Gates Asaeli Rass SVD Grace Roclawska CSFN Stancea Vichie MSS Trevor Trotter SSC (retired)
Ecology Alliance Committee Co-Chairs Sue Martin and Sally Neaves	Kelvin Barrett SSC Anne Boyd CSB Luke Edwards Frances Maguire RSJ Jeffrey Regan CFC Beth Riolo Patricia Powell RSM (retired)
Health And Wellbeing Committee Chair Antoinette Baldwin RSJ	Annette Coulthart David Hawke FSC Mary-Clare Holland OP Carolyn Hunt RSM Jacqueline Jones SJA Marie Mohr Gabrielle Owen RSM
Initial Formation Committee Chair Mel Dwyer FdCC	Maria Bongiorno IBVM Ben Ho SSS Edna MacDonald FMA Helen O'Connell CSFN Marella Rebgetz SGS Kathy Ryan RSM
Interculturality Committee Co-Chairs Meg Kahler SGS and Gaye Lennon RSM	Rita Apura CSFN Henry Adler SVD Melissa Dwyer FDCC Jenny Gerathy OP Peter Jones OSA
Interculturality Subcommittee Co-Chairs Gaye Lennon RSM and Jenny Gerathy OP	Paul O'Keeffe Tom McDonough CP Bernadette Pattison PBVM
Justice Committee Chair Sarah Menassa-Rose	Kevin Dance CP John Ferguson Anne McGuire RSM Peter O'Neill SSC
Stewardship Committee Chair Kathleen Tierney RSM	Andrew Biddle Kathy Daini Campion Fernando Mary-Louise Groenewegen Bernard Kenna Greg O'Brien Kathryn Yates Chris Townend (retired) Josephine Dubiel RSJ (retired) John Spillane (retired) Damien Cairns (retired)

These committees were well served by Carmel Warnock until the end of 2021 and more recently by Stephen Middleton (ex officio).



Antoinette Baldwin RSJ, Chair of Health & Well-being Committee, speaking at a recent seminar

COMMITTEE	MEMBERS
Finance Chair Bernard Kenna	Josephine Dubiel RSJ John Spillane Anne Walker (ex officio)
National Assembly Planning Committee	Anne Boyd CSB Barbara Brown-Graham FCJ Karon Donnellon RSM Grace Roclawska CSFN Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook Trevor Trotter SSC Anne Walker
National Day of Sorrow & Promise	Vince Casey Tom McDonough CP Ann O'Brien James Parker Teresa Pirola Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook Anne Walker
Safeguarding Committee Chair Anne Walker	Tracy Adams David Leary OFM Ambrose Payne FSC Simon Davies

AROUND THE STATES

Gatherings and other activities forged ahead over the past year among networks of Religious in most States, aided by good use of technology during lockdowns and despite the continuing pandemic. These took shape through a variety of forms as determined by the needs, demographics and circumstances of Religious residing in each State.

In Victoria, where there is a long history of collaboration, representatives from many Religious Institutes convened for a well-established schedule of quarterly meetings, examining topics such as the LSAP, the Plenary Council, synodality, and leadership. Julianna Drobik OP observes that “people appreciate the local support and the opportunity to discuss practical issues, for example, how to enrol in the LSAP, help with applying for aged care packages, and ways to manage one’s leadership responsibilities.” There is also the “Small is Beautiful” initiative which provides regular meetings for about 30 Religious from Congregations with particularly small membership.

In South Australia, two congregational leaders meet with others who informally represent their Congregations. Bernadette Kiley OP reports that: “There is a joy in coming together. The group acts as a supportive network, meeting monthly, and receiving regular updates on important matters like education or child protection. We are an ‘older’ group of Religious, who remain an actively contributing presence in the local church. Our most senior member is a 99-year-old Sister who attends meetings regularly, armed with her iPad, well read in social justice issues, and asking searching questions!”

Mel Dwyer FdCC, from Religious of Queensland, reports that their group continues to meet at least three times per year and has grown in number. “Effort has been made to be inclusive of all Religious Congregations based in Queensland, and to invite them to gatherings. There is a real sense of support in our meetings, with Leaders developing a strong network amongst themselves and providing great opportunities for collaboration. Our Social Justice Grants programme, made available through contributions from the Brisbane Archdiocesan Development Fund, continues to support the good work of various Congregations who reach out to those in need across the State.”



West Australian celebration of Diamond Jubilee and WDCL



South Australian gathering



New South Wales Leaders' Dinner



Victorian Leaders' Dinner

In three States, Religious met with their local Bishops in 2021. In Victoria, an online gathering engaged seven congregational Leaders and seven Bishops in a sharing of their experiences of the Plenary Council. In Queensland, Archbishop Mark Coleridge invited Religious Leaders to a discussion on synodality. Meanwhile, the South Australian Religious group had its inaugural meeting with Adelaide’s newest Archbishop, Patrick O’Regan, focusing on the variety of Religious charisms of the group and their capacity to enrich the Archdiocesan community.

Specific issues (e.g., Plenary Council; Archdiocesan consultations) can create an impetus for Religious to come together, as part of broader ecclesial networks. Lucy van Kessel PBVM notes that Plenary Council Members in Western Australia gathered over the past year to pray, share and learn from one another, and that a number of Religious participated in feedback sessions from the First Assembly which were organised by Women of the Catholic Church WA. Meanwhile, 100 Religious from Adelaide Archdiocese and Port Pirie Diocese gathered last November for a productive networking occasion, with reporting from participants at the Adelaide Archdiocesan Assembly and from local members of the Plenary Council.

Leaders Dinners continue to be an enjoyable and valuable form of connection in NSW and Victoria.

The November month of remembrance once again proved a meaningful reason to gather at State level as Religious networks in Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria all held a form of Ritual of Remembrance for deceased congregational members. In other places, the remembrance took place at the local, congregational level.

A noted feature of the past year was the increasing polarisation and fracture of the wider society in which Religious live and minister. As a concrete example of a gospel response to this social dynamic, Mary-Louise Petro RSM, CRA’s NSW representative, spoke of a presentation which she was called upon to give as a Mercy Sister to students in Mercy schools. “I told them that anger is a gift,” she explains. “Well-placed, Spirit-led anger can spur us on. But at certain points of the past year in the Australian culture we saw anger in its nasty form [in the media], bringing us down as a nation. It raises the question: ‘How do we as Mercy people, and as Religious,



Canossian Sisters, Queensland



WDCL mass, Western Australia



Presentation Sisters, Tasmania



Sisters of Charity first gathering of 2022, Victoria

“do” anger? It’s not something we usually talk about, but the question and challenge were well received in the College setting.”

Among the myriad challenges facing Congregations, including the increased complexity of safeguarding and the bureaucratic unfurling of the pandemic, there is the ever-present reality of increased aging and diminishing numbers of Religious women and men. In Tasmania, Gabrielle Morgan PBVM comments on the shifting landscape of Religious life, “So much has changed over the past twenty years. While there are a dozen Religious Institutes represented here (most with just one or two members), the diminishment is particularly evident in Tasmania as Religious have moved back to the mainland or retired and returned to their home city elsewhere.” The Tasmanian Presentation Congregation has received the approval of the Holy See on their Petition for a change of their canonical governance.

Legacy preparation is the ongoing work of many Congregations. From the perspective of her own community walking this path, Mary-Louise Petro describes it as an experience of grief, but also an opportunity for new learnings, new relationships and generativity. “With confidence in [PJP] Mercy Partners, we are able to hand over and find new homes for schools and ministries which are precious to our hearts as a Congregation. It is about letting go, but also creating a place for our schools and ministries to flourish. A little part of our DNA is flying off in all directions.”

WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE 2022 PROJECT

Stories of Religious Institutes In Australia

LAUNCH: 26th World Day for Consecrated Life, 2 February 2022, to be published first half of 2023.

GOAL: To tell the stories of Catholic religious communities in Australia. Faith formation, through an exploration of religious life, with a focus on reaching a youthful audience and supporting vocations.

FORMAT: A publication suitable for individual reflection and classroom use. A teachers' guide will accompany the resource. View sample story and teacher guide.

WORKING TITLE: *Our Stories. Our Lives. Our Mission – Catholic Religious in Australia.*

SUBTITLE: Capturing the 'kaleidoscope' of charisms, gifts, and ministries of Catholic Religious in Australia.

RATIONALE: Each Congregation has a precious story to be told and shared with future generations. This project creates a practical resource and a simple strategy for placing these stories into the hands of those who are actively engaged today in the day-to-day task of forming young people (teachers/catechists/youth ministers/parents).



FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, AND MISSION

In response to Pope Francis' invitation to a global consultation in preparation for the 2023 Synod of Bishops on Synodality, and at the request of CICALSAL, CRA devised a simple, flexible process to invite the involvement of Australian Religious in the synodal journey during the period November 2021 to March 2022. The responses were collated and a Report submitted to CICALSAL and to the Australian Catholic Bishops in April 2022. The Report was rich in direct quotations from Religious and spawned an additional pastoral resource titled "100 ways to Live Synodality" based on these responses.

VOICES FROM CRA CONSULTATION

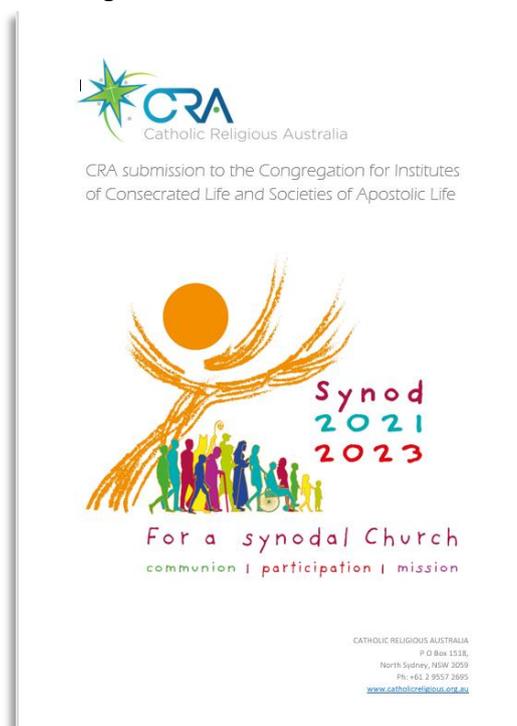
[Our] Congregation has been using a Synodal process in various approaches for over 25 years regarding Chapter and its implementation phase. We would name it Contemplative Dialogue.

At present I see my walking as trying to listen, deeply; not talk so much; but also share some situations of the poor—children criminals at 10 years of age . . .

Ministering everyday with First Nations Peoples in Australia, urban and on the former reserves, is a learning situation every day.

“Tell us how you live synodality

...and how this living witness speaks (or could speak) to the wider Church/society.”



In line with monastic tradition . . . among our guests and visitors we are honoured to welcome people of diverse backgrounds and religious affiliation. Because we are outside normal structures and bureaucracy, many find it possible to approach us who would be daunted by more official contact. We are, as it were, a back door to the Church.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24) we have had hopes and dreams and we have seen some of them dashed and we have returned again and again to these dreams buoyed by the

presence of Christ with us on the journey . . .

It took time for us to grow into where we are today. Change takes time and is incremental. This requires patience and fidelity to the discernment process with real respect for the wisdom of the Spirit seeking to be heard in the voices of all.

SAFEGUARDING

CRA actively assists those who have been abused and regularly supports the safeguarding work of Religious Institutes in fulfilling their obligations. At times, this assistance also extends to other bodies, such as ministerial PJPs. CRA acts as an effective advocate within the Church and wider society, thus giving its work a twofold focus: internal and external.

CRA acknowledges our Members for the deep care with which they approach their safeguarding responsibilities in their organisations and ministries.

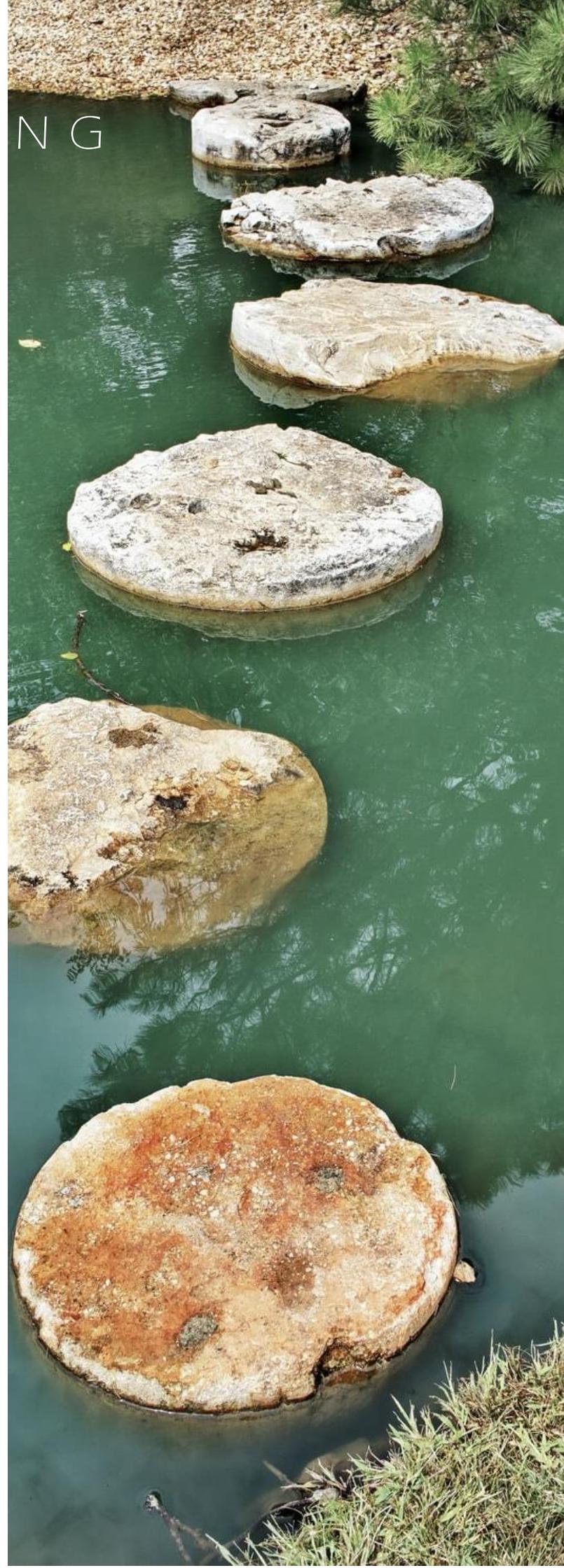
NATIONAL DAY OF SORROW AND PROMISE

It is crucial that our Church never forgets the lessons learnt from the Royal Commission and the deep and lasting impact of abuse. CRA's annual National Day of Sorrow and Promise serves as a reminder and ensures that we think of and pray for those who have been abused and promise to keep safe all those who come into contact with the Church. This is an important, albeit quiet, initiative of CRA through which an appropriately themed liturgical resource is provided to Members, to assist them to gather at a local level and pray for those who have been harmed by sexual abuse. CRA is grateful to the working party of James Parker, Tom McDonough CP, Ann O'Brien, Vince Casey, Teresa Pirola, Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook and Anne Walker, who bring compassion, accountability and heart to carry forth this ministry.

PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE

CRA continues to be a first contact point for people who have been abused. CRA provides information and assistance, compassionately, to enable the contact to be taken forward to the appropriate body.

CRA also assists Religious Institutes with their enquiries about safeguarding and professional standards in a wide range of areas.



CRA SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The CRA Safeguarding Community of Practice continues to grow as a significant meeting place for around 20 Leaders and safeguarding practitioners within Religious Institutes and MPJPs. There is a richness in grappling with the application of the Standards (e.g., in overseas jurisdictions) in our bi-monthly meetings and the praxis-focus of our safeguarding practitioners and Leaders brings confidence to the work. Wisdom and expertise are shared as the group seeks a deepened understanding on challenging issues.

CRA SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The CRA Safeguarding Committee is a helpful and useful ‘think tank’ on complex policy issues. CRA is thankful for their assistance. The Committee comprises Anne Walker, Ambrose Payne FSC, David Leary OFM, Tracy Adams and Simon Davies.

APPORTIONMENT OF LIABILITIES

CRA has been working for a fair, just and equitable apportionment of professional standards liabilities across the Church. While a CRA-ACBC working party has agreed on a set of Principles, there is still much work to be done in seeking agreement on points of definition and application.

STANDARDS AND OTHER CHURCH DOCUMENTS

A great deal of discussion and work continues to be undertaken towards ensuring effective national Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Many, but not all, of CRA’s suggestions have been accepted by ACSL. CRA has been instrumental in having the National Response Framework accepted so that it will apply broadly. CRA has also provided feedback on the *motu proprio*, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*.

REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

As a tool of accountability, the annual joint ACBC-CRA report to the National Office for Child Safety requires the reporting of information about the Church’s responses and initiatives in safeguarding. With the approach of the five-year anniversary of the release of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, CRA is looking at each individual Recommendation with the ACBC.

REDRESS

CRA continues to work with the National Redress Scheme on matters of policy, application of the Scheme, and to support Religious Institutes on particular matters, as an adviser and advocate.

EXTERNAL REPORTS

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ANGLICAN RELIGIOUS LIFE (ACARLA)

Jill Harding FCS is CRA's representative on the Advisory Council for Anglican Religious Life (ACARLA), which informs and advises the Bishops Conference of the Anglican Church on Religious Life. This body consists of representatives from 12 Religious communities, two of whom are from New Zealand, plus four additional appointed members including two bishops. ACARLA also liaises with a number of consecrated people, some of whom have links in Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and the UK.

ACARLA gathers annually, over three days. The first day is devoted to a meeting of Leaders of Religious Communities only, who share and discuss issues of concern and activity updates. The other two days include the bishops and other appointed members. During the rest of the year, there are opportunities for networking among the group, and the dissemination of information and resources: (e.g., Advent and Lenten talks) and initiatives of interest from Catholic circles (e.g., Plenary Council, Synodality), as well as news within the community of members.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATORS (BDACE)

The Biographical Dictionary of Australian Catholic Educators (BDACE) is a project, based at Australian Catholic University (ACU), that details the lives and work of those who have made a significant contribution to Australian Catholic education from the time of colonial settlement through to today. The project began with the print publication of *Not Forgotten: Australian Catholic Educators 1820-2020* (Coventry Press, 2020) and an evolving digital library of video interviews. In addition, BDACE currently holds approximately 50 biographies and suggested biographies in the process of editing, review and

approval. These biographies are primarily from Religious Institutes and cover the period of 200 years.

CRA representative, Kristin Johnston RSJ, reports that the BDACE Advisory Board is considering a proposed BDACE programme for 2022-25 that will progressively develop biographies from all States and Territories, starting with South Australia and Queensland. It will invite names of potential subjects and draft biographies, and specifically highlight three kinds of contribution: early Catholic educators (1820-1960); system builders in Catholic education (1950-2000); and those involved in the transition from religious to lay teachers following the Second Vatican Council (1966-2020).

Three core premises underpin the proposal: a) the contribution of previous Catholic educators deserves to be honoured and remembered; b) the experience of early Catholic educators has laid the foundations of contemporary Catholic education and can inform current endeavours; c) in exercising their mission to the Gospel, contemporary Catholic educators are challenged to be as bold, faith-filled and resourceful as the pioneers who began this work in this country.

Over the past year, the development of the BDACE website came to fruition, with an official BDACE launch held at ACU on 20 July 2022.

CATHOLIC MISSION

Marion Gambin RSJ, CRA's representative for Catholic Mission, reports on the organisation's accomplishments over the past year, including the development of a new strategic plan; the development of digital/social media competencies and practices; the role played by Catholic Mission staff in the first Assembly of the Plenary Council; and a significant contribution to the 2021 online *Conference Mission: One Heart, Many Voices*.

In planning for the future, Catholic Mission is mindful of the impact of the pandemic, both overseas and in Australia, and is currently looking to further adapt and implement its strategic plan to enable the organisation to stay focussed on mission. The tasks of the coming year will focus on formation programmes and raising support for global mission; as well as giving attention to the work environment to develop a more synodal approach to decision making. An ongoing challenge for the year has been to sustain staff working relationships, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the need for staff to work from home. Catholic Mission greatly values the enormous commitment and faithfulness among all involved in living God’s mission both globally and in Australia.

CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA (CHA)

Clare Nolan RSC, CRA’s representative at Catholic Health Australia (CHA), reports on the pressures caused by the Omicron outbreak in the latter half of 2021, highlighting the challenges of recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce in the health and aged care sectors. CHA has partnered with Notre Dame University to conduct research intended to quantify the workforce gap facing its hospitals over the near and long term. CHA is advocating for more skilled immigration in the short term, more training places in the long term for university trained health professionals, and higher wages for all care roles.

Among CHA reports released this year, “Lessons Learnt from COVID-19” provides a thematic analysis of the experiences of the Catholic Health sector in managing the pandemic in Victoria; and “Unlucky in a Lucky Country” is an analysis of demographic and labour force data that identifies the groups who experienced the most disadvantage due to pandemic responses in Victoria and New South Wales.

In August 2021, CHA launched a month-long advertising campaign to encourage COVID vaccination and a further campaign promoting

booster shots targeted mainly younger people in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Meanwhile, \$356,200 was raised by CHA members towards the provision of essential support to Catholic Church Health Services in Papua New Guinea.

CHA will continue to advocate for the Commonwealth Government to play a leading role in ensuring that consistent high quality palliative care is available across Australian jurisdictions, to ensure no Australian is left to choose assisted suicide because high quality palliative care was not available to them. CHA advocates for a consistent, national definition of quality palliative care. A key finding has been a lack of understanding among legislators as to the benefits of palliative care and recent advances in pain mitigation techniques.

Looking ahead, the review of CHA’s Code of Ethical Standards is on track for completion by the end of 2022.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CSSA)

Kathleen Tierney RSM reports that CSSA has continued to implement the new structure which came into effect mid-2021. The downsizing of CSSA was essential to achieve a balanced budget. There has also been a restructuring of staff positions to best serve CSSA and its member agencies.

In addition to continuing the core work of CSSA, including advocacy on behalf of its agencies and engagement with government, several important external partnerships were secured over the past year. CSSA was a member of the Community Crisis Cabinet and has now been invited to be a member of the Community Council Australia and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. A partnership has also been entered into with Caritas Australia and Catholic Health Australia in order to map the unique work of Catholic Agencies in responding to and preventing violence

against women and children.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES VICTORIA (CSSV)

Nicole Rotaru RSM, CRA representative for Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV), reports that a major piece of work being undertaken is a review of the CSSV Constitution which includes attention to Catholic identity, the number of members and the sustainability of social services. Forty-three agencies are associated with CSSV.

Domestic Violence continues to be a significant focus. CSSV was part of a joint submission towards the Federal Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Locally, a standing working group meets monthly to address the issue. Its work has given rise to a significant pilot project in the Diocese of Sale. Through a series of workshops, the project builds awareness of the complexity of the immediate and inter-generational impact of domestic violence; creates supportive connections and resource-sharing within and across faith communities; and revisits one's relationship with God.

CSSV submitted a First Assembly Plenary Council proposal of nine recommendations, drawing on the knowledge of its 43 member organisations.

In April 2022, Professor James McLaren launched a report of the findings of a research project

sponsored by CSSV, ACU, and St Mary's House of Welcome, *'Scarring Effects of the Pandemic Economy: COVID-19's Ongoing Impact on Jobs.'*

Acknowledged here is the passing of Fr Kevin Mogg AM, founder of CSSV, who died on 26 February 2022. An educator, a prison and youth justice chaplain, he had a vision to see how myriad small agencies could be united and given leverage through the peak body of CSSV in which he gave leadership for 50 years.

XAVIER CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL FORMATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Helga Neidhart RSC is CRA's representative on the Xavier Centre for Theological Formation Advisory Council. Xavier Centre's focus at this time has been on leadership and governance, with an understanding that our Church today must be missionary and hope-filled, as emphasised by the teachings of Pope Francis. New ministries have been opened up to women, and courses and programmes offered by the Centre reflect these opportunities.

The challenges presented by the pandemic, and the need to discern God's voice in our midst, have been keenly felt at the Xavier Centre. The opportunity created by the Plenary Council to listen and learn and to contribute was most valuable. The conversation has just begun, and the challenges of synodality continue to call for our attention.

ACRATH REPORT

This report highlights some of the challenges and successes in addressing ACRATH's five goals over the past year. We acknowledge the significant partnership with CRA and with individual Congregations.

GOAL 1: ELIMINATE FORMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & IN FORCED LABOUR

The war in Ukraine draws attention to the link between armed conflict, displacement and human trafficking. Latest reports reveal that human traffickers are active and that women and children are being lured into sex and organ trafficking. *Talitha Kum* networks in Ukraine's neighbouring countries are responding to the urgent need for care and working to identify and interrupt the work of traffickers. ACRATH, as a member of the *Talitha Kum* network, has assisted the Appeal for Ukraine.

ACRATH also sprang into action as U.S. troops left Kabul, issuing a four-part call to action to prevent trafficking in Afghanistan. Significant money was donated in our name, and ACRATH supporters have taken advocacy action to resettle Afghani refugees.



GOAL 2: ELIMINATE FORCED MARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA & GLOBALLY

ACRATH made a written and oral submission to the Federal Parliament's Human Rights Subcommittee Inquiry into forced and child marriage prevention. This was followed up with targeted advocacy meetings with Members of Parliament and with civil society network members.



GOAL 3: ENSURE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED ACCESS THEIR RIGHTS

ACRATH celebrated the success of its multi-year project to secure Act of Grace payments for the 22 men from Vanuatu who had experienced forced labour in Queensland in 2014 and who received no compensation for their losses. We acknowledge the civil society colleagues and at least 38 people in Parliament and departmental roles who partnered with ACRATH. The campaign has brought the men the money they were owed, acknowledging stolen wages and airfares.

GOAL 4: PROMOTE SLAVERY-FREE SUPPLY CHAINS

ACRATH has collaborated with schools in several states to address slavery in their supply chains; it has jointly promoted slavery-free: staffrooms, Easter campaigns and uniforms, eg. arrangement with IGA in WA to promote slavery-free Easter chocolate in their stores for Easter 2022.

Several regional groups in ACRATH have supported the Parliamentary Crossbench initiative to stop the importation into Australia of slavery-tainted goods.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP OUR ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY & INFLUENCE

During 2020-2021 ACRATH's National Committee engaged in a detailed process of reviewing its organisational structure. The change is a sign of the growth of ACRATH as an organisation and of the changing responsibilities of the National Committee.

Membership has become an area of focused work in the past two years. ACRATH is looking to grow its membership, with new flyers and the availability of an ACRATH group meeting regularly online.

ACRATH finances in 2021 have been strongly supported by donors, many of whom are members of Religious Congregations. These partnerships are greatly appreciated. ACRATH has also received three grants for projects, as well as income from the sale of its calendar and from regional fundraisers.

Paid and volunteer workers in the national office, continue to work energetically, with a mix of office and home-based work.



In working to achieve its goals, ACRATH acknowledges the leadership of the National Committee: its President, the collaborative teamwork of Regional Coordinators, and their regional teams.

ACRATH volunteers donated 5,850 hours in 2021.

Photos: ACRATH presents to the Federal Parliament's Human Rights Sub-committee. Students from Iona Presentation College – WA. National Committee 2022 (L-R: Shane Wood CFC, Peter O'Neill SSC, Carmel Heagerty RSM, Annette Arnold RSJ, Clare Nolan RSC, Clare Condon SGS. Absent: Lorraine Phelan RSM)

Thank you X, I appreciate it, my eyes are feeling sore and strained and wearing the eyepatch overnight... and thank you and ACRATH so much for this opportunity I've been longing for the last 8 years till today. Thank you again X, ACRATH is honestly such a phenomenal organisation ❤️❤️ truly blessed to be working with you and having ACRATH by my side & in my life supporting me xx

A text message from a victim/survivor, helped to receive overdue eye surgery through ACRATH's Companionship programme.



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“I CAME TO BRING FIRE TO
THE EARTH, AND HOW I WISH
IT WERE ALREADY KINDLED!”

(LUKE 12:49, NRSV)



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