

Report on the Participation of Women
in the Catholic Church in Australia

WOMAN AND MAN

ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

Dr Marie Macdonald, Professor Peter Carpenter,
Ms Sandie Cornish, Dr Michael Costigan,
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A Research Project undertaken for the Australian Catholic
Bishops Conference by the Bishops' Committee for Justice,
Development and Peace, Australian Catholic University and the
Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes

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CORRECTION

9.8.1, p 386, paragraph 2, line 4; should read: It was not
included as the list contained only those means of
promoting women's participation that could be acted upon.

Report on the Participation of Women in the
Catholic Church in Australia prepared by
the Research Management Group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Research Project on "The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia" was undertaken for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference by the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. The Project was launched by Cardinal Clancy on August 21, 1996 and the Report on the Project presented to the Plenary Meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on April 12, 1999.
2. The overall aim of the study was to gather data on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. In order to achieve this aim, the Research Project addressed four key questions concerning various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia, assistance and support currently offered to women to enable their participation, barriers to women's participation and ways in which women's participation could be increased. It was intended that the information obtained would provide a solid basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups.
3. The Research Project used both quantitative and qualitative research methods including contextual papers, written submissions, public hearings, a large-scale sampling of church attenders undertaken as part of the Catholic Church Life Survey, a survey of Catholic organisations, and targeted groups involving voices which had not been heard in the written submissions and public hearings. In the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups, responses were elicited from women and men from a variety of backgrounds and ages, those actively involved in Catholic Church structures and those who were not.
4. The project attracted an overwhelming response, significantly greater than the response to similar consultations conducted in recent times in the Catholic Church and in the broader Australian society. This in itself is a clear indication that the issue of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia is crucial and controversial.
5. The research identified two broad approaches to the participation of women in the Catholic Church: one oriented towards maintaining the current participation of women, or even returning to the position of the pre-Vatican II Church, the other seeking an expanded role for women.
6. The dominant issue arising from the research was gender equality, recognising the equal dignity of women and men created in the image and likeness of God. This understanding of equality did not imply the sameness of men and women, but rather their complementarity and mutuality.

The Church was seen to be lagging behind the wider Australian society in recognising the changing role of women as one of the "signs of the times" and affirming the equality of women. The very limited participation of women in decision-making at present and the need to increase women's involvement in decision-making at all levels were constant and major themes. Involvement in decision-making was often linked with a call to promote opportunities for women to participate in leadership in the Church.

7. The research found that, while there is a range of views concerning women and the Church, there is virtually no disparity of views based on gender. It is concluded that the issue of the participation of women in the Church is not just a concern for women only but rather an issue for the Church as a whole.
8. Results of the Catholic Church Life Survey revealed that church attenders have a considerably older profile than the Catholic population in general, that women outnumber men in the ratio of about three to two and that more than half of all attenders are not involved in any regular way in other parish activities, although women are more likely to be involved than men are. There is an under-representation of young people and of those who are separated or divorced.
9. The Survey found that the great majority of church attenders have a strong sense of belonging to their parish and feel that it is adequately meeting their spiritual needs, have never felt unwelcome in the Church in recent years, and have been given sufficient assistance to complete a task when they have accepted responsibility. Respondents suggested that the best ways to increase women's participation were through prayer, increasing women's involvement in decision-making and Church administration, and reforming beliefs and practices that do not promote the equality of men and women. Three quarters said they have neither experienced nor observed barriers to women's participation in the Church but more than a quarter said they did not accept the Church's teaching on the ordination of women.
10. By contrast, the overall findings of the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups revealed a strong sense of pain and alienation resulting from the Church's stance on women. The results of these research approaches highlighted the enormous contribution of women to all aspects of the life of the Church, except in the ordained ministry, leadership and decision-making. It was perceived that little assistance and support were received from the institutional Church to undertake anything other than ancillary and support roles. Significant barriers to the full participation of women were experienced. The fundamental barrier concerned traditions and attitudes which were seen to be inconsistent with the person and

message of Jesus Christ and especially his relationship with women. The major suggestions to increase women's participation were the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels, a re-examination of the nature of ministry with exploration of the possibility of more inclusive roles for men and women, and reform of beliefs and associated practices that do not promote the equality of men and women.

11. There was much agreement, even among those with different views on the question, that there should be open discussion of the issue of women's ordination.
12. One of the greatest challenges to emerge from the research is the need to create a range of opportunities in the Church for respectful listening and dialogue concerning the experiences, needs and aspirations of women.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLRI	Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes
ACSJC	Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
ACU	Australian Catholic University
AICC	Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BCJDP	Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace
CCJP	(1) Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (up to 1987) (2) Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace (since 1987)
CCLS	Catholic Church Life Survey
CWL	Catholic Women's League
NCLS	National Church Life Survey
NESB	Non English-Speaking Background
WATAC	Women and the Australian Church
WCC	World Council of Churches
YCW	Young Christian Workers

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church in Australia has never undertaken a larger research project on a single issue than the one that is the subject of this Report to the Bishops Conference. The Research Project on Women's Participation in the Catholic Church in Australia was also far bigger than comparable Government inquiries, in terms of the number of submissions received in writing and at hearings, the thousands of churchgoers participating through the Catholic Church Life Survey (CCLS) and the hundreds of individuals contributing as members of targeted groups.

The full size and scope of the Project were not envisaged at the outset. That it unexpectedly attracted such a huge response and aroused such widespread interest is indicative of its importance and timeliness – and can be said to constitute in itself a message to the Church's leadership and to the rest of the faith community. The Project's significance was acknowledged by several speakers at the recent Special Assembly for Oceania of the Synod of Bishops, including by the convenor of the Project's Research Management Group, Bishop Kevin Manning, and the Superior General of the Sisters of Loreto (Irish branch), Sister Mary Wright ibvm.

The history of the Project is recounted in some detail in the first chapter of the Report. Here it will suffice to highlight that the research study, carried out for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), was a work of collaboration between the Secretariat of the Bishops Conference, the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP), Australian Catholic University (ACU) and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI). The contribution of the organisers of the 1997 CCLS added an important element to the results of the research.

The women's movement is one of the most notable developments for the Churches in recent times. It has been recognised explicitly as such by a number of the Popes of this century, and in a special way by Pope John XXIII, who saw it as one of the outstanding "signs of the times", and by Pope John Paul II, who has frequently spoken and written on the matter. During the five years, divided into two periods, in which the research in Australia was being planned (1994–97) and carried out (1997–99), relevant and important documents were issued by the Holy See and by national Conferences of Bishops. They included Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter on priestly ordination and women, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (May 30, 1994), his 1995 Holy Thursday letter to priests, his Letter to Women dated June 29, 1995, his remarks on women in the Church on September 3, 1995, a response by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the inadmissibility of women to ministerial priesthood (cf. *Origins*, November 30, 1995) and two texts on women's roles in the Church released on October 13, 1998 by the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops (cf. *Origins*, October 29, 1998).

As recently as March 8, 1999, the Holy Father anticipated the celebration of Women's Day on March 9 by greeting pilgrims in St Peter's Square with these words: "I would like to express the hope that this recurrence will be motive for a renewed reflection on the dignity and the role which the woman has in the family, in civil society and in the ecclesial community". Such a reflection was precisely the catalyst for the Research Project; undertaking it in the Australian context was in response to the Pope's wishes, as frequently expressed during his pontificate.

The researchers took due notice of the above and other related statements and documents, refraining, for example, from seeking responses on the specific issue of women's ordination or from making it in any sense the focus of the study, while not rejecting submissions which raised either this or any other matter which respondents chose to address (see Chapter 1). It was seen as important that the Bishops should be given the chance to hear the views of people, especially women, on whatever issues they regarded as relevant to the research.

The original aim of the study was always kept in mind by the committee conducting the research, the Research Management Group (RMG): to establish and present the facts about women's participation in the Church in Australia fully and objectively, without entering into controversy about viewpoints or opinions expressed on the various issues associated with the topic. The objectives were articulated in the following way: "This research will gather information about the ways in which women currently participate in the Church and how their participation can be increased. It will help Church bodies to reflect on and promote the Gospel vision of the equal dignity of women and men, to discuss the issues in a constructive way, and to plan for the future".

The four key research questions were framed with these objectives in mind. The questions were:

1. What are the various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Five major research approaches were used in gathering data based on responses to these questions. They were:

- written submissions;
- public hearings;
- a national survey of church attenders undertaken as part of the CCLS;
- targeted groups; and
- a survey of Catholic organisations and theological institutions.

Thus, the study combined both quantitative and qualitative research, in accord with the accepted contemporary approach to this kind of enterprise. In Church terms, it is a pastorally legitimate and even essential approach, giving the Bishops a unique opportunity as shepherds to listen to the voices of their flocks.

The RMG decided that it would be valuable to supplement the research findings with two or three contextual papers. One of these would assist the Bishops to place the Project in the broader context of the history of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia, especially since the Second World War, and would be written by an historian, preferably a woman. In fact, the RMG considered itself fortunate that Sister Sophie McGrath rsm, a specialist in the area, was willing to accept the commission to write the paper.

The Group was similarly pleased when Ms Denise Sullivan, Executive Secretary to the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Relations, agreed to prepare a paper placing the Research Project in an ecumenical context. These two papers follow Chapter 1 ("Background and Preparation for the Project") to form the first section of the Report. A paper relating the research topic to the role of women in contemporary Australian society was also considered, but it was decided in the end to cover this aspect in an Appendix, reproducing extracts from recent editions of *Australian Social Trends*.

The first section of the Report, therefore, comprises a chapter on the history of the Project's background and preparation and two contextual papers. The second section, the heart of the document, reports comprehensively in five chapters on each of the research instruments. These are mostly quite long chapters. The longest, on the targeted groups, includes some data which goes beyond the research topic because it was judged to be a rich source of information for pastoral reflection. The third section consists of a final chapter of conclusions, titled "Overview of the Report", followed by several Appendices which provide, among other things, lists of those who helped to make the Project a success, whether as organisers, volunteers or respondents.

Since women were the subject of the study, it was fitting that they played a significantly larger part in the Project than men, both as organisers and respondents. It was, of course, as the composition of the RMG itself (four women and four men) shows, a collaborative effort between the two sexes, but it should be recorded that key roles in the organising of the principal qualitative research instruments and in the drafting of the Report belonged to female members of the Group. Some indication of the extent of women's contributions, in many cases on a voluntary basis and in all cases motivated by love of the Church and a generous spirit of service to the Church, will emerge from the following acknowledgements and from the Report itself, including the Appendices.

The members of the RMG, several of whom served from the beginning on an initial working party, which was later formally constituted as the RMG responsible for conducting the research, were:

* **Bishop Kevin Manning**, Bishop of Parramatta (formerly of Armidale) and Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJ). He is the Secretary of the BCJDP, and was delegated by that Committee in 1994 to represent it and the Bishops of Australia on the working party and the RMG. Before his appointment as Bishop, he was for many years the Secretary of the ACBC.

* **Professor Peter Carpenter**, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at ACU and chairman of the RMG. He was involved in planning and designing the Research Project from the beginning. His undergraduate and postgraduate education was in sociology at the University of Queensland. In the mid-1980s he was a Postdoctoral Fulbright Scholar at the University of Maryland. His research interests concern the participation of young Australians in post-secondary education.

* **Ms Sandie Cornish**, Chief Executive Officer of the ACSJC. As the first recipient of the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Scholarship, she studied at the Pontifical Gregorian University and was awarded a Licentiate in Social Sciences, specialising in Catholic Social Doctrine and Ethics. She also has a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Newcastle and a Master of Public Policy from the University of New England.

As Assistant to the Executive Secretary of the BCJDP before her present appointment, she acted as secretary to the working party and the RMG, playing a central role in implementing plans for the research, particularly in regard to the written submissions, the public hearings and the targeted groups.

* **Dr Michael Costigan**, Executive Secretary to the BCJDP since 1987. A former journalist (who reported the Second Vatican Council) and senior public servant with a Doctorate in Canon and Civil Law from the Pontifical Lateran University and a Licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical Urban University, Dr Costigan has overseen the running of several major projects for the Bishops, including the Wealth Inquiry and the Consultation on Young People and the Future. He participated in the planning of the women's Research Project from the beginning and has had ultimate responsibility for its management by the BCJDP Secretariat.

* **Mr Robert Dixon**, Pastoral Research Projects Officer for the ACBC with responsibility for managing the CCLS and the National Catholic Census Project. He is the author of *The Catholics in Australia* (AGPS, 1996). Appointed by the Secretary of the ACBC to join the RMG after it was decided to include a questionnaire on women's participation in the CCLS, his chief responsibilities with regard to the study have been in relation to the questionnaire and the coding of written submissions.

* **Dr Marie Macdonald**, Coordinator of the Research Project and principal writer of the Report. She was a senior lecturer at ACU for eleven years and the Head of the Department of Religious Education (Victoria). She resigned from that position at the end of 1997 to take up the appointment as Project Coordinator. Dr Macdonald was involved from the beginning in the planning

and conduct of the study, as an ACU representative on the working party and the RMG. It is believed that she was the first Catholic lay woman in Australia to become a Doctor of Theology. Religious education and the communication of faith have been her principal areas of study and teaching. Her special interests relate to the effectiveness of student learning in religious education and the theological formation of religious educators. Dr Macdonald has written books and monographs, has lectured and acted as a consultant on the subject of faith transmission throughout Australia and overseas, and conducts inservices for groups of priests, parents, catechists and religious educators.

* **Sister Margaret Malone**, a Good Samaritan Sister and a senior lecturer at Signadou Campus of ACU for eleven years. Her field of study includes the early Church and she has taught in the areas of women in the Church and social justice. Appointed at the beginning to the working party as an ACU representative, she made a vital contribution to the development of the research design. She took leave from the RMG while lecturing in Rome at an international renewal program for Benedictine women and to complete her doctoral studies, but returned to continue playing a key role as a member of the RMG during the past two years.

* **Sister Sonia Wagner**, Superior General of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict. She joined the working party and the RMG as the nominated representative of the ACLRI. With her strong background in teaching, research and planning in Catholic education at the secondary, tertiary and continuing levels and in pastoral ministry in many Australian dioceses, she has made an invaluable contribution to the Project. Sister Sonia's duties for the Order take her to many parts of Australia and to Japan, the Philippines and Kiribati, where there are Good Samaritan communities.

The present members of the RMG wish to place on record their gratitude to three other people who served for shorter periods on the working party, mainly in its early stages. They are **Bishop William Brennan** of Wagga Wagga (Chairman of the ACSJC until 1994 and now Chairman of the BCJDP), **Dr Warwick Neville** of Canberra (Research Director for the ACBC) and **Father Bill Wright** (Church historian and former Deputy Secretary of the ACBC). The first meeting of the working party on June 23, 1994 was also attended by **Professor Bernard Daffey**, ACU's Director of Research Management, who helped to make it possible for the research skills of key University staff to be placed at the disposition of the Project. At the same time, a special tribute must be paid to the Vice-Chancellor of ACU at the time, **Professor Peter Drake**, who responded so positively to approaches made to him by the BCJDP, and to his successor, **Professor Peter Sheehan**, who has continued to support the University's contribution to the research.

Others deserving a special word of thanks here are the previously mentioned authors of the contextual papers, **Dr Sophie McGrath rsm** and **Ms Denise Sullivan**; **Dr Nasir Butrous** and **Ms Ann Bramwell-Vial** of ACU's McAuley Campus, who acted as consultants to the RMG on women's role in contemporary

Australian society; **Professor Gabrielle McMullen**, who edited this Report; **Sister Brenda Lynch csb**, who assisted with reading the texts of written submissions and presentations at the public hearings; **Sr Mary Britt op**, who assisted with reading the public hearings texts; **Revd Dr Michael Mason cssr**, project sociologist with the CCLS, who assisted in the design of the questions used in the CCLS and had a central role in the overall design of Questionnaire H; **Ms Shona McKendry**, who played many roles from the early stages of questionnaire production and distribution to parishes, to the processing of returned questionnaires; **Associate Professor Glenn Rowley** of Monash University, who advised on research methodology, especially in relation to the seeking of written submissions and the public hearings; **Professor John Western** of the University of Queensland, who advised on the research design; **Ms Helen Robson**, the BCJDP's Administrative Assistant, who acted as minute secretary to the RMG during the last two years, helped to organise RMG meetings and the target groups, and was involved in the preparation of this Report, particularly in relation to the Appendices; **Mrs Diana Murphy**, Secretary to ACU's Dean of Arts and Sciences, who assisted Professor Carpenter as chairman of the RMG in many ways, especially in relation to the setting of dates for the RMG's 34 meetings and teleconferences; **Ms Mary Robinson**, whose assistance allowed Sister Sonia Wagner to make her essential contribution at every stage in the Research Project; and **Revd Dr Norman Ford sdb** (President, Moral Theology Association of Australia and New Zealand) and **Sr Anne Lane pvm** and other members of the Sub-Committee on Women's Issues, Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace, who were among the first to suggest to the Australian Bishops through the BCJDP and the ACSJC that a study of this kind should be undertaken.

The RMG also wishes to thank everybody else who helped in any way with the Project. This includes all of the respondents and the many people around Australia who gave their services, usually without financial recompense. A good number are listed in the Appendices and a sincere apology is offered to any others who might have been inadvertently omitted from the lists.

It was the constant determination of the RMG to carry out the research in a rigorously professional manner. The RMG is confident that this intention was fulfilled, in accordance with the wishes of the Bishops themselves, as expressed by the Conference President, Cardinal Edward Clancy.

The RMG does not offer any recommendations of its own to the Bishops in this Report. It will be left to the Conference to consider and evaluate the many suggestions and recommendations coming from the thousands of individuals and organisations who responded, and which are reported in the following pages.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION FOR THE PROJECT

1.1 The Establishment of the Working Party

1.2 Planning the Task Ahead: The Meetings of the Working Party

1.3 The Launch of the Project

1.4 Conclusion

On Wednesday August 21, 1996 Cardinal Edward Clancy, the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), launched a national study of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia. The launch took place in the School Hall at St Mary's Cathedral College, Sydney. The resulting project, which was undertaken over some two-and-a-half years, has gathered information about how women currently participate in the Catholic Church in Australia, assistance and support offered to women to enable their participation, the barriers to their participation and how their participation can be increased. The Research Project has addressed four key questions:

1. What are the ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

The present chapter details the background and preparations for this historic project in the period from late October 1992 to the launch date, August 21, 1996.

1.1 The Establishment of the Working Party¹

The role and status of women in the Catholic Church and in Australian society have been seen by a number of groups and individuals as a social justice issue for some time. In 1977 the Social Justice Sunday Statement published by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace was titled *Towards a More Whole Church* and addressed a range of gender issues in the Church. When consulting the Catholic community in 1987, and again in 1992, regarding the appropriate

¹ This section draws very heavily on notes prepared by Dr Michael Costigan, Executive Secretary, Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace.

social justice issues on which to conduct major consultations in preparation for pastoral statements, the Bishops received many suggestions that gender issues in the Church and in the broader community be addressed. These suggestions came from both women and men, women's groups and the Moral Theology Association of Australia and New Zealand. While other consultation topics were more strongly supported by the community and ultimately chosen by the Bishops, it was clear that issues concerning the role and status of women were a high priority social justice concern to the community.

In October 1992 Bishop William Brennan, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC), received from Sister Anne Lane pbvm, on behalf of the Sub-Committee on Women's Issues, Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace (CCJP), a letter making the following proposal:

That the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council recommend to the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace that they, on behalf of the Australian Bishops Conference, authorise and finance an independent study researching "Sexism in the Catholic Church in Australia".

One month later, after long discussion at their final meeting for 1992, the ACSJC resolved to recommend to the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP) that serious consideration be given to the production of a paper on the active participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. The ACSJC expressed the view that a variety of women should be consulted as part of the writing process and that the issue of inclusive language should be one of the matters addressed in the paper.

In the first half of 1993 the issue raised in Sister Anne Lane's letter (October 15, 1992) was discussed unofficially and informally between members of the CCJP and both Dr Michael Costigan and Ms Sandie Cornish of the BCJDP Secretariat. In this same period Sister Anne's letter was also discussed by her and Ms Bernice Moore, also of the CCJP Sub-Committee, with Bishop Brennan.

At its meeting in July 1993 the BCJDP considered the proposal from the CCJP, the recommendation from the ACSJC and detailed briefing notes prepared by Ms Cornish. The BCJDP agreed to explore the most appropriate way of responding to the different but related proposals coming to it from these two bodies and from other directions as well. As a first step, it was decided to prepare for a dialogue with as many interested women or women's groups as possible.

In mid-September 1993 Bishop Brennan and Bishop Kevin Manning, delegated by the BCJDP, consulted about the proposed project with staff of the BCJDP Secretariat and some women members of the ACSJC. This meeting compiled an initial list of relevant women's groups and organisations and reported to the BCJDP by teleconference. No firm decisions were made and the BCJDP asked Bishops Brennan and Manning to work with the Secretariat staff

to develop more concrete procedural and practical suggestions for the Committee's consideration.

Later in that month Bishop Brennan replied in writing to Sister Anne Lane's original letter, outlining the steps reported above and noting that the BCJDP wished to explore the most appropriate way of responding to the various proposals.

As 1993 closed Bishops Brennan and Manning reported to the BCJDP that the working group recognised a need to study the actual position of women in the Church in Australia. The BCJDP agreed that its Secretariat be asked to look at the possibility of a national survey on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, to be conducted at diocesan level and coordinated nationally. It was noted that such a project could involve the participation of various agencies or institutions, particularly Australian Catholic University (ACU). Dr Costigan, Executive Secretary to the BCJDP, subsequently telephoned Professor Peter Drake, Foundation Vice-Chancellor of ACU, to commence discussions about the feasibility of such co-operation.

Early in February 1994, in that month's issue of the CCJP national newsletter, Sister Margaret Hinchey presented the 1993 annual report of the Sub-Committee on Women's Issues. This report included an account from the Sub-Committee's viewpoint of their communication with the BCJDP, with quotations from their correspondence with the BCJDP, including from Sister Anne Lane's letter to Bishop Brennan of October 17, 1993, wherein Sister Anne had expressed disappointment that the Sub-Committee on Women's Issues of the CCJP had not been involved as part of "a committee to plan the processes to be used" to investigate the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

As February drew to a close, Dr Costigan wrote to Professor Drake, offering more details of the BCJDP's thinking on the matter (February 23, 1994). He wrote:

The Committee's thinking at the moment is that the first step should be a national study or survey on the participation of women in the Church in Australia, to be conducted at diocesan level and co-ordinated nationally. What is envisaged is a comprehensive data gathering project, which would aim at establishing where women are placed and what they are doing in the Church in Australia at present.

A month later Professor Drake replied to Dr Costigan advising "that Australian Catholic University would be competent and interested in participating in the proposed research project on Women in the Australian Church". The Vice-Chancellor noted that "if the University had a major presence in the steering/management group of the project, we could connect to our Research Management organisation and thus be positioned to be alert to any external funding opportunities". He also said that several University staff with the

competence to design, direct and analyse a suitable survey had been identified but that first a steering group needed to be set up "to establish the nature and bounds of the project". The Vice-Chancellor then suggested to Dr Costigan that ACU's Director of Research Management, Professor Bernard Daffey, be involved in the proposed steering group.

In April 1994 the BCJDP noted and approved the actions taken to date and, in the light of the fact that Bishop Brennan would no longer be on the Committee, nominated Bishop Manning as its representative to discuss with Professor Drake and others the financial feasibility of the project and the composition of a steering group, should it emerge that a research project was viable.

On May 11, 1994, Professor Drake met with Bishop Manning, Dr Costigan and Ms Cornish and discussed the aims of the proposed project. It was noted that it would be difficult to obtain government funding for this project but that the possibility of private funding could be further explored. A telephone link between Professor Drake and Professor Daffey then established that a meeting with BCJDP staff representatives would take place on May 20, 1994.

At this meeting Dr Costigan and Ms Cornish briefed Professor Daffey and Professor Peter Carpenter, Foundation Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at ACU, on the background and aims of the proposed research project. All agreed the project was feasible and deserved further exploration. It was decided that another meeting, over a full day, would be held at which two or three ACU staff in addition to Professors Daffey and Carpenter would be present. The Director of Research for the ACBC, Dr Warwick Neville, would also be invited. The first meeting of what was to become the Working Party which designed the research project was set for June 23, 1994.

1.2 Planning the Task Ahead: The Meetings of the Working Party

1.2.1 The First Meeting

Between June 23, 1994 and the official launch of the project on August 21, 1996 the Working Party met on fifteen (15) separate occasions, experienced changes in membership and wrestled with a large number of difficult issues. Regular progress reports were provided to both the BCJDP and to the ACBC, as well as to the Vice-Chancellor of ACU. Meetings were usually held in North Sydney at Leo XIII House and from the outset ACU covered the travel costs of University staff on the Working Party from Melbourne and Canberra to North Sydney.

The following persons, listed with their designations, attended the inaugural meeting on June 23, 1994:

- Dr M Costigan, Executive Secretary BCJDP (Chairman);
- Ms S Cornish, Assistant to the Executive Secretary;

- Bishop W Brennan, Bishop of Wagga Wagga, representing Bishop K Manning for this meeting;
- Dr M Macdonald, Head of the Department of Religious Education (Victoria), ACU;
- Sr M Malone sgs, Senior Lecturer in Theology, ACU;
- Dr W Neville, Director of Research, ACBC;
- Professor B Daffey, Director of Research Management, ACU;
- Professor P Carpenter, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, ACU.

At the inaugural meeting Bishop Brennan, immediate past Chairman of the ACSJC, provided the Working Party with the background to the BCJDP's invitation for a discussion about a proposed research project. The BCJDP's desire to address issues relating to women in the Church was seen as a response to change happening around the world and accompanying shifts in the Church itself. The BCJDP wanted to respond to the call by women that they be taken more seriously in the Church and be more fully involved in a variety of aspects of its life. But any response would be set squarely in the context of the *Apostolic Letter on the Ordination of Women* and the theological and disciplinary consequences thereof.

In the apostolic letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, released by the Vatican on May 30, 1994, Pope John Paul II declared that the Church did not have the authority to ordain women as priests and this teaching was to be definitely held by all the Church's faithful. It is important to note that the issue of this apostolic letter on ordination and women had much significance for the project. The position of Pope John Paul II on the issue was very clear and it was the intention in undertaking the research project to be true to the Pope. The ordination of women was not the focus of the research. The question of the participation of women in the Church was seen as a much broader issue. In any discussion open to all people on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, it cannot be denied that this issue would be raised by some who responded to the project.

The Working Party agreed that the general objective of the proposed study would be to gather data by a variety of methods on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. The information obtained would provide a solid basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues. It would provide a foundation for the Bishops' responses to the concerns of women rather than being the total response in itself. The proposed study would also be of interest, it was noted, to other Church agencies and Committees of the Bishops Conference, for example the Committee on the Laity, the Committee on Doctrine and Morals and the Committee on Family and Life. Its findings could also be of use to lay movements and local faith communities.

At this initial meeting Professor Daffey indicated that his future role would be limited to negotiations about the funding of the project, rather than membership of the Working Party charged with developing and then managing the Research Project.

1.2.2 The Remainder of 1994

Three further meetings were held in 1994. At the request of the members of the Working Party, Professor Carpenter assumed the role of chairing meetings and Ms Cornish acted as Secretary to the group. Importantly the BCJDP at its August 5, 1994 meeting provided quite a detailed request to the Working Party, as follows:

- that a research design be developed, costed and presented to the BCJDP for their consideration and development into a submission to the ACBC for funding to undertake the research;
- that a historical element be included in the study to examine the trends in women's participation in the Catholic Church in the post-World War II period to the present.

The Working Party itself began to consider from this early stage the desirability of holding public hearings as a means to gather data concerning individuals', groups' and organisations' experiences, views and perceptions of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia. The Working Party formed the view that, though such hearings would require careful handling and appropriate placement in the total research process, they could prove extremely valuable. What was really important was the need to communicate clearly and accurately the limited and specific task of the research.

The Working Party saw as desirable the use of a variety of means of collecting data from as wide a spectrum as possible of women and men across Australia. How could this be done?

- by calling for written submissions in response to a small number of key questions, such submissions taking one of a number of forms – a list of points, a letter, a paper of a few pages;
- by using a brief questionnaire to a national sample of Catholic parishes across Australia, providing that the complex sampling that would be needed was explained clearly and simply as the inclusion of all Catholic parishes (approx. 1,425 in Australia) was not possible owing to prohibitive costs;
- by using focus groups to record people's feelings and perceptions;
- by using public hearings in each capital city and in several provincial centres to provide a forum for groups and individuals to be heard on the issues of women's participation in the Catholic Church;
- by establishing a full list by diocese of women's groups in the Church, which the Working Party considered could form an important data source.

In the spring of 1994 Professor Carpenter sought advice on the early draft of the research design from Professor John Western of the University of Queensland, an eminent social researcher with long experience in undertaking research using a variety of methods to investigate complex social issues, including issues of inequality in Australia. Professor Western endorsed the draft strategy of the Working Party but counselled it to consider carefully what role the media was to play at different points in the investigation.

The Working Party also received advice from Dr Neville about the kinds of procedures used by governmental committees conducting hearings and the protocols which apply. For example:

- the need to seek an appointment to speak at a hearing;
- a time limit for speakers (often 45 minutes);
- provision for observers to attend;
- the role of the panel to be that of hearing submissions, asking questions of clarification to draw out from presenters what was meant rather than by way of cross-examination;
- the presentation of an opening statement and time for questions from the panel;
- time for dialogue among the presenters at the end of each session where this is seen as helpful;
- the need to record and transcribe the proceedings and de-brief the panel after each hearing.

At the final meeting for 1994, held in November, the Working Party spent a great deal of time on the sampling of parishes across Australia and on the nature of the brief survey to be completed by individuals, perhaps fifty (50) persons, in the selected parishes. The sampling method to be used was that adopted by the Australian Council for Educational Research in several national studies of young people's educational achievements and attainments. Parishes were listed in postcode order and an appropriate sampling interval determined according to the size of the sample of parishes to be drawn. Using a random start and this constant sample interval, the requisite sample of parishes, for example 100, was drawn. Each diocese, even the smallest, had at least one parish in the sample, but the sample as a whole was proportional to the size of each diocese, in this sense representing the total parish picture. The sample achieved excellent geographic coverage across Australia but allowed over-sampling in any particular diocese should any Bishop wish this to occur. The Working Party also examined national samples of 50, 75 and 200 parishes, respectively.

From its first meeting in 1994 the Working Party had spent much time on a detailed examination of the wording of the questions for the survey to be used in the national sample of parishes.

Through successive drafts of the questionnaire, which were extensively piloted, the following questions came to be refined:

- What are various ways women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- What are the most important roles which women undertake in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- What are the most important roles which women should perform in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- What assistance and support are offered to women to participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- What are the barriers to women's participation in the Church in Australia?
- What are the ways in which women's participation can be increased?
- When do you feel you most belong to the Church?
- When do you feel you do not belong to the Church?
- When are women able/not able to be involved in decision-making in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- When should women be involved in decision-making in the Catholic Church in Australia?

The final task for the Working Party in 1994 was to prepare a Progress Report for the BCJDP meeting in late November setting out the proposed research design, a possible time frame for the project and possible costs.

1.2.3 1995

In 1995, the second year of its operation, the Working Party met on five separate occasions, commencing the year with Bishop Manning's report that the Working Party's Progress Report to the BCJDP had been very well received but that the financial constraints experienced by the Bishops' Conference meant that various avenues would need to be explored for the necessary funds to conduct the proposed investigation. The Working Party took up Bishop Manning's suggestion that a Report be prepared for the April 1995 Plenary Meeting of the Bishops' Conference to be submitted to the Conference by the BCJDP. The Working Party noted that the *Young People and the Future* project would not be completed until 1997 and that the *Ministry and Mission in Australian Post Secondary Education* project being undertaken by the Bishops Committee for the Laity and ACU was also a major budget item for the Bishops' Conference. It would clearly be very difficult for the Bishops' Conference to undertake another major national project until these other projects had been completed or brought close to completion. At this stage the figure of \$70,000 was mooted as an estimate of the possible costs of the research and the Working Party received a suggestion that the Australian

Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI) be approached for assistance.

At its May 1995 meeting the Working Party underwent a change of membership. Dr Neville had to withdraw from the Working Party owing to pressure of work at the ACBC. The Working Party welcomed as his replacement Father Bill Wright, a Priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney, who was on secondment to the Bishops' Conference Secretariat as Assistant to the Secretary of the Conference.

At this meeting Bishop Manning provided a detailed report on the discussion at the Bishops' Conference of the Working Party's April 1995 Submission. Importantly, the Conference had agreed unanimously that the project be undertaken and that \$80,500 be allocated to the project over a three-year period 1996–1998. It was noted that ACU would continue to support the project and that the ACLRI had indicated that it would support the project financially.

Bishop Manning was able to report also that the Bishops' Conference had discussed whether the proposed project was to be considered as a third social justice consultation following on from the *Inquiry into the Distribution of Wealth in Australia* and the consultation on *Young People and the Future*. Following this input the present project has always been conceived as a research undertaking rather than as a consultation, although the research design did include public hearings and a call for written submissions, which may be seen as consultative mechanisms.

Early in its deliberations the Working Party had examined the gathering of data on the participation of women in Catholic education and health care organisations and in diocesan structures by using, for example, the data sources in the National Catholic Education Commission and the Australian Catholic Health Care Association. Father Wright had written to Bishop Manning, following the Bishop's presentation to the Bishops' Conference, urging the gathering of data on where women are placed and what they are actually doing in the Catholic Church in Australia at the present time. The Working Party agreed that Father Wright would investigate the possibility of gathering this data from Catholic institutions while the Bishops would each be asked to provide data on the participation of women in the structures of their dioceses. Religious institutes were also to be asked to provide information on the roles and the tasks of their women members, if this were possible.

The Working Party at this stage of its work held the view that feelings and perceptions about women's participation in the Church were important data to be considered along with actual behaviour. Dr Macdonald and Sr Malone sgs, who had major responsibility for drafting particular survey questions, were then charged with the task of piloting questions about women's participation in the Church with convenience samples of mature respondents

to establish whether they contributed data about actual participation (behaviour) as well as data about perceptions and feelings about women's participation.

The proposed time frame for the Project at this stage was as follows:

April 1996	• Call for written submissions
	• Launch of survey of parishes
	• Commissioning of historical paper
August 1996–March 1997	• Analysis of written submissions
April 1997–July 1997	• Public hearings
July 1997–February 1998	• Analysis of submissions from hearings
	• Draft Report to Bishops
April 1998	• Report to Bishops

Halfway through 1995 an important development occurred in the history of the project. The ACLRI had indicated they were considering co-sponsorship of the project but were seeking more information about it and the possibility of a representative of their Conference becoming a member of the Working Party. The ACLRI President, Sr Helen Clarke, had approached Bishop Manning on these issues and the BCJDP agreed to the Leaders of Religious Institutes' requests.

In discussing the nature of the briefing for the new member, the Working Party began to examine its role after the commencement of the actual research. The original task of the Working Party was to prepare a research proposal. However, a management group would be needed to oversee the research as it progressed and to prepare the Report for the Bishops. Clarification was clearly needed on the ongoing role of the Working Party.

Two matters raised at earlier meetings were further progressed. Dr Macdonald's and Sr Malone's piloting of the key survey questions with a group of women with a range of educational backgrounds and ages (19 years to 60 plus) had shown that these respondents had included their own activities and perceptions in their responses as well as those of other women. Father Wright reported that he had made informal inquiries with key organisations regarding collecting data about the participation of women in key Catholic education, health and social welfare organisations. His inquiries revealed the following situation:

- The National Catholic Education Commission did not hold consolidated data but might be able to access such data through its regional offices.
- The Australian Catholic Health Care Association did not have the kind of data the Working Party required and would have to survey its membership to get it.
- The Catholic social welfare sector is complex and diversified with many part-time workers and skilled volunteers. Data on this sector did not exist centrally.

The Working Party had discussed on several occasions the importance of a professional historian preparing a paper examining the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia over the last several decades. The Working party discussed the names of several historians and agreed that advice be sought in several quarters for the names of other historians who might be interested, competent and available. Advice would also be sought as to the type of fee to be offered and legal advice would be needed in relation to copyright. An important point stressed at this stage was that the selected historian must be made aware that there could be no guarantee that the work produced would be published in whole or in part. A brief would need to be developed for selected historians to consider.

By August 1995 the ACLRI had pledged \$10,000 to support the project and Sister Yvonne Lamerand ibvm had attended a meeting of the Working Party. The ACLRI were to indicate later who their permanent nominee to the Working party would be. Bishop Manning at this stage was able to report to the Working Party that the BCJDP had reached a decision concerning the ongoing role of the Working Party in relation to this project of the Bishops' Conference. The decision was couched as follows:

*That a Management Group, with Bishop Manning as Convenor, consisting of the membership of the present Steering Committee (ie. The Working Party), whose original task was to prepare a research proposal, together with a representative from ACLRI, be appointed to oversee the conduct of the research project on the **Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia**. This Management Group will report the research findings to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, through the BCJDP.*

From this time the Working Party was known as the Research Management Group (RMG), Bishop Manning being its Convenor and Professor Carpenter chair of its meetings.²

While Sr Malone sgs and Dr Macdonald continued to trial questions for the survey, the RMG continued to address the gathering of data from organisations and appropriate statements to use as media releases. As well, the RMG had begun to consider how best to launch the Project officially.

By September 1995 Sister Sonia Wagner D.Min, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, had joined the RMG, representing the ACLRI. Discussion continued on both the survey of parishes and the survey of organisations and a slightly revised time frame was adopted as follows:

² This Group was also responsible for the authorship of this Report.

October 1995	• Historian commissioned
December 1995	• Outline for historical study submitted
April 1996	• Call for written submissions (closing date August 15, 1996)
	• Launch of survey (data to be available in December 1996)
June 1996	• First draft of historical study submitted
August 1996–March 1997	• Analysis of written submissions
December 1996	• Final draft of historical study submitted
April–July 1997	• Public hearings
July 1997–February 1998	• Analysis of public hearing submissions
	• Draft Report to Bishops
April 1998	• Report to Bishops

The work of the RMG in 1995 ended with careful examination of a media strategy for the Project following a meeting between Dr Costigan, Ms Cornish and Ms Julie Fewster, Director of Catholic Communications for the Archdiocese of Sydney. The following points summarise the discussion on this issue:

- Formal Church language would need to be supplemented by explanations which spell out the meanings of terms used, minimise the potential for distortion and help avoid any misunderstanding.
- All Bishops should be well briefed on the Project.
- The Bishops' decision to implement the Project must be placed in the context of broad movements within the Church and in society.
- The call for submissions and for appointments to appear at the public hearings should be conducted through the national media as well as local Catholic and secular media.
- The assistance of the Catholic Communications office in each State should be sought.
- Regular media releases should be placed, especially in the Catholic press.

1.2.4 1996

Prior to the launch of the Project on August 21, 1996 by Cardinal Clancy, the Committee held five meetings between February and July 1996.

At the first of these meetings, Mr Bob Dixon, Pastoral Research Projects Officer for the ACBC, joined the RMG as a replacement for Fr Bill Wright, who had completed his term as Assistant to the Secretary of the Conference.

Mr Dixon briefed the RMG on the National Church Life Survey (NCLS). Mr Dixon explained that the Bishops' Conference had decided that the Catholic

Church would participate in a repeat of the 1991 NCLS, along with a consortium of more than 20 Anglican and Protestant Churches.

In this Survey, to be held in November 1996, a statistically representative sample of 100,000 Catholic Church attenders in some 400 parishes would be asked to respond. There would be no sampling at parish level – all those in attendance on a particular Sunday at the parishes drawn in the sample would be asked to respond. Statisticians from the Monash University Statistical Consulting Service had been consulted to assist in the development of a sampling technique which would allow reliable inferences to be drawn at the level of the individual diocese.

Part of the Survey sent to Catholic Church attenders was to be in common with the surveys sent to the other Churches while part of it would be specific to the Catholic Church. The Survey would include 40 to 50 questions and take 15 minutes to complete. It would have two foci:

- matters of interest to national or diocesan bodies; and
- a self-study experience for parishes by providing information of direct value to participant parishes.

The four-page Survey would include core questions which would appear on all survey forms. There would be an opportunity for other Church agencies to use the back pages of the Survey to carry their own questions. Each respondent would receive and respond to only one back page and the different back pages would be distributed randomly among the respondents.

All questions in the NCLS would need to be in a multiple choice format for ease of data entry. All questions in all versions of the NCLS would be trialled with a significant number of Church attenders.

Following discussion of the NCLS the Management Group then examined whether it should include its questions in the Survey or conduct an independent survey of its own.

Mr Dixon had focused upon the practical difficulties of sampling at the parish level which the RMG would have to face given resource constraints. The NCLS, with a much larger budget, did not face this problem as this Survey would be given to **all** Mass attenders in the sampled parishes on a particular Sunday. Further, the number of people in the Church Life Survey sampling frame would provide the 8,000–10,000 possible respondents originally planned by the RMG for its own survey.

This was a crucial moment in the project. Very lengthy discussion took place and, after the RMG had clarified the key issues, it was agreed that including the planned questions concerning women's participation in the Catholic Church in the NCLS would be the best course of action. A statistically representative sample from which valid inferences about Church attenders could be made

would be available and the funds to be spent by the RMG on its own survey would be saved.

The decision meant that the RMG had to move quickly to reformat the survey questions to meet the NCLS format and to trial the reformatted questions. The members of the Management Group undertook this task and the remaining meetings of the Group during 1996 saw the refinement of these questions until they were ready for inclusion in the NCLS, following approval by the BCJDP.

During 1996, the difference between Protestant and Catholic research interests saw the separation of the Catholic survey from the NCLS, with the result that the Catholic project became known as the Catholic Church Life Survey (CCLS). As well, changes to the design of the CCLS project meant that instead of having one questionnaire with a variety of back pages, there would be twenty different questionnaires, one of which would include the RMG's questions. This questionnaire would be distributed to 5 percent of Mass attenders in each participating parish and would result in a national sample of about 5,000 people. Although this sample was smaller than that originally planned for by the RMG, it was still of sufficient size to be statistically representative of Australian Mass attenders as a whole and also of the larger dioceses.

Over the next four meetings of the Management Group, in March, April, June and July 1996 respectively, a number of issues occupied the Group – the nature of the official launch of the Project, the structure of the hearings, a brochure and other materials to accompany the launch and the nature of the background papers to be commissioned.

1.3 The Launch of the Project

In discussing the launch of the Project, the RMG stressed the importance of the following matters:

- It was crucial that the President of the Bishops' Conference, Cardinal Clancy, launch the Project.
- Bishop Manning, as Convenor of the RMG, would chair the proceedings with another member of the Bishops' Conference as the Master of Ceremonies.
- Members of the RMG would make short presentations and answer questions, providing an overview of the Project and detailing how its several elements, submissions, hearings, the Survey and focus groups fitted together.
- The timing of the launch must link with the call for submissions to maximise publicity.
- Representatives of the media, the sponsors, women's groups and other interested parties would be invited.

- A criticisms and responses paper should be prepared to brief the panellists for the launch, and it was agreed that all members of the launch panel should meet together the day before the launch.
- The information to be presented at the launch was as follows:
 - the history of the Project: Bishop Kevin Manning to present;
 - issues underlying the Project and the key questions it seeks to address: Dr Marie Macdonald, Sr Sonia Wagner and Sr Margaret Malone to present;
 - how the various research strategies would address the key questions, the research instruments, the timing of the different phases of the Project: Ms Sandie Cornish, Mr Bob Dixon and Professor Peter Carpenter to provide details;
 - reporting of the findings to the Bishops' Conference, to Dioceses, to the public: Bishop Kevin Manning and Dr Michael Costigan to brief launch participants and to refer to other inquiries undertaken by the Bishops and how their findings were made available.

1.3.1 The Hearings

A key element in the whole Project was the commitment by the Working Party initially and then by the RMG, as it became, to hold hearings across Australia concerning the participation of women in the Catholic Church in order to allow individuals, groups and organisations to present submissions on this matter and for the Bishops to hear such submissions.

As the RMG reflected upon the experience of other inquiries and the advice from professionals in the field, a number of conclusions were reached about how the planned hearings should be conducted. These are listed below:

- The hearings should be conducted in a similar manner to the Senate's hearings in the Australian Parliament – small gatherings; participants appearing by appointment; questions explanatory in tone rather than cross-examination; some interaction between presenters invited by panel; other observers present but without the right to ask questions or address the panel.
- The panel for each hearing should include the local Bishop, a member of the RMG and assistants with due care for gender balance and lay persons/religious balance on each panel.
- All panellists would need to be briefed and appropriate background material provided. A meeting with panellists should be held the day before each hearing.
- The hearings would need to be recorded and later transcribed.
- Hearings would be conducted in all State and Territory capital cities and in a range of provincial cities.
- The media would be permitted to be present at the hearings but would not be permitted to ask questions from the floor.

1.3.2 The Project Brochure

Preparation of an appropriate brochure and materials related to the call for written submissions to accompany the official launch of the Project took a great deal of thought by the RMG. Included in the Group's considerations were the following:

- The first heading on the brochure should deal with the commissioning of the research.
- Reference to the Holy Father's *Letter to Women* should then follow and the information about the management of the research.
- The list of the RMG's names would be included in the brochure.
- The key questions guiding the Project should be listed followed by an invitation for responses from women and men, young and old, those who are and those who are not actively involved in Catholic Church structures.
- The brochure and materials related to the call for written submissions should be circulated widely among Church-attending Catholics through parishes, schools, dioceses and Church organisations, together with a short notice suitable for inclusion in newsletters and bulletins. These materials should also be distributed as widely as possible among interested non-Church-attending people.

1.3.3 The Context Papers

After discussion at several meetings the RMG had reached the tentative conclusion that two contextual papers should be commissioned to place the Project for the Bishops in the broader contexts of the history of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia and of the role of women in the ecumenical movement. Both papers should be guided by the key research questions.

The first of these papers proposed by the RMG would be a paper, of approximately 10,000 words, on women in the Catholic Church in Australia in the post-World War II period. The second of these papers, of approximately 4,000 words, would be a paper on the role of women in the ecumenical movement.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has set out, to the date of the official launch of the Project, the history and deliberations of the RMG, which was charged by the ACBC with the management of its investigation of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Bishops have initiated this project with a desire to learn from it. We know that the Church as a whole has much to learn from and about women, who constitute more than half of its membership (and I would be the last to deny that they constitute the better half). We know that their contribution over the centuries and today has been (and is) enormous, even if not fully recognised and valued.

We are also aware, as Pope John Paul II has acknowledged, that the Church's history has often been characterised by mistaken attitudes and actions in this as in other areas; and that the brief period between now and the Church's Year of Jubilee (AD2000) is an appropriate time for us to acknowledge, repent for and begin to remedy those mistakes of the past.

In his 'Letter to Women' Pope John Paul II said that we must examine the past with courage so that the contributions made by women can be acknowledged, and injustice, exploitation and domination can be removed from gender relations within the Church wherever they exist. By conducting this research we will be able to move beyond claims and counter claims by different groups, to a deeper understanding of the real situation. With solid information about the range of experiences and views that exist we will be better equipped to plan well for the future and to address issues constructively.

Address by Cardinal Edward Clancy at the launch of the Bishops' Research Project on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia (August 21, 1996).

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- 2.1 This Chapter's Objective
- 2.2 Beginnings
- 2.3 The Early Australian Scene
- 2.4 Catholic Action – From the 1930s
- 2.5 Post-Second World War
- 2.6 The Second Vatican Council and its Aftermath
- 2.7 The Second Wave Women's Movement
- 2.8 Philosophical Developments
- 2.9 Relation of Lay Women and Women Religious
- 2.10 Relation of Women and Men in the Church
- 2.11 In Conclusion
- Timeline
- Select Bibliography

2.1 This Chapter's Objective

The objective of this Chapter is to provide a brief, general historical context to assist in the understanding of the Report on the Research Project, The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia. To meet this need there is required a broad brush stroke approach, which gives a comprehensive view, indicating movements and developments in the history of Australian Catholic women with emphasis on the period from the Second World War to the present. Understandably this does not permit the naming of individual women or individual religious orders but the associated time-line provides some such detail and the select bibliography indicates the breadth of research that underpins a summary account of the history of Catholic women in Australia.

History is of its nature organic. It is a truism that the present is inextricably related to the past. Therefore when considering, even cursorily, the history of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, it is necessary to appreciate that the women of this era belong to a long and rich tradition.

It is an historical fact that mainstream history has been largely men's history. This is true of Church history as much as for secular history. The basic problem has been that men rather than women have been the scholars whether in or out of the Church. They have generally failed to carry out a gender analysis of their resource material and tended to ignore material that centred mainly on women.

The emergence of social history, however, has helped the promotion of women's history. To achieve a balanced history of society, men's history and women's history must be understood in relation to one another; together they interact to form an integrated whole. Social history is necessarily related to political history, which has been the main concern of men historians. Within the Church our written history has centred primarily on the activities of the men leaders of the Church and the formulation of doctrine, which also has been principally the work of men. Frequently women of status and/or wealth exercised their power in the interests of the Church, often through patronage. Holy women throughout the ages attracted disciples, including men, yet rarely did women feature in men's written history, although, as research has shown, women were always present and actively and passionately concerned for the welfare of the Church.

Certainly much resource material relevant to women's history has been destroyed but there is more available for analysis than is commonly imagined. Unfortunately, apart from being excluded from academic life for so many centuries, women are still much more involved in teaching rather than research in the field of history so that many areas of women's activities relevant to this study have not yet been adequately researched.

2.2 Beginnings

Although the history of Christian women, then, contains many lacunae and throws up many unanswered questions, it is well known that women were key followers of Jesus in his ministry and central in the establishment of household churches in apostolic times. In these early centuries women suffered martyrdom; in association with the local bishop, they formed companies of virgins and widows and served the Church through them; they went to live in the desert seeking holiness; they performed the ministry of deaconess; they raised Christian families; they went on pilgrimages and documented their journeys; they established monasteries.

The Middle Ages are likewise studded with numerous examples of women vitally involved in the life of the Church. In the early modern period women contributed significantly to the counter-Reformation efforts of the Church, most especially in the field of education, and in the development of pious associations which were the prototype for the later uncloistered active religious.

In the period following the industrial revolution, the uncloistered women religious became largely the visible compassionate face of the Church as they initiated and/or cooperated with priests and bishops in directing and serving personally in the social welfare activities of the Church, while developing further the Church's educational outreach to the poor. In these activities they

were part of the philanthropic movement in the Western world which followed the separation of industrialised work from the home and provided the women of the middle and upper classes with the leisure to undertake such altruistic service. These women also responded to the various renewal movements in the Church during this time, including the Oxford Movement in Britain.

2.3 The Early Australian Scene

By the mid-decades of the nineteenth century women were active in the Church's foreign missionary effort and this brought them to work in the various colonies of Australia both as women religious and as lay women. They ministered to convict women, migrant women and migrant families. The women that they served frequently became their strong supporters in one form or another.

As in New Testament times, the Church in Australia was based on household churches. Although in recent years men have been encouraged to become involved in the early nurturing of their children, it is the women who bear the children and establish close relationships with them in the early stages of their lives. Women's religious faith, attitudes and values inevitably influence their children. It was the women in remote bush areas who taught the catechism to their children, prepared them for the Sacraments and cared for the local church and the visiting priest who came, monthly if they were fortunate, to celebrate Mass.

As the nineteenth century progressed women in the Catholic Church in Australia, including the now numerous native-born women, became aware that "women's rights" had become a public issue in the Western world. Rights to university education, widened work opportunities, improved work conditions and the vote for women were matters for discussion among Catholic women and men in Australia in the late nineteenth century. A prominent Sydney Catholic feminist prepared papers for both the 1904 and 1909 Australasian Catholic Congresses.

The care of orphaned and abandoned children was a pressing problem from the early days of the Australian colonies and the Bishops sought the help of both women religious and lay women in addressing this problem. It was women religious in Europe who laid the foundations for the nursing training and practice of the modern hospital system and it was such trained nurses among the first women religious to come to Australia, who by the mid-nineteenth century had established the first Catholic hospital in Australia, in Sydney.

By the early twentieth century numerous women's religious orders had come to the aid of the Catholic Bishops, who were endeavouring to set up a

separate Catholic educational system in response to the secular education Acts enacted in the Australian colonies in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The Bishops saw religion as integral to the educational enterprise; the women shared this perception. The education of girls was fostered both by the Bishops and religious sisters as women were seen as the primary educators in the family.

Despite the Church's suspicion of the secular universities, by the 1930s there were a number of women Catholic doctors and a few Catholic women representatives in other formerly male professions. There were, too, many Catholic nurses and many Catholic women who had entered the public teaching service. Numerous lay women had joined the teaching and nursing congregations, which were administered by women. By the Second World War these women, with the generous aid of lay women and men, had weathered a crippling depression and the Catholic schools and hospitals were well established.

2.4 Catholic Action – From the 1930s

Following the exhortation of Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on Catholic Action in 1931, the active involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church was promoted in the Catholic dioceses of Australia. The laity, both men and women, were seen as cooperating with the Bishops in the mission of the Church under the leadership of the Bishop. Various Bishops interpreted Catholic Action in different ways. Some supported the Young Christian Workers (YCW) version, which included both men's and women's groups. It was based on the See, Judge and Act methodology, which promoted an active Gospel-based involvement of women in both the Church and the wider community. Other Bishops emphasised the domestic aspect of Catholic Action rather than that which could lead to political involvement.

These differences were evident in such organisation as the Catholic Women's Association (CWA) in Sydney and the Catholic Women's Social Guild (CWSG) in Melbourne, and later the Australian chapter of the St Joan's Social and Political Alliance, which had been formed as a Catholic response to the militant women's suffrage movement in England. The first was designed to be social and educational, while the other two encouraged active involvement in the social problems of the wider community. The CWA and CWSG, however, were under the direction of the Bishop and the degree of freedom of operation of the women depended upon the Bishop's perception of the role of women in the Church and the subsequent interpretation of this by the appointed chaplain.

Women in the Australian Catholic Church therefore experienced various degrees of freedom of operation at different times and in different places. There

is ample evidence that a number of women of leadership ability in the Catholic women's organisations felt frustrated by clerical dominance and withdrew to put their energies into welfare organisations outside the Church. Generally, however, the women in the Catholic organisations did attempt to address some serious problems such as those of young working women, especially country girls coming to the city to get work, women's working conditions and pay, and the provision of assistance for convalescing members of poor families.

To meet with the exigencies of the Second World War, on the initiative of the Archbishop of Sydney, the Legion of Catholic Women in Sydney replaced the CWA. The new, vibrant, international movement of The Grail, which had been invited to Australia in the 1930s, was also mobilised into action and established the very effective, though ephemeral, National Catholic Girls' Movement (NCGM). The Grail, while being strongly feminist, was critical of the tendency of many of the early European suffragists to emphasise the similarity of the nature of women and men rather than their complementarity. The Grail encouraged women to develop their gifts and their confidence and challenged them to take initiatives to serve the wider Church and community. It provided the seed-bed for the development of some significant Catholic women leaders.

2.5 Post-Second World War

Following the Second World War the face of the Catholic Church in Australia changed dramatically as immigrants flooded into the country from war-torn Europe in search of a new start in life. A high proportion of these migrants were Catholics from non-English speaking countries. Catholic schools with their meagre resources were stretched beyond endurance. Women religious frequently were teaching huge classes, at times 100 children or more. The situation could not be allowed to continue and the political campaign for State Aid began in earnest. Lay women were involved in this crusade at the local, State and national levels and they subsequently became active in the local, State and national Catholic parents' associations.

The gaining of State Aid in the 1960s led to the establishment of Catholic Teachers' Colleges based largely, though not exclusively, on the teacher training institutes of the women's religious orders, which contributed to the staffing of them. Always there had been some lay Catholic women teachers in Catholic schools. Very often they undertook this work in a spirit of ministry and, owing to the lack of resources, they were paid a mere pittance. From this stage on, however, their numbers increased and their conditions of service and remuneration improved considerably. By the 1980s, with the declining number of women religious, lay women had become largely responsible for the maintenance of the Catholic school system in Australia.

With the declining involvement of religious orders in schools and the increase in Commonwealth and State components in the funding of them, the administration of Catholic schools in the different States was centralised. In the early stages of this process, women religious played key roles in the establishment of the diocesan Catholic Education Offices. Progressively in later years lay Catholic women, but more often lay men, took over from many of these women religious pioneers. Although more Catholic lay women are being appointed to key and, very occasionally, top leadership roles in these offices, women are not represented at this level proportionally to their involvement in the education ministry of the Church.

In 1959 the Legion of Catholic Women was reconstituted as the Catholic Women's League (CWL) in response to internal problems and in an effort to bring it into line with Catholic women's organisations in the other Australian dioceses and throughout the world. The CWL continued a concern with the wider community and increasingly across the decades to the 1990s has been challenged to look beyond the domestic and parish churches. Presently in Australia, as a national body, the CWL represents the Church on various government bodies and bears the responsibility of representing Australia Catholic women internationally, most significantly on the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, which has consultative status at the United Nations and is represented on seven Pontifical Councils at the Vatican.

2.6 The Second Vatican Council and its Aftermath

A movement for reform and updating in the Church was cautiously growing from the 1920s and finally found expression in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). The women's religious orders had been encouraged as early as 1952 by Pope Pius XII to modify their customs, especially their dress. It was generally not until the mandatory directions of Vatican II that the Congregations of women religious faced the challenge of identifying their founding charism and adapting it to the contemporary times in the light of the Gospel, the Vatican II documents and relevant social sciences.

As a result of their re-education and with the freeing up of the human resources of the women's religious congregations through the availability of lay Catholic women teachers, many women religious were able to move into areas of ministry outside the schools. The Sister assisting the priest in the parish, which was an innovation in the 1970s, had become a common feature in the lives of many parishes by the 1980s. Currently there are lay women and women religious in parts of Australia who are cooperating with priests in ministering to a cluster of parishes and some women have been appointed by Bishops as pastoral administrators of parishes.

Since the 1970s there has been a proliferation of the participation of women, both religious and lay, in a great variety of ways in the mission of the Church. They minister in such institutions as universities, industries and prisons; they serve on clinical pastoral teams in the various hospitals, both Catholic and non-Catholic; they serve as volunteer visitors to prisons; they work with disabled people both as professionals and volunteers; they serve as journalists and editors on Catholic newspapers and periodicals; they provide accommodation and ongoing support for women and children in crisis; they provide support for those suffering from AIDS and their families; they are involved in youth ministry.

Catholic women live among the poor and marginalised as a Christian presence providing neighbourly support; they play an active role in the justice advocacy and justice education of the Church; they (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) are working for reconciliation between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities; they perform a significant role in addressing such international problems as land-mines and such local problems as the widespread exploitation of home migrant workers in the clothing industry through the Fair Wear Campaign. They are deeply involved in the Church's ministry to newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers in many ways, ranging from diplomatic work on their behalf with the government to tutoring them in the English language; they serve in refugee camps overseas.

Ever since the setting up of the catechetical ministry to State schools, this work of the Church has been performed mainly by lay women with women religious being active in the education of catechists – though this, too, is being done increasingly by lay women. Women religious continue to provide catechetical instruction by correspondence for children in remote areas. There are religious sisters, too, who carry out visitation of families in remote districts. In one case this is done by the use of light aircraft.

Currently women are much involved with adult education in its various forms. They organise diocesan educational programs, prepare educational material, give courses, cooperate with parishes in providing for their adult education needs and are especially involved in the Rite of Catholic Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program at the parish level.

As part of the painful process of renewal following Vatican II, the women religious leaders endeavoured to provide their members with further opportunities for education, especially in the areas of biblical studies, theology and spirituality. A number of women religious and later lay women undertook such courses and, in addition, other appropriate studies to prepare them to act as spiritual directors and retreat directors. They are now ministering to both women and men in these areas.

Many Catholic women, after having being awarded postgraduate degrees, have undertaken teaching roles in the different tertiary educational institutions

of the Church. Some women have studied canon law and assist in this area at the diocesan level especially in connection with the very sensitive ministry of the marriage tribunal.

Although there are women religious who are still exercising powerful roles of governance and stewardship in Catholic health institutions, in a number of Catholic hospitals, as the number of women religious has declined, lay women have filled many vacancies. In such cases, aided by support groups of women religious, the lay women strive to cooperate with the lay professional men involved in the hospitals to maintain a Catholic ethos and ethic.

Women, both lay and religious, are also part of the Australian Catholic Health Care Association, formed in 1986 to be a united voice for Catholic health providers in dealing with the Government and to articulate officially the Catholic ethic in relation to health care. Some of the most respected specialists in bioethics in the Church are women, both lay and religious.

The Domestic Church continues as the basic building block of the Church. It is the women who usually follow up the invitation to enrol their children in the various sacramental programs and introduce paraliturgical practices into the life of the home to mark the different seasons of the Church's year. It is such women, too, who perceive the need for a children's liturgy during the homily at the Sunday Masses and organise and participate in such initiatives. In innumerable ways as wives and mothers women educate the young in the domestic church and strengthen bonds in the local community.

Just as in the home the housework has to be done and the meals cooked, so in the local parish the church has to be cared for, linen and vestments washed, the altar and sanctuary tended, and the church cleaned. From the early days of the Church in Australia, Catholic women have been responsible for these tasks and continue to do them, though with increasing difficulty since so many women are now in the paid workforce. The latter development represents a challenge common to many women in relation to their involvement in the Church. Despite this handicap, women play significant roles in a number of family movements, spiritual renewal programs and ecumenical organisations, as well as being involved in the building of good relationships with members of other Churches and religions. Women also play vital roles in the Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter movements.

2.7 The Second Wave Women's Movement

The Church does not exist in a vacuum and the currents of thought in the wider community impact on the Church community. As mentioned earlier, the Catholic community in Australia was affected by the first wave of the women's movement in the late nineteenth century. It is not surprising then that the

second wave of the women's movement also impacted upon the Church from the mid-1960s.

Despite the interruption of the First and Second World Wars, feminist activities had persisted, most significantly, as recent research has shown, at the United Nations level. The degree of discontent of women was growing during the 1950s and erupted in what is called the second wave of the women's movement in the 1960s.

This eruption was promoted by various publications, the most significant of which was arguably Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*. This book, based on Betty Friedan's own experience and subsequent research, resonated with the lived experience of many women in the Western world. In general willingly confined to the domestic sphere after the upheaval of the Second World War, many women by the 1960s, while not negating the importance of motherhood, now felt frustrated. Their talents were being under-used and they longed to be challenged beyond the domestic sphere. They longed, too, for further education. Catholic women sought further education in religion. They sought to study erstwhile male disciplines such as philosophy, biblical studies, theology and spirituality, with the result that women now constitute the majority of students in Catholic tertiary institutes.

Since the first wave women's movement the Popes have been conscious of the restiveness of women. Pope Pius XII was sympathetic towards the position of women and in the post-Second World War period frequently expressed this in his public addresses. Typically he would say:

If more attention were paid to the anxieties of feminine sentiment, the work of consolidating peace would move ahead more rapidly ... With women in charge certainly the organisations set up to take care of community needs in the fields of housing, education, hospitals and employment would get more done and show more foresight.

(Address of Pope Pius XII to a pilgrimage sponsored by the Federation of Italian Women, October 14, 1956)

In his encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII assessed the women's movement as one of the three significant signs of the times:

... it is obvious to everyone that women are now taking a part in public life ... Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life.

Pope Paul VI expressed support for the aims of the 1975 International Women's Year (IWY) – equality, development and peace – when receiving the Secretary General of the IWY in November 1974. Pope John Paul II sympathises with the

women's movement and in his 1995 *Letter to Women* commented concerning the process of women's liberation: "...the journey has been a difficult and complicated one and at times, not without its share of mistakes. But it has been substantially a positive one, even if it is still unfinished ..." (*Letter*, 10).

More recently he stressed:

It is ... important to point out that women's new self-awareness also helps men to reconsider their way of looking at things, the way they understand themselves in history and how they interpret it, and the way they organise social, political, economic, religious and ecclesial life.

He made another significant observation on this occasion:

It is ... urgently necessary to take concrete steps by providing room for women to participate in different fields and at all levels, including decision-making processes, above all in matters which concern women themselves.

(Post-synodal apostolic exhortation, Vita Consecrata, 1996)

2.8 Philosophical Developments

The tragedy of the Second World War had involved acts of inhumanity that left the European people generally feeling hopeless, helpless and disillusioned. Existentialism, concerned with the broad phenomenology of human experience, emerged from the European philosophical tradition to speak to the anguish and alienation of the times, addressing such human concerns as suffering and death, the sense of cosmic absurdity and the limitations of human reason. Atheistic existentialism bred despair. Family and religious influences weakened and the emerging values were described as permissive. By the 1960s drugs and sexual behaviour had become central issues and religion and authority were increasingly challenged.

Contraception became an important issue that faced the Church. Pope Paul VI, after long and anguished consultation and prayer, responded with the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which was generally perceived simplistically as saying "No" to the pill. For some Catholic women the credibility of the Church was called into question. With much distress some Catholic women in the light of their consciences made the best decision that they could in their circumstances. Some Australian Catholic lay women actively espoused the cause of natural family planning. The "work within nature" message of the ecological movement was one that was not yet central to Western thinking and the mission of the Australian natural family planning pioneers found little support and much derision. The stories of all these groups of Australian Catholic women, like so many other aspects of women's history, have yet to be told.

By the 1970s a significant number of women in the Australian Churches, including the Catholic Church, began to be openly critical of their situation in their respective Churches. They tended to see themselves as second-class citizens. They became conscious that they were expected to do the church cleaning and provide the refreshments for the men of the Church but their advice was not seriously sought in Church matters, nor were they involved in decision-making. Publications such as the *Women, Faith and Fetes* [1977, Sabine Willis (ed)], products of the 1975 United Nations Women's Year, highlighted both the significant contribution of women to the Church and women's resentment of their second-class position in it.

In 1982 the place of women in the life of the Catholic Church in Australia was on the agenda at a meeting between the Australian Bishops and a commission of men and women major superiors of religious congregations. As a result of the discussion on this issue it was suggested that a project be developed to make contact with women, both lay and religious, at the grass-roots level to ascertain their perception of their current role in the Church and their hopes for the future.

There followed the setting up of the Women and the Australian Church project (WATAC), which was national in scope and designed originally as a bicentennial project. This initiative was strongly supported by the men religious congregational leaders. It became apparent by 1988 that there was an ongoing need for such an organisation and some women religious orders agreed to continue to support it in New South Wales. Lay women have increasingly assumed leadership of WATAC, which, despite some vicissitudes, has gone on to flourish and has re-established itself as a national body.

In recent years there has been a group of women in the Catholic Church in Australia who actively campaign for women's ordination. A wide spectrum of attitudes to the ordination of women in the Church is apparent, ranging from openly rejecting the traditional teaching of the Church on this matter to strongly supporting the teaching. While there seems to be much sympathy for the ordination of women, most women appear to be putting their energy into the pastoral concerns of the Church rather than a campaign for women's ordination.

2.9 Relation of Lay Women and Women Religious

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church in Australia women religious and lay women have generally been close associates. It was lay women who entered the existing religious congregations and sometimes established new ones with the assistance of priests and bishops. Lay women were extremely active in fund-raising on behalf of the women religious to support their various

activities and the lay women's efforts in this area were vital to the Church's apostolate. Women religious and lay women often became life-long friends. Frequently lay women in public life cite women religious from their school days as having been role models for them.

Historically lay women have tended to see women religious as leaders in the Church. They have seen them as having easier access than lay women to the hierarchical administration of the Church and as having the resources and support of their religious congregation on which to draw. Women religious have acted as pioneers in many fields of ministry in the Church and prepared the way for lay women. As lay women assume leadership roles within the Church, they often express appreciation of the generous, unselfish support of religious. There is no doubt that, despite the shadow side that inevitably accompanies flawed human nature, generally speaking women religious and lay women have held one another in mutual respect and appreciation and continue to do so.

2.10 Relation of Women and Men in the Church

From the New Testament accounts of the relationships between the men and women disciples of Jesus, it is clear that there were strong friendships and intelligent cooperation as well as pervasive tensions involving sexist elements – women were viewed as inferior to men, which reflected the prevailing Jewish, Roman and Greek cultures of the time.

Not surprisingly, the early Fathers of the Church often accommodated the sexist aspects of the respective cultures in their theologising on the position and role of woman in the Christian divine scheme of things. Consequently they bequeathed to subsequent generations an ambivalent and ambiguous tradition concerning the relationship between men and women in the Church, especially concerning the important relationship of marriage. Certainly their upholding of the rights of a woman not to marry but to live a life of virginity for the sake of the Kingdom was revolutionary and freeing for women.

They did recognise, too, the spiritual equality of women and men and the essential goodness of marriage, in contradistinction to many of the heresies of the day, as well as rejecting the double standard concerning chastity for women and men. But there was a strong tendency among the most influential of the Fathers to present marriage as a lesser good and fraught with problems for the conscientious Christian, with woman as the problematic and lesser partner in the relationship.

But, despite this negative theory, and to compound the ambiguity of our inheritance in this area, many of the Fathers had positive and life-giving friendships with women. Even from the present relatively fragmentary state of

women's history, it is evident that this ambivalent situation has continued across the centuries.

There have been some significant troughs in the relationship between the sexes. One deep trough that haunts the Western world, both Catholic and Protestant, to this day is the complex issue of the witch hunts of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While recognising the complicated political, economic, social, religious and intellectual climate that generated and permitted these sporadic outbursts of savagery, and allowing for exaggeration, it is a matter of fact that thousands were put to death as witches and by far the majority of these were women.

The women and men of the Church in Australia are the heirs of these tragedies but also of the heroism and close companionship of women and men in such times as the twelfth century revival of holiness in Europe and of the resistance of the Catholic recusant women and men in Britain and Ireland from the sixteenth century to the time of the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829.

As has been indicated, in the period from the Second World War to the present, women and men in the Catholic Church in Australia have faced ongoing daunting challenges together, with women generally bearing the greater burden in the day-to-day maintenance of the domestic and parish churches and the Church's educational, health and charitable institutions. Tensions have always been there but have been escalating over the last few decades. They were instrumental in bringing the Bishops to the stage of mounting the Research Project on the Participation of Women in the Australia Catholic Church in 1996.

In the final analysis it must be recognised that the tension between men and women in the Catholic Church in Australia is rooted in our flawed human nature. It reflects the perennial tension between men and women in the family and the wider community. The relationship between men and women is complex and, being still little understood, calls for more scientific study and reflection in the light of the Gospel.

2.11 In Conclusion

Every diocese, parish and religious women's congregation in Australia will be able to identify with much that has been mentioned in this Chapter and identify those who have served and are currently serving in the Church. Such is the diversity of women's contributions to the Church that no doubt there are ministries that have not been mentioned.

This summary account of the contributions of women to the Catholic Church in Australia, emphasising the period from the Second World War to the

present, may be likened to a collage. The background of this collage consists of a cryptic account of the long, rich and inspiring tradition of women in the Catholic Church in Australia reaching back to the early centuries of Church history. The women engaged in the current renewal movements in the Church in this land are linked across the centuries to the women involved in the many renewal periods in the life of the Church. The foreground of the collage situates the history of women in the Catholic Church in Australia from the early twentieth century to the present within the broader movements in the history of that time. Highlighted are:

- the nineteenth century missionary thrust of the Church which continued into the twentieth century;
- the Church's need to establish educational and social welfare institutions and services in response to a democratic ethos and the social problems of a developing country;
- the first wave women's movement;
- Catholic Action with its diverse interpretations by the Bishops;
- the Great Depression;
- the trauma of the Second World War;
- the pressure of post-war immigration;
- the campaign for State Aid;
- the challenges of the Second Vatican Council;
- the decline in religious and priestly vocations;
- the second wave women's movement from the 1960s;
- the increased educational opportunities for women;
- the influence of atheistic existentialism in post-war society;
- the challenge of the *Humanae Vitae* encyclical;
- renewal in religious orders leading to the movement of many women religious from the schools and their replacement by laity, mainly women;
- the 1975 United Nations International Women's Year;
- the crisis in Catholic health services;
- diversification of women's ministry.

One cannot but be impressed by the enormous energy and love that women have put into promoting the life of the Church in Australia. Their vital and increasingly varied contribution is incalculable.

Two obvious elements in the pattern of this history are the ongoing involvement of women in the mission of the Church beyond the home and the desire of women to be accepted as fully-functioning adults, seriously included in the decision-making processes of the Church.

The necessary brevity of this Chapter has not permitted much needed analysis. Many aspects of the material presented are bristling with questions to

be asked and researched. It is hoped that following the Bishops' survey into the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia there will emerge structures which will:

- enable the women of the Church in Australia to be more in touch with their rich historical tradition and draw inspiration from it;
- enable them to carry out research that will promote the cooperation of men and women in the Church and the wider community; and
- facilitate the regular serious involvement of women as formal, accredited consultants in matters concerned with the mission of the Church.

Time Line on Australian Catholic Women: Some Symbolic and Significant Events

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| 1828 | The census of this year of the Colony of New South Wales recorded a population of 8,987 women in a total population of 36,598. Approximately 3,000 of the women had been or were convicts. Catholics formed 31 percent of the European population of the Colony. |
| 1831 | Mary Corcoran, an Irish Catholic convict woman, arrived in Australia. She was to be ministered to by the Sisters of Charity in the Female Factory at Parramatta and subsequently, as a free woman of some means, supported their work. |
| 1838 | Caroline Chisholm arrived in Australia and soon commenced her extraordinary work of public service, initially aiding migrant single women and families. |
| 1838 | Five Sisters of Charity led by Margaret Cahill (Sr M. John) arrived in Sydney from Ireland. They were the first women religious to come to Australia and commenced their work of ministry at the Female Factory (the women's prison) at Parramatta. Two of the Sisters were the first trained nurses to come to Australia: Sr M. Francis de Sales O'Brien (Paris-trained) and Sr M. John Baptist De Lacy (Dublin-trained). |
| 1846 | The Sisters of Mercy led by Clara Mary Frayne (Sr M. Ursula) arrived in Perth from Ireland. Eleven other Mercy foundations were to be made in Australia from overseas and numerous foundations from these were established within Australia in the next fifty years. These Sisters became the largest group of women religious ministering in Australia. |
| 1857 | Establishment of the Good Samaritan Sisters (originally Good Shepherd Sisters) by Archbishop Polding and Sister of Charity, Geraldine Gibbons (Sr M. Scholastica), for the care of destitute and "fallen" women – the first religious congregation to be founded in |

- Australia. They soon moved into the care of orphans and into the field of education.
- 1857 The Sisters of Charity established St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, the first Catholic hospital in Australia.
 - 1859 In a public lecture on the land question Caroline Chisholm expressed sympathy for women's suffrage.
 - 1866 Establishment of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart by Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. This was the first Australian religious order designed to minister especially to the educational needs of families in isolated country areas.
 - 1883 At the University of Sydney the first woman graduate in Australia was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.
 - 1885 Sarah Octavia Brennan (later Sr M. Elizabeth sgs) matriculated for the University of Sydney and subsequently became the first woman student in Australia to be awarded both the MA and BSc degrees.
 - 1889 Establishment by the Sisters of Charity of a hospital in Parramatta for tuberculosis patients. It was the first specialist hospital established in Australia.
 - 1890 By this time there were three State high schools for girls and forty-four Catholic secondary schools for girls in the Colony of New South Wales.
 - 1891 The Womanhood Suffrage League was formed in Sydney and Catholic feminists Annie and Belle Golding promoted this cause especially among the inner city parishes.
 - 1894 The right to vote in State elections was granted to South Australian women.
 - 1897 Cardinal Moran stated publicly: "For many years I have been in favour of extending to women the same privilege as enjoyed by men in the matter of the suffrage or voting at the municipal or parliamentary elections. I consider that they are entitled to the right".
 - 1899 The right to vote in State elections was granted to Western Australian women.
 - 1900 Catholics Annie and Belle Golding and Kate Dwyer formed the Women's Progressive Association.
 - 1902 The women of the Commonwealth of Australia were granted the right to vote. Catholic women were encouraged to use their right to vote to further the Catholic cause especially in the area of education.
 - 1902 The right to vote in State elections was granted to New South Wales women.
 - 1903 The right to vote in State elections was granted to Tasmanian women.
 - 1903 By this year the following religious congregations of women were ministering in Australia: Charity, Mercy, Benedictines, St Joseph of the

Apparition, Good Samaritan, Marist Missionary, Good Shepherd, St Joseph (brown), Presentation, Dominicans, St Joseph (black), Perpetual Adoration, Loreto, Ursulines, Sacre Coeur, Faithful Companions, Brigidines, Poor Clares, Little Sisters of the Poor, the Little Company of Mary, Carmelites, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Poor Sisters of Nazareth, Our Lady of Sion, St John of God, Our Lady of the Missions, St Joseph of Cluny.

- 1904 The right to vote in State elections was granted to Queensland women.
- 1904 Catholic feminist Annie Golding prepared a paper, "The Evolution of Women and Their Possibilities", for the Australasian Catholic Congress in Melbourne.
- 1907 Mrs Annie Toohey initiated the establishment in Sydney of the short-lived Catholic Women's Society, a social and charitable organisation.
- 1908 The right to vote in State elections was granted to Victorian women.
- 1909 Catholic feminist Annie Golding prepared a paper for the Australasian Catholic Congress in Sydney. It was entitled: "The Industrial and Social Conditions of Women in the Australian Commonwealth".
- 1909 Anna Brennan graduated in law from the University of Melbourne; she was to become a founding member of the Catholic Women's Social Guild (CWSG).
- 1913 Mrs Esther Cannon chaired the committee for the setting up of the Catholic Women's Association (CWA), founded in Sydney on the initiative of a Catholic lay man, Joseph Patrick Minahan, who offered premises for such an association.
- 1913 Lady Edeline Strickland, wife of the Governor of New South Wales, was appointed president of the CWA by Archbishop Kelly.
- 1914 Catholic Women's League (CWL) founded in South Australia to integrate Catholic women into the war effort.
- 1915 Maud O'Connell was the first Catholic woman in Australia to speak from a public platform under the auspices of the Catholic Church. She spoke in Melbourne on equal pay for equal work for women at a public meeting called by the Catholic Federation.
- 1916 Dr Mary Glowrey (29 years old) cooperated with the Jesuit priest William Lockington in the establishment of the CWSG in Melbourne and became its first president.
- 1916 May Daly, first editor of the CWSG journal, expressed the view that the CWSG was part of "the second phase of the Women's Movement" in that it advocated the use of legal rights gained from "the first phase" when the social and economic changes resulting from industrialisation caused many women to fight for equality.

- 1916 Catholic activist Mary Tenison Woods became the first woman in South Australia to graduate in law.
- 1924 Julia Flynn, a founding member of the CWSG, was appointed a Senior Inspector of Secondary Schools – the highest position any woman had reached in the Victorian Department of Education.
- 1930 Western Australian Norma Parker, the first professional Catholic social worker in Australia, graduated with an MA degree and a Diploma in Social Science at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC and subsequently, among many other vital activities, was involved in the establishment of the Catholic Welfare Bureaus in both Melbourne and Sydney as well as the development of social welfare courses at both the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales.
- 1936 Led by Dr Lydwine van Kersbergen, five Dutch women of the International Grail movement with headquarters in the Netherlands were welcomed to Sydney by clergy, religious and laity.
- 1936 Enid Lyons was nominated president of the Australian section of St Joan's Alliance established in Melbourne on the initiative of Margaret Flynn.
- 1938 Rosemary Goldie, having returned from overseas study in France, began work on an MA at the University of Sydney and under the influence of the Grail commenced a life-long involvement in Catholic Action. After extensive experience in Europe she was appointed executive-secretary of the Permanent Committee for the International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate and later became the first woman to be employed at a senior level in the Roman Curia, as Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. In 1964, Rosemary Goldie became one of the first women auditors appointed to Vatican II.
- 1941 To facilitate the Church's war effort, the CWA was absorbed into the newly formed Legion of Catholic Women with Mrs Emily O'Neill as the appointed president.
- 1944 By this time eleven more congregations of women religious were ministering in Australia: Marist, Our Lady's Nurses of the Poor (Australian), Daughters of Charity, Sacred Heart Missionary, St Peter Claver, Missionary Franciscans, Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady Help of Christians, Benedictine Missionary, Queen of the Apostles, Missionary Sisters of Service (Australian). By this time approximately 10,800 women religious were ministering in Australia.
- 1945 Beginning of post-war immigration.
- 1946 The Australian section of the St Joan Social and Political Alliance was established in Sydney by Mary Tenison Woods (lawyer), Jean Daly (lawyer), Norma Parker (pioneer social worker), Phyllis Burke

- (economist) and Mary Whitton Flynn. It failed to gain the approval of Cardinal Gilroy.
- 1950 Mary Tenison Woods was sent by the Government to head the status of women office at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.
- 1952 A Congress of women religious in Rome was called by Pope Pius XII. Among other things it advocated the modification of antiquated customs including forms of dress and established a central international coordinating body of the superiors general of the various orders, which in turn promoted the establishment of similar regional bodies culminating in Australia in the present Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLR).
- 1959 In an effort to move with the times the Legion of Catholic Women was transformed with a new constitution into the Catholic Women's League with Mrs Phyllis Chandler the appointed president.
- 1960s Beginning of the Second Wave Women's Movement.
- 1960s Women teaching in Catholic Teachers' Colleges.
- 1962–65 Second Vatican Council.
- 1963 Granting of State Aid and beginning of the increased development and centralisation of the Diocesan Catholic school system.
- 1966 Isabel Donnelly rsm of the Archdiocese of Sydney was the first woman appointed in the Catholic Church in Australia as an inspector of Catholic schools.
- 1967 Women officially accepted in the St Vincent de Paul Society on an equal basis with men.
- 1968 Promulgation of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.
- 1968–69 Special General Chapters in religious congregations led to their renewal in the light of the teachings of Vatican II, their individual charisms and the relevant social sciences.
- 1970 Pope Paul VI visited Australia. Members of the CWL were vitally involved in the preparations. At the request of the Apostolic Delegate, the League contributed a set of new curtains to the Apostolic Delegation, where a reception for the Pope was held and to which no member of the CWL was invited.
- 1972 After a strong campaign for a new constitution, which was finally accepted and ratified by the hierarchy, Monica Gallagher became the first elected president of the CWL.
- 1974 Royal Commission on Human Relationships. The CWL in its submission argued that suitably qualified women could make an important contribution to the administration of Government Departments such as Road or Motor Transport, Railway, Housing and the State Planning Authority.

- 1975 United Nations Women's Year supported by Pope Paul VI.
- 1977 Publication of *Women, Faith and Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia* – open criticism of the Church by women.
- 1980s Catholic lay women now largely responsible for the maintenance of the Catholic school system.
- 1980s Women giving retreats and acting as spiritual directors.
- 1982 At a meeting between the Australian Bishops and a commission of men and women Major Superiors of religious orders the issue of women's participation in the Church was raised.
- 1982 Lay woman Camille Paul was invited to join Mary Ronayne sgs, Pauline Smith rsm and Patricia Bartley rscj to form a task force for the establishment of women and the Australian Catholic Church (WATAC).
- 1983 WATAC established.
- 1984 Paulina Pilkington rsc appointed head of the Division of Nursing Education at the Catholic College of Education, Sydney, as nursing education moved into tertiary educational institutes.
- 1985 The ecumenical group Women-Church (originally Women and Religion) was established to explore the issues of feminism and spirituality.
- 1986 At Parramatta, New South Wales, Ann Clark became the first woman to be appointed in Australia as the Director of a Diocesan Catholic Education Office.
- 1987 First National WATAC conference held.
- 1987 Publication of the first issue of *Women-Church Journal* with Erin White as the editor.
- 1990s Such Aboriginal women as Maisie Kavanagh and non-Aboriginal women as Camilla Cowley intensified their efforts in working for reconciliation between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.
- 1992 Professor Pamela Joyce rsm appointed Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the only woman dean at the recently established Australian Catholic University (ACU).
- 1993 Patricia Egan (rsj, Lochinvar) was the first woman in Australia to be appointed chancellor of a diocese. The appointment was made by Bishop Leo Clarke of the Diocese of Maitland.
- 1994 By this time, in the post-war period, fifty-seven more women religious congregations had come to Australia, mostly in small numbers and often to meet the needs of migrants or specialist apostolates such as the media.
- 1995 World United Nations Conference and NGO Forum on Women held in Beijing. Among the Australian Catholic women representatives were Diana Ciesiolka (Toowoomba), Clare Condon (SGS), Liz Dodds (RSC),

- Margaret Hinchey (ISMA), Anne Lane (PBVM), Mary Mooney (CSB), Bernice Moore (WATAC), Annette Power (Albury), Sue Sullivan (OP).
- 1995 Mary MacKillop, the co-founder of the Sisters of St Joseph, was beatified and became the first Australian to be recognised in this way by the Church.
- 1996 Pioneering woman religious Professor Pamela Joyce rsm retired as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at ACU and handed on the baton to lay woman Professor Elizabeth Cameron-Traub.
- 1996 Launch of the Research Project, 'The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia', organised by the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace in association with ACU and ACLRI.
- 1997 Hearings around Australia in association with the above Project indicated that many Australian Catholic women want to be involved more in the decision-making processes of the Church.
- 1998 Patricia Pak Poy rsm was made a Member of the Order of Australia and awarded the RSL ANZAC Peace Prize for her work nationally and internationally in the campaign to ban landmines.
- 1998 Edna Kenna of Our Lady of Dolours Parish, Chatswood, was awarded the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice for sixty years of service to the Church. For fifty of those years she had cared for the altar linen; for more than twenty years she had been a catechist.

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CHAPTER 3

WOMEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH: AN ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Women's Participation in the Development of the Modern Ecumenical Movement: A Brief Reflection

3.3 Australian Roman Catholic Women's Current Participation in "Official" Ecumenical Church Structures and Projects: An Overview

3.4 Conclusion

Selected Texts

3.1 Introduction

To describe the ecumenical dimension of the participation of women in the Christian Churches is somewhat daunting for, like the reality of ecumenism itself, this aspect of the Churches' life is now so broad, ever-changing and multifaceted as almost to defy description. The word "ecumenism" itself is today multivocal. Originating from the Greek *oikoumene* (meaning "that which pertains to the whole inhabited world"), it was later adopted into Church parlance, and used in various senses. This Chapter uses the term "ecumenical" in the sense accorded it at Vatican Council II (*The Decree on Ecumenism*, art. 4). Thus understood, it signifies the call to the Christian Churches to strive, together, to restore to visible unity our currently divided Christian family, as Christ's "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" – "so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21, especially, constitutes its mandate).

This Chapter focuses on only two aspects of women's contributions to the ecumenical development of the Christian Churches in the twentieth century. First, it presents some background information to show how women have been involved in the modern ecumenical movement since its inception. Then, in very broad strokes, it outlines something of the scope of Australian Roman Catholic women's current participation in "official" Church ecumenical structures and projects. The data in this latter section reveal how extensively women now participate in this dimension of the Church's vocation. A more comprehensive investigation of a wider cross-section of Christian women and their diverse contributions to ecumenical development (especially at the local level) would also provide valuable resource material and could suggest guidelines for future research and planning.

3.2 Women's Participation in the Development of the Modern Ecumenical Movement: A Brief Reflection

It is often claimed that the modern ecumenical movement constitutes one of the most remarkable developments in Christian Church history – certainly the most remarkable of twentieth century Christian history. Of many notable milestones in this century's journey towards restoring Christian unity, three events seem of almost epochal significance. First, from a Western perspective especially, the modern movement is seen to have originated in the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. Then, following World War II, there came the momentous foundation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam in 1948. As is well known, the official Roman Catholic Church actively dissociated itself from participating in both these initiatives. Then, thanks largely to the astonishing dedication to prayer for Christian unity by people such as Maria Gabriella Sagheddu and Paul Couturier, the tireless pioneering scholarly and pastoral work of such Catholic ecumenists as Yves Congar and Jan Willebrands, and the vision of Pope John XXIII and the Bishops of Vatican Council II, on November 21, 1964, the Catholic Church in its Council Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* (*The Decree on Ecumenism*) committed itself – irrevocably – to the one ecumenical movement.

To the acclaim and delight of all other Christian churches this inaugurated, according to the noted Protestant ecumenist Dr Samuel McCrea Cavert, “a new era in the relation of the Churches to one another – an era that can truly be called ecumenical” (Abbott, 1966: p.367).

Much study and writing have been devoted to the many facets and personalities involved in these and other outstanding subsequent ecumenical milestones. What is surprising and disconcerting is to discover how little attention is accorded to the highly significant contribution some outstanding women made to the successful future direction of the modern ecumenical movement.

In relation to Edinburgh in 1910, for instance, the indexes of two recent standard classic ecumenical reference texts (see Selected Texts below) make no reference whatsoever to the major contributions to that Conference of two notable American women. Leila Mott, for example, wife of the almost legendary Chairman of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference John R. Mott, travelled the world and worked tirelessly with her husband in preparation for the Conference. Nor is there mention of the unreserved ecumenical commitment and outstanding financial contributions to it of Nettie McCormick. Moreover, there is only scant reference to the (later) editorial and prolific (and invaluable) written work of Ruth Rouse, but not to her role as an international ambassador for, key member in the preparation of, and official participant in Commission I of that Conference (her visit to Australia and

New Zealand in 1908 to undertake preparatory work for the Conference was to achieve remarkable advances for women in ecumenical leadership roles, especially in the universities). Interestingly, 16 Australians attended that Conference (of 1,249 members, almost all of whom were Western), and while naturally all came from the various Protestant and Anglican traditions, it is also true that all were men, despite the increasingly proactive role of many women in those Churches at the time.

Similarly, in connection with the formation of the WCC in 1948, neither text makes any reference to the enormous ecumenical work of the American Twila Cavert (wife of Dr Samuel McCrea Cavert, a member of the Committee working on the formation of the WCC); yet she had an inestimable influence on the program for that first Assembly, an influence that persists to this day. It was she who in 1948 imaginatively and creatively initiated a survey of the actual situation of women in the Churches world-wide (the first time since the Reformation that systematic attention was directed to gaining a picture of the life and work of women in the Church as a whole), and was then responsible for the fact that the issue of Women in the Church was on the agenda for that first Assembly – where it has stayed ever since.

Significantly, the Eighth WCC Assembly in Harare (December 1998) marked the close of the WCC 'Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women: 1988–1998', an initiative which followed its previous decade of study on 'The Community of Women and Men in the Church'. In a paper delivered in Sydney recently on 'The Ecclesiological Challenges of the Decade', the internationally renowned Church of England theologian Mary Tanner claimed that while many of our Churches have, in their understanding and praxis of inclusive life, "moved in ways that were unimaginable twenty years ago and witnessed marvellously a decade of *women* in solidarity with women, [yet, in her experience] in Britain and Ireland and many other countries [the decade] was hardly a decade of *Churches* in solidarity with women". The courageous initiative of Twila Cavert has, however, ensured that the issue of the equality of men and women in the Churches remains alive in ecumenical discussions.

Of the 351 delegates from 147 Churches present at that first WCC Assembly in 1948, 22 of the 81 lay delegates were women (of course, at that time none of the 270 clergy were women). At the Seventh WCC Assembly (Canberra, January 1991) what is noteworthy is that an Australian woman, Jean Skuse, had overall Australian responsibility for its planning and implementation (she was subsequently invited also to be a principal consultant for the 1998 Assembly in Harare). Jean is but one example of some outstanding contemporary Australian women who have contributed enormously to the ecumenical life of the Churches both in this country, and also internationally. General Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches (ACC) from 1976 to 1988, Jean also held the

positions of Vice-Moderator of the WCC Central Committee (1975–1983) and of the WCC Executive Committee (1975–1991).

The third epochal milestone of the modern ecumenical movement this century was the belated, but momentous, entry of the Catholic Church into the mainstream of the now world-wide ecumenical fellowship at Vatican Council II. Admittedly, by its very nature as a hierarchical Church, the main protagonists at that Council were men. However, women also contributed to the Council's preparations and daily workings. The Australian Rosemary Goldie, for example, was one of the twenty-three women auditors at the Council. The noted American Catholic theologian, Monika Hellwig, also took an active part in the preparatory theological discussions. Two European Grail women, Corinna Maertens and Josette Kersters, were also deeply involved. From 1960 (when Mgr Jan Willebrands was appointed Secretary of the newly founded Secretariat, now Pontifical Council, for Christian Unity) until 1996, they worked "to further Christian unity at many different levels". Josette recalls how the beginning of their long commitment was "a very exciting time, and there was a lot of enthusiasm for ecumenism". She also remembers how when they arrived "women were not part of Vatican offices, so the work was done at home", Mgr Willebrands carrying it back and forth every day.

The Chapter has focused on just a very small number of women who were involved in ecumenism in these three epochal events. So many more women should be mentioned, and so much more could be highlighted. Whether deliberately or not, the roles and contributions of these women seem so often to escape public recognition. Their documentation could be a valuable research project. Especially valuable would be an account of the innumerable ways in which Australian women have contributed to the growth of the ecumenical movement, both within our nation and internationally.

3.3 Australian Roman Catholic Women's Current Participation in "Official" Ecumenical Church Structures and Projects: An Overview

3.3.1 National and Diocesan Church Structures

Following the Catholic Church's momentous commitment to the one ecumenical movement in 1964, the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (SPCU) issued seven major documents between 1966 and 1975 outlining ways in which this commitment was to be implemented. Two of these, its *Directory Concerning Ecumenical Matters: Part One (Ad totam ecclesiam)* (1967) and the *Directory Concerning Ecumenical Matters: Part Two: Ecumenism in Higher Education (Spiritus Dominus)* (1970), were subsequently revised in 1993 with the

publication of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*.

The practical suggestions for ecumenical cooperation contained in these publications have had a direct influence on the formation of ecumenical structures within the Catholic Church in Australia.

Many Australian Catholics today are familiar with, or have had experience of, Diocesan ecumenical structures. Lesser known is the effect of Vatican Council II's 1965 Decree *Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church), supplemented in 1966 by Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter *Ecclesiae sanctae*. In line with their recommendations there resulted in Australia what is now known as the ACBC. Its Statutes, approved definitively in March 1979, resulted in a reconstituted Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (initially the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenism).

The 1993 *Directory* (arts. 46–47) spells out the responsibilities of this Committee stating that it should be "assisted by experts, both men and women, chosen from among the clergy, religious and laity. If possible, the commission should be assisted by a permanent secretariat" (art. 46). As one of only five of the current 28 Bishops' Committees which have permanent secretariats, it would seem significant that at present it is the only Committee for which a woman is the Executive Secretary, a role to which Denise Sullivan was appointed in January 1993 to succeed the late Sr Lenore Sharry NDS. Many Catholics (and other Christians) seem unaware that women have been participating ecumenically at this national level in the official hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church in Australia. While the position is not a "leadership" role as such, through this means women have been able to contribute directly to this national episcopal forum.

The ACBC has, of course, no jurisdiction over the seven Archdioceses or 21 Dioceses of the Catholic Church in Australia, and it is to the organisation of ecumenical life within dioceses that the 1993 *Directory* addresses its particular attention, for example in its Chapter II, 'The Organisation in the Catholic Church of the Service of Christian Unity'. The first recommendation of this Chapter is that dioceses appoint a "Diocesan Ecumenical Officer". Its description of ten responsibilities for this office is carefully and clearly presented in inclusive language (art. 41). The importance attached to this office emerges clearly when it is realised that "He/she will serve as counsellor on ecumenical issues for the Bishop and other officers of the diocese and will facilitate the sharing of ecumenical experiences and initiatives with pastors and diocesan organisations". Two Australian Archdioceses have now appointed full-time ecumenical officers, both of whom are women, while three others employ an ecumenical officer part-time, two of whom are women, while the third position was occupied by a woman for eight years until 1998. No diocese in

Australia yet employs an ecumenical officer in any capacity. These facts would seem revealing in two regards. First, when one notes that this recommendation concludes with "Even ... in those dioceses with limited personnel or resources, it is recommended that such a diocesan officer be appointed", it would seem that this suggestion still needs to be taken far more seriously. More pertinently, however, the information also indicates the important contribution of Catholic women to the ecumenical life of the Church in this area.

A survey of membership of Diocesan Ecumenical Commissions is also revealing. The 1993 *Directory* treats these bodies in its articles 42–45, 'The Diocesan Ecumenical Commission or Secretariat'. Article 44 d) indicates something of its scope and significance.

The Commission should "offer help and encouragement by such means as workshops and seminars for the ecumenical formation of both clergy and laity, for the appropriate realisation of an ecumenical dimension to all aspects of life, and giving special attention as to how seminary students are prepared for the ecumenical dimension of preaching, catechetics and other forms of teaching, and pastoral activity (e.g. pastoral care in mixed marriages), etc.". All seven Archdioceses and eight of the 21 dioceses in Australia have now established such Commissions. Seventy people today serve on the Archdiocesan Commissions and, of these, 35 are women. Currently women chair four of these Commissions, and a woman is the Deputy Chair of another (research for this paper did not investigate the numbers or status of women members on the eight Diocesan Ecumenical Commissions). The evidence available would suggest, however, that Catholic women's participation in this ecumenical dimension of the Church's life is substantial. It should also be noted that women have played major roles in the organisation of the twelve national biennial conferences of Catholic Ecumenical Commissions, while at the first Diocesan Synod held in Australia since Vatican Council II (Canberra and Goulburn, 1989) the Convenor of the Commission for Ecumenism was a woman.

3.3.2 International, National and Diocesan Projects of Ecumenical Cooperation

The *Directory* (Chapter V) outlines ten major areas for ecumenical cooperation, including Councils of Churches and Christian Councils, and Ecumenical Dialogue. Catholic women participate in both National and State Councils of Churches, and are members of formally constituted international and national ecumenical dialogues.

Councils of Churches

The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, but since 1968 has sent official "Delegated Observers" to its Assemblies. The Australian Rosemary Goldie was one such "delegate" to the 1968 Assembly in Uppsala. At the Seventh Assembly in Canberra in 1991, of the official Roman Catholic

delegation of 23, six were Australians, and of these three were women. In addition, the official Catholic representative on the preparatory Canberra Churches Assembly Committee (CCAC) was a lay woman. A number of Catholic women also attended, unofficially, the Eighth WCC Assembly in Harare as visitors. The Catholic group included the two full-time ecumenical officers who were sponsored by their respective Archdioceses. An Australian Catholic woman, Dr Margaret Jenkins csb, is also currently an official member of the WCC international Faith and Order Commission.

When the ACC was reconstituted in Canberra in 1994 as the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA), the Roman Catholic Church was a foundation member. On that occasion and at each of the two subsequent National Forums, the Catholic delegation comprised 12 members, in addition to the Head of Church. Six of the delegates to the 1994 Forum were women, while there were seven women delegates at the 1998 National Forum. Catholic women have also served on the Executive of the NCCA, the Catholic Church being officially represented there since 1994 by Cardinal Clancy (and an alternate, a bishop) and Denise Sullivan. In addition, two Catholic women were elected to the Executive at the 1996 National Forum, and the 1998 Forum also elected two Catholics, one of whom is a woman.

Catholic (and other Christian) women are also prominent in the membership of the NCCA's four Commissions, and also on its various Networks and Committees. For example, a Roman Catholic woman, Ms Sandie Cornish, is the Co-convenor of the NCCA Women and Gender Relationships Network.

There are seven State Councils of Churches in Australia, in all of which Catholic dioceses are members (Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese is a member of the NSW Ecumenical Council), and women from all member churches, including Catholic women, have held executive positions on these Councils and been prominent in their various Commissions. It is not possible here to outline the details of women's involvement in all these Councils but the following three examples serve as an indication of the overall situation. The Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC) was the first ecumenical council in Australia, and in the world, with Roman Catholic membership; the Catholic Archdiocese of Hobart joined the TCC in 1970. Of the TCC's current membership of 72, 26 are women, and of its 19 Roman Catholic members, 10 are women. In 1987 the Archdiocese of Adelaide joined the South Australian Council of Churches. Of the latter's 45 members, 24 are women, and of the approximately 15 women who have held executive positions, four have been Roman Catholics. The Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane was one of the foundation members of Queensland Churches Together (QCT) in 1991. Today, of QCT's total membership of 54, 22 are women; eight of the Roman Catholic membership of 14 are women.

Ecumenical Dialogues

Australian Catholics are members of two international dialogues. The current Co-Chair of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council is Bishop Michael Putney of Brisbane. Revd Peter Cross, a Melbourne Catholic priest, is a member of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II). The Roman Catholic Church is engaged in three national ecumenical dialogues. The first established of these is the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia which began in 1975. Its current membership includes two women, one from each denomination. The Uniting Church in Australia–Roman Catholic Church national dialogue began in Melbourne in 1978 and moved to Brisbane in 1993. It currently has fourteen members, two of whom are women, again one from each denomination. A national dialogue in Australia between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches (AUSTARC) began in Melbourne in 1993. Of its current six Roman Catholic members, two are women.

Other Projects of Ecumenical Cooperation

Ecumenical cooperation at the local level is of crucial importance, and a questionnaire conducted to provide data for this Chapter attests how many women, in many ways, contribute to this cooperation. One striking example warrants particular attention, because of its wide acclaim by so many major Christian denominations, not just in Queensland where it was instigated, but also throughout Australia. In addition to this, it was an officially commissioned project. In February 1994 the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, with the endorsement of the Catholic Bishops of Queensland, undertook an “International Year of the Family Western and Remote Area Project” and appointed Sr Margaret Madden rsm as the Project Officer. Her November 1994 *Report of IYF Western and Remote Area Project* is an outstanding example of an ecumenical contribution by a Catholic woman to the life of the Christian churches in Australia.

This brief overview of Australian Roman Catholic women’s current participation in “official” ecumenical Church structures and projects indicates that there are considerable numbers who are involved in ecumenical leadership and decision-making roles. It also illustrates the diversity of their contributions at the international, national, State and diocesan levels. What also needs to be recognised is that at all these levels women are also involved in a great variety of other official ministerial roles, for example in education, liturgy and social justice, to which they contribute an ecumenical dimension.

3.4 Conclusion

"The ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is to re-establish full visible unity among all the baptised. In view of this goal, all the results so far attained are but one stage of the journey, however promising and positive ... This journey ... continues to require patient and courageous efforts" (*Ut Unum Sint*, arts. 77–78). It is evident that many Australian Catholic (and other Christian) women have contributed energetically and imaginatively to this dimension of the Church's vocation. With the advent of the new millennium it is hoped that Church leaders will encourage their further participation with vision, courage, justice and practical assistance.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Research Project on the participation of women in the Australian Catholic Church has been one bold initiative. What seems crucial now is that practical strategies be introduced to demonstrate to general Church members that their leaders intend to take seriously the strengths and problems identified in the Research Project.

Research undertaken in preparing this Chapter indicates that:

- women from all mainline Christian churches have contributed significantly to the development of the modern ecumenical movement since its inception, a fact which is often unacknowledged;
- many Australian Roman Catholic women currently participate in many diverse ways in "official" ecumenical church structures and projects, both within Australia and internationally, though this seems to be relatively unknown in the wider Catholic community.

It needs to be added that many of these Australian Catholic women (and others) experience quite acute frustration and anger with the Catholic Church today, for unlike their counterparts in other Christian Churches where "all roles of ministry and witness are now available to women", they feel consistently debarred from participating in any significant decision-making, leadership or consultative roles within their own Church. For them the Catholic Church, in stark contrast to most other mainline Christian churches in Australia today, continues to pursue a policy of gender discrimination and inequity. This situation they both lament and deplore.

Ut Unum Sint states (in a different context admittedly, but nevertheless truly), "...mutual help in the search for truth is a sublime form of evangelical charity" (art. 78). The promotion of dialogue between Churches, and between men and women in the Churches, can surely only enhance the life of the one Church of Christ, and enrich its witness in, and to, the world.

Selected Texts

- Abbott, W M (ed) *The Documents of Vatican II*. London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1966.
- Lossky, N and others (eds) *A Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. Geneva, WCC Publications, 1991.
- PCPCU *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*. Boston, St Paul Books and Media, 1993.
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CHAPTER 4

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

- 4.1 Background to the Written Submissions
 - 4.2 Number of Submissions Received
 - 4.3 Analysis of the Written Submissions
 - 4.4 Findings of the Written Submissions
- 4.5 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia
- 4.6 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church
 - 4.7 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church
 - 4.8 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased
- 4.9 Summary of Findings of Written Submissions

4.1 Background to the Written Submissions

4.1.1 Call for Written Submissions

The first of the main ways in which the community was invited to assist in the Research Project was through written submissions from groups or individuals. The call for written submissions was made at the launch of the Project on August 21, 1996. It was requested that the submissions address one or more of the key research questions and be mailed to the BCJDP Secretariat by December 1, 1996. The intention to provide an opportunity "for everyone to express their views on women's participation in the Catholic Church: female or male, young or old, those involved in official Church structures such as parishes or not, Catholic or not" was announced when the Project was launched.

4.1.2 Dissemination of Information on the Research Project Including the Call for Written Submissions

Information on the Research Project, including the call for written submissions, was distributed widely throughout the Australian community in a variety of ways including:

Media and Publicity

Reportage included interviews with *The Maitland Mercury*, *The Annals*, ABC Radio (Newcastle), ABC Radio National "Religion Today", and Bathurst Radio; TV news items on ABC and Channel 9; and wide coverage in the Catholic press.

Advertisements placed in *The Australian* (twice), *The Catholic Weekly*, *National*

Outlook, The Leader, The Record, Kairos, The Standard, South Australian Catholic, Australian Catholics (October issue), *Educare News* and several other publications.

All Bishops were requested to encourage organisations and parishes in their dioceses to support and publicise the Project. The Bishops were provided with a suggestion for a parish bulletin notice which a number of parishes ran.

A number of women's groups publicised the Project in their newsletters and mailings. For example, WATAC New South Wales sent forms and guidelines to everyone on their mailing list.

Distribution of Project Materials

Project materials were sent to all parishes; all persons and groups on the Secretariat's contact list for youth consultation; all lay organisations (both youth and adult) in liaison with the Bishops' Committee for the Laity; all national agencies of the Bishops' Conference; Diocesan Contacts of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council; Diocesan Directors of Caritas Australia (formerly Australian Catholic Relief); all Catholic women known to the Secretariat who attended the Beijing conference; and university chaplaincies.

Bulk copies of the materials were sent to the following organisations for distribution among their memberships: ACLRI; Victorian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes; WATAC (New South Wales and South Australia); Catholic Women's League (CWL), and Society of St Vincent de Paul. The Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia also provided the Secretariat with mailing labels for all their households with a request that each household be sent copies of the materials. The Marist Fathers Women's Issues Group requested bulk copies of Project materials for distribution.

Many individuals contacted the Secretariat requesting copies of materials, often in bulk for distribution to friends and colleagues. Many thousands of sets of Project materials were distributed by the BCJDP in response to such requests.

4.1.3 Guidelines for Written Submissions

It was requested that written submissions address one or more of the following key questions:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? These ways could be described in areas such as the home, parish, diocese, educational and healing ministries of the Church or women's groups.
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

It was stated that submissions could take the form of letters, lists of points, or papers no longer than ten A4 pages. Shorter submissions were also welcome. Alternatively, participants could choose to use the submission form provided.

Confidentiality

The “Guidelines for Written Submissions” stated:

Submissions or parts of submissions will be treated in strict confidence upon request but anonymously submitted material will not be accepted. The Research Management Group will include in its final report on this Project a list of written submissions and presentations at hearings. It may also refer to those submissions and presentations in the text of the report and other publications. If you do not want your submission or any part of it to be used in any one of these ways please indicate this clearly.

The written submission form asked participants to indicate any concerns about confidentiality by ticking the appropriate box:

- Please DO NOT include details of this submission in the research report's list of submissions received.
- Please DO NOT refer to this submission (or the part of this submission which has been circled in red) in the text of the report or other publications.

4.2 Number of Submissions Received

4.2.1 In total, the Secretariat of the BCJDP received more than 2,500 written submissions to the Research Project. This more than doubled the number of written submissions which had been expected by the RMG and represented the greatest number of written submissions received by any inquiry conducted by the Catholic Church in Australia.

In total, 2,555 submissions were received. Of these,

- 1,776 were received from individuals;
- 719 were received from groups; and
- 60 were anonymous.

As anonymously-submitted material was not accepted, a total of 2,495 written submissions were received and analysed.

The call for written submissions elicited responses from individuals and groups with a wide range of backgrounds and views. Many submissions were received from individuals who wished to “tell their story” of experiences of the Catholic Church or make a few points only. The call for written submissions also elicited many responses which were prepared over a period of time and

which were characterised by careful scholarly preparation and consultation with colleagues and associates.

Written submissions were also received from many key leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia who sent detailed responses, often as a result of much consultation with others, for example:

- leadership teams of religious orders;
- leadership teams of Catholic organisations, including women's groups, at both national and local levels;
- leadership teams of dioceses;
- leadership teams of parishes.

Submissions were also received from leading individuals in the Catholic community drawn from the laity and clergy, women and men, and from some outstanding scholars.

4.3 Analysis of the Written Submissions

4.3.1 Development of a Comprehensive Coding Frame

In order to analyse the submissions, a comprehensive coding frame was prepared by members of the RMG. The frame to code the submissions was developed over a period of twelve months from the time that a number of submissions had been received by the Secretariat. In developing the coding frame a great number of submissions were analysed to identify an inclusive list of responses to the key questions as well as comments about the Research Project.

Once the initial coding frame had been developed, it then underwent a further stage of trialling with thirty additional submissions until the RMG was assured of its adequacy to record all responses used in the trialling process.

Considerable time was given to ensuring a comprehensive range of items; eliminating repetition and grouping the items under suitable subheadings. The coding frame was then trialled with three volunteer coders in order to determine the clarity of the instrument and to identify any unexpected difficulties for coders. The result of this process was the development of a coding frame containing a total of 359 response items which was both comprehensive for the task and manageable for the coder.

As well as recording specific responses to the Research Project and to each question, the coding frame also enabled the coders to record the overall response of each written submission. The "Overall Response" category contained a range of items in relation to each question which identified whether the submission indicated that the individual or group:

- was satisfied with current ways of the participation of women;
- sought greater participation of women;
- noted limitations of women's participation;
- noted historical background (Question 1);
- was satisfied with current assistance and support for women (Question 2);
- sought greater assistance and support for women (Question 2);
- believed women have too much involvement in the Church (Question 4);
- included passages suitable for quotation;
- provided an example of a significant submission.

As noted above, coders were asked to record submissions which contained passages suitable for quotation, such as a viewpoint which was clearly and succinctly expressed, a strong expression of feeling or an effective use of narrative. It was stressed that coders record a variety of submissions suitable for quotation so that a range of views and experiences were included. Similarly, coders were requested to note examples of significant submissions. What was deemed to be a significant submission could have a range of characteristics. For example, a significant submission could be one which presented a viewpoint in a particularly clear and logical manner, gave a strong expression of feeling, used narrative in an effective way, represented a typical expression of a particular stance, or offered a unique insight. Once more, coders were asked to record a range of viewpoints and experiences in their selection of significant submissions. The reading of these 676 submissions was undertaken in conjunction with the analysis of data received from the coding frame.

In exceptional cases where the coding frame could not accommodate a response, coders were asked to send any additional responses to the RMG. These were later collated and incorporated into the findings of the written submissions.

4.3.2 Use of Volunteer Coders

Overall, thirty-four volunteer coders were involved in coding submissions. As expert assistance was required in the analysis of the written submissions, coders were required to have a background in theology and to have a sense of confidentiality concerning the sensitive nature of the work. Coders were drawn from around Australia and included religious and laity, women and men. Coders included staff from ACU and members of women's religious congregations. It should be noted that the great majority of coders were women. It was explained to coders that, following the briefing session, there would be an initial accuracy test as well as a further accuracy test of a common unidentified submission as part of the coding process. It is estimated that each coder averaged approximately seventy hours of work in coding submissions. Some coders undertook additional coding work. The great generosity of coders was noted and appreciated by the RMG and the Bishops.

4.3.3. Briefing of Coders

Instructions for coding were developed and trialled for clarity with two volunteer coders. Briefing sessions for coders were conducted in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane. More than one session was required in each of these centres. These briefing sessions of approximately three hours duration included:

- an overview of the Project;
- an explanation and demonstration of the coding frame; and
- practical experience in using the coding frame with a range of submissions.

4.3.4 High Accuracy of Coders

To check the degree of accuracy of coders, a typical submission was selected for an initial accuracy test following the briefing. Another more difficult unidentified submission was chosen for the second common accuracy test undertaken as part of the coding of submissions. Members of the RMG coded both submissions to determine the most accurate code for each response in the submissions.

The degree of accuracy was recorded according to the following categories:

- 3A – Accurate code recorded;
- 3B – Different but accurate;
- 2 – Different but defensible;
- 1 – Inaccurate;
- 0 – No code recorded.

It should be noted that, for some responses, two or more codes could have been used which recorded the meaning of the response. However, while a particular code was selected as the most accurate code (3A), it was possible for coders to select other codes which were different but which also accurately conveyed the meaning of the response (3B) or to select a different code which was consistent in meaning with the most accurate code selected (2). These first three categories were considered to be accurate and acceptable, that is the coders had successfully completed the task by making sensible, sound judgments about each response in a submission. However, inaccurate coding (1) and coding which failed to record a particular response (0) were both treated as inaccurate.

4.3.5 Results of Initial Accuracy Test Following the Briefing

The main responses to each question were recorded accurately by all coders. There was a very small percentage of inaccurate and missing responses. These related to details of a particular question rather than a main response. Details of this result are set out below. To respect the privacy of coders, the list of coders is not presented in alphabetical order.

Table 4.1: Results of Initial Accuracy Test

Coder	Category					Total accuracy (%)
	3A (%)	3B (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	0 (%)	
1	71	13	5	0	11	89
2	73	20	0	0	7	93
3	72	26	0	0	2	98
4	78	17	0	0	5	95
5	74	19	0	0	7	93
6	77	21	0	0	2	98
7	64	36	9	0	0	100
8	73	25	0	0	2	98
9	59	25	10	2	4	94
10	65	21	6	0	8	92
11	61	31	2	0	6	94
12	69	19	4	0	8	92
13	65	19	0	2	14	84
14	46	14	14	6	20	74
15	57	27	12	2	2	96
16	56	13	10	1	20	79
17	65	23	2	0	10	90
18	69	18	0	0	13	87
19	63	20	0	0	17	83
20	68	27	0	0	5	95
21	58	27	0	0	15	85
22	60	24	2	2	12	86
23	74	26	0	0	0	100
24	60	17	9	0	14	86
25	73	27	0	0	0	100
26	69	26	0	0	5	95
27	55	27	9	2	7	91
28	73	16	0	0	11	89
29	77	19	0	0	4	96
30	52	20	17	0	11	89
31	75	13	10	2	0	98
32	71	21	5	0	3	97
33	68	18	7	0	7	93
34	77	20	0	0	3	97
Average for coders	67%	21%	4%	0.5%	7.5%	92%

4.3.6 Results of Second Common Accuracy Test

A common submission was given to all coders for the purpose of testing their accuracy during the course of the coding process. Coders were not able to identify the common submission used for testing. During the coding process, three coders were unable to continue with the coding for various reasons. Thus, thirty-one coders completed the common unidentified accuracy test.

The test revealed:

- There were no inaccurate responses by any coders to any question. Familiarity with the coding frame and practice in coding were significant factors in this achievement.
- There were some missing data, but this data related to only an aspect of a particular question. Substantial data were recorded for every question by every coder.
- One coder did not complete the code pertaining to the overall response to each question. To address this missing data, one coder with excellent accuracy completed the coding of these submissions.

The overall accuracy of coding for the two accuracy tests was 91 percent accuracy.

All coders received two letters giving the results of their coding and expressing the gratitude of the RMG for their generosity and accuracy. Fifteen coders with excellent coding results assisted with coding additional submissions (see Table 4.2).

4.3.7 Discussion of the Presentation of the Findings in a Format to Portray Both the Scope and Depth of the Written Submissions

The coding of the 2,495 written submissions was completed by the end of June 1998. The coding frames were then processed by an experienced data processing company which undertook a process of data verification to ensure 100 percent accuracy in data entry. Additional comments from the coders were collated and used to complement the database. Six hundred and seventy-six submissions identified by coders as containing suitable quotations or as significant submissions were read in conjunction with the results of the database and the additional comments.

The main findings of the written submissions as discussed in this Chapter are those which were recorded in 200 or more submissions, that is eight percent or more of the submissions. In addition, particular or unique insights offered by only a few submissions and identified by coders as significant have also been used to shed further light on these findings.

In presenting quotations, no names of individuals or groups have been used. This decision is in accordance with directions concerning confidentiality

given to the public, namely that “the contents of submissions will not be quoted in any way which would allow identification of the author(s) or other persons referred to in the submission”. Every effort has been made to select quotations from a wide range of submissions and thereby to present the main findings in the words of the participants.

Table 4.2: Results of Second Common Accuracy Test

Coder	3A (%)	3B (%)	Category 2 (%)	1 (%)	0 (%)	Total accuracy (%)
1	77	0	5	0	18	82
2	77	14	9	0	0	100
3	82	4	14	0	0	100
4	82	9	4.5	0	14	95.5
5	77	9	0	0	14	86
6	68	5	9	0	18	82
7	59	5	9	0	27	73
8	86	5	0	0	9	91
9	55	18	4	0	23	77
10	68	14	14	0	4	96
11	64	18	14	0	4	96
12	82	9	4.5	0	4.5	95.5
13	64	27	9	0	0	100
14	73	9	4	0	14	86
15	82	4.5	4.5	0	9	91
16	59	23	18	0	0	100
17	64	14	4	0	18	82
18	68	14	9	0	9	91
19	77	14	4.5	0	4.5	95.5
20	86	5	0	0	9	91
21	91	0	0	0	9	91
22	55	23	4	0	18	82
23	77	23	0	0	0	100
24	73	4	9	0	14	86
25	73	14	0	0	13	87
26	77	4.5	4.5	0	14	86
27	73	18	4.5	0	4.5	95.5
28	50	14	9	0	27	73
29	68	9	5	0	18	82
30	82	14	4	0	0	100
31	77	5	9	0	9	91
Average for coders	72.5%	11%	6%	0%	10.5%	90%

4.4 Findings of the Written Submissions

4.4.1 Requests for Confidentiality

The number of requests in relation to the confidentiality of the submission, as outlined above, are set out below:

Table 4.3: Requests in Relation to Confidentiality

Number of submissions	Description of response
2352	Confidentiality not requested
60	Submission not to be listed
60	Submission not to be referred to
23	Parts circled in red not to be referred to
2495	Total number of named submissions

4.4.2 Comments about the Research Project and Introductory Comments

A small number of submissions expressed concerns about the Research Project, in particular the need for action to follow the Project. Examples of such concerns are taken from a submission from a group of pastoral associates in Victoria: "Previous questionnaires have not led to anything. What about this one?" and from a woman in Queensland: "At the risk of sounding a pessimist, I see this whole Project as an exercise in rhetoric that, because of external circumstances, will go unmatched by practice".

There were a number of requests concerning the publication of the findings of the Research Project. For example, a woman from Queensland stated:

I request that the results of this research be published and that notification of where and when will be sent to me in due course and not disappear never to be heard of again as results of previous surveys have.

Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity to be involved in the Project and that the Bishops of Australia had undertaken this Project. For example, a submission from a man in Queensland who had had a lifelong (61 years) association with the Church in many countries stated:

I congratulate the Australian Bishops for inviting submissions and pray that this endeavour will lead to a genuine opening up of the Church to engage with the people where they are in our time.

Often by way of preamble, questions were raised about the meaning of the key terms: "women", "participation" and "Church".

"Women" – Not One Homogeneous Group

It was noted that Australian women who are Catholics are not a homogeneous group. Two women from a parish in Brisbane expressed this view in the following way:

As a preamble, we would cite a recognition that women do not constitute a homogeneous group but, in fact, are extremely diverse as to age, education, social and economic situation, ethnic background, religious tradition (even as Catholics), life experiences, sexual and marital condition.

Full "Participation" Requires a Part in Decision-making and Leadership

Those who commented on the term "participation" emphasised that full participation meant to take part in leadership and decision-making. For example, a woman from Victoria noted: "...perhaps it is more true to say women are involved rather than participate in the life of the Church as participate has a more equal dimension to it". A group submission from a parish in the Australian Capital Territory argued:

To participate fully means to take part in decision-making, to take a leadership role. That is, not only on the sidelines, being "helpers". The essence of our baptism in actuality is denied by the Catholic Church in that we, as women, cannot fulfil our potential in the Church. Women always have to refer to men. Where do women go to dialogue with the men who lead our diocese?

What is Meant by "the Catholic Church"?

Some submissions raised the issue of the definition of Church. An understanding of the Church as the "People of God" was stressed. A woman from rural New South Wales wrote:

So what is meant by "the Catholic Church"? If it is a Christian community that Jesus lived, worked and died for by responding to the needs and struggles of people where they are (at) in their lives (eg Mark 3:1-4, Mt. 5:43-48, Mt. 7:1-3, John 4:5-26, John 8:3-11 and many others of course), many women are truly "Church" by reaching out in love and compassion to suffering people. This is how I think Jesus meant Church to be. Such a model is also very clearly defined by Vatican Council II in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church especially in Chapter 11 "People of God". If, however, we are only referring to the institution in which people's participation is gauged mainly by their attendance at Church Services/Mass and/or involvement in the institutional practices there are more women than men involved.

Another submission also lamented the lack of implementation of the vision of the Second Vatican Council:

I believe sadly that the basic changes envisaged by Vatican II have hardly been implemented and modern Catholics, especially women and youth, have been badly let down by the Church structure.

4.5 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

4.5.1 Greater Participation Sought for Women Especially in the Areas of Leadership and Decision-making

The great majority of submissions which considered this first question concerning ways in which women participate in the Church expressed a view which indicated either satisfaction with women's current participation or which sought greater participation for women. Thus, while the first key question asked about ways in which women currently participate in the Church, the dominant response to the question concerned the need for greater participation of women, especially in the areas of leadership and decision-making.

Women's Involvement in Ancillary Roles but Exclusion from Leadership and Decision-making

An illustration of the frustration expressed about the limitations of women's participation is taken from the submission of a group of religious women from Queensland:

While women participate in the Catholic Church in a variety of ways, this participation is almost totally confined to playing ancillary roles in the home, in parishes, dioceses and in Church-run education, health and social welfare bodies. Women are very seldom appointed to leading positions within Church structures and play a very small role in decision-making within the official Church. A small number of women have been employed in recent years as administrators of parishes but their functioning is limited by official Church positions on women's exercise of priesthood and by ways in which the "boys' network" operates within the Church structures.

A woman from New South Wales stated that it is not so much a question of ways in which women participate in the Church, but rather how they participate:

Of course women participate in the Church (they are part of the People of God) and even participate in the official Church at lower levels. The question is more

to do with how, in terms of power and voice, women participate. I wonder if one asked how men participate, if the first area mentioned would be the home. Is women's participation given recognition in terms of status or merely paid pious lip-service? Do women hold any power positions in the Church as Church (not in Church run institutions)? Are they really given a voice? But then are the laity?

In a similar way, a woman from Victoria noted that women are denied an influence in the most visible arenas:

Women are more apparent in their "behind the scenes" activities. This, of course, means that their influence is strong in all but the most "visible" arenas – those positions of power and authority which are reserved for the male members of the Church.

Traditional Participation of Women as Catholic Wives and Mothers

The following quotation from a submission from a Sydney woman is an illustration of a minority response which indicated satisfaction with current ways of participation, with particular emphasis on the importance of women's role in the home:

The majority of Australian Catholic women, if asked, wouldn't describe their participation in the Church in terms of formal structures. Instead, they would call themselves Catholic wives and mothers. And this description should be sufficient by itself. Perhaps the real question for attention is not the ways in which women participate in the life of the Church, but why women's traditional participation – as wives and mothers – is no longer seen as sufficient. Why [do] women have to describe their work in other terms in order for it to be respected and supported.

Many women are happy to participate in the more formal structures of Church life – but usually not until after their heavy years of family involvement are completed. And they see their participation in formal Church structures as ancillary to their primary role as wives and mothers, not a replacement for it.

Catholic women are more interested in their traditional paths of Church participation being respected and resourced, rather than in new formal structures being developed which only occupies time which could more fruitfully be spent in their family apostolate.

Enormous but Often Unacknowledged Contribution of Women

It was noted that women participate, in greater numbers than men, in all aspects of the life of the Church, except in the ordained ministry. A submission from a group of women in Melbourne provided a succinct statement concerning the various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia:

Wherever the Church is there too you will find women – working in health and social services, fighting for social justice, prominent in education from nursery to university, a strong force in all professions. In the parish and diocese women, faithful followers of Jesus, are their backbone, far outnumbering men as they fill key positions with the exception of the priesthood – and priests and bishops are beginning to seek their advice.

The enormous contribution of women was highlighted, in particular their voluntary, unpaid and frequently unacknowledged work. A submission from a group of women from Mittagong illustrates this response and the accompanying anguish:

The women contribute a huge amount of voluntary, unpaid work to the Church. This important work, but often considered low status work, is somehow “expected” and often taken for granted. Women seem to take the passive and unofficial roles in the parish. Women, in general, seek no thanks for what they do, but they do have to put up with the lack of acknowledgment of their enormous contribution.

After considering the contribution and participation of women in the Church, we asked ourselves these questions:

- What would happen to the Church if all the women withdrew all their services?*
- What will happen to the Church as more and more thinking women and the more educated and professional women become more dissatisfied with contributing on an unofficial level and decide to leave the institutional Church?*
- For how long will full and complete participation be denied to women? Is it worth waiting for?*
- Do we remain as part of the institutional Church and try to change the situation from within or do we leave and wait for the collapse? But because women do not belong to the authority structures of the Church it seems to be very difficult to help change come about. Are we guilty of contributing to the maintenance and upkeep of an unjust system?*

In a similar way, a group from Toowoomba describe the critical but undervalued and limited role of women:

Women do more than just participate in the Catholic Church in Australia. In many ways they keep the Church afloat! Usually it is the woman in the home who instils religious values into the children, who attends Mass, who helps in school functions, who gives valuable time to committees, and responds in many other ways to the needs of the Church. The woman is always there to help and assist but is greatly under-valued for her service, and rarely given the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in the Church.

The Significant Role of Aboriginal Women

A number of submissions noted the significant role played by Aboriginal women in the Australian Church. For example, a woman from Western Australia noted the role of Aboriginal women in the Kimberley Catholic Church:

In particular, let me mention the significant role played by Aboriginal women:

- *Explanation of the Word (in the local language);*
- *Smoking and water ceremonies;*
- *Sacramental preparation and liturgies;*
- *Prayer leaders;*
- *Church leaders;*
- *Catechists;*
- *Baptismal and Funeral Rites;*
- *Music ministry.*

It would seem that if anyone is to be recommended for the ministry of diaconate, (married or single), these women should be given first consideration for their long-serving dedication to the Kimberley Church.

Women's Contribution Since the Earliest Days of the Australian Catholic Church

Women's immense contribution since the earliest days of the Australian Catholic Church was noted in a submission from a parish in Melbourne:

Women in the Australian Catholic Church have since its earliest days made immense contributions to the life of the Church whether as religious sisters or as mothers of families or as dedicated single people ... Their contribution is summarised in the figure of Mary MacKillop.

4.5.2 Women's Involvement in the Liturgy of the Church, Especially as Eucharistic Ministers

The three major ways women currently participate in the Church which were identified concerned women's role in liturgical preparation and their involvement as ministers of the Eucharist and as readers.

Greater Involvement in Church Ceremonies

A submission from one of the branches of the CWL stated:

We all agree that we as women are permitted much greater involvement in Church ceremonies than before Vatican II and many of our members are delighted to take on the responsibilities of Lectors and Special Ministers in addition to many activities mentioned in the collated material. We are grieved however that some are still denied this opportunity by their Parish Priest. It would seem that this [is an] area of concern which should be addressed.

A submission from a young Queensland woman emphasised the importance of the active and visible participation of women in the Mass and the Church community:

Firstly, I believe that participation of women in the Church varies from parish to parish. In the Church I attended in my early childhood, and occasionally visit now, women's participation is very low. The entire Mass may be celebrated without ever seeing a woman directly participate in roles such as a reader, minister of the Eucharist or altar server.

However, in the parish I now belong to, women are very active in the life of the Church community. Women read at Mass, are Eucharistic ministers and homilists, and are members of the leadership team. This I believe, is the ideal that should be aimed for by all parishes, that women actively participate in the Mass and Church community. Unfortunately, some parishes still view women as those who bake the scones for parish functions and wash the dishes when it's all over.

The next two major ways of participation which were highlighted concerned women's involvement in the parish and in the home.

4.5.3 Participation of Women in the Parish

Consistent with the emphasis on women's current involvement in the liturgy is the prominence given to women's participation in the parish. In addition to women's involvement in the liturgy as noted above, the most frequently-cited involvement concerned participation on the parish (pastoral) council followed by participation in service groups, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society; catechetical roles with children; prayer groups; other caring roles in the parish; general participation in the parish; visitation in the parish; other voluntary parish roles; taking communion to the sick and elderly; fundraising and financial contribution; other group participation in the parish; serving as altar girls; catering roles; other volunteer leadership and ministry roles; women's groups in the parish; working as pastoral associates and in voluntary parish staff roles; and involvement in discussion groups.

A submission from a woman from Wollongong East stressed the indispensable voluntary contribution of women to the parish: "At Parish level – if women stopped their voluntary tasks – there would be complete confusion – indeed Parish life as we know it would cease to function".

4.5.4 Participation of Women in the Home

The next major area of participation concerned women's role in the home. Women were seen to participate in the Church in the context of the home, principally as faith educators and mothers. Much less prominence was given to

the role of women as wives and other roles in the home such as care for the sick and elderly.

The importance given to the role of the woman in the home is illustrated by a submission from a woman in Melbourne:

Nonetheless, I must point to the essential and unique role of wife and mother because, as stated, the home was the original Church and the mother is the "heart and soul" of a home. Furthermore, the neglect of the wife and mother role by so many has done irreparable damage to so many young children who have been coldly passed on to professional child-carers without due consideration as to the child's capacity to accept such a jolt. Children sometimes suffer greatly because of this misguided mentality First things first. A woman participates in the Church in so many ways by being a full-time wife and mother. She helps form religious vocations by giving her offspring the love and attention which is needed so much nowadays, a time of so much social upheaval because of the breakdown of so many marriages.

Two women from a parish in Brisbane presented another view of the contemporary woman in the home in more disadvantaged circumstances:

The description, above, presents the "ideal" view of the Catholic woman in the home but we have to acknowledge that there is another less positive, but probably more real, picture of many women as we approach the end of the century. This is the picture of the single, unmarried mother, the divorcee, perhaps even the lesbian mother, living in outlying suburbs, often working in less well-paid jobs or unemployed, and constantly disadvantaged in housing, transport, in social amenities, even at times not properly recognised in Church communities, or in support by the Church or in the ways by which parish priests are chosen for such areas and operate with such non-middle class women (and men).

4.5.5 Catechetical and Education Roles of Women

Another prominent area of participation concerned the role of women in catechetical activities and education. Specific responses in this area included women's participation in catechetical roles with children, as school teachers, in catechetical roles with adults (including the RCIA), in sacramental preparation groups, as government school catechists, in education in general and through parent involvement in schools.

A woman in Victoria noted the outstanding participation of women in Catholic education in Australia:

Women are the majority of the teaching and other staff of the greatest Catholic education system in the world. Catholic schools are like parishes in the formation, support and the Sacramental life they provide.

A submission from a parish in Melbourne emphasised the range of educational opportunities in which women take part, often at their own expense:

Women participate in educational opportunities – theological, ministry and leadership courses offered in parish, deanery and diocese, often at considerable expense of time, money and energy, while caring for families, being involved in community activities and/or working outside the home. They willingly share this knowledge with others, and seek to deepen their own spirituality and that of others.

4.5.6 Catholic Women's League Given Prominence

In terms of women's involvement in specific groups, women's participation in the CWL was the most frequently mentioned. The CWL received much prominence in the area of women's involvement in the wider Church and Catholic organisations.

A response from the National Executive of the CWL (CWLA) highlighted the work of the organisation:

C.W.L.A. (Inc.) represents seven member organisations consisting of autonomous state C.W.L. bodies, based on a branch and Diocesan structure with a total membership of approximately 14,500 women. . . .

C.W.L.A. as a recognised lay organisation of the Catholic Church does participate in the formation of women and facilitates in a particular way a range of activities leading to a greater understanding of our faith and hopefully to a love of God and holiness. Personal devotion to prayer and individual holiness is essential to the continuation of our organisation.

4.5.7 Membership of Women's Religious Congregations

Less frequently mentioned but still prominent in responses was the participation of women as members of religious congregations. A submission from a women's religious congregation in Tasmania highlighted the various ways in which the religious sisters participate in the Church, including parish ministry; education ministry; prayer house ministry; aged care ministry; Diocesan Commissions; and membership of national bodies. The submission made the point:

Activities do not adequately portray our participation; it is rather who we are that is important – our way of being in our world today:

- *sharing the joys and sorrows of the community where we live;*
- *providing space, support, a listening ear, for those caught in the whirl of the modern world;*
- *standing with, reaching out to the poor and powerless.*

A submission from a lay woman in Melbourne noted “this extraordinary gift” of women in religious orders to the Church:

Orders and their works: I can't sum up this extraordinary gift to the Church in a couple of sentences. But someone must find words (adequate words) for these women and what they have given to the Australian people.

The important contribution of women as spiritual directors, retreat givers and leaders in spirituality was noted.

4.5.8 **Women’s Involvement in Health Care**

The area of health care, involving a range of healing ministries and health care roles, was frequently noted. A submission on behalf of a Congregational Leadership Team in New South Wales stated:

In education, health care and family life women make significant contributions:

- *initiating and sustaining commitment to areas of need and poverty;*
- *outnumbering men at all levels in these ministries except at the top decision-making stratas;*
- *responsible for much of the development of spiritual, theological and religious education and formation programs.*

4.5.9 **Other Areas of Women’s Participation in the Catholic Church**

While the major areas of women’s participation in the Church were as described above, other types of involvement named in the written submissions are listed in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below, in diminishing order in each category according to the number of times they were mentioned.

Table 4.4: Other Areas of Women’s Participation: Voluntary Roles

Area of participation	Types of participation
Home	• Provider of hospitality at home
Parish	• Ecumenical groups
	• Leaders of prayer and communion services
	• Family groups
	• Social justice groups
	• Voluntary pastoral associate
	• Mothers’ and children’s groups (including play groups)
	• Social and sporting groups
	• Participation in small Christian communities

Wider Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the wider society • Community service • Women's groups and organisations • Community organisations • Visitation • Work with ethnic communities • Workplace • Work with rural communities
Health and Social Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling roles and social welfare roles
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education roles • Other voluntary education roles • Theological student
Wider Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other diocesan agencies or commissions • Diocesan pastoral councils • Chaplaincy roles • Overseas missions • Marriage Encounter groups • Teams of Our Lady • National agencies or commissions • Pastoral formation student • Tertiary Catholic student groups
Religious Congregations of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other ministries of religious congregations • Education • Health care • Overseas missions • Rural communities

Table 4.5: Other Areas of Women's Participation: Professional Roles

Area of participation	Types of participation
Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other parish staff roles
Catholic Health and Social Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling and social welfare
Catholic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious Education teaching • School principals • Other educational roles • Other school administrators • Tertiary education • Theology lecturer • Adult education • Catholic Education Office

Wider Church

- Pastoral formation educator
 - Other professional roles
 - Diocesan agencies or commissions
 - Catholic organisations
 - National agencies or commissions
-

Other submissions referred to participation by women in education, health and welfare services and the wider Church without specifying whether the participation was voluntary or professional.

4.6 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

4.6.1 Greater Assistance and Support Sought for Women

The question of assistance and support currently offered to women received the least attention in the written submissions. A number of submissions did not respond to this question.

However, the overwhelming response to the question was that greater assistance and support were required for women in the Church. The following submission from a parish in Queensland is an illustration of the overall response:

It must be noted, however, that the assistance and support offered to women is not sufficient and can only be evaluated as a token effort by the Church hierarchy. It appears that the composition of the worshipping is such that 75% of congregations are female and yet all the power is concentrated in the hands of men.

Much pain and alienation is experienced as a result of exclusion from full participation. This strong feeling is illustrated in a group submission from a parish in a Victorian provincial city:

So it is, alas, that very little, if any, assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church in any influential way. An unnecessary burden of grief, anger, frustration and hopelessness has been thrust upon women's shoulders, a burden they are, by and large, and with regret, refusing to support any longer.

A man from Melbourne stressed the inadequate assistance given to women and the resulting alienation of women:

- *Not enough! It's still a boys' club. When Vatican II came out it was the female religious and teachers who were first to read and take in the full message. Some blokes (ie male religious) haven't read it yet!!*

- *The Church will alienate women if it continues to operate as it is now. I would counsel my daughters to be very very careful about involvement with the "boys' brigade" of the male religious. It would deny their full talents!*

A woman from Western Australia wrote:

However, the general experience as I "hear" it is that support is through necessity, not through conviction that women's participation is valued and valuable of itself. Bishops say they would like women helping in various ways but on a voluntary basis. This can be grossly unjust. Many women (and some men) have prepared themselves through study and pastoral courses to be part-time or full-time Parish/Diocesan Workers but cannot afford to work without some pay.

Support for Ancillary Roles but Lack of Encouragement for Leadership Roles

While it was felt that there was great support for ancillary roles, there was little or no encouragement for women to take on roles associated with leadership and decision-making. A group response from Waitara in New South Wales stated:

Women get full support to work in a voluntary capacity in roles men of the Church say we can have. These are the roles which the men do not want. [There is] almost nil support financially to educate ourselves for roles in ministry.

The lack of assistance for women to assume leadership roles was highlighted by a group response from Campsie in New South Wales:

Our group agreed that there was little encouragement or support for women to take leadership roles in the Church. In fact, quite the opposite, and often active discouragement is experienced.

Questions asked were:

- *How and how often does the Church take an active role in helping women who are involved in the care of our most afflicted brothers and sisters? ...*
- *What voice do carers have?*
- *Is there such a thing as Women's advisers to the Bishops/Cardinal on Women's Issues where women can feel confident that their request/complaint will be listened to, acted upon, without being vetted through a male panel?*

No Real Attempt to Formulate Policy Systematically

In general, assistance was experienced as "ad hoc". A man from New South Wales concluded his response in this way:

Generally however, it seems that "assistance" (whatever form it takes) is on an ad hoc basis. It would appear there has been no real attempt to formulate policy systematically.

The need for the formulation of policy was developed further by a man in the Australian Capital Territory:

What seems to be lacking is any recognition that, because of the subordinate position to which women have been assigned up till now, the Church needs to develop the equivalent of the affirmative action programs, and perhaps also of the equal opportunities legislation, used by the state in its endeavours to assist disadvantaged groups. The aim of such provisions should be to bring about a situation in which women can play a full part in the life of the Church on a basis of equality with men.

The development of effective programs will be difficult while the hierarchy and the clergy remain exclusively male. Given goodwill and commitment all round, however, it should be possible to take at least the first steps towards assigning women a position in the authority structure of the Church more commensurate with their numerical predominance among the active and church-going faithful.

Concerns about Underlying Assumptions of Church

Once again the issue was raised about any underlying assumptions of Church implicit in the question. A group of women in Perth responded in the following way:

By virtue of their baptism, women participate by right in the Church. This question seems to operate on the premise of the Church as an hierarchical structure with its perceived privileges that this idea of Church presents rather than the Vatican II understanding of the Church as "pilgrim people of God".

In a similar way, a Sydney woman stated:

I have real difficulty with this question and more precisely with the assumptions behind the question. Women are the Church as much as men so why does the Church need to offer them participation?

Particular Groups of Women require Special Assistance and Support

Many submissions noted particular groups of women who required special assistance and support. These women included mothers at home with children; single mothers; divorced women; single women; young women; women in pastoral ministry; the sick, the disabled and their carers; lesbian women; and women living in the country.

Lack of Support for Single Women

A lack of adequate support and acknowledgment of single women was noted. For example, a submission from a woman in New South Wales stated:

There is little that a single working woman can do under present parish structures. There are, and never have been, provisions made within parishes to accommodate single people, over the age of thirty. Most meetings and activities are held during the daytime. Much talent and administrative ability is lost to the Church.

This view was reinforced by women from a Brisbane parish:

We are both single and extremely conscious of how frequently we, and others like us, seem to be "invisible" in Church and in the view, generally, of the clergy. Somehow single women seem to lack any claim to holiness such as seems evident in religious and married women with children!

Plea from Divorced Women

A divorced middle-aged woman in a parish in Melbourne wrote of her experience:

My comment here, for support, would have to bring to your attention, a severe lack. Had it not been for my wonderful parish priest ... who helped me make a "new beginning" I would have floundered badly. I feel we (the Church) need for our daily health in all dimensions, a social organisation where divorced people can be themselves, let their hair down (its HARD WORK being a celibate divorced "practising" Catholic in the secular scene). We need the publicly approved imprimatur of our Church on such a group so that EVERYONE knows and accepts us for what we are – fully paid up members of His Body trying our best to walk with Him on the road we find ourselves, not by preference usually. In these times, it's a highway, not a back road, and needs facilities.

Need for Greater Involvement of Young Women

The need for greater involvement of the young was stressed. A mother of five young adult daughters spoke of her experience in a parish:

Taking a deep look at our parish structure the other day, I realised there is nothing there for the young. The young want to be involved (ours are because they play various musical instruments plus organ) but the girls said to me they wouldn't go if it wasn't for music – they don't want to be just an observer at church – and said that's why most of their friends had stopped going to Mass because they found after school they could not make a contribution to the service.

Small Minority Satisfied with the Current Assistance and Support

Only a small minority was satisfied with the current assistance and support offered to women. For example, a woman from New South Wales expressed her satisfaction with women's participation but was concerned about the involvement of men and boys:

I feel women get all the support and assistance necessary. I see many and varied opportunities for both men and women to be more actively involved in the Catholic Church (ask a priest if he needs help or support for a starter). As an active and committed older Catholic woman my concern is not for more women's participation but for men's and boys', we are seeing fewer men readers, singers, special ministers or altar servers.

I wonder are they feeling unwanted as their female counterparts are putting themselves forward taking over these roles and not encouraging their menfolk and boys to do so. Do they see our Church as a female domain, is this the reason for fewer Priestly Vocations?

4.6.2 Little Assistance and Support from the Official Church

The next major response was given in terms of the amount of assistance and support which was perceived to be given to women. In general, it was felt that only limited assistance and support or hardly any assistance and support were offered to women to participate in the Church. For example, a woman from Tasmania stated:

In my experience, there is little assistance – financial, physical or emotional support given to women by the hierarchy or clergy to participate in the Catholic Church in Australia.

4.6.3 Assistance from Other Women

Another dominant theme was that, where assistance was received, the source of the assistance and support came from other women, including support from women religious, women's groups, and the woman's own religious congregation. A group of women from Melbourne explained:

With a few impressive and welcome exceptions (eg Adelaide's Diocesan Pastoral Team and its recently established Church Ministry Program) minimal assistance and support are currently offered by the official Church. Groups such as ACLRI or WATAC give significant encouragement and hope. Most assistance and support for women in ministry has come from other women, usually religious or ex-religious, whose own theological and pastoral education has been funded by religious orders, not by the official or institutional Church. This source is set to reduce greatly as religious orders decrease in active personnel. The support that some dioceses offer to interested Catholics in terms of adult education has been reduced often in the face of budgetary constraints.

4.6.4 Support from the Clergy

The clergy was also named as main source of support with special reference to the parish priest. It was noted that some priests and Bishops were supportive and

encouraging, although this support varies depending on the priest, parish or diocese. This response from a Sydney woman illustrates the point:

There is no guarantee that it [assistance] will be consistent from one appointed pastor to the next. Parishioners moving to a new area often find their past experience of participation will not be repeated.

4.6.5 Assistance to Participate in Parish Lay Ministries

Where encouragement did occur, assistance was offered principally for women to participate in parish lay ministries, as indicated in a submission from a woman in Melbourne:

It is hard to determine overall support coming from [the] hierarchy – but at the Parish level I feel women are given support and encouraged to participate in the [following] tasks. Parish work: secretarial, cleaning, administration, catechetical, Readers, Special Ministers, music.

4.6.6 Other Responses Concerning Current Assistance and Support Offered to Women

While the major issues concerning assistance and support offered to women in the Church were as described above, other responses to the question of current assistance and support given in the written submissions are listed below, in diminishing order according to the frequency of response, under the following headings: quantity of assistance and support; nature of assistance and support; source of assistance and support.

Quantity of Assistance and Support Offered to Women

Statements received included the following: lot of assistance and support; adequate assistance and support; very little support and assistance offered to lay women; no support or assistance offered; spasmodic assistance and support offered; not aware of any specifically for women; as much support and assistance as offered to lay men; more support and assistance than previously offered; no support or assistance needed; difficulties with access to support and assistance due to location; no support for women who do things informally; difficulties with access to support and assistance due to lack of child care provisions; no support for separated or divorced women; more support and assistance than necessary; no support for mothers of disabled children.

Nature of Assistance and Support Offered to Women

Statements received included the following: adult education available; other ways of providing assistance or support; theological training available; pastoral training available; publications/conferences/seminars; assistance, support and encouragement to undertake further study; funded training offered; support to

undertake faith education roles in the home, school or with adults; assistance, support and encouragement to undertake leadership roles; assistance, support and encouragement to undertake ancillary roles or menial tasks; education and training undertaken at women's own expense; assistance, support and encouragement to participate in Diocesan Church committees or groups; support for motherhood and caring roles; promotion of collaborative ministry; assistance, support and encouragement to share in decision-making; sacramental programs; help with childcare provided; work arrangements offered by Church employers that help people harmonise their work and family responsibilities.

Sources of Assistance and Support Offered to Women

Support was received from: groups and movements; parish pastoral workers (pastoral associates); husband/family; spiritual directors, chaplains and retreat directors.

4.7 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

4.7.1 Greater Participation Was Sought for Women in the Church

The question concerning barriers to women's participation drew the greatest response. Indeed, the great majority of all the written submissions sought greater participation for women and the removal of the barriers described below.

This strong response is an indication of the serious and significant concern expressed in the written submissions about current barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia.

A small minority of the responses supported the current participation of women. A minority group indicated satisfaction with current ways of participation, emphasising the importance of women's role in the home. A married woman in Victoria stated:

I do not believe there are barriers put against women participating in the Catholic Church but there are barriers put up against women following their vocation as mothers and a lack of recognition of the tremendous value of the work done in the home economy by women.

The submission from a woman from Queensland is another illustration of the minority group who saw no barriers to women's participation in the Church:

No barriers. The Pope has instructed us on what women can do and not do in the Church. Please Bishops, let the faithful know what our Holy Father is saying. There is no such thing as making up our own minds once the Vicar of Christ has spoken. Obedience should be strongly encouraged otherwise disunity will flourish and turmoil will surely follow as it has in other Churches.

The overall pattern of response of the written submissions is reflected in the following statement from a parish in Queensland:

A minority felt that within our parish there was no barrier to women's participation, with full invitations to help and participate to all, male and female. However mostly it was felt that the historical pattern and the current structure do create barriers to participation. They do prevent women holding certain positions in the Church.

4.7.2 Patriarchal System of the Church

By far the greatest number of barriers to women's participation in the Church identified in the written submissions were related to Church structures and practices, in particular the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of the Church.

The patriarchal system was identified as the greatest underlying barrier. A group of women in Moss Vale, New South Wales, wrote: "We feel that the biggest barrier to women's participation in the Catholic Church is the 2000-year patriarchal tradition of the Church and its deep-rooted mistrust of women". A group of women from Flaxton, Queensland expanded this view:

The historical perspective to this issue is the most important one. The Bible and Church doctrine reflect the culture of Biblical times, which are not appropriate for our culture today. Thus the patriarchy and misogyny of Biblical times is still the barrier to equality in the Church now. This understanding is seen as central to the exclusion of women from participation in the Church. All other comments should be considered in the context of the socio-political structure of Biblical times, which created our religious doctrine, which is the basis of our interpretation of Scripture.

It is the ongoing influence of the traditional stance which is halting progress in the fight for equality. The widespread lack of education and awareness is drastically hindering change.

It was felt that revision of the patriarchal tradition was required through theological reflection on the experience of women in the Church in the light of the life and mission of Jesus. A group of women in South Australia noted:

There is an ongoing need for Theological Reflection based on the experience of women in the Church. The question of patriarchy in the tradition must be open to revision, so that our Christian heritage can be liberated from what is oppressive and discriminatory. If we looked to the life and mission of Jesus as the scriptural endorsement for the fuller participation of women in leadership and pastoral ministry, we would be compelled to free the biblical message from patriarchal perspectives. Such selective perspectives have prevented an understanding of Scripture in the social and cultural context of its time and

consequently have limited our understanding of Jesus' attitude to the participation of women in the context of his time.

Along with many other submissions, a parish group in Melbourne highlighted the concerns related to the continued patriarchal reading of the Scriptures:

Continued patriarchal reading of the Scriptures also alienates us. There is an astounding lack of recognition of the excellent biblical scholarship which finds nothing in Scripture that is contrary to the full participation of women in every area of Church life. Women are insulted at being expected to listen to sermons from male clergy who make no effort to deepen their understanding in this regard and who often show a complete ignorance of historical perspectives.

4.7.3 Hierarchical Structure of the Church

The hierarchical structure of the Church was frequently discussed in conjunction with the issue of patriarchy and seen to be oppressive and alienating to women and also to many men. A man from Queensland wrote:

The greatest barriers to women's participation, and in fact many men's participation as well, are structural and attitudinal.

- *Structural: The decision-making process, because of the precepts of canon law, remains with the hierarchy of priests and bishops – all celibate males. While participation from the people is “allowed”, it's a discretionary decision which perpetuates a patriarchal exclusive structure.*
- *Attitudinal: The feminine is not acceptable to the hierarchy. This does not refer to only women but also to those men who have chosen not to remain celibate. It would seem that anything to do with the “softness” of family life, male/female relationships and sexuality is anathema to the present Church structure. It is a total denial of the feminine side of humanity and it enslaves men as well as women.*

Church structures were seen to relegate women to subordinate roles in the Church. A male medical practitioner from New South Wales emphasised this point:

There are major barriers to the participation of women in the Church. The structures and organisation of the Church are such that women are confined to a subordinate role. Women make up the majority of members of congregations, and do a disproportionate share of the actual work of the Church, yet clearly have a subordinate role. Leadership is denied to them (except in limited situations where groups of women have created their own structures within the Church, but even here the hierarchy tries to have as much control and governance as they can).

This subordinate position of women in the hierarchy of the Church was highlighted further by a woman from Bathurst:

At the Synod for Religious in Rome a couple of years ago, one woman Religious was allowed to represent Australia, spoke only for about six minutes and was not allowed a vote. Strange indeed when there are more women Religious than men Religious!

A priest from New South Wales stressed the intransigence of the official Church's position concerning democratic forms of government:

If women experience the freedom to exercise authority and leadership at the highest level in their civic and social life, then the Church will appear as an anomaly and anachronism. Just as there has been evolution and development in the way various societies are governed, particularly the liberal/democratic societies, many people expect that there would be similar developments in Church structures and government. Many see the present Church structures as being a denial of the full implications of the Incarnation, and a fixation on outmoded and unnecessary forms of government which have served the Church in the past but which are no longer appropriate. The grudging and very gradual acceptance by Church leaders of democratic forms of civic government indicates that it will be a long time before similar allowances are made with regard to Church government. The greatest barrier to women's full participation in the Church is the official Church's intransigence with regard to democracy.

4.7.4 Negative Attitude of Some Priests to Women

The negative attitude on the part of some of the clergy, especially parish priests, was experienced as a significant barrier to the participation of women. A woman from Victoria wrote:

Given the overwhelmingly priest centred nature of current Catholicism, the inadequacy of many priests to seriously engage with the changes in women's consciousness and lives is an important barrier to women's participation. Whilst I believe that many priests work very hard and long hours, and genuinely wish to "do good", embedded centuries-old practices of power and control which they exercise over the life of the laity mitigate against their own development in self knowledge, self forgetfulness and a deep prayer life. All too often they operate out of their own unexamined mindsets which are frequently patronising to women, particularly women who have stepped outside the Catholic woman stereotype. Most men, when confronted with the changes in the gender relations such as we have seen in the West in the last thirty years, are fearful. My experience has been that men change in their behaviour to women

when someone they love or work with demands that they change. The integration of this at deep attitudinal levels comes much more slowly.

Many stories were told of the negativity of some priests and of clerical chauvinism. A married couple in New South Wales gave “two up-to-date” examples which they believe are “duplicated in similar matters, many times over in our country”:

1. *Promotion of this submission paper at the parish level has been brief and lacking enthusiasm, not only in our parish, but in a number of other parishes where we have been for Sunday Mass during the past few weeks. It has been necessary for us to attend our parish office, during their working hours, to obtain a photocopy of the form. Other have told us that they have not been able to obtain a copy.*
2. *In our parish the Sisters of St Joseph have established a house at the far end of the parish where there is considerable ongoing urban development. One sister has been providing pastoral care in this area of the parish for the past few years. She has been reaching out to the lonely and the influx of Asians, particularly women, who are very vulnerable and isolated because of language difficulties, with outstanding success. We have only just learnt that the original contract will not be renewed. Whether or not other arrangements are being made is “Top Secret”.*

Another woman gave details of her “deeply distressing” experience:

I cannot express how deeply distressing it is to experience a situation where you are prevented from doing a ministry in a parish, especially when you can see the real need is not being met. Some religious women will try again when invited to another parish, but have another bad experience. This year has been so bad for me that I will never offer myself for service within the Church again. This makes me feel deeply upset from many aspects, besides the fact that I have received so much formation and education for this form of ministry. ... I now know that no matter how cautious you are in the beginning, the problem occurs when the woman is taking on a role of responsibility, for example, to co-ordinate the sacrament programs, which requires some delegation of authority by the parish priest.

4.7.5 Discrimination in the Church on the Basis of Gender

Discrimination against women on the basis of gender was discussed as a serious and fundamental barrier to women’s participation. The lack of equality of women and their exclusion from some areas of the Church’s ministry and governance, sometimes described in terms of the “sin of sexism”, were a source of great pain and distress to many women. A Queensland woman described her experience of discrimination in the following way:

Being a woman in the Roman Catholic Church is for many of us a most painful and distressing experience. It is in the Church that we experience the greatest exclusion on the basis of our gender, and we are given frequent reminders in Church practice that, despite various rhetoric, we are not considered to be created equally in the Image of God as are males. . . .

The Christian mandate for inclusion and equality was clearly articulated in Gal. 3:28: "All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus". In its early years the Jesus community had to struggle to resolve the first division; it took many centuries before it would confront the second and declare slavery immoral. We are now at the time of confronting the sin of the third division, the sin of sexism.

As with each of the previous two periods of confronting the ways we've failed to be true to the Galatians mandate, it is necessarily a time of huge struggle as old practices and beliefs are declared wrong. May we have the courage to "hang in" through the pain of the struggle and evolve a Church more humble and more true to the vision of Jesus.

The gender question was raised in terms of both theology and justice. A man from New South Wales, wrote:

At the theological level, women, no less than men, are created in the image of God. Women, no less than men, are called to "share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity". Women, no less than men, participate in the benefits of Christ's salvation and are recipients of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To exclude women from some areas of the Church's ministry and governance, therefore, seems to me to be an injustice to them and an offence against God. It is also, however, a grave injustice to the members of the Catholic community at large, who are thus deprived of the qualities of ministry and leadership that might be contributed by women.

4.7.6 Other Barriers Associated with Church Structures and Practices

A range of other barriers associated with Church structures and practices were noted including the following:

Need for Role Models, Especially for Young Women

Such barriers included the need for lay women as role models, especially for younger women. A submission from a group in Sydney stated:

Few models of women are offered to the young within the contemporary Church. Though some notable exceptions are evident, too few women fulfil the function of spiritual direction within parishes and schools, few offer guidance in matters

pertaining to the struggles of young women in our society, few are seen holding responsible positions to encourage and offer the young the hope of better participation. Without appropriate role models, women are apprehensive to put themselves forward for positions within parish life for fear of rejection.

Failure to Identify the Changing Role of Women in Society as a "Sign of the Times"

A recurrent theme was that the changing role of women in society is not recognised by the Church as a "Sign of the Times". It was felt that the Church should be leading the way concerning the role and status of women. The gap between the Church and society in this regard was experienced as a significant barrier. For example, a parish group from Ballarat, Victoria, highlighted this concern:

The changing role of women in society is not recognised in the Church as a "Sign of the Times". ... For the young women (or young people), who have grown up in a rapidly changing world, the Church seems to them to offer little opportunity for growth, development or involvement, and therefore no incentive to get involved.

Discrimination against the Divorced and Remarried

It was felt that the Church is often seen to discriminate against the divorced and remarried, and those who are unable to accept the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. A woman in South Australia described the problem of the divorced and remarried in the following way:

There is a major problem, however, if I am married, divorced and remarried. Then the Church says I cannot be a full member of the Church. I cannot receive the Eucharist. I am excluded. If I murder someone and in time am reconciled to God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I am immediately received back into the bosom of the Church. Is a mistake in marriage worse than homicide? Is the Church a vehicle of the unlimited forgiveness and mercy of God? Or will it be seen as a harsh, condemning institution?

When I look at the story of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at the well in John's Gospel, I am puzzled and angered by the attitude of the Church. Jesus' response to her was to first build a relationship with her, to offer her living water. The fact that she has had five husbands does not deter him from teaching her and encouraging her to "worship in spirit and truth". And it is she who begins to recognise that this may be "the Christ". On the strength of this meeting and her testimony to the people, many Samaritans believed and "recognised that he really is the saviour of the world".

How often have we denied people this chance encounter, this opportunity of grace? Does the Church have the right to deny the people of God their access to

the saving word and to the channels of grace? How can we speak of unconditional love and forgiveness when we exclude some from the Table of the Lord?

Sexual Scandals and the Refusal of Bishops to Listen

The failure to address sexual scandals, harassment and sexual injustice in the Church was experienced as a serious barrier along with the Church's reluctance to reflect on the underlying causes of the problem. The gap between pastoral practice and official Church teaching, particularly in the area of sexual morality, was noted. A submission from a married couple from New South Wales highlighted the issue of clergy sexual abuse involving exploitative relationships between priests and adult women. It was noted that the sexualising of the relationship was normally at the instigation of the priest at a time of personal crisis or difficulty in the life of the woman:

We would submit that such sexual relationships between priest and women in their pastoral care represents a serious impediment to these women's participation in the Church. Frequently these are women, who before their sexual involvement have shown a high level of commitment to the Church and have demonstrated some degree of leadership potential. The effects of their relationships are such as to render them incapable of contributing to the life of the Church, significantly marginalising them and often causing a loss of faith.

Inability of the Official Church to Listen to Women's Voices

The inability of institutional Church to listen to women's voices or to listen to criticism was lamented. For example, a group from Melbourne stated:

We believe there are few forums within the official Church for women's voices to be heard. Women are not always accepted in Church circles and they are dealt with in patronising ways. There is often an inability by those in authority to listen to women's pastoral experience and vision.

A group of women from Sydney expressed their grave concern: "The inability of the institutional Church to listen to criticism, even that given in love, is not only a barrier but a death wish".

Sacramental Limitations of Women Chaplains

Significant sacramental limitations were emphasised for those involved in pastoral care of the sick and dying and for those working in prisons, especially their inability to anoint the sick and absolve. For example, a submission from one group of women in Western Australia noted:

The denial of the pastoral function for sacramental recognition of God's forgiveness and spiritual healing in reconciliation and anointing, to suitable women, limits the work of women chaplains.

4.7.7 Lack of Participation in Decision-making Processes of the Church

The exclusion of women from the decision-making processes of the Church was seen as a most significant barrier to full participation of women and a serious impediment to sound decision-making in the Church. A group submission from a parish in Queensland stated:

The major barrier is that women continue to be slotted into a cultural role which denies them appropriate decision-making rights and which does not acknowledge the variety of individual talents and experiences. We believe a fundamental paradigm shift is needed so that women will be viewed as people of the Spirit whose completion reflects a feminine expression of God.

The centralisation of decision-making in the Church represented a further barrier for women. A man from the Australian Capital Territory highlighted this point:

The centralisation of decision-making must also be classed as a barrier to the participation of women. As long as the Roman Curia persists in imposing a uniformity of practice across the entire Western Church, the initiatives needed to respond to the needs of the Church in Australia will continue to be inhibited by an imperfect appreciation of the local situation. In particular, measures to facilitate the increased participation of women, which might be perfectly acceptable in Australia, may be inhibited by decisions taken against the background of situations in other countries which are completely irrelevant to Australia. Moreover, the sheer bureaucratic inertia which arises in a system of world-wide uniformity inhibits response to urgent needs for change.

Further, it was strongly felt that women were excluded from decision-making even concerning issues which directly affected them, especially moral teachings on issues such as sexuality, contraception, marriage, divorce and abortion. A man from Queensland wrote:

*One of the main barriers to women's participation in the Church is the obvious one: they have no part in the decision-making process. For example, the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, determines the directions of women's lives: their control of their own fertility; their working life; their socio-economic status; their dependence on the goodwill of men. Rules such as this were made without consultation, without the significant voice of women who have to deal with the practicalities of sexuality and fertility. While women are excluded from such arbitrary decisions there can be no true "discipleship of equals". While women are not part of the decision which controls their lives, there can be no justice.*

4.7.8 Women's Contribution Undervalued

Many of the submissions emphasised that women's contributions were neither valued nor acknowledged, as stated by a group from Brisbane:

The whole feminine experience and dimension of Church is disregarded and women's initiative discouraged. There is little genuine respect and valuing of the gifts and abilities of women and women's work. This is demonstrated by the patronising attitude of many administrators.

A group of women from the outer western Sydney parishes spoke of the lack of acknowledgment of women and their work as a barrier to participation:

There is a great lack of ACKNOWLEDGMENT of people's services; at the moment we are given lip-service – senior servers, eucharistic ministers, pastoral associates etc. This is a barrier to our ongoing and full participation.

The inability of the male hierarchical Church even to recognise or interpret properly women's experience was expressed as hurtful and alienating. A woman from Melbourne wrote:

The barrier is that the male "authority" is unable to recognise or interpret properly my experience. My whole life has been one prevented from its full flourishing by being kept in the role of serving the Church in a subservient position. The level of struggle is putting a strain on my being in the Church. I feel proud that I am one of the 60% of women graduates in theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity. I represent the common profile of the typical student – a woman between the age of 35–50 years. My study is totally self-funded. My study is not recognised as being a resource for the official Church. It does, however, inform my volunteer involvement.

The alienation of women from the Church and the resulting loss of their talents and service at a time of great need in the Church were highlighted by many participants. For example, a submission from Western Australia stated:

Because of lack of recognition of women in the Church, women are now spending more time attaining material and corporate goals and do not have enough time or energy left to push through barriers in the Church.

4.7.9 Church's Teaching on the Ordination of Women

The exclusion of women from ordination was seen as a major obstacle to the full participation of women. Both the Church's teaching on the ordination of woman and the ban on its discussion were experienced as significant barriers and aroused strong feelings of alienation and resentment. For example, a woman from Victoria stated:

First I have as a matter of truth and reasoning to state the one of which we are not permitted to speak: the ordination of Catholic women to the Diaconate or Priesthood. This springing from no idle personal desire but from:

- i. a deep faith conviction*
- ii. an ignorance of any theology barrier to this*
- iii. an awareness of our basic rights as human beings and a resentment at the infringement ... on my freedom of speech as a thinking, reasoning being, the removal of the medieval right and responsibility of "disputatio". As lecturer, student and teacher, I believe that in any context debate is healthy, silencing is unhealthy and repressive.*

The exclusion of women from the ordained ministry was interpreted as a clear sign that women are seen as inferior to men, "second class citizens", not worthy or important enough to be ordained. A priest from a religious order in New South Wales wrote:

This Church is the only organisation/people for whom the significant leadership and decision-making positions are all excluded from women. There are seven sacraments available to men – only six for women. Excluding ordination from women symbolically teaches the world that the official Church considers women in some way less human than men – less able to bear the burden of acting in Christ's place. It images and legitimates the idea that women are worth less than men. The misuse of theology and scripture, and fundamentalist understandings of tradition, are used to keep women in second place. For example, we say scripture doesn't endorse women's ordination – we are bound by it. Scripture does endorse married clergy (eg Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus) and the Church is not bound by that. We are very selective in our understanding of scripture and tradition.

As the following quotation from a woman in country Victoria indicates, compulsory celibacy can also be seen as a "slur on women":

Compulsory celibacy is a barrier because it is a slur on women, as if a wife might prevent a priest following Christ. Maybe it's a slur on married men too. Voluntary celibacy is a treasure.

The exclusion of women from the priesthood was seen as a denial of women's right by Baptism to full participation in the Church, as well as a denial of their gifts and talents in the service of Christ and the Church at a time of great need. A man from Victoria lamented:

The major barrier is the current position of not ordaining women to the priesthood. ... This exclusion weakens the Church at a time when it is crying out for people to join the priesthood.

It denies the Church the balancing, enhancing, completing insights that women can bring to decision-making to policy and strategy formulation. It underlines the archaic world-view of the Church when survival calls for triumphantly grasping the 21st century.

The failure of the official Church to recognise that men and women are “all labourers in the vineyard” was a source of distress. Consideration being given by some dioceses to bringing in priests from overseas to serve in Australia was felt to be most inappropriate. A woman from Victoria stated: “Decisions to import foreign priests to plug gaps, rather than to use lay women and men, are culturally wrong”.

The Church’s inability to sustain or even discuss its argument on the question of women’s ordination in the light of reputable Catholic scholarship constituted a significant barrier to many participants. For example, a group submission from Queensland argued:

Theologians around the world, both women and men, have raised serious issues and questions in relation to the papal position. This current survey provides the opportunity to reiterate some of those issues and to call upon the Australian Bishops to take up the question of the ordination of women which has clearly not been resolved in that it has not been received by the faithful as expressive of their Catholic belief.

- (a) It has been established by reputable Catholic scholars that the question cannot be established on a scriptural basis. ...*
- (b) A critical examination of the biblical and theological principles operative in the documents needs to be undertaken. ...*
- (c) For the Church’s position to be credible it must enter into dialogue with the wealth of scholarship being undertaken in relation to women’s ministry in early Christianity and throughout its history. ...*
- (d) The claim to “constant tradition” needs to be re-examined.*
- (e) The claim “in persona Christi” raises theological and theological anthropological questions which need further exploration. ...*

The Church’s current position in relation to ordination singles out gender rather than any other characteristic as constitutive of the human and especially in relation to Jesus. It universalises and divinises male gender in its claim that only the male can represent Church in the celebration of the Eucharist and hence denies the claim that women and men are equal in the order of creation.

4.7.10 Tradition of Social, Professional and Religious Inferiority Concerning Women

A long tradition of social, professional as well as religious inferiority concerning women was experienced as a serious and ongoing barrier. For

example, a woman from Melbourne stressed that the gender bias has become institutionalised and that attempts to remove gender barriers in the Church would bring benefits for both men and women:

There is gender bias within the Church that is institutionalised. This is partly due to societal attitudes, particularly in the Australian context. Australia has one of the most sex-segregated workforces in the western world ... and the Australian context contributes to the sexual division of labour within the Church and the bias against women as active participants within the Church. There is also an historical bias against women which is centuries old, both in the religious and the societal dimensions of women's and men's lives.

This bias affects men as well as women by prescribing limited, acceptable roles for both genders, particularly within the sexual division of labour. Complexity and diversity in both genders have historically been discouraged. Any attempt to remove barriers to women's participation within the Church must bring benefits for both men and women.

The failure of the Church to distinguish cultural norms and the Gospel message has kept women in subservient roles. For example, a woman from Sydney argued:

Despite historical evidence that the early Christians gave leadership roles in the Church to women ..., cultural norms quickly tempered the original freedom. ... By the fourth century it was even being debated whether women could image God. ... The non-differentiation between cultural norms and the Gospel message continues, as it has done throughout history, to keep women bound to subservient roles within the Church, in the mistaken belief that such cultural norms are part of revelation.

4.7.11 Systems and Structures of the Church Not in Touch with the Contemporary Needs and Experience of People

A major way in which the Church was perceived as out of touch with the contemporary needs and experience of people was related to its failure even to attempt to understand or appreciate the lives and experiences of women. A woman from New South Wales wrote:

Women's experience of the practice of Catholicism is a gendered experience and as such it is a fractured experience. Recently a gathering of women who were drawing up a response to this survey found that "one of the strongest critiques brought forward and affirmed by all present was that the Church, as women encounter it, is completely out of touch with their lives and experience. It speaks a language, uses symbols and metaphors, and evokes models which are removed from women's lives". Gendered experiences are compounded incidences and thus have a cumulative effect.

A woman from Melbourne elaborated this point:

*Women's spirituality and their experience are not reflected in the Church.
[There is an:]*

- *Inability of celibate, male clergy to understand or relate to women's experiences, feelings and concerns.*
- *Inability of celibate, male clergy to understand vital moral issues relating to married life, particularly contraception and domestic violence.*
- *Inability of celibate, male clergy to come to terms with the issue of sexual abuse.*
- *Inability of celibate, male clergy to demand an end to discrimination against women in the Church.*

In summary, a woman from Wagga Wagga noted:

The Church is out of touch by failing to appreciate women as informed, mature and responsible adults with, through Baptism, a God-given right, responsibility and dignity to participate in the Catholic Church.

The contrast between the more just and affirming attitude to women of the wider society, including the secular workplace, and the attitude of the Church was frequently interpreted in terms of an issue of social justice. For example, a grandmother from Pymble, New South Wales, wrote:

The Church should be at the forefront of Social Justice. It is only now investigating women's role (certainly not yet ready to grant equality). Young women are not interested in discussion that for them has already been decided in society. My concern is for my children and grandchildren – the Church remains irrelevant in their lives. Their spiritual inheritance will dissipate.

A group of women from Victoria stated: "While society in general has seen and acknowledged the changing place of women, the institutional Church resists, and in some cases condemns, the new roles women are playing".

The lack of accountability in Church processes was also named as a way in which the Church is out of touch with sound practices in contemporary Australian life, as illustrated by the following quotation:

I believe we have a major problem with a system that has no process for evaluating performance. To the lay person (of either gender) there appears to be little or no accountability on the part of bishops and clergy. Our parents may have accepted that situation, but my generation will not.

The failure to address issues of concern to women, and also to men, was sometimes seen in terms of omission rather than commission. A woman in Queensland told of her experience:

One of the most noticeable barriers, more by its omission than commission, is the failure in sermons to address some of the most important issues that face women. Usually issues that are important for women are important for men as well. Sometimes I think the reluctance to address issues from the pulpit springs from the desire not to offend people. . . . I have never heard a sermon against racism. Although racism is not specifically a women's issue, it does affect many Indigenous women and women from non English speaking background. . . . [Such] issues should be addressed using research, reasoned debate and the pastoral care model for solutions.

4.7.12 Male-dominated Church Culture

The male domination of the Church was experienced as another major barrier for women and often linked with the future survival of the Church. For example, a man from Queensland expressed his concern:

A Church that has the core rituals solely conducted by males, where the Gospel and the events of our time are interpreted solely by males, where the older laity have been able to maintain attitudes about gender that were acceptable four decades ago, and so on, is not going to hold the attention of young women.

The preservation of male domination, itself an historic phase of the culture into which Jesus was born, cannot be justified in these times in our culture. Women will not tolerate it and the refusal of Church leadership to deal with the issue at the highest level is retrograde and risks the very survival of the Church in coming decades.

A submission in the form of a letter from a woman in Queensland is an example of a heart-felt plea "from the grass-roots level" and highlights the experience of the maleness of the Church and its effects:

As a woman with a strong Catholic background, I feel alienated by the maleness of the Church, and excluded by the language used in the liturgy. The simple fact is that I would attend the parish church if its structure reflected the reality of life. The historical Church's power of men over women and children must be removed in the light of ongoing Revelation. Gender equity and social justice debates have raised today's consciousness.

I am a mother of four children aged seven to thirteen years, and because I don't attend parish church, nor do they. This is such a typical situation. Recently I attended my twenty-five year school reunion and this was one topic of news-swapping. Not one woman from that year twelve class any longer goes to Sunday Mass, and as a result, nor do their children. This is not to say I don't attend Mass. I love the Eucharist and sometimes can attend weekly – but as a weekday event . . .

In spite of my sadness for the direction the Church is taking on women, I remain intensely interested in religious matters. I am two-thirds of the way through an Associate Diploma in Theological Studies ... However my spirituality has left the Church.

I believe other women have received God-sent vocations to become priests and I feel the Church desperately needs them. My letter deliberately doesn't go into the historical and cultural reasons for the status quo – these are already well documented by scholars and writers. Rather, I make a plea from the grass-roots level for a gentle revolution on the issue of women in the Church.

A group submission from South Australia noted the feelings of being overwhelmed by “an all male Church”:

In our discussions, a number of women expressed feelings of alienation from the traditional Church. They described being overwhelmed by experiences such as concelebrations of the Eucharist by a large group of the all male priesthood.

4.7.13 Entrenched Ideas Which Are Resistant to Change

Attitudes resistant to change on the part of the clergy and laity, including women, were identified as further barriers to women's participation. A group from Victoria wrote:

Clerical and lay conservatism hinders the growth of the Church as a response to the signs of the time. There are vested interests in maintaining the status quo, both for the clergy whose careers depend on it, and for those members of the clergy and laity who are uncomfortable with all of us making choices and decisions based on our rights and responsibilities as Christ's Faithful. ...

Educated and capable women in roles outside the domestic arena are seen as a threat by many who are not familiar with working in relationship with them. This results, in many parishes, in a lack of readily-available information on current educational opportunities and support available.

Of greater concern is that, although many women are now undertaking further education in theology, canon law, spirituality and pastoral care, there is little place for their talents and wisdom in today's Church.

In a similar way, a group from Townsville expressed the following concerns and questions:

Change is not always willingly accepted, either by the community at large or by the hierarchy. This can make it difficult for women to take on non-traditional roles. It can also discourage both men and women from making the most of educational opportunities.

4.7.14 Church's Traditional Teachings Concerning Women

Many of the traditional Church teachings concerning women were a source of much alienation. For example, a submission from a woman from Sydney stated:

Recent Vatican pronouncements on contraception, abortion, ordination seem to me unnecessarily harsh and essentialist in tone. The return to non-inclusive language seems to me to be as foolish as it is insulting.

There are other major concerns though in moral theology, especially with regard to sexuality. The Church's teachings with regard to women have increasingly come under attack as being out of touch with women's experience, as well as fundamentalist in Scriptural interpretation and built on questionable philosophical and theological principles. The seepage from the Church of once devout Catholic women, many of them among my friends, is a more serious crisis than many Church people realise.

Finally most Churchmen in my experience seem not to be touched by the incredible paradigm shifts in theology, science and all areas of knowledge. That they do not take the Christian feminist movement seriously is thus as inevitable as it is serious.

A parish group submission from Melbourne highlighted "emotional" barriers to women:

Attitudes to the body and sexuality have a strong misogynous basis. Pronouncements on such matter by celibate males lack credibility for many of us. Women have been pressured into accepting male emotional perspectives by clergy who have been isolated from mainstream life and have little understanding of the female emotional landscape. Teachings seem to be based on the medieval "whore vs saint" model and perpetuate the Platonic, not Christian, dichotomy between body and spirit. Official teachings re matters concerning sexuality and relationships are at odds with women's understanding of themselves and the Christian call to wholeness and fullness of life.

The portrayal of women as "whores and temptresses or as mothers (preferably virgin mothers)" or as nuns was frequently noted. It was felt that there is no room for "sexy" women in the Church. Often saints were presented as models of weakness and denial of sexuality. Faulty Mariology, which presented images of Mary inconsistent with the Gospels, was also highlighted. Not only were such images based on inadequate understandings of Scripture, but they were also found to be lacking relevance and inspiration for women today.

4.7.15 Decision-making Reserved to Clerics

That decision-making is reserved for clerics only was considered a barrier. It was felt that a badly-needed balance in the development of sound decisions

was required: "God made them male AND female, and this balance is desperately needed within the Church and its functioning". The inability or unwillingness of the clergy to accept women's participation meant that lay men as well as all women were excluded from decision-making. For example, a woman from country Victoria stated that the following were barriers to women's participation:

- *Present Church structures – all women and lay men are locked out of decision-making.*
- *Many clerics are unable/unwilling to accept participation of women and they (the clerics) have the absolute say.*

4.7.16 Clergy's Fear of Women's Participation

It was felt that fear of women and their participation was a serious impediment to a more inclusive Church based on the vision of Jesus Christ and the early Church. A woman from Melbourne suggested:

It is clear the current Church hierarchy would rather see the faithful without the celebration of the Eucharist than admit the possibility that Jesus the Christ was the symbol of all humanity and not only one part of it. Silencing discussion, prohibiting dialogue, are not worthy of the Spirit of Christ – they are the hallmarks of a deep fear. I would even suggest that they are stances of those who know, deep in their subconscious, that the evolution of spiritual consciousness is against them, but who are incapable of the inner freedom which would allow such profound trust.

The clergy's fear of educated women was frequently noted, as in the following submission from a woman in New South Wales:

One difficulty is that in recent years, women as a numbered group have probably become more educated in theology and ecclesiology than men – they have made it their business to do so. ... There are many informed women in our parish, but this seems to create insecurity in men who have not kept up with growth in the Church.

It was felt that the clergy "are far more comfortable with women who are submissive, passive and unquestioning". Fear of women "as occasions of sin" was also mentioned.

Fear among the clergy of being "reprimanded, demoted or excommunicated" was also noted:

The lack of understanding of the needs and gifts of women seems to foster a fear of change and growth among the clergy. Among those who are more enlightened among the clergy there is constraint lest they be reprimanded, demoted or excommunicated.

A woman from Western Australia stated:

Priests need to understand their training, their fears, their celibacy and their identity in order to allow shared leadership to take place. Originally priests were the only educated people or best educated. This is no longer true leading to fear and identity crises in clergy. Until this is owned by priests and bishops, women will be seen only as a threat – this needs to be out in the open.

4.7.17 Few Opportunities to Participate in Leadership of the Church

Few or no opportunities for women to participate in leadership roles in the Church represented major barriers for participation. A group submission from Ferntree Gully, Victoria, set an historical framework for their discussion of this issue:

Historically, women were pushed out of leadership after the Romanisation of the Church in the 4th century. This has created a 1700 year legacy and tradition of male role models in most areas of Church leadership.

Women's current invisibility in leadership at the ceremonial and spokesperson level was stressed. There were concerns raised as to the lack of opportunities for women to take up positions of responsibility within the hierarchical structure of the Church. The male dominance of key leadership positions was seen as a most prevalent barrier. Particular concern was expressed about the lack of role models of women in leadership for girls and young women. A group from Melbourne stressed this latter point:

Girls and young women often see no relevance of the Church to their experience of daily life, including in the area of the place of women in the Church. They are educated to believe in the equality and complementary talents of men and women, and see only inconsistency in the teaching of the institutional Church in this area, particularly in the exclusion of women from leadership roles.

4.7.18 Lack of Inclusive Religious Imagery and Language

The use of exclusive religious imagery and language elicited much discussion and depth of feeling. It was seen as a failure to draw on the richness of the Christian understanding of God; to impoverish Christian spirituality for both women and men; to be demeaning to women and girls "made in the image and likeness of God"; to be out of touch with sound insights of the twentieth century; to be an issue of justice; and to lag behind society rather than provide a lead.

While there was much reference in the submissions to the use of exclusive social language as a barrier to women's participation, it should be noted that the most frequently mentioned concern related to the lack of inclusive religious imagery and language. If the number of references to the current use of exclusive

religious and social language were put together, they would represent the third greatest barrier to women's participation after the patriarchal system of the Church and its hierarchical structure. However, while many submissions referred to the use of both exclusive social and religious language, many others focused on one form of exclusive language only. The following response from a woman in New South Wales, is an illustration of many of the responses:

The dominant language of Liturgy, prayer, theology and morality is patriarchal and not simply in the English gender referents. The whole structure of the language bespeaks of exclusion rather than inclusion (and not ONLY of women). The language used to talk of God is almost always "male". Feminine images and language for God is still largely treated as a joke by many priests and bishops. Language is what carries culture and the culture of the Church is male.

A woman from Queensland emphasised the importance of the feminine being recognised as part of the divinity:

The sexist language used by the Church is a barrier to women's and girls' participation in even the most basic thing, the liturgy. Women and girls are being denied the basic human right of having their very existence acknowledged and their being made in the likeness and image of God celebrated. We cannot participate fully until the feminine is recognised as part of the divinity and included in the language about the people of God. Until the language of liturgy is true to the ancient scripts and uses the feminine images of God that are present there in the Scriptures and uses both pronouns or none for God. Until it acknowledges in words that the incarnation is the union of divinity and humanity (not God and maleness) and refers to Jesus in terms of his humanity, as the early Church was so careful to do when it wrote the Scripture, creeds and prayers. Until both genders or none are used for the Holy Spirit. Until women as well as men choose which passages of Scripture will go in the lectionary and be called the word of God.

Inclusive language is not just a nice "politically correct" idea. It is an important part of justice for women and girls and also for men and boys because sexist language has profound effects on their spirituality too.

I am disillusioned with a Church that lags behind the rest of society in this matter of justice instead of leading it.

The concern regarding exclusive religious language was extended to the use of religious imagery and, indeed, the broader symbol system of the Catholic Church. A group submission from Brisbane highlighted this point:

Were it just the language that was androcentric, its effects would be far-reaching enough ... but it is more than that. The entire theological symbol system has been constructed in a male-gendered way that is out of touch with the twentieth

century. ... The failure of the Church to draw on new images which touch the lives of today's women and men, renders much of the symbol system antiquated. ... The entire Church community is being denied the richness of imagery emerging in contemporary theological and spiritual traditions.

The following story from a woman in Melbourne indicates the significance of this barrier and the great depth of feeling which it aroused:

I've worked hard on my submission, giving it many hours of thought. I've struggled with the use of the word "participate" and listed dozens of barriers which exclude women from the Church. I've been positive too, about the love and support I've received from people (mainly women) in the Church but I think I need to tell my story in a different way.

I went to Mass today and I cried from the pain of it. It was to be a joyous occasion because for the first time in weeks our family – my husband, our five children and I were all at Mass together. For me, yet again, the joy turned to hurt, sadness and anger. I, and I believe many others, have been excluded from the central celebration of the Church. We have been excluded by the language and by the imaging of God.

All language for God is metaphorical yet the constant and almost exclusive use of the word "Father" for God in the liturgy of the Mass has left many with a single image of God – a male parent. This is both tragic and, I believe, idolatrous.

- *It limits extraordinarily our relationship with the Divine Mystery at the centre of our lives.*
- *It denies us communion with the whole feminine side of God, the God who lives within the depths of our hearts.*
- *It creates a Church which is unable to accept fully the gifts of women or celebrate their experiences of God.*
- *It creates a Church which can, and does, easily slip into dominance and control; which divides rather than unites.*
- *The wonderful life-giving gift of Eucharist is being denied to many because it is couched in male, patriarchal terms.*

The male hierarchy of the Church seems to be largely unfeeling to the pain of many women, some still in the Church and others who have had to continue their journeys outside the Church. I weep for myself and my family but I also weep for the institutional Church. How can it proclaim justice and liberation when it refuses to openly acknowledge its own deeply embedded sexism? How can it offer forgiveness and reconciliation to people when it denies its own shortcomings? How can it be open to the Spirit when maintaining power and control are such priorities?

Leaving the Church is assumed to be associated with a loss of faith. For an increasing number of women quite the reverse is true. As women learn to trust their own experiences, to have the courage to say yes to the God within, the institutional Church fails to affirm, nourish or celebrate. For some the struggle to bring about change becomes too hard. They leave. And some in the Church rejoice!

4.7.19 Authoritarian Nature of the Church

The authoritarian and legalistic nature of the Church as a barrier for women was stressed: "The style of administration of the institutional Church is based on a confined, legalistic way of thinking. Many women are used to problem-solving in a more lateral way". A submission from a man in New South Wales, expressed his concern in the following way:

The banning of even discussing the ordination of women by this Pope has made a laughing stock of the Church in all free countries. It has only given support to authoritarian regimes who wish to stifle free speech, to further their own ends.

It is not clear that Jesus established a priesthood. He was scathing in his criticism of the priesthood he grew up with. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-36) shows the priest and the Levite unable to act because the man was naked and unconscious. So they did not know if their laws allowed them to associate with or even touch the man on the ground.

Where the priests first sought an answer in their laws, the Samaritan went straight to the person. Our Church is now more encumbered by laws (Canon Law) than were the Jews. When dealing with women, the hierarchy go first to the law and not the person, risking the same scorn from Jesus as he had for the priest and Levite. Doesn't the hierarchy ever wonder that they might suffer an eternity of embarrassment of their un-Christ-like treatment of women?

The lack of collaborative ministry was stressed.

4.7.20 Lack of Inclusive Social Language

The issue of exclusive social language presented a serious barrier, especially for younger women. For example, the following quotation is taken from a submission from a multi-cultural parish in a "working class" area of Adelaide. It was reported that the parish conducted two meetings which involved women ranging in age from thirty years through to eighty-two years:

In the area of liturgy serious barriers exist, quite apart from exclusion from ordination. The exclusive language of the liturgy offended younger women in particular, while older women who had grown up with it, did not see it as such a serious issue. Younger women see it as alienating (and they included here the translation of Church documents, the Pope's talks, and the Catechism) and it is

contributing to their movement out of the Church and seeking expressions of their spirituality elsewhere.

In a similar way, a man from Queensland stressed the need for inclusive social language:

And yet a further barrier to women's participation in Church is the use of exclusive language. This perpetuates a situation of subservience and gives a powerful negative message to women. This is particularly evident in liturgy but also occurs in the workplace. Whereas exclusive language can be forgiven in documents written thirty years ago, for example the documents of Vatican II, we cannot condone the use of it in this present societal climate where secular institutions forbid it, for example the new Catholic Catechism and lectionaries in current use.

4.7.21 Family Responsibilities

The constraints of family responsibilities presented significant limitations to women's participation. For example, a woman from New South Wales noted:

At a time when so many women are both raising a family and encouraged to have careers outside the home, there is often simply not enough time and energy to be actively involved in the Church as well.

Another barrier I have come across personally is the lack of a "child-friendly" environment or atmosphere. Women with children are effectively barred from participation when their children are not made welcome.

4.7.22 Current Attitude of the Superiority of Men in Our Society

It was felt that the current attitude of the superiority of men in our society, adopted by both men and women, has presented obstacles to women's participation and kept them in "male designated subservient roles". It was noted that an acceptance in society of the inferiority of women resulted in "women's lack of confidence in themselves, in their abilities, their responsibilities, their rights". A submission from a group of women in Melbourne stated:

Over many years a large body of systematic distortions concerning the ability and the very nature of women has grown up in Church and Society and dictated that women be treated as inferior to men. So pervasive are these distortions that some women have even been brain-washed into accepting them and defining their own roles in harmony with these falsifications.

4.7.23 Other Barriers to Women's Participation in the Catholic Church

While the major barriers to women's participation are discussed above, other barriers described in the written submissions are listed below, in diminishing

order according to the frequency of response, under the following headings: society and culture; Church structures and practices; Church teachings; professional service and employment.

No Barriers to Women's Participation

A small number of the written submissions stated that there were no barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia.

Barriers Related to Society and Culture

These barriers included women's attitude concerning traditional expectations of their role; radical/aggressive feminism; lack of inclusive language; other social and cultural barriers; lack of time; personal difficulties such as illness, shyness, age; work responsibilities; women in migrant and refugee communities; and English language difficulties.

Barriers Related to Church Structures and Practices

Issues noted were the negative attitude of some Bishops to women; lack of encouragement by men for women to participate in Church matters; men's fear of women's participation; the negative attitude of some lay women to women; lack of awareness of women's history and experiences in the Church; the negative attitude of some lay men to women; breakdown in communications in various levels in the Church; apathy among women in the Church; lack of recognition of the laity; women who seek to play too much of a role in the Church; lack of adult faith education; lack of education for ministry in the Church; concern of Church leaders with wealth and power; fear of speaking out; the negative attitude of the Vatican to women; unfortunate past experiences within the Church; the negative attitude of the Pope to women; lack of information about opportunities for participation; Canon Law; cost of theological and ministry courses; lack of gender equity on Church committees at parish level; use of inclusive language in the Church; a particular priest's attitude to women; lack of gender equity on Church committees at diocesan level; the tendency on the part of clergy to deny the existence of conflict or difference; lack of gender equity on Church committees at national level; girls not being able to act as altar servers; exclusion of women as ministers of the Eucharist; lack of consultation on the appointments of bishops; and lack of women in the Vatican.

Barriers Related to Church Teachings

Barriers included the following: other factors relating to Church teachings; the Church's traditional teaching on the compulsory celibacy of priests; the Pope's ban on the discussion of the possibility of women's ordination; the Church's traditional teaching on contraception; the only barriers to the participation of women being those duties exclusive to the priesthood; the Church's traditional

teaching on divorce and remarriage; women not being able to marry clergy and fulfil the special ministry of a clergyman's wife; and the Church's traditional teaching on abortion.

Barriers Related to Professional Service and Employment

The following were recorded: lack of appropriate remuneration levels; lack of finance being a barrier to women being formed for leadership levels, eg university degree; lack of perceived career path that opens up positions which are available only to ordained ministers; lack of status as a paid minister; other professional factors; and lack of professional structures, eg role descriptions, duty statements, tenure, contracts, appraisal procedures.

4.8 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

4.8.1 Greater Participation Was Sought for Women in the Church

The overwhelming response to this question was that women's participation in the Church be increased. The main suggestions concerning particular ways to further women's participation are set out below. At one end of the spectrum, many submissions called for fundamental change, for renewal in "the hope that the Church might be as revolutionary in its acceptance of women as its Founder". The submission from a woman from Rockhampton captured the essence of this call for reform:

I can accept that it might take a long time to bring about the change, but making cosmetic changes (eg declaring equal numbers on the Parish Council), while indicative of goodwill, are entirely inadequate in bringing about the sort of change that is needed. It has to be a fundamental change, a change of the heart, a change of mind set, a change of paradigm.

The paradigm shift will not occur without a massive commitment to education at all levels of the Church, but particularly of the present holders of power in the Church. While such a shift can happen, it has all the qualities of a major miracle. I doubt if it can happen from the top down since that would mean voluntary relinquishing of power by those who have it in quite dramatic ways. It can happen more readily at the lower levels of Church and work its way up. An image is the demolition of the Berlin Wall (a simple project by comparison). It did not go down because Governments decided; it went down because ordinary people wanted it to happen, people with some power encouraged others with less power to pull out a few rocks. Why not start with the structuring of Parish Councils, with the dismantling of hierarchical decision-making wherever possible, with more inclusive structures, eg synods?

Other submissions called for a review of “what is core and central to our lives as Catholic and Christian”, especially in relation to the Eucharist, as a woman from Victoria wrote:

By recognising that as Eucharist gives way to eucharistic celebrations or liturgies of the word, many women and men are being deprived of life-giving celebrations of this “source and summit of Catholic life”. The long-term implications for a sacramental Church will not be remedied by importation of clergy, but only by a review of what is core and central to our lives as Catholics and Christians, and a reorientation of Church regulations to respect the gifts the Spirit is clearly giving to women and married men.

A sense of urgency marked many of the submissions which called for change, the need to “act now”, especially to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the young. A woman from Adelaide wrote:

As the mother of seven children, four of them girls, I feel it is imperative for the future of our Church that we act now to make the Catholic Church a place where our women feel truly valued, respected and equal. Our young women (and men) are leaving the Church in droves as they no longer see it as a relevant part of their lives.

A small minority supported the current participation of women, emphasising the importance of the traditional role of women in the Church and in society, and concerns about the feminist movement. An example of this type of response is taken from a submission from a woman in Canberra:

I bring all this to your attention because I believe there is a very grave confusion in the minds of Catholic women. The majority do not understand that there are fundamental differences between what the Holy Father calls “authentic feminism” and the kind of feminism propounded by prominent women leaders of the feminist movement in Australia at present. ... Catholic women leaders must, sooner or later, correct the widespread misunderstanding that the sort of feminism dominating Australian society at present is compatible with Catholic principles.

A woman’s identity, duty and purpose is as much an innate and principled part of God’s creation as the physical daily certainty and necessity of the sun rising in the East and setting in the West. To meddle with the role of women in God’s creation would be about as sensible as to try to insist that the sun should rise in the West.

4.8.2 Increasing Women’s Involvement in Decision-making at All Levels

The request to increase women’s involvement in decision-making at all levels was the most frequently-made suggestion. An example of this suggestion came from a group of women in South Australia:

This response has as a basic underlying principle the belief that women must be involved in all facets and levels of the Church. ... Consequently, the Church must find ways for women to be involved in all areas of the Church, at all levels and especially in the areas of significant decision-making and direction-setting for the Church. This must occur locally at parish and diocesan level and nationally. The Australian Church works within the confines set by the World Church. However, there are many significant areas where the Australian Church can be at the "cutting edge" of developments for women. Our understandings of social justice principles demand that action be taken towards inclusivity.

At Diocesan and parish level, it was frequently recommended that a task force of men, women and clergy be convened to develop collaborative decision-making processes to be implemented at parish, Diocesan and agency levels and to identify key occasions when such processes should be used.

The need for women to be involved in decision-making and policy formation, particularly on issues which affect women, such as sexuality, contraception and marriage, was highlighted. It was also proposed that particular examination of the role women play in financial decision-making is needed to redress the gross imbalance in numbers of women undertaking this function.

4.8.3 Permitting Women to be Ordained Priests

There was the strong request that the Church "recognise that women were created in the image of God and that their vocations to the priesthood be welcomed" (submission from a woman in New South Wales). To achieve such an outcome, it was proposed that the issue of the ordination of women be explored in the broader context of an examination of the nature of ministry and that the question of women's ordination remain open for discussion and further discernment. A priest from country Victoria stated:

Examination of the concept of "Priesthood", from both an historical and contemporary perspective, would be timely and constructive. Although the issues of access to the priesthood for women and optional celibacy for clergy are contentious, there is need for reasoned debate in these areas.

Further, it was suggested that the Bishops of Australia raise these issues in Rome. The words of a Melbourne woman illustrate this request:

It would be helpful if the Australian Bishops could insist as a body that the relevant Congregation in Rome heed the conclusions of scripture scholars. The Pontifical Biblical Commission, the American Catholic Biblical Association and the Australian Catholic Biblical Association state that there is nothing in Scripture that precludes women's ordination to the priesthood.

A young woman from Sydney argued the positive effects of the ordination of women for the young:

If the Church ordained women, heaps more of my friends (we're in our twenties) would come to Mass, would feel that their Church did not discriminate against people just because of their sex, and would possibly give their lives to the future of an inclusive, real, alive, and representative institution.

4.8.4 Reforming Church Structures to Remove Gender Inequalities and Establishing a Balance of Men and Women on All Church Advisory Groups

It was proposed that there is a need to reform Church structures in order to address imbalance in the predominantly male leadership. While it was acknowledged that entrenched structures take time to change, it was felt that the Church could act positively by increasing female representation at all its levels, in pastoral, ministerial and administrative areas. A group from Adelaide proposed:

The Australian Church must take seriously the status of women. The rights of women are not concepts that can be "added on" to existing structures. The rights of women require that existing structures and practices be critically examined with a view to reformation of the structures with inclusivity as a core value.

Specific suggestions included:

- At the national level, for the Conference of Australian Bishops to promote, at the international level, a growing consciousness of the need for gender balance in all Church structures and subsequent action to bring this about.
- At the diocesan level, to establish structures which would involve males and females, and be representative of the diverse multi-cultural society, and policies which state the principle of equal representation of men and women on all commissions and committees.
- At the parish level, to ensure that Parish Councils that make decisions be expanded to include married, single and consecrated women as well as lay men, and that the role of Pastoral Associates within parishes be actively promoted and developed by the Bishops of the Australian Church.

4.8.5 Other Ways to Increase Women's Participation Relating to Church Structures and Practices

In relation to Church structures and practices, a number of additional suggestions were made to increase women's participation. Among these, the following three areas were prominent:

Continuing Education of the Clergy

Education of priests was seen as a keystone. It was felt that priests should be encouraged to pursue continuing education for themselves. The need for the ongoing education of clergy in relation to the equality of women was stressed, as indicated by a woman from country Victoria:

I truly believe we need a re-education of our priests and Bishops to accept women as equal. If our priests show their acceptance of women in the Church, then in time more and more parishioners would accept that women can play a major part in the life of the Church.

Education of priests to promote collaborative ministry was also highlighted. For example, a woman from Western Australia proposed:

Initial and ongoing formation of priests needs to enable a shift in consciousness to bring about collaboration – a partnership of equals who work together on ideas generated by the group.

Some Sacramental Ministry for Women in Pastoral Roles

There were frequent requests for particular women working in pastoral roles to be able to anoint the sick and the dying, and hear confessions. For example, a group of religious sisters and associates and pastoral workers from Melbourne recommended:

A concerted effort from our Bishops' Conference to Rome for trained and commissioned women and non-ordained males in pastoral roles to have some sacramental ministry open to them such as Sacrament of Baptism, Penance, Anointing of the Sick. These Ministers are so often closely involved with the events leading up to Birth/Death and occasions of spiritual journeying with another that the celebrations of these Sacraments seem a natural progression of celebrating the Church's presence and life-giving power with the person concerned.

In support of the last proposal, anecdotal evidence was presented, factually true but with fictitious names:

Patricia was a Pastoral Care Worker at a major hospital in Melbourne. She had been visiting Anna regularly over a few weeks. The day prior to Anna's departure from the hospital, Anna announces to Patricia that she wants to go to confession. Patricia says she will get a priest. Anna responds promptly, "You can forget about the priest. You're the one I know. I'm going to confession to you." Anna will not take "No" for an answer ...

Mary again is a Pastoral Care Worker in a large hospital. On one occasion, she checks with the priest about taking Communion to a seriously ill patient.

He hesitates and then says he'll get the assistant priest to do that. The assistant priest didn't come ...

A group of women from Sydney wished to encourage the Church in its compassion to develop a special rite for a service of healing and reconciliation which could be used for the sick in hospital and in prison ministry.

Development of Processes for Dealing with Sexual Abuse

It was recommended that the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference develop and implement in every Australian diocese "open, just and pastoral processes for dealing with sexual harassment, sexual abuse and paedophile issues" (submission from a group of women from Queensland). A married couple from Sydney expanded this recommendation in the following way:

1. *That the scope of the problem [of clergy sexual abuse] be acknowledged.*
2. *That the nature of the damage be acknowledged.*
3. *That celibacy be spoken of not just as a matter of spirituality but of professional responsibility.*
4. *That those in ministry and those training for ministry receive adequate training in their professional responsibilities towards those in their care.*
5. *That there be a ministry of outreach to women who have been so marginalised by priests.*
6. *That there be mechanisms for due process when complaints are made.*
7. *That the laity be educated on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse to minimise the risk to women involved in the life of the Church.*

The need to be positive and affirming and, above all, to be charitable was frequently stressed, as a woman from Melbourne concluded: "Yes it is OK to challenge unjust structures but we must be positive and affirming in our efforts to change and let all be done in love".

4.8.6 Reforming Beliefs and Associated Practices That Do Not Promote Equality of Men and Women

Complicity of the Church in the promotion of inequality of men and women was highlighted. It was suggested that there is a need to reform beliefs and associated practices that do not promote equality. A woman from Sydney stated:

Discrimination against women is surely just as serious an evil as discrimination on the basis of race or economics. Just as the Australian nation will be truly richer and more wholesome when it ceases to fear and accepts graciously the diversity of gifts available to it through its citizens of different ethnic backgrounds, so too the Australian Church will be closer to the vision of its Lord, "that all may be one ... love one another as I have loved you", when it receives, on equal terms, the contribution of males and females.

4.8.7 Allowing Women's Talents to Be Fully Utilised

It was suggested that women's talents and gifts be utilised more fully in the service of the Church. A group of women from Melbourne suggested that lay ministry be expanded significantly:

By recognising and celebrating the lay ministry of both men and women and encouraging its broadening to include baptisms, marriages and funerals, reconciliation and anointing as well as ministry of the Word. There is a wonderful role here for the special gifts of women – even if they “can’t be priests” at present.

A woman from country Victoria stressed this point in the following way:

There are some things that women, with their gifts of insight, intuition and empathy, do extremely well, in fact they are often better than men in ministering to people who are spiritually wounded and hurting. Women who have vocations in prayer ministry and in healing need much more support and guidance from the Church; they are often left to manage with very little support because there is no official recognition of their value both to the people to whom they minister and to the Church as a whole.

I believe that people (both men and women) who work in this field and all lay people in times of crisis should be able to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lay people have had the ability to administer the Sacrament of Baptism for many years and have not abused it, so realistically, they are not likely to abuse this privilege either. I believe that we must look for ways of mitigating the effect of the shortage of priests in our Church and this proposal, as well as helping those people to whom it is addressed, would perhaps allow someone who is dying to receive the Sacrament when a priest is unavailable.

There were many requests that women in pastoral ministry be authorised to administer the Sacraments of Healing, Anointing and Reconciliation rather than having to call in a priest who has had no relationship with the person. A submission from a parish in Melbourne urged:

Use the nurturing gifts of women more. Their potential to give birth is negated. In homes they are usually the peacemakers, the ones who build community. They have to budget, prepare meals, care for the sick, listen to the stories and visit the needy. Why can't they be involved in giving the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Eucharist?

It was also suggested that women's wisdom and experience be utilised in “a more mature understanding of sexuality” for the benefit of the whole Church. A group of married women from Hobart made the following proposal:

It is, we feel, difficult to overestimate the valuable contribution which the reflected-upon wisdom of women could make towards a more mature understanding of sexuality – in all the variety of ways it is lived out (excepting in the priesthood). We have been daughters, sisters, cousins and friends. We have had boyfriends and beginning sexual encounters. We have fallen in love, married. We have grown up with our husbands and our children, have tried to pass on the faith – with both success and failure. And now we are grandmothers. Through our experiences as wives, mothers, daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law and so on, we feel our lived experience gives us a great deal of information about sexuality – male as well as female. This information could, through mature reflection, go a long way toward bridging the gaps between facile opinion and dour Church pronouncement.

Recognition of the diversity of women's experience and strengths which could be offered to the Church and wider community was sought, as illustrated by a submission from a woman in Traralgon, Victoria:

My dream of the Church of the future is a Church . . . in which women are recognised as more than "wives and mothers", but as "women" and with this is the recognition of different strengths and weaknesses, different ways of thinking, doing things, feeling and acting, different skills and attitudes, different and essential gifts to the Church and humanity, where these differences are given value and dignity and seen as vital to the Church.

There were suggestions that a list of Catholic women and their qualifications and skills should be available to Bishops as "there is so much knowledge which can and should be used". For example, a submission from a group of women in Sydney proposed that "a register of Catholic women of achievement and distinction, within both the Church and society, could be kept and made available to all Church parishes and institutions etc".

It was frequently stated that the large number of women graduates in theology represent such a valuable and untapped resource for the Church. An investigation was sought of possible ways to allow the education, gifts and faith of such women to be placed at the service of the Church.

4.8.8 Promoting Gender Equality and Opportunities

The importance of the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, both within the wider society and in the Church, was stressed.

It was felt that a policy of no discrimination between men and women in Church leadership would represent "no more than catching up with what is recognised, and indeed lawful, in other fields of human endeavour".

Many specific recommendations were made to promote the equality of women. These included:

- the development of explicit teaching of the equality of men and women in Church ministry;
- training towards attitudinal change in recognising equal value, equal rights and equal responsibilities of male and female “created in the image of God” and “equal in the Church through Baptism”;
- recognition of the value and need for moderate feminist movements;
- the inclusion of stories of women and their experience in the Scripture readings in the liturgy, the omission of readings that place women in subordinate positions and the use of recent biblical research to situate the text of the day;
- the promotion of the writing of women theologians;
- a conscious effort to promote “modern suitable role models” for young women by presenting “well-educated professional Catholic women” who undertake careers “combined with motherhood”;
- the acceptance by the Church of its responsibility to research, study and act upon the contributions of women from the earliest Church to the present;
- the Church being clearly seen as an Equal Opportunity Employer;
- the Church keeping pace with the laws of the land in the area of discrimination;
- the establishment of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity policies being adopted by all official Church committees nationally and by dioceses as well as by every parish in Australia;
- the establishment of an Office for the Status of Women within the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference with representation from women in Church life and with a real voice;
- the creation of “something like an Office for Women” within dioceses whereby decisions would be taken in consultation with this body and involving a genuine willingness to be advised;
- the convening and sponsorship of:

a national forum on the Church as a gendered organisational culture to consist of a number of papers which explain the concept and a number of workshops to develop strategies to bring about changes at the levels of gendered cultures and processes. (Submission from a group of Queensland women)

Much attention was given to the need for affirmative action. Specific recommendations were made by the Affirmative Action Agency:

The Affirmative Action Agency strongly encourages the Catholic Church to provide leadership and support in the area of affirmative action as a significant step towards removing the barriers that impede the full participation of women in all areas of Church life.

To this end the Agency recommends:

- i. *That the Catholic Church establish and resource a policy and research position to provide assistance to Church bodies in the development of their affirmative action programs by developing models of best practice.*
- ii. *That the Catholic Church make a positive statement on the role and responsibilities of the Church as an employer to be communicated to all Catholic organisations.*
- iii. *That the Catholic Church provide leadership and guidance on the issues of good employment practices for women by making a positive statement of the benefits of removing discriminatory practices through the implementation of affirmative action programs.*

4.8.9 Promoting Opportunities for Women to Participate in Leadership in the Church

In conjunction with suggestions outlined above to foster the equality of women, it was further proposed that opportunities be provided for women with suitable qualifications and backgrounds to assume positions of leadership at all levels. It was also recommended that a range of educational and training opportunities be provided so that leadership positions can be taken up by an informed laity. A specific suggestion was made to have regular “Women in Leadership in the Church” courses and seminars.

4.8.10 Providing Access for Women to Pastoral, Religious and/or Theological Education

The Church was encouraged to provide access for women to a range of opportunities for pastoral and theological education and training. It was suggested that “real encouragement” be provided by scholarships and financial sponsorship from dioceses. As a result, these women could then take up roles as Pastoral Associates in parishes or as Parish Moderators to address concerns arising from the diminishing numbers of clergy. The need for educational opportunities for women in rural Catholic communities was stressed.

4.8.11 Encouraging Women to Have a Voice in the Church

Encouragement for women to have a voice in the Church was seen as critical in both promoting the participation of women and enriching the Church as a whole. A woman from Sydney wrote:

It is very limiting for the whole Church if only male voices are heard to share what it is to be a Catholic at this time and place, and where we need to go in the future. Until they [women] are given equal voices with voting rights, they are not being heard or taken seriously. Since traditionally “Sophia” is a feminine

principle, it seems that the Church deliberately limits the right of the feminine wisdom of God to be heard.

There was the reminder that the voices of women require listening to. A priest from the Northern Territory emphasised this need:

The voices of women in the contemporary Church reflect the anguish and anger of oppression and at the same time offer the Church an alternative vision of hope and wisdom founded on a renewed sense of justice and compassion. A constant appeal by women is first of all one of listening, a listening that will then move to a greater level of inclusion and participation of women in all levels within Church life and structures.

Having “a voice” in the Church was frequently associated with involvement in decision-making, for example that women “have a more pro-active voice in matters affecting their lives such as family planning and sexual morality” or that women “have a say in the appointment of their Archbishop”. The expression also referred to opportunities for women to act as Church spokespersons. A group of women in Sydney stated:

At a time when the Catholic Church in Australia is receiving a lot of negative publicity in the media – we feel it would be most encouraging to Catholic women in general if there were more high profile Catholic women in the media able to promote the Catholic women’s point of view. Women’s gifts of communicating with others should be more thoroughly exploited.

A woman in Queensland also emphasised this need for Church spokespersons:

Empower laity to act as Church spokespersons. They should be able to deal with contemporary sectarian issues in ways that are appropriate to media reporting. They should receive official recognition from all the Bishops and priests in a diocese with their statements supported by official news releases. Many women can and should fulfil this role.

4.8.12 Educating Women and Men in the Vision of Shared Leadership

There were many suggestions concerning the need to educate women and men in a vision of shared leadership. The establishment of Diocesan pastoral councils, such as the model developed in the Archdiocese of Adelaide, was suggested (see Appendix 14). It was felt that the establishment of collaborative ministries required the preparation of seminarians, clergy and laity. The development of collaborative ministries was presented as a matter of urgency as it was seen that parish priests have too many roles. The need to “work on a sense of community in running a parish” was stressed. More collaborative leadership involving greater accountability was sought.

4.8.13 Recognising Women's Great Contributions to the Church

Affirmation and recognition of women's great contributions to the life of the Church was requested. For example, a submission from a group in North Hobart recommended:

Publish an encyclical or Church document on collaborative partnership – valuing the contribution of women at all levels of Church life not only in traditional occupations. Pope's Letter to Women [is] a first step in this process. Circulate it more widely.

Recognition of the role of women in the home was requested. It was also felt that women need to be affirmed in their struggle to improve their role and status in the Church. As a woman from Melbourne noted:

They need to know that there is support and guidance, both spiritual and temporal, available to them. Women also need to be affirmed in their difference and complexity as do men. Narrow stereotypes have no place in a Church that champions tolerance and the sacredness of life.

4.8.14 Using Inclusive Religious Imagery and Language

There were many requests for the use of inclusive religious imagery and language. An illustration of this response is taken from a submission from a woman in New South Wales:

When God is acknowledged to be beyond male and female, language must change. This acknowledgment, when it reflects accurately a change of consciousness, will automatically acknowledge and call forth the giftedness of women.

Particular attention was given to the need for liturgy to affirm women in language, ritual and symbol. It was recommended that the Church educates liturgists to the many ways of addressing God so that male images are not always used. An Australian religious sister working in Papua New Guinea made the following comment:

As regards the gender of God, I would expect words like "May the Lord accept this sacrifice ... in God's name" to be used in an attempt to change. Again, "for our good and the good of all the Church". Similarly, "It is right to give God thanks and praise". We say it like this here in Papua New Guinea where I am. I have been amazed to experience many times no steps towards these changes being made in Australia.

There were many suggestions that the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference develop and promote a policy on the use of inclusive language for all Church liturgies, rituals and documents in Australia.

4.8.15 Allowing Women to Preach

There were frequent suggestions for women to preach, as illustrated by the following from a group of women in Wagga Wagga:

Women should be encouraged and invited to reflect and speak on the Word of God through homilies and other occasions. The pulpit can be a very strong power position. Women have been excluded from this place.

4.8.16 Fostering Respect for Women's Unique Contribution

The Church was urged to foster respect for women's unique contributions to Australian society and to the Church. Many of the written submissions urged the Australian Church to:

- encourage women's talents to be fully developed and utilised, especially in the areas of decision-making and leadership;
- acknowledge women's contributions to society and the Australian Catholic Church both currently and since the early days of the Australian Church;
- support the key role of the woman in the home;
- recognise the diversity of women and their experience;
- foster the spirituality of women;
- provide contemporary role models of women in the Australian context.

An example of a specific suggestion to achieve such outcomes included an award for the Australian Catholic Woman of the Year. The proposal from a woman in Sydney stated the aims of the award would be:

- *recognition of the role of Catholic women in the development of Australian society;*
- *awareness of the outstanding achievement of Catholic women in such fields as politics, the law, public service, education, home-building, medicine, etc;*
- *respect for the heroic quality of Catholic women, in whatever field of work they undertake.*

It was felt that such an award would:

enhance the position of Catholic women in society and encourage them to take a more prominent role in a Church which has traditionally focused on the roles and contributions of men, rather than of women.

In the development of such an award, similar awards in other countries could be examined such as the "Laetare Medal" in the United States and the "Catholic Women of the Year Award" in Great Britain.

There were a number of suggestions to establish a Research Centre in Women's History in association with ACU. The proposed Centre was seen as an

opportunity to research the historical role of women in the Catholic Church in Australia:

Women need to be aware of their history in order to gain an adequate sense of their identity in the Church. Such knowledge is also necessary for women theologians since an inadequate and flawed history contributes to a deficient theology. A knowledge of women's history would also be of great help to men, giving them a wider and more balanced perspective.

4.8.17 Permitting Women to be Ordained as Deacons

There were frequent requests for women to be ordained as deacons as a response to the recognition of the particular gifts of women, the urgent pastoral needs in hospitals and parishes, and the serious difficulties associated with the growing shortage of priests. For example, a submission from a Pastoral Care Department of a large Catholic hospital argued:

*If women in ministry who had the appropriate gifts and training were ordained for specific sacraments (excluding the Mass), such as anointings, baptisms, and able to conduct funerals and weddings in the Church, then the priest shortage would be greatly alleviated; there would be less potential for burn-out amongst priests themselves, and there would be a greater sense of collaboration in the Church. In other words, a **paid deacon role** (either part-time or full-time) which would even suit mothers; which did not lead to ordination, would solve many problems. It would not in any way threaten the sacred central role of saying the Mass, and would greatly enhance the ministry of over-worked priests and allow many gifted women and men to do good work.*

Another example of this constant plea came from a woman in Melbourne who recommended that:

Sacramental ministry be opened up to the non-ordained, male or female, eg Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation. This plea comes from pastoral experience in hospitals and parishes. The pastoral need is not being met because of shortage of priests and also because people prefer that the sacramental minister be the person with whom they have established a relationship and some trust. There is an insistent need that the pastoral experience be listened to at all levels of Church life.

4.8.18 Increasing Women's Involvement in the Parish

Many suggestions were made to increase women's involvement in the parish. A group from a parish in Melbourne stated: "If roles of responsibility in parishes were more clearly defined, women would more confidently offer to use their gifts". Particular attention was given to the value of the role of Pastoral Associate. A woman from a parish in country Victoria wrote:

The role of Pastoral Associate could be viewed in a similar light to that of an assistant priest. If funds are presently available for assistant priests, use them to employ lay women. The argument that lay women would not work for a stipend is not feasible. Most lay women would gladly work for a stipend if it were offered to them and see the financial shortfall (to use worldly terms) as their contribution to the Kingdom.

They could assist with Funerals, Baptisms, Services of the Word, Prayer Leader, Anointing of the Sick etc. The roles of Catechist, Evangeliser, Counsellor, Administrator, Visitor, Supporter, Encourager etc. naturally flow on. A job description and job expectation would outline the requirement of parish regarding "after hours" participation (meetings, sick calls etc).

Women bring a complementary feminine aspect to Church ministry.

As an illustration of the various ways to increase women's involvement in parish life, a woman from a large provincial town in Victoria spoke of her positive experience in her own parish:

In our parish [name provided], our parish priest is very forward-looking. We have an officially-appointed laywoman in charge of the parish when he is away. Women, equally with men, conduct prayer services when we are unable to have Mass, and participate in ministries such as special minister of the Eucharist, reader etc. They are also welcome on the elected Parish Council.

A number of women in the parish have had the opportunity to undertake challenging Pastoral Care courses; also some on theology and liturgy. I have been told the diocese funded a number of these.

4.8.19 Setting up Communication Processes within the Church with Broad Consultation

The establishment of a range of communication processes within the Church involving broad consultation was proposed. Suggestions for such processes included initiatives at the national, Diocesan and parish levels. For example, a woman from Sydney concluded her submission in the following way:

I believe there is a need for the Church in Australia to acknowledge that alienation exists at every level – men as well as women are alienated from the "official Church". There is a need to set up a process of communication ... with broad consultation and reciprocal exchange, an understanding of shared perspectives, leading to action derived from consensus. Such a process could be located, for example, at Parish level, Action group level, Adult Education, Religious Congregations and across dioceses.

For those who are alienated, another form of communication is necessary – a form that introduces an alternative community network to that already given status quo within the official Church. Such an alternative network or

community would need a forum that is open to the expression of difficulties and problems with the Church, without such constraints as fear of exclusion or of attack.

A large group from Melbourne stressed the need for a better system for consultation between the leaders and the community, such as:

- *the zoning of dioceses and parishes, with elected zone leaders (men and women), who are in frequent consultation with Diocesan bishops;*
- *the use of small communities as an alternative model to parish, with community leaders consulting with priests and bishops. This consultation needs to have some significance beyond mere lip-service;*
- *a public forum to give all Catholics the opportunity to air issues of concern.*

There were many proposals to set up a Board of Catholic Women, at either national or diocesan level, such as the "National Board of Catholic Women: Consultative Body to the Bishops of England and Wales" (see Appendix 12).

A man from New South Wales made a plea for the establishment of a consultative representative body of women to advise the Australian Bishops on matters relating to the participation of women:

As a practical recommendation to emerge from this study, may I plead for the creation of a consultative body, composed of women, representative of the spectrum of opinion in the Church from conservative to progressive, to advise the Bishops' Conference on matters relating to the appropriate participation of women in the Church.

A detailed suggestion was developed by a women's religious congregation in New South Wales:

In order for the honest dialogue and transforming outcomes of this Project to be faithfully maintained, we ask that, when its period of research ends, a STANDING COMMITTEE be established.

Our hope is that membership of this committee would be representative of women and men, ordained and non-ordained who are skilled in communication and strategies for pastoral analysis and competent in theology and pastoral practice.

We envisage that tasks of the Standing Committee would include:

- *monitoring Church practices and policies which affirm or obstruct the active participation of women;*
- *advising Bishops of areas which require correction or redirection;*
- *publishing occasional papers relevant to the development of a fruitful and inclusive Church.*

4.8.20 **Other Ways to Increase Women's Participation Associated with Church Teachings**

There were strong requests to address Church teachings associated with sexuality and marriage. For example, a group of women from Sydney highlighted the need to replace "the present obsession with sexual morality by emphasis on themes such as peace, social justice and the preservation of creation". A woman from Melbourne requested that the Church "address the painful situation, currently involving the exclusion of many, many people from the Church on grounds related to sexuality and marriage".

The importance of addressing irregular marriage situations was emphasised. For example, a submission from a parish in the Diocese of Geraldton in Western Australia proposed: "That the official Church find ways of reconciliation and healing for women who suffer the pain of 'failed marriages' and the implications for full Church membership".

4.8.21 **Other Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased**

While the major suggestions for ways in which women's participation could be increased are discussed above, other suggestions described in the written submissions are listed below, in diminishing order according to the frequency of response, under the following headings:

- *Society and Culture.*
- *Church Structures and Practices:* Home; Parish and Liturgical Practices; Wider Church; Prayer; Spirituality; Language; Gender Equality; Communication and Consultation; Decision-making; Leadership; Education; Theological Education.
- *Church Teachings:* Priesthood and Ministry; Marriage and Family.
- *Professional Service and Employment.*

Society and Culture

The following were recorded: other social and cultural ways to increase participation; and promoting the recognition of the central importance of women's work in the home.

Church Structures and Practices: Home

Requests included: support the role of women as wives/mothers; support the role of women as full-time mothers; strengthen family faith formation and prayer life; and provide education programs for women which foster the faith education of young children.

Church Structures and Practices: Parish and Liturgical Practices

The following were noted: allow girls to act as altar servers; encourage men to be more involved in the parish; foster women's participation by encouraging men to participate more; make greater use of women religious; make the Eucharist more available; and enlist the help of retired priests.

Church Structures and Practices: Wider Church

Issues raised were: recognise alienation of women from the Church; ensure women are offered more than menial tasks; encourage women to take on group leadership in the Church; increase women's involvement in social welfare and ministry roles; recognise conflict within the Church regarding the participation of women; establish support groups for women; involve young people in all aspects of the Church's life; encourage women to join women's groups in the Church; train women as marriage celebrants; establish support groups for needy women; appoint women to Vatican congregations and councils; appoint women as cardinals; have Bishops apologise for the Church's failure to adequately recognise the place of women; involve married women in marriage preparation; train more women as canon lawyers; establish support groups for women who are abused or raped; and establish support groups for infertile couples.

Church Structures and Practices: Prayer

The need for prayer, especially prayer for more vocations was noted.

Church Structures and Practices: Spirituality

Women must deepen their own personal spiritual growth and should be used as spiritual guides for seminarians. Development of a feminine spirituality and emphasising dedication to the Word of God were also stressed.

Church Structures and Practices: Language

Use of inclusive social language was requested.

Church Structures and Practices: Gender Equality

Requests were presented to challenge priests who are prejudiced in their attitudes to women.

Church Structures and Practices: Communication and Consultation

The following were suggested: allow ongoing discussion about the ordination of women; establish women's advisory bodies to advise the Bishops; seek opinion on key issues within the Church; and publicise women's achievements in the Church.

Church Structures and Practices: Decision-making

Matters raised were: increase women's involvement in decision-making at diocesan level; increase women's involvement in decision-making at parish level; remove the connection between decision-making and ordination; increase

women's involvement in decision-making in Vatican congregations; and, as an alternative viewpoint, leave decision-making in the hands of the priests.

Church Structures and Practices: Leadership

The following appointments were suggested: women to major Diocesan leadership groups; as parish pastoral coordinators; as spokespersons for the Church where appropriate; and as leaders of basic ecclesial communities.

Church Structures and Practices: Education

Education issues raised were as follows: re-educate Bishops and priests on women's issues and women's theology; promote a knowledge of women's history to gain a sense of their identity in the Church; educate Catholics on gender equality and justice; encourage women in catechetical work in government schools; place religious education in the hands of priests and religious; and establish more coeducational Catholic schools.

Church Structures and Practices: Theological Education

Suggestions included training for the priesthood to involve personal development and counselling, women's issues and women's theology; women's theological work being seen as valid and important in the Church; encouraging theologically qualified women to become professors in seminaries; and re-examining the portrayal of men and women in moral theology.

Church Teachings: Priesthood and Ministry

The following were included: give women who work in ministries to the sick the power to heal and absolve; permit women to marry the clergy and fulfil the special ministry of a clergyman's wife; and examine the position of women in the early Church as deacons, Eucharistic leaders and their presence at the Last Supper.

Church Teachings: Marriage and Family

Matters raised were: reconsider the Church's teaching on divorce and remarriage; support the Church's teaching on family planning; revise the Church's teaching on artificial contraception; explain the Church teaching on birth control; and have clergy support the Church's pro-life stance.

Professional Service and Employment

Suggestions provided were as follows: foster opportunities for using the academic and theological qualifications and experiences of women in the service of the Church; provide appropriate status and remuneration for women in the professional service of the Church; encourage women to assume professional leadership roles in the Church where appropriate; and consider other professional service and employment factors concerned with increasing women's participation.

4.9 Summary of Findings of Written Submissions

4.9.1 Overwhelming Response to the Call for Written Submissions

The response throughout Australia to the request for written submissions was overwhelming and represented a significantly greater response than to similar consultations conducted both within the Australian Catholic Church and within the broader society. It should be noted that, for the Australian Parliamentary inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 634 submissions were received representing "a vast number of submissions" (*Half Way to Equal: Report of the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia*, April 1992).

This response is contrasted in the table below with the number of written submissions received by the Bishops' inquiry. The much greater number of letters sent to persons and organisations by the Australian Bishops' inquiry should also be noted.

Australian Parliamentary Inquiry	Australian Bishops' Inquiry
Approx. 1,500 letters sent to persons and organisations	Several thousand letters sent to persons and organisations
634 submissions received	2555 submissions received

This overwhelming response is, in itself, a major finding indicating that the issue of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia is critical and controversial.

4.9.2 Dominant Feelings of Pain and Alienation

Overall the feelings expressed in the written submissions were those of pain and of being alienated "in our own Church". As one submission from Sydney said:

We, the Leadership team of a large Congregation of religious women, are heartened by the setting up of this Project. . . . Sadly, it is our lived experience that we participate with great difficulty on the edge of a Church in which we do not feel a full sense of belonging.

The written submissions tell the experiences of a great number of women who have been forced to leave the Church as a result of resentment and disillusionment. The lament was not only for the loss of the individual but also for the future of the Church. A strong sense of the urgency for the Church to address the alienation of women was often noted. An eighteen-year-old female university student concluded:

Studies clearly indicate that women make up the majority of the Church's congregation and yet I and a great many of my peers feel that the Church continually alienates women by ignoring their needs and their obvious right to full participation. In a world with increased awareness of women's potential, needs and rights, the Church is sadly behind the times. Women's continued pleas for a modernised Church, more in touch with its congregation, have repeatedly fallen on deaf ears. This has caused much resentment and disillusionment. In some circumstances women feel they have no choice but to walk away from a Church that denies their rights and needs, and to look for other avenues to live out their faith. I believe this trend will continue if the Church does not act fast to implement major changes within the Church and particularly within its hierarchy. Sooner or later the Church is going to have to wake up to the fact that without the support of women there would simply be no Church. ... In conclusion, I believe in the Catholic Church but strongly feel that changes need to be made.

4.9.3 Greater Participation for Women in the Church Sought

The overwhelming response of the written submissions was to seek greater participation for women, in particular:

- to involve women in decision-making at all levels of the Church;
- to permit women to be ordained as priests;
- to reform Church structures to remove gender inequalities and establish a balance of men and women on all Church advisory groups; and
- to establish other ways to increase women's participation in relation to Church structures and practices, including through the continuing education of the clergy; the inclusion of women in pastoral roles in related aspects of sacramental ministry; and development of processes to deal with sexual abuse in the Church.

A minority of the written submissions indicated satisfaction with current ways of participation. Such responses emphasised the traditional roles of men and women in society and in the Church, and concerns about the feminist movement. The importance of women's role in the home was stressed.

4.9.4 Greater Assistance and Support for Women in the Church Requested

Greater assistance and support were requested for women to be able to participate more fully and equally in the life of the Church. Only a small minority was satisfied with the current assistance and support offered to women. In general, it was felt that only some assistance and support or hardly any assistance and support were offered to women to participate in the Church.

Where assistance was received, the greatest source of the assistance and support came from other women, including support from women religious,

women's groups, and support from the woman's own religious congregation. The clergy was also named as a source of support with special reference to the parish priest. It was noted that some priests and Bishops were supportive and encouraging, although this support varied depending on the priest, parish or diocese. Where encouragement did occur, assistance was offered principally for women to participate in parish lay ministries.

4.9.5 Women Seen as Integral and Central to the Life of the Church

That women are integral and central to the very nature and life of the Church was highlighted. Women and men were seen as equal in Baptism and together to form the "Body of Christ". An understanding of the Church as "the People of God" involving "a Discipleship of Equals" was stressed.

4.9.6 Women's Visible Participation in the Liturgy since Vatican II

The three major ways women currently participate in the Church which were emphasised concerned women's role in liturgical preparation and their involvement as ministers of the Eucharist and as readers. In the perceptions of women's participation, their more visible participation in the liturgy since Vatican II was seen as most significant.

4.9.7 Women's Participation in the Parish and in the Home

The next two major types of participation which were highlighted concerned women's involvement in the parish and in the home.

In addition to women's involvement in the liturgy as noted above, the most frequently cited involvement in the parish concerned participation on the parish (pastoral) council followed by participation in service groups, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, and involvement in other diverse and generous roles important to parish life.

Women were also seen to participate in the Church in the context of the home, principally as faith educators and mothers. Much less prominence was given to the role of women as wives and other roles in the home such as care for the sick and elderly.

4.9.8 Other Prominent Areas of Women's Participation

Other prominent areas of women's participation included:

- catechetical and educational roles of women;
- participation in the CWL;
- membership of religious congregations where the varied participation of religious sisters in the contemporary Church was stressed;
- women's involvement in health care.

4.9.9 Patriarchal and Hierarchical Nature of the Church Seen as the Greatest Barrier to Women's Participation

By far the greatest number of barriers to women's participation in the Church identified in the written submissions were related to Church structures and practices, in particular the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of the Church.

The patriarchal system was identified as the greatest underlying barrier. It was felt that revision of the patriarchal tradition was required through theological reflection on the experience of women in the Church in the light of the life and mission of Jesus.

The hierarchical structure of the Church was frequently discussed in conjunction with the issue of patriarchy and was seen to be oppressive and alienating to women, and also to many men. The negative attitude toward women on the part of some of the clergy, especially parish priests, was also experienced as a significant barrier to women's participation.

4.9.10 Discrimination in the Church on the Basis of Gender

Discrimination against women on the basis of gender was discussed as a serious and fundamental barrier to women's participation. The lack of equality of women and their exclusion from some areas of the Church's ministry and governance, sometimes described in terms of the "sin of sexism", were a source of great pain and distress to many women. The gender question was raised in terms of both theology and justice.

4.9.11 Other Barriers Associated with Church Structures and Practices

A range of other barriers associated with Church structures and practices were noted, including:

- lack of role models, especially for young women;
- failure to identify the changing role of women in society as a "sign of the times";
- discrimination against the divorced and remarried;
- sexual scandals and the refusal of Bishops to listen;
- inability of the official Church to listen to women's voices;
- sacramental limitations of women chaplains.

4.9.12 Lack of Participation in Decision-making Processes of the Church

The exclusion of women from the decision-making processes of the Church was seen as a most significant barrier to full participation of women and a serious impediment to sound decision-making in the Church. It was strongly felt that women were excluded from decision-making even concerning issues which directly affected them, especially moral teachings on issues such as sexuality, contraception, marriage, divorce and abortion.

4.9.13 Women's Contribution Undervalued

Many of the submissions emphasised that women's contributions were neither valued nor acknowledged and spoke of the lack of acknowledgment of women and their work as a barrier to participation. The inability of the male hierarchical Church even to recognise or interpret properly women's experiences was expressed as hurtful and alienating. This alienation of women from the Church and the resulting loss of their talents and service at a time of great need in the Church were highlighted.

4.9.14 Church's Teaching on the Ordination of Women as a Barrier

The exclusion of women from ordination was seen as a major obstacle to the full participation of women. Both the Church's teaching on the ordination of women and the ban on its discussion were experienced as significant barriers and aroused strong feelings of alienation and resentment. The exclusion of women on the basis of sex from the ordained ministry was interpreted as a clear sign that women are seen as inferior to men, "second class citizens", not worthy or important enough to be ordained. The exclusion of women from the priesthood was seen as a denial of women's right by Baptism to full participation in the Church, as well as a denial of their gifts and talents in the service of Christ and the Church at a time of great need.

4.9.15 Tradition of Social, Professional and Religious Inferiority Concerning Women

A long tradition of social, professional as well as religious inferiority concerning women was experienced as a serious and ongoing barrier. It was felt that the failure of the Church to distinguish cultural norms and the Gospel message has kept women in subservient roles.

4.9.16 Systems and Structures of the Church Not in Touch with the Contemporary Needs and Experience of People

A major way in which the Church was perceived as out of touch with the contemporary needs and experience of people was related to its failure even to attempt to understand or appreciate the lives and experience of women. The contrast between the more just and affirming attitude to women of the wider society, including the secular workplace, and the attitude of the Church was frequently interpreted in terms of an issue of social justice. The lack of accountability in Church processes was also named as a way in which the Church is out of touch with sound practices in contemporary Australian life.

4.9.17 Male-dominated Church Culture

The male domination of the Church was experienced as another major barrier for women and often linked with the future survival of the Church.

4.9.18 Other Major Barriers to Women's Participation

Other major barriers identified in the written submissions included:

- entrenched ideas which are resistant to change;
- the Church's traditional teachings concerning women;
- decision-making being reserved to clerics;
- the clergy's fear of women's participation;
- few opportunities to participate in leadership of the Church;
- lack of inclusive religious imagery and language;
- the authoritarian nature of the Church;
- the lack of inclusive social language;
- family responsibilities;
- the current attitude of the superiority of men in our society.

4.9.19 Increasing Women's Involvement in Decision-making at All Levels

The request to increase women's involvement in decision-making at all levels was the most frequently-made suggestion to increase women's participation. The need for women to be involved in decision-making and policy formation, particularly on issues which affect women, such as sexuality, contraception and marriage, was emphasised.

4.9.20 Permitting Women to be Ordained Priests

There was the strong request for the Church to recognise that women were created in the image of God and that their vocations to the priesthood be welcomed. To achieve such an outcome, it was proposed that the issue of the ordination of women be explored in the broader context of an examination of the nature of ministry and that the question of women's ordination remain open for discussion and further discernment.

4.9.21 Reforming Church Structures to Remove Gender Inequalities and Establishing a Balance of Men and Women on All Church Advisory Groups

It was proposed that there is a need to reform Church structures in order to address the imbalance due to the predominantly male leadership. While it was acknowledged that entrenched structures take time to change, it was felt that the Church could act positively by increasing female representation at all its levels, in pastoral, ministerial and administrative areas.

4.9.22 Other Ways to Increase Women's Participation Regarding Church Structures and Practices

In relation to Church structures and practices, a number of additional suggestions were made to increase women's participation. Among these, the following three areas were prominent:

- providing continuing education of the clergy;
- opening up some sacramental ministry to women in pastoral roles;
- developing processes for dealing with sexual abuse.

4.9.23 Reforming Beliefs and Associated Practices That Do Not Promote Equality of Men and Women

The complicity of the Church in the promotion of the inequality of men and women was highlighted. It was suggested that there is a need to reform beliefs and associated practices that do not promote equality.

4.9.24 Allowing Women's Talents to Be Fully Utilised

It was recommended that women's talents and gifts be utilised more fully in the service of the Church. There were many requests that women in pastoral ministry be authorised to administer the Sacraments of Healing, Anointing and Reconciliation rather than having to call in a priest who has had no relationship with the person requesting the Sacraments. It was also suggested that women's wisdom and experience be utilised in "a more mature understanding of sexuality" for the benefit of the whole Church. Recognition of the diversity of women's experience and strengths which could be offered to the Church and wider community was sought. There were suggestions that a list of Catholic women and their qualifications and skills should be available to the Bishops. It was frequently stated that the large number of women graduates in theology represent such a valuable and untapped resource for the Church. An investigation was recommended of possible ways to allow the education, gifts and faith of such women to be placed at the service of the Church.

4.9.25 Promoting Gender Equality and Opportunities

The importance of the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, both within the wider society and in the Church, was stressed. It was felt that a policy of no discrimination between men and women in Church leadership would represent "no more than catching up with what is recognised, and indeed lawful, in other fields of human endeavour".

4.9.26 Promoting Opportunities for Women to Participate in Leadership in the Church

In conjunction with suggestions to foster the equality of women, it was further proposed that opportunities be provided for women with suitable qualifications and backgrounds to assume positions of leadership at all levels. It was recommended that a range of educational and training opportunities be provided so that leadership positions can be taken up by an informed laity.

4.9.27 Other Ways to Increase Women's Participation in the Church

Other major ways to increase women's participation in the Church included suggestions to:

- provide access for women to pastoral, religious and/or theological education;
- encourage women to have a voice in the Church;
- educate women and men in the vision of shared leadership;
- recognise women's great contributions to the Church;
- use inclusive religious imagery and language;
- allow women to preach;
- foster respect for women's unique contributions;
- permit women to be ordained as deacons;
- increase women's involvement in the parish;
- set up communication processes within the Church with broad consultation;
- address Church teachings associated with sexuality and marriage, including the exclusion of many people from the Church on grounds related to sexuality and marriage.

4.9.28 Need for Action to Flow from Research Project

The need for action to follow the Research Project was emphasised and requests were made for publication of the results.

4.9.29 Appreciation for the Research Project on the Participation of Women in the Church

Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity to be involved in the Research Project and that the Bishops of Australia had undertaken this initiative.

CHAPTER 5

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH LIFE SURVEY: REPORT ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

5.1 Background to the Survey

5.2 A Profile of Questionnaire H Respondents

5.3 The Participation of Women in the Church: The Four Key Questions

5.4 Summary of Major Findings

5.1 Background to the Survey

The RMG commissioned a series of questions in the Catholic Church Life Survey (CCLS) to investigate the responses of a large national sample of Mass attenders to issues concerning the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

The CCLS, a pastoral research project of the ACBC, was developed from and conducted in association with the National Church Life Survey (NCLS), a project of the Uniting Church Board of Mission in New South Wales and the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. The NCLS involved over 300,000 church attenders from more than 20 Anglican and Protestant denominations.

The CCLS was constructed so as to include a sample that would adequately represent statistically urban and rural parishes from each of Australia's 28 territorial dioceses. This sample incorporated 286 parishes – 281 of which actually took part – and resulted in about 101,000 people participating in the Survey. Another 116 parishes accepted a general invitation to participate in the Survey and receive a report on parish life but, as they were not part of the statistical sample, responses from attenders in those parishes are not presented in this analysis. Appendix 7 provides further information on the sample design.

The Survey was conducted in November 1996. Every attender aged 15 years and over at all Masses in participating parishes on a particular Sunday was requested to complete a questionnaire. In most parishes, the Survey took place during the time normally reserved for the homily but in others it was completed before the beginning of Mass or at the end of Mass. Most people needed about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The CCLS sought data on many areas of contemporary Church life, including parish life and vitality, the religious experience of Mass attenders, attitudes to Catholic education, the experiences of new Catholics initiated according to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and several other matters. It also carried questions commissioned by twenty Catholic organisations, agencies, commissions and groups, including the RMG.

In order to investigate all these areas without subjecting respondents to an impossibly long questionnaire, twenty different versions of the questionnaire were prepared. The questionnaire dealing with parish life (Questionnaire A) was distributed to 67 percent of attenders aged 15 years and over in each parish: this large sample was necessary to enable individual reports on each parish to be prepared. The other 33 percent of attenders in each parish received, at random, one of the other versions. Prior to being dispatched to parishes, questionnaires were packed in such a way that the version received by any particular attender was entirely a matter of chance. All versions of the questionnaire required respondents to circle a number beside their preferred response options: there was no opportunity to write in additional details.

Questionnaire A was made available in six languages other than English: Croatian, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Vietnamese and, for attenders in Ukrainian Rite parishes, Ukrainian. All other questionnaires, were available in English only.

The questions commissioned by the RMG appeared in Questionnaire H, which was completed by 4,457 people. An outline of the twenty different questionnaire types, showing their major topics and distribution, can be found in Appendix 8.

Questionnaire H contained the following sections:

About you (Questions 1–12)	This section included demographic items such as age, gender, marital status, birthplace, highest educational qualification, occupation and religion.
You and your parish (Questions 13–19)	Items about Mass attendance, involvement in parish life and satisfaction with the parish were included here.
About faith (Questions 20–28)	Items about faith formation, private devotional activities, Catholic beliefs, attitudes to religious vocations and attitudes to the teaching authority of the Church were in this section.
Your involvement in the Church (Questions 29–51)	This section contained items about involvement in Catholic organisations and the four key questions that lie at the heart of the Participation of Women in the Church Research Project.

A copy of Questionnaire H is included in Appendix 9.

The items used to explore the four key questions were developed after an extensive trialling process over a period of fifteen months. Items on demographic characteristics, parish involvement and attitudes to Church authority were also included to enable the RMG to be appropriately informed about those completing the questionnaire and to analyse how different groups of attenders responded to the items concerning the participation of women. Many of these latter items were common to other versions of the questionnaire, meaning that respondents to Questionnaire H could be compared to respondents to other questionnaires. Not all the items in Questionnaire H are considered in this Report.

Note on the Analysis

The sample is statistically representative of all Catholic Church attenders (and of all parishes) in Australia. That is, findings based on the sample can, with appropriate limitations, be claimed to apply with a high degree of accuracy to the whole Church in Australia.

In the preparation of this Chapter, statistical formulae have been applied to the data to ensure correct weighting (that is, representation appropriate to its size) of each urban and rural stratum and of each diocese.

With the exception of the weighting procedure, complex statistical techniques have not been used in the preparation of this Chapter. Rather, attempts have been made to ensure that the data are presented and discussed in a way readily understood by a non-specialist audience. Confidence in the reliability of the data rests on the extremely high degree of correspondence between this sub-sample and the much larger sample of attenders who took part in the CCLS as a whole, a sample designed after much consultation with the Monash University Statistical Consultancy Service. Throughout the Chapter conclusions are only drawn when there is a very marked result or a very noticeable trend.

Note on the Tables

Most tables refer to single items in the questionnaire, and include all respondents, so that each column of percentages adds to 100. Most tables also include the total number of people (shown as 'N = ...') who responded to that item. Any departure from these features is noted in individual tables.

The structure of the remainder of this Chapter is as follows:

5.2 A Profile of Questionnaire H Respondents

5.2.1 Demographic Characteristics

5.2.2 Parish Involvement

5.2.3 Acceptance of Church Authority

5.3 The Participation of Women in the Church: The Four Key Questions

5.3.1 Key Question 1: What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?

5.3.2 Key Question 2: What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?

5.3.3 Key Question 3: What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?

5.3.4 Key Question 4: What are some ways in which women's participation can be increased?

5.4 Summary of Major Findings

5.4.1 Overview of the Profile of Questionnaire H Respondents

5.4.2 Key Question 1

5.4.3 Key Question 2

5.4.4 Key Question 3

5.4.5 Key Question 4

5.4.6 Final Observations

5.2 A Profile of Questionnaire H Respondents

5.2.1 Demographic Characteristics

The analysis of the data from Questionnaire H begins with a demographic description of the respondents. This description not only enables key demographic features of the sample to be identified but also provides a background against which responses to other items in the questionnaire can be considered. As well, it enables comparisons to be made between the Questionnaire H sample and the much larger sample of all CCLS participants and the Catholic population as a whole.

Geographic Distribution

Questionnaire H was completed by a sample of 4,457 Mass attenders of whom 97 percent were Catholic. As Table 5.1 shows, respondents came from every diocese.

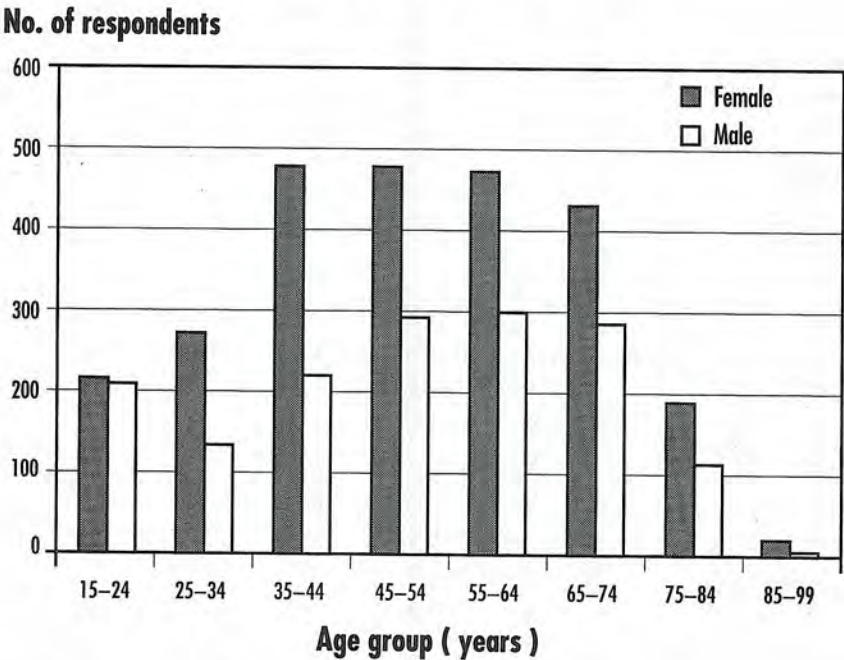
Table 5.1: Respondents in Each Diocese

Diocese	Number of sample parishes	Gender			All respondents
		Females	Males	Not stated	
Adelaide	11	102	75	17	194
Armidale	8	64	32	7	103
Ballarat	9	47	34	2	83
Bathurst	8	32	21	6	59
Brisbane	17	185	99	18	302
Broken Bay	7	122	73	6	201
Broome	7	10	3	0	13
Bunbury	8	73	36	13	122
Cairns	8	27	14	1	42
Canberra and Goulburn	9	96	52	6	154
Darwin	8	52	26	2	80
Geraldton	8	24	14	4	42
Hobart	8	61	28	4	93
Lismore	7	85	60	10	155
Maitland-Newcastle	9	48	36	2	86
Melbourne	34	472	301	51	824
Parramatta	8	106	78	9	193
Perth	15	110	74	5	189
Port Pirie	9	51	21	12	84
Rockhampton	8	83	52	7	142
Sale	8	89	53	5	147
Sandhurst	8	85	62	14	161
Sydney	21	252	144	47	443
Toowoomba	8	49	26	6	81
Townsville	8	60	53	5	118
Wagga Wagga	8	44	17	7	68
Wilcannia-Forbes	6	42	28	10	80
Wollongong	8	125	65	8	198
Total	281	2,596	1,577	284	4,457

Age and Gender (Questionnaire Items 1 and 2)

Just under a fifth of the sample (19 percent) were aged 15 to 34 years, another 55 percent were aged 35 to 64, and a little over a quarter (26 percent) were aged 65 or more. The median age was 52 years. Women made up 62 percent of the sample and men 38 percent. As Figure 5.1 shows, women outnumbered men in all age groups, although only marginally in the youngest and oldest groups.

Figure 5.1: Age and Gender Profile



Marital Status and Spouse's Religion (Items 3 and 10)

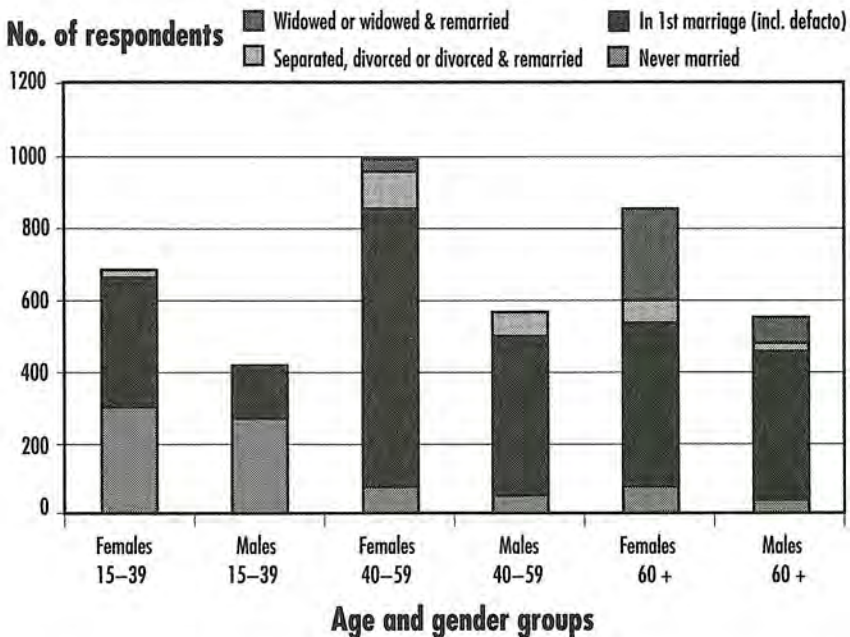
Sixty-three percent of the respondents answering Questionnaire H were in their first marriage, and a further 20 percent had never married. Almost 10 percent had been widowed, and nearly 7 percent were currently separated or divorced, or re-married after divorce. Fewer than 1 percent were in de facto relationships.

Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 show how marital status varies according to age and gender. More than a quarter (29 percent) of women aged 60 and over were widows at the time of the survey.

Table 5.2: Marital Status by Age

Marital Status	Gender and age (years)						All respondents (N=4,299)
	Females 15-39 (%)	Males 15-39 (%)	Females 40-59 (%)	Males 40-59 (%)	Females 60 & over (%)	Males 60 & over (%)	
Never married	44.2	64.1	7.9	9.7	11.2	6.9	20.4
In first marriage	50.3	32.9	77.9	78.9	51.9	75.8	62.8
De facto relationship	0.7	1.7	0.6	1.1		0.5	0.7
Separated not divorced	1.0	0.2	2.2	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.5
Divorced not remarried	2.2	1.2	4.2	3.5	4.1	1.3	3.0
Divorced and remarried	1.6		3.2	4.2	1.3	2.0	2.1
Widowed not remarried			3.1	0.4	28.9	8.7	8.3
Widowed and remarried			0.8	0.7	1.3	3.6	1.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 5.2: Marital Status



Eighty-two percent of respondents with spouses gave the denomination of their spouse as Catholic, while 7 percent were married to Anglicans. Almost all the rest were married to Christians of other denominations, except for 4 percent who said their spouses had no religion.

Households (Item 11)

Almost half (48 percent) of respondents lived in households made up of two parents with children, another 5 percent lived in one-parent households, and 25 percent lived in households made up of couples with no children living at home. Thirteen percent of respondents lived alone and 9 percent lived with other adults.

Birthplace (Item 4)

The ethnic diversity of Mass attenders in Australia was reflected in the fact that only a little over half (53 percent) of the respondents to Questionnaire H were born in Australia of Australian-born parents, while another 7 percent of Australian-born respondents had both parents born in non-English-speaking countries. Thirty percent of respondents were born overseas, including 24 percent who were born in non-English-speaking countries.

Education (Items 5–7)

Nineteen percent of respondents had bachelor's or higher level degrees but 36 percent had never completed secondary school, a consequence of the high proportion of respondents aged over 60. Another quarter (26 percent) had completed their secondary schooling.

Table 5.3 clearly shows that younger respondents had completed many more years of formal education than their older counterparts. For example, primary schooling was the only formal education received by more than a fifth of women (22 percent) and about one in six men (17 percent) aged 60 and over (although it should be noted that for this age group, primary school often extended to what is now regarded as the second year of secondary school).

In contrast, fewer than 1 percent of women and men under 40 had only this level of education. More than a quarter of these younger women (29 percent) and men (26 percent) had bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications.

Seventy-four percent of respondents received their primary schooling at Catholic schools and, of those who went to secondary school, 75 percent attended (or now attend) Catholic secondary schools. Most of the rest attended government schools; only 3 percent went to a non-Catholic private secondary school, with even fewer attending a non-Catholic private primary school.

Occupation (Item 9)

One quarter of respondents (26 percent) gave "retired" as their current occupation, and a further 19 percent said their main job was "home duties/family responsibilities". About 10 percent of respondents worked as clerical and secretarial workers or in similar occupations. The three groups

Table 5.3: Highest Educational Qualification

Highest educational qualification	Gender and age (years)						All respondents (N=4,295)
	Females 15-39 (%)	Males 15-39 (%)	Females 40-59 (%)	Males 40-59 (%)	Females 60 & over (%)	Males 60 & over (%)	
Primary schooling	0.6	0.5	5.1	3.9	22.4	17.2	9.5
Some secondary schooling	19.9	26.4	27.3	16.8	35.7	23.3	26.0
Completed secondary school	34.3	27.8	26.7	23.2	24.3	17.5	25.5
Trade certificate	5.7	11.2	4.2	16.0	2.9	18.4	8.8
Diploma or associate diploma	11.0	8.6	14.6	11.4	8.2	11.9	10.9
Bachelor degree from a university or equivalent	21.4	19.2	13.4	17.4	3.2	7.6	12.8
Postgraduate degree or diploma	7.1	6.3	8.7	11.4	3.2	4.0	6.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

“senior manager or administrator”, “school teacher, artist”, and “farm owner, small business owner” each accounted for about 5 or 6 percent of respondents, while blue collar workers accounted for about 8 percent. Among respondents aged 60 and over, 80 percent of men and 58 percent of women were retired; another 34 percent of women in this age group were involved in home duties or family responsibilities.

Table 5.4: Current Occupation by Age

Current occupation most like the following	Age		All respondents (N=4,251)
	15-49 (%)	50 & over (%)	
Senior manager or administrator	11.0	3.9	6.5
Farm owner, small business owner	5.7	4.5	4.7
Doctor, lawyer, scientist, engineer, lecturer	6.1	2.5	3.8
School teacher, artist	9.4	2.8	5.3
Technician, registered nurse, police officer	6.3	1.6	3.3
Tradesperson, skilled craftsperson, hairdresser	5.3	2.5	3.7
Salesperson, enrolled nurse, waiter	6.1	2.1	3.6
Clerical worker, secretary, teacher's aide	17.7	5.8	10.1
Truck driver, machine operator	1.1	0.9	0.9

Labourer, factory or farm hand	4.5	1.6	2.8
Retired	0.4	48.6	26.1
Home duties, family responsibilities	18.7	21.1	18.9
Student	4.6	0.2	7.9
Currently unemployed	3.1	1.9	2.5
Total	100	100	100

Table 5.5: Current Occupation by Gender

Current occupation most like the following	Gender	
	Female (%)	Male (%)
Senior manager or administrator	4.0	10.7
Farm owner, small business owner	2.7	7.6
Doctor, lawyer, scientist, engineer, lecturer	1.9	7.2
School teacher, artist	6.8	3.4
Technician, registered nurse, police officer	3.7	2.7
Tradesperson, skilled craftsperson, hairdresser	1.1	7.6
Salesperson, enrolled nurse, waiter	4.3	3.0
Clerical worker, secretary, teacher's aide	13.1	6.0
Truck driver, machine operator	0.1	2.3
Labourer, factory or farm hand	1.6	4.5
Retired	22.0	30.9
Home duties, family responsibilities	29.8	0.8
Student	6.8	10.2
Currently unemployed	2.1	3.1
Total	100	100

Summary of Demographic Characteristics

In terms of its demographic characteristics, the sample of Mass attenders who completed Questionnaire H was very much like the larger sample of over 100,000 Mass attenders who took part in the CCLS.

However, there are many differences between the CCLS samples and the picture of the Catholic population in general which emerged from the 1996 Australian Census.

The similarities of the Questionnaire H sample to the full CCLS sample, and the differences between the two CCLS samples and the general Catholic population of the same age range, are illustrated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Comparison of Demographic Characteristics of Questionnaire H Sample, Entire CCLS Sample and Catholic Population

Demographic characteristics	Questionnaire H (N=4,457) Attendees aged 15 and over	Entire CCLS (N=101,658) Attendees aged 15 and over	Australian Census (N=3,693,723) Catholics aged 15 and over
% aged 15–34	19	19	40
% aged 35–64	55	55	46
% aged 65 and over	26	26	14
Median age (years)	52	52	38
% females	62	61	52
% never married	20	19	32
% currently widowed	8	9	6
% currently separated or divorced	5	4	9
% born in Australia	70	71	71
% born overseas in English-speaking countries	6	7	6
% born overseas in non-English-speaking countries	24	22	23
% with bachelor degree or higher qualification	19	19	10

Table 5.6 demonstrates that, based on the evidence of a range of demographic characteristics, respondents to Questionnaire H are representative of CCLS respondents generally and, therefore, of all Mass attendees in Australia. However, there are some marked differences between Mass attendees and the Catholic population in general, with Mass attendees having a considerably older profile and a smaller proportion of males. By comparison with their proportions among Catholics in general, widows are over-represented among Mass attendees, whereas people who are currently separated and divorced tend to be under-represented. Mass attendees are about twice as likely to hold a bachelor's degree or higher qualification as Catholics generally.

There was a high degree of correspondence between the proportions of people born in Australia, in overseas English-speaking countries and in non-English-speaking countries. This result is a little surprising, given that the CCLS was conducted only in parishes and not in any migrant Mass centres, and that attendees who had arrived in Australia in recent years from non-English-speaking countries would be more likely, on the grounds of language difficulty, not to complete a questionnaire. It is probable that closer analysis will show that some birthplaces were better represented than others, depending on the Mass-going traditions of various ethnic groups and on the availability of Masses in their languages.

5.2.2 **Parish Involvement (Items 13–19)**

Questionnaire H included a series of questions about Mass attendance and involvement in the parish.

Respondents to Questionnaire H displayed the same high levels of Mass attendance as attenders generally, with 88 percent attending Mass at least once per week. Another 7 percent attend Mass two or three times per month. Frequency of Mass attendance varies considerably with age: 78 percent of respondents aged 15–39 go to Mass every week or more often, compared with 89 percent of those aged in their forties and fifties and 95 percent of those aged 60 or more.

Among this older age group, 30 percent of women and 23 percent of men go to Mass more than once a week. In younger age groups, men and women were equally as likely to be frequent attenders.

Table 5.7: Involvement in Parish Activities

Outreach activities	
Do you regularly take part in any parish activities reaching out to people outside the parish community (e.g. community service, welfare, social justice and evangelisation)? (Circle ONE only)	Percent
Yes, in community service/welfare/social justice activities	15.9
Yes, in evangelisation activities	4.4
Yes, in both of the above	4.0
No, I am not regularly involved	62.6
No, we don't have any such activities	<u>13.1</u>
Total (N=4,106)	100
Roles in parish	
Do you perform any of the following roles in this parish? (Circle ONE only)	
Member of the parish council or similar leadership group, or other committee	4.5
Catechist, sacrament preparation team, RCIA team or group leadership role	6.2
Both of the above	1.3
A ministry or leadership role not mentioned above	10.1
I do not have any particular ministry or leadership role	<u>77.9</u>
Total (N=3,894)	100
Pastoral activities	
Are you currently involved here in any of these ways? (Circle ONE only)	
Special minister of communion, reader or member of a music group or liturgy group	15.9
In groups which help parishioners e.g. bereavement support, family support and visiting the sick	5.0
Both of the above	1.9
No, I am not currently involved in these ways	<u>77.2</u>
Total (N=3,979)	100

Parish groups

Do you regularly take part in any group activities in this parish? (Circle ONE only)

Yes, in groups meeting for prayer, scripture or faith discussion, or adult faith education	10.5
Yes, in social or youth groups or clubs	6.6
Yes, in both of the above	1.8
No, I am not regularly involved	66.3
No, we have no such groups	<u>14.8</u>
Total (N=4,010)	100

The extent of respondents’ involvement in parish activities was explored using the four items shown in Table 5.7. The most common types of activities were those involving outreach in the form of community service, community welfare and social justice activities (20 percent), liturgical and musical involvement (18 percent), and prayer, scripture or adult faith education groups (12 percent). However, 60 percent of respondents were not involved in any of the ways mentioned in Table 5.7. This pattern of parish participation closely resembles that of the entire CCLS sample.

There is further discussion of these parish involvement results in Section 5.3.1 on Key Question 1.

Despite the overall lack of involvement in parish life, about three-fifths of respondents felt a strong sense of belonging to their parish, with 32 percent reporting a strong and growing sense of belonging and an additional 27 percent saying their sense of belonging was about the same as it had been twelve months earlier. Sixteen percent said they did not have a strong sense of belonging but were happy to stay on the fringe, while only 4 percent expressed regret that they did not yet experience that strong sense. Ten percent said they had a strong sense of belonging, but not as strong as it had been.

Just over 65 percent expressed agreement with the statement that “my spiritual needs are being adequately met in this parish”, while another 19 percent neither agreed nor disagreed and only 16 percent expressed disagreement.

5.2.3 Acceptance of Church Authority (Items 24 and 25)

Questionnaire H asked respondents whether they accepted the authority of the Church to teach that “certain doctrines of faith and morals are essential to faith, and are true, and to be believed by all Catholics”. Forty-seven percent said they accepted this authority with no difficulty, while only 6 percent said “No”. Once again, the response pattern of Questionnaire H respondents was very similar to that of the other 60,000 or so attenders who responded to this item in other CCLS questionnaires.

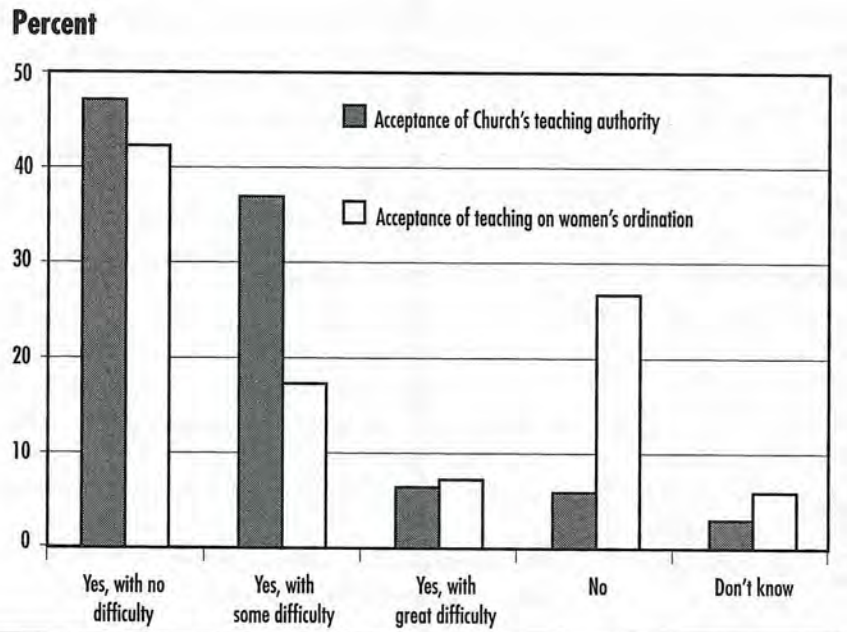
The very next item related to a specific issue of Church teaching: “Do you accept the Catholic teaching that women cannot be ordained priests?” In response to this

item, which appeared only in Questionnaire H, more than a quarter (27 percent) said “No”, although the proportion saying “Yes, with no difficulty” fell only a little, to 42 percent. The very different response patterns for the general question and the specific issue are shown in Figure 5.3 and also in Tables 5.8 and 5.9.

The level of acceptance without difficulty of the Church’s teaching authority was highest for respondents aged 60 and over. In this age group, the patterns of men’s and women’s responses were very similar. In younger age groups, however, where levels of “acceptance with no difficulty” were much lower, women were considerably less likely than men to accept that authority with no difficulty. Although the proportion of respondents in the younger age groups rejecting the Church’s teaching authority was higher than the corresponding figure for older respondents, it was not particularly high, reaching almost 9 percent for females aged 15 to 39.

It is, in fact, the high proportions of older respondents accepting the Church’s teaching authority with no difficulty that is responsible for the difference in the “accept with no difficulty” scores for these two items. Among attenders aged under 60, there is very little difference in the proportions accepting with no difficulty the general teaching authority and the teaching on the ordination of women. As with the teaching authority in general, among respondents aged under 60, women are somewhat less likely than men to accept the teaching on women’s ordination with no difficulty.

Figure 5.3: Comparison of Responses to Items about acceptance of the Church’s Teaching Authority and the Teaching on the Ordination of Women



Younger adults are most likely to reject the teaching on the ordination of women (34 percent of women and 28 percent of men aged 15 to 39), but these figures are only marginally higher than for women and men in their 40s and 50s. What is particularly noticeable is the quite high proportion of older respondents who also reject this teaching – 20 percent of women and 23 percent of men aged 60 or more. This contrasts sharply with the fact that only 3 percent of this age group do not accept the Church’s teaching authority in general.

Table 5.8: Acceptance of Church’s Teaching Authority

Acceptance of Church's teaching authority	Gender and age (years)						All respondents (N=4,205)
	Females 15–39 (%)	Males 15–39 (%)	Females 40–59 (%)	Males 40–59 (%)	Females 60 & over (%)	Males 60 & over (%)	
Yes, with no difficulty	33.0	38.3	38.4	47.1	60.7	61.8	47.0
Yes, with some difficulty	44.8	37.8	43.8	40.0	30.1	28.1	37.5
Yes, with great difficulty	6.9	9.0	8.5	4.6	4.8	5.2	6.5
No	8.8	7.8	7.6	6.7	2.9	3.0	6.1
Don't know	6.5	7.1	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.9	2.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 5.9: Acceptance of the Teaching on Ordination of Women

Acceptance of teaching on women's ordination	Gender and age (years)						All respondents (N=4,228)
	Females 15–39 (%)	Males 15–39 (%)	Females 40–59 (%)	Males 40–59 (%)	Females 60 & over (%)	Males 60 & over (%)	
Yes, with no difficulty	31.5	39.1	39.3	43.1	53.1	50.7	42.9
Yes, with some difficulty	18.1	14.5	17.6	17.9	15.3	16.3	16.8
Yes, with great difficulty	9.9	9.4	8.4	7.1	5.0	5.8	7.5
No	34.3	28.0	30.0	27.3	19.8	22.8	26.8
Don't know	6.3	8.9	4.7	4.6	6.7	4.3	6.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Respondents’ attitudes to these issues of Church authority were also related to their frequency of Mass attendance and their level of education. Whereas 49 percent of respondents who attend Mass at least once a week accept with no difficulty the Church’s authority to teach and 5 percent do not accept it, only 28 percent of respondents who go to Mass less than once a week accept it with no difficulty and 16 percent reject it.

A similar contrast is evident in relation to the Church’s teaching on the ordination of women. Forty-five percent of frequent attenders – those who go

to Mass every week or more often – accept it with no difficulty and 25 percent reject it. On the other hand, only 29 percent of less frequent attenders accept it and 43 percent reject it.

Because level of education is so closely related to age (see Section 5.2.1), it is best to consider the effect of level of education on the acceptance of Church authority by looking at individual age groups and thereby minimising effects due to age.

In every age group from the 20s to the 60s, respondents with a bachelor’s degree or higher qualification were less likely than those without degrees to accept with no difficulty both the Church’s authority to teach on matters of faith and morals and the teaching that women cannot be ordained priests. They were also more likely to reject both (respondents aged under 20 and 70 or over were not included in this analysis of education because there were very few with degrees).

The differences between the better educated and less well educated groups were substantial for all ages. Responses for those in their 50s, where the greatest contrasts could be seen, are shown in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Acceptance of the Church’s Teaching Authority and the Teaching on the Ordination of Women by Respondents aged 50–59

	Highest educational qualification		All aged 50–59
	No degree	Bachelor’s degree or higher	
respondents Acceptance of Church’s teaching authority (N=758)	(%)	(%)	
Yes, with no difficulty	48.4	31.0	45.5
No	3.2	17.5	5.5
Acceptance of teaching on women’s ordination (N=759)			
Yes, with no difficulty	52.6	20.3	46.9
No	20.5	45.3	24.6

Note: In order to illustrate the contrast between respondents with degrees and those with no degree, Table 5.10 includes only two responses to these items: “Yes, with no difficulty” and “No”.

5.3 The Participation of Women in the Church: The Four Key Questions

5.3.1 Key Question 1: What are ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? (Items 13–17, 29–30)

In relation to Key Question 1, the questionnaire asked respondents about a number of ways in which they participate in the Church. Naturally, the

questionnaire could not list all possible forms of participation, but it did confirm that respondents' participation in the Church covers areas such as those listed in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Participation in Church Activities

Participation in Church activities	Gender	
	Females (%)	Males (%)
<i>Percentage of women and men who ...</i>		
Attend Mass weekly or more often	88.4	87.6
Take part in prayer and scripture groups, or adult faith education	13.7	9.8
Take part in social or youth groups	8.8	7.6
Are members of parish councils or other committees	6.9	3.7
Are catechists, members of sacrament preparation teams or group leaders	6.8	8.6
Take part in community service/social welfare/social justice activities	20.0	18.9
Take part in evangelisation activities	8.6	7.5
Are special ministers of communion, readers or members of music or liturgy groups	19.0	16.7
Are involved in visitation, bereavement ministry, family ministry, etc.	7.4	5.3
Are volunteers in a Catholic school	14.8	9.7
Are volunteers in a local parish	17.5	15.6
Are volunteers in Catholic health/social welfare organisations	2.9	3.9
Are volunteers in Diocesan or national Church organisations	1.5	1.5
Are volunteers in ecumenical projects	2.5	1.4
Are volunteers in other Catholic organisations	6.7	8.2
Are employed in a Catholic school	5.8	3.0
Are employed in a local parish	2.0	1.9
Are employed in Catholic health/social welfare organisations	1.1	0.3
Are employed in Diocesan or national Church organisations	0.4	0.8
Are employed in ecumenical projects	1.5	0.3
Are employed in other Catholic organisations	1.3	1.2

Note: Columns do not add to 100 as Table 5.11 was compiled from several different questionnaire items.

In virtually all of these fields of activity, a higher proportion of women than men is involved, sometimes by a considerable margin, as in the case of prayer and scripture groups and voluntary involvement in Catholic schools. In those cases where men have a higher level of involvement than women, the differences are quite small.

Questionnaire H also demonstrated the important role that women play in the Church as mothers. Seventy-four percent said their mother was one of the three most significant people to show them what faith was about.

The importance of the family in developing faith is also illustrated by two items from Questionnaire A on speaking to children about faith and family prayer. Thirty-one percent of the 36,700 attenders with children living at home said they often speak to their children about the Catholic faith, another 49 percent said they occasionally do so, and only 5 percent said they never do. Although women and men are equally likely to speak to their children about the faith *occasionally*, women are considerably more likely than men to speak to them about the faith *often* (36 percent compared to 24 percent).

A quarter (26 percent) of Mass attenders with children living at home pray together with their families once a week or more often, including 14 percent who pray with their families most days. Another 22 percent pray with their families occasionally, although 51 percent never pray as a family.

5.3.2 **Key Question 2: What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church? (Items 31, 35–41)**

This key question was explored in the questionnaire by one item about the extent of support in general, and also by a series of seven items about participation in specific areas of Church life. This series is reproduced in Table 5.12.

In response to the question “When you have accepted responsibility for doing something in the parish or the wider Church, have you been given sufficient practical assistance and encouragement?”, 35 percent of respondents said they had received all they needed, while 52 percent said that they had not accepted any responsibility like this. Only small numbers were not satisfied with the assistance they received, with 5 percent saying they received too little support to enable them to carry out the responsibility properly, 4 percent reporting that they received sufficient support from the leaders but not from the people and a further 4 percent reporting that there was insufficient support from the leaders although the people supported them. Of the 48 percent who had accepted a responsibility of this type, almost three-quarters were satisfied with the level of assistance and encouragement they received. Men and women differed little in their responses to this question.

The response pattern for each item about specific areas of Church life was quite similar. In each case, between 62 percent and 70 percent indicated that

they did not participate (with 45 percent replying that they did not participate in *any* of these ways), while between 19 percent and 29 percent indicated that they had received some or a lot of assistance. Respondents reported the highest levels of assistance with educating children in faith (29 percent received some or a lot of assistance) and educating themselves in theology (26 percent) and lowest levels regarding social action and social justice activities (19 percent), in undertaking leadership roles (20 percent) and decision-making (21 percent). The proportion reporting that they had received no assistance ranged from 7 percent for participation in parish lay ministries to 13 percent for sharing in decision-making.

Table 5.12: Assistance and Encouragement to Participate in Various Areas of Church Life

What practical assistance and encouragement have you been given by the Church to participate in the following areas of Church life?	I don't participate in this way		Hardly any assistance		Some assistance		A lot of assistance	
	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)
In care-giving roles in the community or workplace	67.7	68.7	8.0	7.7	16.6	16.2	7.7	7.4
In parish lay ministries	70.3	68.0	6.0	7.4	12.3	14.5	11.5	10.1
In educating children or adults in faith	61.1	68.8	6.8	7.5	17.1	14.2	15.1	9.6
In educating yourself in theology	61.8	62.0	11.3	13.6	18.5	15.9	8.4	8.5
In social action/justice activities	71.1	66.5	11.1	11.8	13.1	16.0	4.8	5.7
In sharing in decision-making	67.9	64.3	11.0	13.9	15.0	15.3	6.1	6.5
In undertaking leadership roles	72.5	67.0	8.4	11.1	12.3	14.5	6.7	7.3

Note 1: N (Number of respondents) for each item varied from 3,024 to 3,256.
 Note 2: As each line of figures above refers to a separate item, column percentages do not add to 100. Instead, percentages **across** rows add to 100 for females and 100 for males.

There was little difference in the responses of men and women in relation to care-giving roles, parish lay ministries or self-education in theology. In the areas of sharing in decision-making, undertaking leadership roles and participating in social action, however, women were a little more likely than men to say that they did not participate, whereas men were considerably more likely than women to say they did not participate in educating children or adults in faith.

Considering only those respondents who said they *do* participate in one or more of these areas of Church life, the percentage saying they received “hardly any assistance” or “some assistance” ranged from 44 percent in relation to

educating in faith to 57 percent for social action/social justice activities. It seems reasonable to interpret “hardly any assistance” and “some assistance” as expressions of dissatisfaction, and to assume that people would not express dissatisfaction if they had not sought assistance or felt the need for encouragement in taking up one of the seven activities listed.

5.3.3 **Key Question 3: What are barriers to women’s participation in the Church? (Items 32–34, 42–50)**

Of all the key questions, Question 3 received the most thorough investigation in the questionnaire, with several items devoted to it.

Item 32: In the last five years, have there been occasions when you felt unwelcome in the Church?

Only 12 percent of respondents replied in the affirmative to this question. That is, 88 percent of all respondents said they had never felt unwelcome in the Church in the last five years. Only about 1 percent of women (and only six men) said they had felt unwelcome because of their gender; three-fifths of these were in the 40 to 59 age group. Numbers rather than percentages of respondents have been used in Table 5.13 to draw attention to the fact that most options were chosen by very few individuals.

Table 5.13: Respondents’ Experience of Feeling Unwelcome in the Church in the Last Five Years

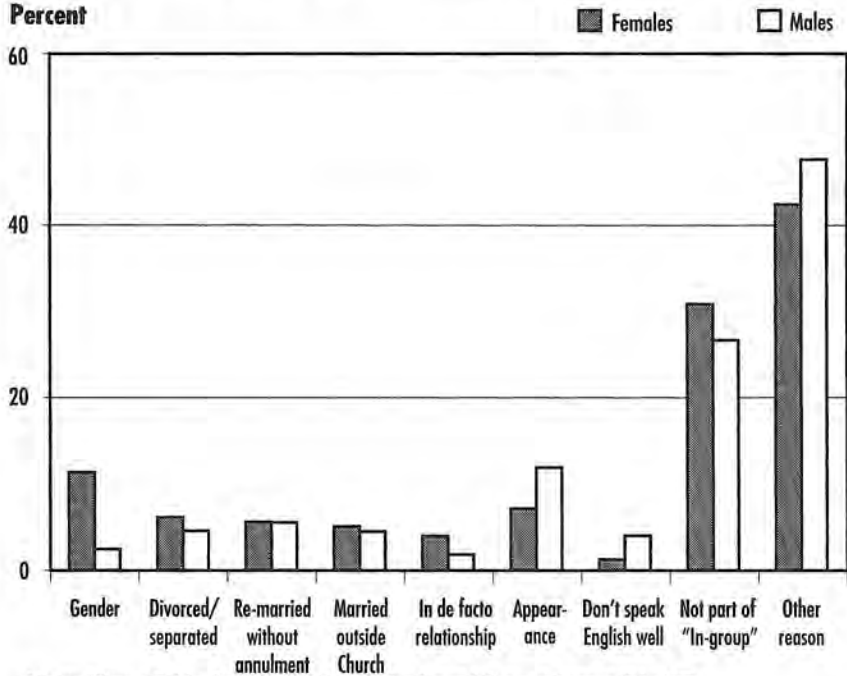
Have you felt unwelcome in the Church?	All respondents (Number) (N=4,048)
Yes, because of my gender	34
Yes, because I was divorced or separated	29
Yes, because I had re-married without an annulment	24
Yes, because I had married outside the Church	25
Yes, because I was in a de facto relationship	18
Yes, because of my appearance	46
Yes, because I don’t speak English well	19
Yes, because I’m not part of the “in-group”	165
Yes, for some other reason	243
No, I have never felt unwelcome in the Church	3,561
Total responses	4,164

Note: Number of responses exceeds number of respondents because respondents could choose all applicable options.

Of those who *had* felt unwelcome in the Church, the largest group (44 percent) said it was for a reason not listed among the options, while 30 percent said they felt unwelcome because they were not part of the “in-group”. Those who felt unwelcome because of their gender accounted for 9 percent of all those who had felt unwelcome, the same percentage as had felt unwelcome because of their appearance.

Figure 5.4 illustrates the relative frequency of reasons for feeling unwelcome among those who have at some time felt unwelcome.

Figure 5.4: Reasons for Feeling Unwelcome



Note: Figure 5.4 includes only those who have felt unwelcome (N=487).

Item 33: If you felt unwelcome in the Church, what was the effect on your level of participation?

As indicated above, only a small proportion of respondents indicated that they had felt unwelcome in the Church. Of these, just over half said their experience of feeling unwelcome had no effect on their level of participation, one-third said that it resulted in their participating less fully and the remainder (13 percent) said it made them more determined to participate fully. There was virtually no difference between men and women on this issue, nor was there much difference across age groups, except that respondents aged under 30 were a little more likely than older respondents to say they participated less as a result (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Effect of Feeling Unwelcome on Participation

Effect of feeling unwelcome on participation	Respondents (N=567) %
It had no effect on my level of participation in Church life	53.3
It made me more determined to participate fully in Church life	13.3
As a result I now participate less fully in Church life	33.4
Total	100

Note: Table 5.14 includes only those respondents who have felt unwelcome in the Church.

Item 34: Is there any activity or role that you would like to undertake in the Church which is made difficult or impossible for you by Church teachings or policies? (Circle UP TO TWO)

More than four-fifths of respondents (82 percent) chose “None of the above”, indicating that there were no Church activities or roles they would like to undertake but felt prevented from doing so by Church teachings or policies (Table 5.15). Eight percent said they would like a greater say in decision-making, 4 percent would like a more prominent role in the Mass, and 3 percent said the ordained priesthood was closed to them by Church teachings or policies. Small proportions of both men (4 percent) and women (3 percent) regretted that they could not be ordained. Just over a quarter (27 percent) of respondents who were currently divorced or who had at some time been divorced said they would like to undertake roles or activities from which Church teachings or policies exclude them.

Table 5.15: Roles Made Difficult or Impossible by Church Teachings or Policies

Roles made difficult or impossible by Church teachings or policies	Gender		All respondents (N=3,890)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	
The ordained priesthood	2.8	3.8	3.2
A more prominent role in the Mass	3.6	3.7	3.9
A greater say in decision-making	7.7	9.1	8.3
Some other activity or role not mentioned above	7.4	8.6	8.0
None of the above	83.5	79.6	81.5

Note: Column percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could choose up to 2 options.

Respondents who go to Mass at least once a week were more likely than less frequent attenders (19 percent compared to 14 percent) to say that there were

roles or activities in which they would like to be involved. Respondents in every age group with bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications were considerably more likely than those without degrees to say they would like to have a greater role in decision-making; among those in their 60s, for example, 25 percent of those with degrees said they would like to be more involved in decision-making, compared to 9 percent of those of the same age without degrees.

Item 48: Some say there are barriers preventing women from taking on leadership roles in the Church. During the last few years, have you ever experienced such a barrier, or known a woman who has? (Circle ALL that apply)

Just over three-quarters of respondents (76 percent) said that in the last few years they had never experienced or observed a barrier preventing a woman's participation in the Church because of her being a woman (Table 5.16). Where barriers had been experienced, the most common arose from Church practices that favour men for certain positions (13 percent), the exercise of authority within the Church (10 percent) and opposition or lack of support from priests (9 percent). Perhaps surprisingly, given that the question specifically referred to the experiences of women, the responses of men and women were very similar (Figure 5.5).

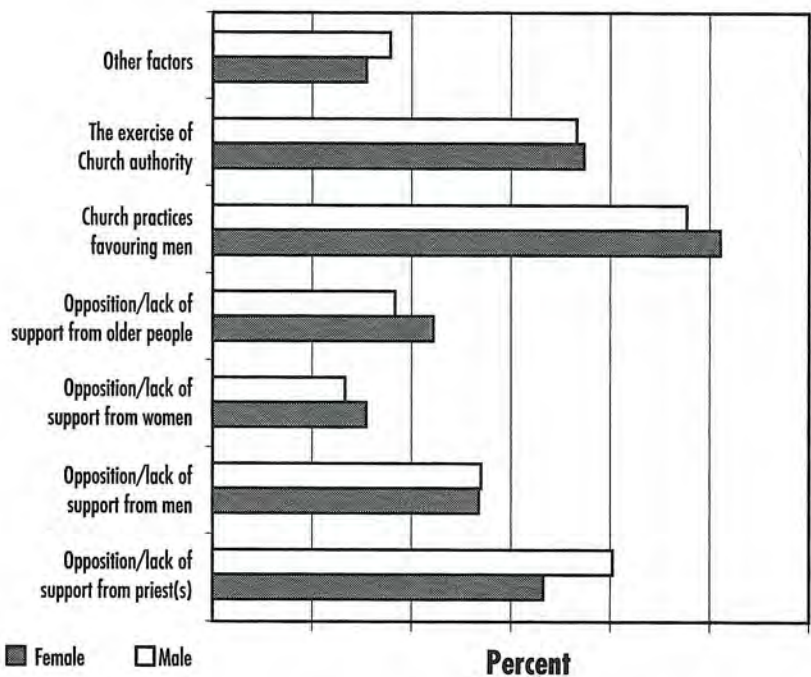
Table 5.16: Experience of Barriers to Women's Participation

Experience of barriers to women's participation	Gender		All respondents (N=3,890)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	
No, I have never experienced or observed such a barrier	75.3	76.7	75.6
Yes, opposition or lack of support from a priest or priests	8.9	9.1	9.0
Yes, opposition or lack of support from men in the Church	7.0	6.7	6.8
Yes, opposition or lack of support from women in the Church	4.3	3.1	3.8
Yes, opposition or lack of support from older people in the Church	6.1	4.8	5.7
Yes, Church practices that favour men for certain positions	14.1	11.8	13.1
Yes, the exercise of authority in the Church	10.4	10.0	10.2
Yes, other factors	4.6	4.0	4.3

Note: Column percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could choose all applicable options.

In all age groups, respondents with degrees were more likely than those who were less well-educated to say they had experienced or observed barriers preventing women from taking on leadership roles in the Church. Both men and women identified the same three main causes of barriers.

Figure 5.5: Relative Frequency of Experience of Barriers to Women’s Participation



Note: Figure 5.5 includes only those respondents who have experienced or observed a barrier to women’s participation (N=863).

Figure 5.5 illustrates the relative frequency of the different forms of barriers to women taking on leadership roles in the Church nominated by those attenders who have experienced or observed such barriers.

Items 49 and 50: Do you personally know any men who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic Church? and Do you personally know any women who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic Church?

Around three-quarters of respondents do not personally know any men (77 percent) or women (73 percent) who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic Church, but 10 percent know men and 16 percent know women who do say they have felt excluded (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17: Knowledge of Men and Women Who Have Felt Excluded from the Church

excluded Type of person excluded	Know men who have felt excluded			Know women who have fe		
	Female (%)	Male (%)	All respondents (N=3,760)	Female (%)	Male (%)	All respondents (N=3,818)
Yes, family member	4.8	4.1	4.7	5.8	4.9	5.5
Yes, close friends	3.0	4.3	3.5	8.6	5.3	7.3
Yes, both of these	1.7	3.4	2.3	4.3	3.5	3.9
No	78.2	75.7	77.1	70.5	75.6	72.4
Don't know	12.3	12.5	12.4	10.8	10.6	10.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Respondents in their 30s and 40s were most likely to know men who felt excluded, and those aged in their 30s, 40s and 50s most likely to know women who felt excluded. Those who go to Mass every week or more often are more likely than less frequent attenders not to know men or women who have felt excluded from the Church. In all age groups from 20 to 70, respondents with degrees were more likely than those without degrees to know men and women who have felt excluded. About one-third of those aged from 40 to 70 who have a degree know women who say they have felt excluded.

Items 42–47: Some people say that various Church teachings affect their active participation in the Church. How do the following affect your participation?

Of the six areas of Church teaching listed in Items 42–47, the teaching on abortion was seen as the one most likely to encourage respondents to participate in the Church and the least likely to be a source of discouragement. Almost half (48 percent) of respondents said they were encouraged or strongly encouraged by this teaching, another 37 percent said it had no effect on their participation, and 16 percent said the teaching discouraged or strongly discouraged them (Table 5.18).

Table 5.18: Effect of Various Church Teachings on Participation

Church teaching	Strongly encourages me to participate		Encourages me to participate		No effect		Discourages me from participating		Strongly discourages me from participating	
	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)
Abortion	26.7	29.6	18.5	16.4	36.8	39.2	6.6	5.7	11.4	9.2
Artificial contraception	13.2	17.8	11.2	11.5	46.6	48.2	14.3	11.4	14.6	11.1
Compulsory priestly celibacy	15.3	18.1	9.1	9.4	49.1	51.7	12.0	10.2	14.4	10.7
Divorce and re-marriage	12.9	18.1	11.9	11.8	46.6	48.6	15.0	11.4	13.7	10.1
Pre-marital sex	16.2	20.5	11.5	10.2	48.0	49.0	11.7	8.7	12.6	11.5
Ordination of women to the priesthood	13.7	18.0	8.5	8.4	46.7	45.6	12.3	11.5	18.8	16.6

Note 1: N (Number of respondents) for each item varied from 3,265 to 3,436.

Note 2: As each line of figures above refers to a separate item, column percentages do not add to 100. Instead, percentages **across** rows add to 100 for females and 100 for males.

Except in the case of abortion, about half the respondents said the teachings in these areas did not affect their participation one way or the other and the other half said the teachings encouraged or discouraged their participation. Care must be exercised in interpreting the high proportion of respondents saying that the teachings do not affect their participation. It would not be reasonable to combine them with either those who are encouraged or those who are discouraged in order to make statements like, for example, “73 percent of men are not encouraged by the Church’s teaching on compulsory priestly celibacy”. This is because the “no effect” option does not necessarily mean that respondents are uncertain about whether these teachings encourage or discourage them from participating in Church life. It could also mean that these teachings simply do not belong to the range of considerations which influence people’s decisions about participating in Church life.

In order to compare perceptions about the six different issues, the percentages of respondents saying they were encouraged or strongly encouraged were added and the issues were then ranked from most encouraging to least encouraging according to these scores. This was repeated for those who were discouraged or strongly discouraged. Both rankings are shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19: Ranking of Issues from Most Encouraging to Least Encouraging and from Most Discouraging to Least Discouraging

Church teaching	Ranking	
	Most encouraging	Most discouraging
Abortion	1	6
Artificial contraception	4	2
Compulsory priestly celibacy	5	4
Divorce and re-marriage	3	3
Pre-marital sex	2	5
Ordination of women to the priesthood	6	1

Note: 1 is the highest ranking, 6 the lowest. That is, the teaching on abortion is perceived as the most encouraging teaching, and the teaching on the ordination of women as the most discouraging.

Table 5.19 shows that the Church’s teachings on abortion and pre-marital sex are regarded as the most encouraging and the least discouraging of the six issues, whereas the teaching on the ordination of women is regarded as the least encouraging and the most discouraging.

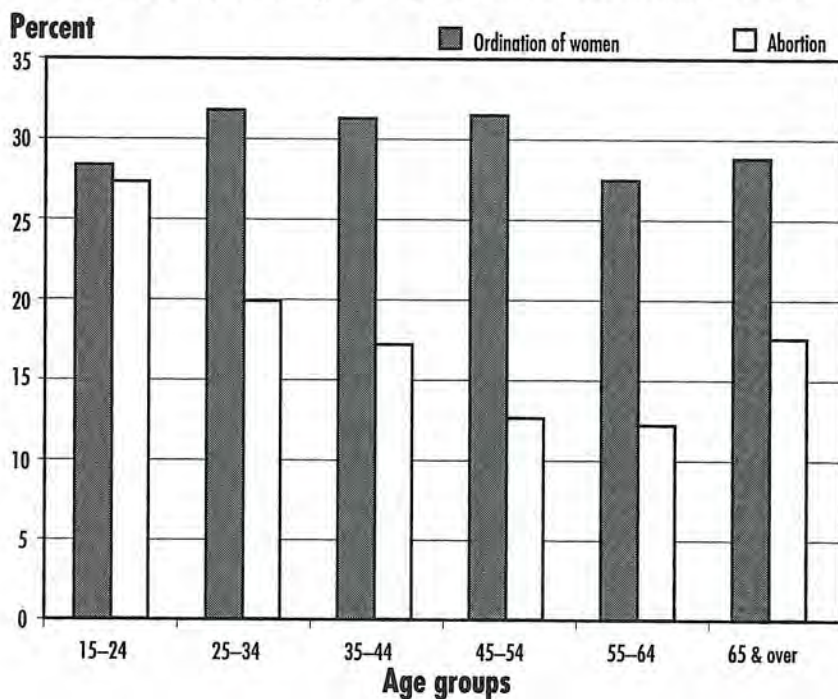
Women and men gave the teachings identical rankings both in terms of encouragement and of discouragement. For all issues except abortion and pre-marital sex, the percentage of women saying they were discouraged exceeded the percentage saying they were encouraged. Only in the case of the ordination of women did the percentage of men saying they were discouraged exceed the percentage saying they were encouraged. For every issue except abortion, women were more likely than men to say they were discouraged from participating and less likely to say they were encouraged to participate.

For all age groups older than 45, the teaching on the ordination of women is regarded as discouraging or strongly discouraging participation by higher proportions of respondents than any other teaching (30 percent women, 28 percent men). For respondents aged 15 to 24, the most discouraging teachings are those on pre-marital sex and contraception (33 percent and 30 percent respectively), while for respondents aged 25 to 44, the teaching on contraception is regarded as having the most discouraging effect on participation: 32 percent regard it as discouraging or strongly discouraging their participation.

Attendees who are currently separated (not divorced) found the Church’s teaching on divorce and re-marriage the most discouraging of the teachings listed; 57 percent said it discouraged or strongly discouraged them from participating.

Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of respondents in each age group who are discouraged or strongly discouraged from participating in the Church by the teachings on abortion and the ordination of women. These two teachings were chosen for inclusion in the graph to illustrate the contrast between the most encouraging and the most discouraging teachings. The graph shows that approximately the same proportion of 15 to 24 year-olds find that the two teachings discourage them from participating, but that the proportion discouraged by the teaching on abortion drops rapidly with age (although it rises again for those aged 65 and over), while the proportion discouraged from participating by the teaching on the ordination of women remains relatively stable across all age groups.

Figure 5.6: Percentage of Respondents Discouraged or Strongly Discouraged by Teachings on Abortion and the Ordination of Women



For each of these six areas of Church teaching, respondents who go to Mass every week or more often are more likely than less frequent attenders to find the teaching encouraging and less likely to find it discouraging. For example, 29 percent of frequent attenders find the Church's teaching on contraception encouraging and 25 percent find it discouraging, whereas 12 percent of those who attend less frequently find it encouraging and 43 percent find it discouraging.

The effect of these teachings on respondents' participation was also related to their level of education. For most of the six issues – abortion and, to a lesser

extent, pre-marital sex were the exceptions – respondents of all age groups with degrees or higher qualifications were more likely than respondents without degrees to be discouraged from participation and less likely to be encouraged to participate. Twenty-six percent of respondents in their 60s with a degree, for example, were encouraged by the teaching on priestly celibacy, and 33 percent were discouraged by it. On the other hand, for the same age group, 34 percent of respondents without a degree were encouraged by this teaching and 25 percent were discouraged by it.

In the case of abortion, the pattern of responses just described was true for respondents in their 20s, but in older age groups, better educated respondents tended to see the teaching on abortion in a more positive light than those who were less well educated.

The results of younger respondents for the item on pre-marital sex also showed the same pattern as for other teachings but this clear pattern was not present for attenders aged 40 and over.

In Section 5.2.3, it was reported that the authority of the Church to teach that certain doctrines of faith and morals are essential to the faith, and are true, and to be believed by all Catholics, was accepted with no difficulty by 47 percent of respondents and rejected by 6 percent. It was also reported that the Church's teaching on the ordination of women, one of the issues discussed here, was accepted with no difficulty by 42 percent and rejected by 27 percent of respondents. Similar types of items about two more of these issues, artificial contraception and divorce and re-marriage, were included in other questionnaires. Each of these other questionnaires was completed by considerably smaller samples than the Questionnaire H sample.

In Questionnaire G, completed by 1.3 percent of attenders in each participating parish, respondents were asked "Do you accept the practice whereby divorced Catholics who have remarried without an annulment of their previous marriage are refused Communion?". This practice was accepted with no difficulty by 17 percent of the 1,545 respondents and rejected by 36 percent. In Questionnaire M (also completed by 1.3 percent of attenders), respondents were asked "Do you accept the Catholic teaching prohibiting the use of artificial contraception?". Twenty-five percent of the 1,231 respondents said "Yes, with no difficulty", while 38 percent rejected the teaching. Unlike the other items of this type, however, this latter one did not include the option "Don't know" so that its results are not directly comparable with those of the other items.

In concluding this section on Key Question 3 regarding barriers to women's participation in the Church, a reference to an item in Questionnaire F (which was completed by 2 percent of attenders in each participating parish) is appropriate. Respondents were asked to respond on a 7-point scale from

"Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" to the following statement: "The Church's teaching on and treatment of women is unjust: e.g. all-male authorities, ineligibility of women for ordination, etc.". Fifty-one percent of the 1,512 respondents, including 49 percent of men and 52 percent of women, expressed some degree of agreement with this statement. Thirty percent expressed some disagreement, with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

So far as Key Question 3 is concerned, it appears that the results from Questionnaire H and from related items in other questionnaires indicate that the great majority of Mass attenders do not feel unwelcome in the Church and do not experience barriers preventing them from participating in the Church in the way they want to. Depending on the issue, however, between 17 percent and 30 percent of attenders feel discouraged by certain Church teachings from participating in the Church. As well, even though over 90 percent of attenders accept the Church's teaching authority in principle, the teachings on the ordination of women and contraception and the practice of denying Communion to those who have been remarried without an annulment are each rejected by between 27 percent and 38 percent of attenders.

5.3.4 **Key Question 4: What are some ways in which women's participation can be increased?**

Item 51: If you believe women are being discouraged from fully participating in the Catholic Church, what would you see as the best way of increasing their participation? (Circle UP TO TWO)

Thirty-one percent of respondents said they did not believe women are discouraged to any significant extent from participating in the Catholic Church. Due to the way the question was worded, however, it is probable that many who do not believe that women are being discouraged from fully participating in the Church did not answer the question. Nevertheless, over 2,400 respondents did indicate what they think are the most important ways of increasing women's participation. This accounts for 56 percent of the entire Questionnaire H sample or 69 percent of the respondents to this question.

Respondents were asked to select up to two of the best ways of increasing women's participation. The most popular choices were prayer (chosen by 27 percent of respondents) followed by involving women in decision-making (19 percent) (Table 5.20, Figure 5.7). Other courses of action to be selected as one of their top two priorities by more than 10 percent of respondents were "reforming beliefs and practices in the Church that do not promote equality of men and women" (15 percent), "appointing women as spokespersons for the Church where appropriate" (13 percent) and "creating opportunities for using the academic and theological qualifications and experience of women in the service of the Church" (13 percent). Use of gender-inclusive language was not

one of the highest priorities for most respondents; only two percent thought that making greater use of gender-inclusive language was one of the two best ways of increasing women’s participation.

It is important to note that only means for promoting women’s participation in the Church that can be acted upon were included in this item. Thus, “ordaining women to the priesthood” was not one of the choices offered.

Men were somewhat more likely than women (35 percent to 28 percent) not to believe that women are discouraged from full participation in the Church, but they were also a little more likely to favour reforming beliefs about the practices in the Church that do not promote equality of men and women (17 percent to 14 percent). Other means of promoting women’s participation either received about equal support from both sexes or were more strongly supported by women. Support for all of these measures, except prayer, tended to be strongest for people aged between 30 and 60. In the case of prayer, however, support increased consistently from 15 percent of teenagers to 46 percent of people in their 70s.

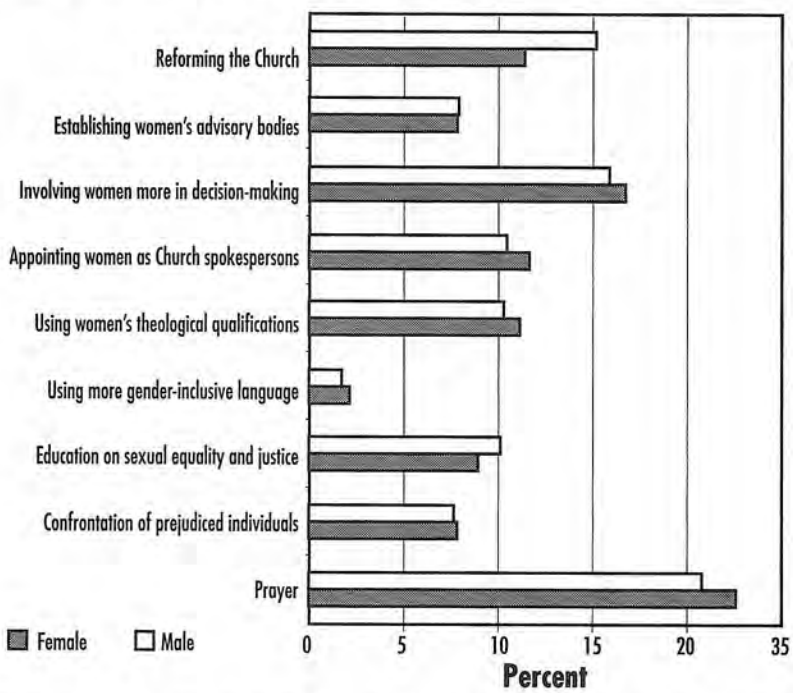
Table 5.20: Means of Promoting Women’s Participation

Means of promoting women's participation	Gender		All respondents (N=3,510)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	
Prayer	28.8	23.2	27.1
Confrontation of prejudiced individuals, especially those in positions of authority	10.2	8.5	9.4
Education of Catholics on sexual equality and justice	11.5	12.6	12.2
Making greater use of gender-inclusive language	2.5	1.4	2.1
Using women’s academic and theological qualifications and experience in the service of the Church	14.4	11.6	13.1
Appointing women as spokespersons for the Church where appropriate	14.8	11.3	13.2
Increasing women’s involvement in decision-making and Church administration	20.8	17.4	19.3
Establishing women’s advisory bodies to advise the Bishops	9.6	9.0	9.3
Reforming beliefs and practices in the Church that do not promote equality	14.3	16.9	15.0
I don’t believe women are discouraged to any significant extent	28.3	34.6	31.1

Note: Column percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could choose up to 2 options.

Figure 5.7 indicates the relative popularity of the different ways of promoting women’s participation in the Church by showing the percentage of respondents nominating each of the ways listed in Item 51 as one of their top two priorities. Only those respondents who selected one of the ways of promoting women’s participation are included in the graph.

Figure 5.7: Relative Frequency of Means of Promoting Women’s Participation



Note: Figure 5.7 includes only those respondents who selected one or two ways of promoting women’s participation (N=2,420)

5.4 Summary of Major Findings

5.4.1 Overview of the Profile of Questionnaire H Respondents

In terms of demographic characteristics, parish involvement and acceptance of the Church’s teaching, respondents to Questionnaire H are representative of Mass attenders in Australia generally. That is, they have a considerably older age profile than the Catholic population in general, and women tend to outnumber men in the ratio of about three to two. Like the Catholic population in general, the respondents are made up of people from many different countries, but they are about twice as likely to have a bachelor’s degree or

higher qualification as Catholics generally. They include a higher proportion of widows than the Catholic population as a whole, but separated and divorced people are under-represented. Almost nine-tenths of them attend Mass every week, or more often, but more than half of them are not involved in any regular way in other parish activities. Despite this, they have a strong sense of belonging to their parish, and are generally satisfied that it is meeting their spiritual needs. Like Mass attenders all around Australia, about half of them accept with no difficulty the authority of the Church to teach, with nearly all the remainder accepting it with some or great difficulty and only a small percentage (6 percent) not accepting it.

Several characteristics of the Questionnaire H respondents stand out. One of these is the age profile, where the high median age is a product of the under-representation of attenders aged under 40. Another is the relative under-representation of men – there are only two men to every three women at Mass – and the relative lower level of involvement, compared to that of women, of those men who do attend.

A third characteristic is the high proportion of attenders who say they accept the Church's teaching authority "with some difficulty" or "with great difficulty". Some respondents who chose one of these options may have done so because their Catholic faith requires them to submit to the authority of the Church, even if this is difficult for them. Despite their difficulties, their ultimate decision to accept the Church's authority is never in doubt. Others who said they had difficulty in accepting the Church's authority may be indicating that their confidence in the Church has been shaken and that they are in the process of moving from a position of acceptance with no difficulty to one of rejection. Because this is the first time a survey such as the CCLS has been carried out in Australia, it is not possible to tell whether the high proportion of people experiencing difficulty is a new and growing phenomenon, or whether it has existed for many years. It will be important to monitor issues like this with the aid of future research so that trends can be identified.

Another characteristic concerns respondents' acceptance of the Church's teaching on the ordination of women. While the proportion accepting this teaching with no difficulty is only marginally lower than the proportion accepting with no difficulty the Church's teaching authority in general, the proportion who do not accept the teaching is more than four times the proportion not accepting the more general teaching authority and accounts for more than a quarter of the Questionnaire H respondents, with even higher proportions among younger respondents.

The final characteristic to be noted here concerns the differences between older and younger respondents. Respondents aged 15 to 39 are less likely than older respondents to go to Mass every week, but even those who are weekly

attenders are less likely than respondents aged 40 or more to participate in parish groups, to feel a sense of belonging to their parish, to agree that the parish is meeting their spiritual needs and to accept without difficulty the authority of the Church to teach on matters of faith or morals.

5.4.2 **Key Question 1**

Questionnaire H has reinforced the insight that women (and men) participate in the Church in a wide variety of ways. Together with items from other CCLS questionnaires, it has also permitted some assessment of the scope of participation in Church life away from the formal Church setting, in praying as a family and speaking to children about faith, for example. In almost every form of participation, female attenders are more likely to be involved than male attenders, and since there are three women for every two men among attenders, this means that women greatly outnumber men in the vast majority of forms of participation in the Church referred to in this Chapter.

5.4.3 **Key Question 2**

The questionnaire data revealed little evidence to suggest that Mass attenders who take on responsibility for doing something in the parish or wider Church do not receive sufficient practical assistance and encouragement from Church leaders to enable them to complete the task. Almost three quarters of the respondents who had accepted such a responsibility reported that they had received all the practical assistance and encouragement they needed, with one-third of the remainder saying they experienced sufficient support from the leaders but not from the people.

Respondents reported the highest levels of assistance with educating children in faith (29 percent received some or a lot of assistance) and educating themselves in theology (26 percent) and lowest levels regarding social action and social justice activities (19 percent), in undertaking leadership roles (20 percent) and decision-making (21 percent).

5.4.4 **Key Question 3**

An examination of the items related to Key Question 3 shows that 88 percent of respondents have not once felt unwelcome in the Church in the last five years, and only a tiny percentage (including about 1 percent of women) have felt unwelcome because of their gender. Over 80 percent said there is no role in the Church from which they feel excluded by Church teachings or policies. Seventy-six percent said that in the last few years they had never experienced or observed a barrier preventing a woman's participation in the Church because of her gender. Two-thirds of respondents personally know neither men nor women who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic

Church. Many respondents find that certain Church teachings, particularly the teaching on abortion, encourage them to participate in the Church.

On the other hand, 16 percent of female respondents said they would like to undertake activities or roles in the Church which are made difficult or impossible for them by Church teachings or policies. It is important to note here that an even higher proportion of men (20 percent) regretted that some activities or roles are made difficult or impossible for them. In other words, certain Church teachings or policies are perceived by some women and men to act as barriers to their participation, especially when it comes to having a greater say in making decisions. These perceptions are more prevalent among frequent Mass attenders than they are among less frequent attenders, and are particularly prevalent among those who are or at some time have been divorced.

While 88 percent of respondents have never felt unwelcome in the Church in recent years, it is also important to acknowledge that 12 percent of all attenders, women and men, *have* felt unwelcome and to consider the impact of that experience on their participation. One-third of those who have felt unwelcome said they participate less as a result. This result suggests that four attenders out of every hundred in parishes around Australia are now participating less than they did before because of some experience they have had of feeling unwelcome. It also prompts the question, unanswerable with the present data, about how many people have, as a result of feeling unwelcome, already lessened their participation to the extent that they no longer regularly attend Mass.

In a similar way, it is important to note that, while the majority of respondents did not know people who felt excluded from the Church, 16 percent of all respondents (and 19 percent of female respondents) know women who have felt excluded. As well, 10 percent know men who have felt excluded. The corresponding figures for people with degrees were a good deal higher.

Although the majority of respondents have not experienced a barrier preventing them from taking on leadership roles in the Church and have not known a woman who has experienced such a barrier, a substantial minority (25 percent) of female respondents and a similar proportion of male respondents (23 percent) have observed a barrier like this at work. When barriers are experienced, they are most likely to arise from the exercise of authority in the Church, Church practices that favour men for certain positions, and opposition or lack of support from priests.

Responses to the items about various areas of Church teachings indicate that the teaching about abortion is generally seen as encouraging participation, but teachings on issues such as the ordination of women, contraception and divorce and remarriage are more likely to discourage than encourage particular groups of respondents such as women, young people or those who are currently separated. All six areas of teaching are less encouraging to less

frequent attenders than they are to more frequent attenders, and respondents with degrees also find all of them, except the teaching on abortion, less encouraging than those without degrees do.

5.4.5 Key Question 4

Respondents to Questionnaire H believe that the most important ways of promoting the participation of women in the Church are prayer, increasing involvement in decision-making, reforming beliefs and practices that do not promote equality, appointing women as spokespersons for the Church and creating opportunities for theologically qualified women to make a greater contribution to the Church. All of these are seen as more important than making greater use of inclusive language.

5.4.6 Final Observations

This research has shown that women are more involved than men in a wide range of Church activities. It has also shown that the majority of people who accept responsibility in the parish are given sufficient assistance to complete the task, and that large majorities have not felt unwelcome in the Church in recent years nor have they experienced or observed barriers to women's participation.

The Survey has also identified some matters requiring deep reflection on the part of the Bishops and other leaders in the Church. These include the under-representation of men and of attenders aged under 35 among Mass attenders and, more particularly, among those who are involved in parish activities apart from the Mass.

The research also found that only about half of all attenders have no difficulty accepting the Church's teaching authority in general. Substantial minorities do not accept its teaching on specific issues such as contraception and the ordination of women and its treatment of people who have been divorced and remarried without an annulment. Those teachings, among others, discourage many attenders from participating in the Church. As well, the research has shown that about a quarter of attenders have experienced or observed a barrier preventing women from taking on leadership positions in the Church.

Another important finding that emerges from the study is that on many items the responses of women and men follow a similar pattern. Whether the issue is the desire to have more opportunities for participation in decision-making, the existence of barriers to women's participation in leadership, or the extent to which they agree that the Church's teaching on and treatment of women is unjust, women and men are in broad agreement. The participation of women in the Church is not only a woman's issue; women and men share the same questions and concerns.

CHAPTER 6

PUBLIC HEARINGS

6.1 Background to the Public Hearings

6.2 Conduct of the Public Hearings

6.3 Findings of the Public Hearings: Overall Response

6.4 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

6.5 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

6.6 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

6.7 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

6.8 Summary of Key Findings of the Public Hearings

6.1 Background to the Public Hearings

- 6.1.1 The third of the main ways in which the community was invited to assist in the Research Project was through a series of public hearings conducted between May 13 and July 24, 1997. The intention to hold such hearings "in a number of capital cities and regional centres across all Australian States and Territories during 1997" was announced when the Project was launched in August 1996. At the same time, it was stated that presentations to hearings should address one or more of the Project's key research questions; and that those wishing to make presentations at hearings would be asked to arrange an appointment through the BCJDP after the times and places of hearings had been advertised.
- 6.1.2 The RMG and the BCJDP Secretariat devoted a good deal of attention during the latter part of 1996 and the first half of 1997 to the planning and organising of the hearings. It had been recalled that the 1987 Report of Monsignor J Nestor's *Review of Episcopal Initiatives for the Promotion of Education for Justice, Peace and Development* (the 'Nestor Report') had drawn attention to the way in which the United States Bishops had developed a system of hearings as an integral part of the method of consultation needed in addressing major social issues. Subsequently, a working party led by Brother Mark O'Connor fms had examined in more detail the model used by the US Bishops in the period between 1977 and 1987 for the production of Pastoral Letters or Statements on social and other issues. One conclusion of the working party's report (the "O'Connor Report") was that one of the elements on which the successful operation of the model depended was public hearings.
- 6.1.3 When the Bishops of Australia decided to use an adapted version of the US model in conducting a consultation or inquiry on the distribution of wealth in Australia (the 'Wealth Inquiry'), they included hearings to complement the written

submissions, the advice from experts and other forms of data-gathering or research. The hearings were held in the months between May and August 1988.

- 6.1.4 The RMG was informed about the way in which the Wealth Inquiry hearings were conducted. It was noted that a number of Diocesan Hearings, held in all States, preceded National Hearings held in four centres – Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide. Panel members at the National Hearings included some members of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, particularly members of the BCJDP, the specialised consultants to the Project, economists, sociologists, academics, social workers and members of the central management team. The panels varied in size but generally consisted of at least six members. Presenters had up to 30 minutes in which to speak, with provision for a period of interaction with the panel. All of those who either accepted an invitation to make a presentation or expressed a wish to do so were given the opportunity to appear.
- 6.1.5 The RMG also received some information about the way in which Senate and Parliamentary Committees manage hearings or receive oral evidence from witnesses. There is a strong emphasis on such occasions on the questioning of witnesses, who are often called to expand or discuss their previously presented written submissions. There is also at times some scope for interaction between witnesses. The proceedings are subjected to Hansard-type recording and transcription.
- 6.1.6 After careful consideration, it was agreed by the RMG that the hearings for the research study on women's participation in the Australian Catholic Church would not be conducted in quite the same way as either the Wealth Inquiry hearings of 1988 or those organised by Senate or Parliamentary Committees, although some of the procedures used in both cases would be adopted.

6.2 Conduct of the Public Hearings

- 6.2.1 It was seen as important that the hearings should be authentic listening exercises, open to anybody wishing to make their voices heard. In this sense they were more inclusive than, for example, Senate Committee hearings. Presenters would be encouraged to express their views and describe their experiences openly and frankly, without an expectation that they could be challenged for saying certain things or that their presentations would give rise to a debate with members of the panel. It was made clear that the panel members, who would not necessarily be the same people at every hearing, would limit themselves in questioning the presenters to seeking clarification of matters raised or additional information about those matters. It was also regarded as desirable that, as far as possible, at least one Bishop, preferably the local Ordinary, would sit on the panel at every venue. It was also agreed that the panels should always include some members of the RMG. As a general rule, there would be about four panellists.

Presentations were not to exceed twenty minutes, and in every case there would be up to ten minutes for questions from the panel. While the hearings could be attended by any interested members of the public, including the media, those in attendance would not be allowed to ask questions or to enter into discussion with the presenters or panellists in the course of the hearing. If presenters were willing to answer the questions of media representatives, this could be done, but not during the session or within the hearing room.

6.2.2 It was the wish of the RMG to advertise the hearings widely, giving every interested person or group the opportunity to apply to make a presentation. With this in mind, the BCJDP Secretariat prepared media releases, placed advertisements in newspapers and periodicals, both Catholic and secular, and sent information about the hearings to several thousand recipients, including every person and group who had sent in a written submission, parishes, pastoral councils, religious orders and congregations, lay movements and other Church organisations. The aim was to alert every potential presenter to the fact that the hearings were taking place, without, however, offering a guarantee that all those applying to make a presentation would be accommodated. Those who could not be heard during a hearing would still be encouraged to submit their views in writing.

6.2.3 At an early stage in the planning, it had been intended by the RMG, mainly for budgetary reasons, to limit the number of hearings to the capital cities of the eight States and Territories and to about four provincial or rural centres. The organisers had been advised that this would be sufficient to ensure that viewpoints of every kind would be represented in the presentations. It was also thought initially that one day of hearings in most centres would suffice, with the possible exception of the two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne. It soon emerged, however, that the amount of interest in the hearings was going to exceed the expectations of the organisers. This was also reflected in the fact that the Bishops of most of the dioceses responded positively when asked if they wished to have a hearing in their territory. Aware now that there were solid pastoral reasons, apart from the requirements of the research, for arranging hearings wherever they had been requested, the organisers drew up a revised plan for what in the end were 32 hearing days in 23 centres. The 23 venues, the number of hearing days in each venue and the order in which they took place were:

Canberra (1)	Hobart (1)	Alice Springs (1)
Newcastle (1)	Sale (1)	Darwin (1)
Sydney (3)	Melbourne (3)	Broome (1)
Wollongong (1)	Brisbane (3)	Geraldton (1)
Wagga Wagga (1)	Toowoomba (1)	Perth (2)
Bathurst (1)	Rockhampton (1)	Bunbury (1)
Shepparton (1)	Townsville (1)	Tamworth (1)
Ballarat (1)	Adelaide (3)	

- 6.2.4 It will be noticed from this list that hearings took place in 22 of Australia's 28 territorial dioceses. (Darwin was the only diocese where, for reasons of distance, hearings took place in two centres – Darwin and Alice Springs.) Although there were no hearings in the Dioceses of Parramatta, Broken Bay, Lismore, Wilcannia-Forbes, Port Pirie and Cairns, in most cases the opportunity existed for people wishing to make a presentation to apply to do so at a hearing in a neighbouring diocese. This was particularly the case with Parramatta and Broken Bay, which each had presenters at the Sydney hearings, and with Port Pirie, which was well represented at the Adelaide hearings. There was some regret that hearings were not arranged in such areas as the far west of New South Wales and the more remote parts of Western Australia and Queensland. Nevertheless, people travelled vast distances from small communities to make presentations and be present at many of the hearings, notably those in Bathurst, Toowoomba, Geraldton, Broome and Bunbury.
- 6.2.5 After information about the pending hearings had been widely circulated, people or organisations expressing an interest were sent background information about the Project itself, a detailed guide to the procedures for the hearings and an application form. Those wishing to apply were asked to return the completed form to the BCJDP Secretariat. As the applications arrived, especially for the hearings in the capital cities, it soon became clear that a selection process would have to be used for some of the hearings, since it would not be possible to invite all applicants to make a presentation.
- 6.2.6 The organisers gave careful consideration to the way in which a selection of presenters was to be made. It was decided that, where necessary, a selection by ballot would be used so that each individual and group had an equal chance to present at the hearings: no one was advantaged; no one was disadvantaged. Furthermore, as noted above, all applicants were told that, if they were not invited to speak at a hearing, they could still submit their intended presentation in writing, which would be fully considered by those conducting the research.
- 6.2.7 While some consternation greeted the announcement that a ballot system would be used where necessary, most of the critics of the method were reassured when advised of the reasoning behind the decision. Others were still sceptical about it, however, fearing that the system might not be as random as was being claimed, and that in fact some supposedly "unwanted" or over-critical presentations were going to be eliminated by choice. Such fears were unjustified. The RMG used a process involving the numbering of all applications as they arrived and a presentation of the numbers alone, without indication of the identity of the applicants, to the local Bishop, who proceeded to carry out the ballot on this basis. When advised by the Bishops or their staff of the successful numbers, the BCJDP Secretariat then identified the presenters and proceeded to draw up the program for the hearing.

- 6.2.8 Another criticism of the random selection process was that it needed to be used in some places and not in others. While it was used in most of the capital cities (Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth), it was not required in most of the provincial or country centres, where all of the applicants were able to be given a hearing in the time available. This was seen by some as a form of unintentional discrimination against city-dwellers. There was some strength in this argument, but it was pointed out that the disadvantages unfortunately suffered by some urban applicants did not detract from the overall validity and completeness of the research findings emerging from the hearings. It was also noted that the outcome helped to restore some balance to a situation in which people living in rural areas usually have more limited opportunities than those in the cities to participate in projects of this kind.
- 6.2.9 It should also be noted that modifications introduced to the process in the course of the hearings, in light of experience, had the effect of reducing the numbers excluded by the ballot in the later hearings. It was found that some of the presenters at the early hearings were not using the full twenty-minute period available to them, with the result that spare time was found for “stand-by” presenters. In the light of this experience, the staff of the BCJDP asked those chosen to present at the later hearings to indicate in advance how much time they expected to take. Since a good number advised that they would need considerably less than twenty minutes, it was possible to increase the number of presenters at most sessions.
- 6.2.10 From the outset, it was recognised that the role of Chairperson at the hearings was crucial. This complex and sensitive task was undertaken with great success at every hearing by women who in most cases were nominated by the local Bishop. Notes concerning the kind of statement which the Chair should make at the commencement of the hearings were supplied by the BCJDP Secretariat. The notes included some background information on the Project and the four questions around which the research was centred, as well as guidelines for the speakers and the audience on the ground rules for the hearing.
- 6.2.11 The panel members were also provided with a set of notes on their role. They were given a number of record sheets, one of which was to be used for notes on each presenter’s responses to the Research Project’s four key questions. The panel members were reminded that any questions that they might wish to ask a presenter should be simply aimed at clarifying or better understanding the material being presented. While it was recognised that in some cases a presentation did not require much clarification, panel members usually asked at least one or two questions, with the intention of courteously showing the presenters that they had been heard with attention and respect. At the end of every session, the panel members met together to formulate a summary or synthesis of the main points gleaned from the session. These included

responses to the four key questions as well as overall lessons learned and particular reflections on the process.

- 6.2.12 As noted earlier, local Bishops or their nominated representatives sat on every panel. In total, 24 Bishops participated themselves on 28 of the 32 hearing days, while others were represented by delegates on the four days when they themselves were impeded from attending.
- 6.2.13 All of the eight members of the RMG acted as panel members at different times, so that one or more members sat on every panel. Since it was seen as important for the ACLRI to be represented on most of the panels, a number of female Leaders of Religious Institutes kindly agreed to act as substitutes for the ACLRI member of the RMG, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs, on the days when she was unavailable. On almost every occasion, at least half of the panel members were women.
- 6.2.14 In organising the hearings, the BCJDP Secretariat received considerable help at the local level from the offices of the Bishops, other diocesan staff, Catholic Justice and Peace agencies or contact persons, Catholic Education Offices and volunteers. Important contributions were also made through their representatives on the RMG by the ACLRI and ACU.
- 6.2.15 The fact that hearings on 32 days were conducted in 23 centres around Australia without any serious organisational hitch owes much to those people at the local level who assisted the RMG and their own Bishops to ensure that suitable arrangements were made. The logistics included the booking and preparation of appropriate venues, placing advertisements, liaising with the BCJDP Secretariat over appointments for presenters, setting up public address systems, attending to the tape recording of proceedings, arranging accommodation for visiting panel members and organising refreshments, meals etc. for them and other participants. The whole exercise was a noteworthy example of teamwork between Church employees and many generous voluntary helpers. It was carried out everywhere in an admirable spirit of friendship and cooperation.
- 6.2.16 As indicated earlier, some procedural and organisational lessons were learned by the RMG in the course of the hearings. For example, while it had been left mainly to local organisers to make whatever arrangements they saw as necessary for child-care during hearings, it was clear that, in a number of cases, mothers of young children had difficulty attending or making presentations because insufficient provision was made for their child-minding need.
- 6.2.17 An effort was also made to have a certain number of evening as well as day-time sessions, in the interests of people in paid employment, but this could not be done at every venue, with the result that some interested people were excluded from participating.
- 6.2.18 Presentations were made at the hearings by close to 500 people. It should be noted that, since many of the presenters represented groups, organisations or, in

some instances, entire religious congregations sometimes numbering hundreds of individuals, the hearings can be claimed to have gathered information, opinions, comments and suggestions from several thousand people.

6.2.19 In preparing to report on what was learned from the hearings, members of the RMG worked progressively towards a final synthesis of the data collected from all of these presenters. As mentioned above, panel members, including the Bishop, met at the end of each hearing day to formulate an initial synthesis of what had been said that day. They identified the key learnings of the day, particular lessons relating to the process and the various responses to the four research questions. In places where more than one day's hearing occurred, a further synthesis for the full program of hearings at that venue was later developed. The next step was to produce a synthesis of the hearings in each State or Territory. This work was done some time after the conclusion of the hearings by members of the RMG. Those members of the RMG who had between them attended every hearing subsequently worked on the production of the overall synthesis, which forms the basis of what follows in this chapter. As explained to panel members, the daily synthesis sheet prepared by each panel was the source of the data for this aspect of the research. **All points recorded in the synthesis of each hearing have been incorporated into the following discussion.**

6.2.20 To provide a suitable depth of understanding and detail for the following report, a careful reading was undertaken of all the written texts which accompanied the presentations as well as the written texts submitted by those who were not selected by the ballot system to give an oral presentation. Where necessary, recourse was made to the tapes of the hearings in order to clarify a point or to obtain a suitable quotation. Every effort has been made to select a wide range of quotations "to let the voices of the people be heard". At least one quotation has been chosen from each of the 23 rural and urban centres in which the hearings were conducted.

6.3 Findings of the Public Hearings: Overall Response

6.3.1 In portraying the national synthesis of the public hearings across Australia, it should be noted from the beginning that divergent views and feelings were expressed. While there was comfort with the traditional stance for some, pain and anguish were generally expressed about women's lack of equality in the Church. Most presenters addressed issues concerning barriers to women's participation and offered ways in which women's participation could be acknowledged and enhanced. Although many presentations listed manifold ways in which women are involved in the life of the Church, little assistance and support for women were identified. There was much confirmation of

current roles of women in society and that these need to be taken into account in the management of the Church. The dominant feelings were ones of pain and alienation, and the major call was for the greater participation of women in the Church, especially at the levels of leadership and decision-making.

- 6.3.2 The issues concerning the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia provoked much depth of feeling on the part of all presenters, as well as eliciting thoughtful and often scholarly-prepared presentations. The earnestness of the message and the quality of the preparation and presentation were noted frequently. There was often much power in people's submissions as individuals and groups. The overriding feelings were ones of pain, anguish, anger and alienation. A dichotomous relationship with the Church was experienced by both individuals and groups characterised by such feelings as love, hate; commitment, alienation; frustration, persistence; searching, longing. These feelings are typified in the following case history presented in Melbourne:

I remain steadfastly loyal to the Church, although often disenchanted, frustrated and angry. My disappointments about lack of support have not lessened my faith but deepened it, giving me an awareness of the suffering and needs of others, with a desire and ability to reach out to them. I both love and hate the Catholic Church. I am both highly committed to it and to the Good News, while also ready to leave and give it all away.

- 6.3. The pain and alienation resulted from the strong sense of women's marginalisation and struggle, disenfranchisement and powerlessness, irrelevance and lack of acknowledgment within the Church. The frustration yet persistence of both women and men in trying to stay in the Church despite the Church's treatment of women was evident. It was clear that many people have hope but in most cases it is faint. There was a heightened sense of frustration at the blockage of the much-needed gifts of women from service to the Church. An example of this frustration is captured in the presentation of a woman in Sydney:

Many of us are restless and dissatisfied with the knowledge that no matter how much we are prepared to give to the Church – the Church is only prepared to take limited service from us. We know the Church needs all the help it can get if it is to survive – but it seems that major potential providers of human resources available to the Church, the dominant number of Church-goers – women, still aren't good enough to fully participate.

The ongoing decline in Church involvement in Australia, especially by the young, was a source of much anguish and pain. The frankness and sadness of those who had left the practice of the faith, and those who have considered "unbecoming" a Catholic as a result of the Church's treatment of woman were obvious. A woman in Hobart explained:

It may be tempting for those who are ordained to think that lay persons have separate compartments for their lives, one of which is "Church", and there was a time that I would have agreed. But for those Catholics who consider "unbecoming" a Catholic, it is not so easy as closing off a compartment – neither for those who would say their faith means much to them, nor for those who would say it has no meaning for them. Being Catholic is part of who I am, and that is why I care enough about the Catholic Church to be part of this Research Project.

The question was asked whether the boundaries of the secular and sacred are more fluid in women.

- 6.3.4 Pain was experienced by those at both ends of the spectrum: those seeking change and those firmly opposed to change. The sense of alienation and anguish as a result of the issues concerning women and the Church was shown by all categories of individuals and groups such as the young and elderly, women and men, laity and religious, and was not characteristic of any particular group. A presentation from Wollongong, stated:

I conclude with the sad reminder that so many of our people have walked away from our Church and have turned to other religions and sects because of the manner in which they have been ignored, patronised, denigrated, humiliated and treated in a condescending manner. Many others have retreated into a personal prayer life because they do not feel comfortable in the present situation. Those who have remained with their religion probably have provided reinforcement of the behaviour that has caused their hurt. It's a tremendous sadness to those of us who love our Church to witness this turn of events.

- 6.3.5 There was much appreciation that the Australian Bishops would undertake the Research Project on women and provide a public forum to speak. In the public hearings, people seemed to feel heard, but there was much concern about the danger that there would not be a response. The warning note about the Project was strong. It would be a "cruel hoax" if the research did not "deliver". Any cynicism about the Project concerned the need for something to come of it. It was noted that the process of the Research Project itself had had a healing effect already. There was much value in the hearings as a source of dialogue, but the Project and the hearings must lead to action. Women should continue to have a key involvement in the future stages of the Project and in its implementation. Acceptance of the limitations of the Project and the need to be realistic were noted.
- 6.3.6 In the hearings, the presentations were mainly from people who are still committed to the Church. A strong sense of deep faith and love and commitment to the Church were evident. However, love and tolerance of others were not always shown. Some had trouble hearing a viewpoint different from a

conservative stance, and obedience ranked higher than charity. Generally, most showed respect – for example, while attitudes of some clergy were criticised, the positive attitude of others was recognised.

- 6.3.7 Across the nation, there were varying perspectives on the roles and status of women. In some States, a polarisation of views was most obvious whereas in other areas a striking level of consensus was present in the hearings with only a small number of presenters putting significantly different views.
- 6.3.8 A great diversity of views within the Church about the nature of the Church was noted. Different models and visions of Church were presented either explicitly or implicitly. In general, much emphasis was placed on the value of pluralism, unity and diversity, and the need to strive for wholeness and inclusivity. Both the necessity of ongoing dialogue and the need to live with diversity were noted. There was a strong plea to consider the future directions of the Catholic Church and a concern not to lose access to Eucharist.
- 6.3.9 Strong reference was made to Jesus and his relationship with women, and to the importance of fidelity to the vision of the Gospel. All presenters, regardless of their particular stance, stated the need to follow Jesus concerning the treatment of women in the Church. The story of the Syrophoenician woman in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 15:21–28, was noted as a model for the Church's relationship with women. A presentation in Melbourne presented this reflection on the story:

He [Jesus] is open to listen to her [the Syrophoenician woman's] objections and is able to recognise the injustice of any discrimination against foreigners and, in this case, a woman! ... Jesus, a devout Jew, was led to see the injustice of this Jewish law of discrimination. This woman was really on the margins, both for race and gender, and the story was used by Matthew's community to help them to come to terms with their prejudices.

- 6.3.10 The role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring both the life of Jesus and in guiding the contemporary Church in this issue was seen as affirmative and very important. The comparison was noted between the very different presentations proposed for the Church's treatment of women: the "Jesus model" and the "Mary model": the former based on the vision of the Gospels and the breakdown of discrimination, and the latter based on traditional piety and maintenance of the *status quo*.

6.4 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

6.4.1 Women's Participation Diverse and Myriad but Limited by the Church

Women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia was presented as diverse and myriad, but limited by the hierarchy. Many participants presented

long lists of particular tasks undertaken by women. Others abbreviated their lists saying that women did “all the usual things”. There was manifold participation but lack of recognition. The need for the recognition, affirmation and celebration of women’s contributions to the Church was a constant request.

Participation varies widely, depending on the parish priest’s attitude, for example Church bulletins that ask for ladies to clean the Church to engaging a woman pastoral assistant. It was generally agreed that women are the greatest percentage of people attending Mass and the greatest percentage of people on parish rosters. Many participants noted that women do most of the voluntary work of the Church, especially at the parish level. There was a strong sense that women are the Church. As one Sydney woman noted:

The Church is the people of God; I don’t participate or belong. I am the Church. It is part of my identity – it is in my blood and bones. But, I want to be the Church on equal status with all other Catholics.

Of the various ways which women participate in the Church, two main areas were identified: through motherhood and family roles, and as evangelisers and nurturers.

6.4.2 **Motherhood and Family Roles Seen as Central**

Motherhood and family roles were seen as central and given great emphasis. Motherhood dominated. As mothers, Catholic women are participating at the heart of the Church, in the “domestic Church”. For example, this point was highlighted in a presentation in Queensland:

A woman at home with her children, caring for the needs of her family is, in fact, participating in the church, at the home level – in the domestic church. She is laying down her life in the care and service of others every moment of every day, in the role of love and sacrifice.

The importance of motherhood and family for Church and society was emphasised. It was stressed that the domestic Church needs support and advocacy. The presentation in Melbourne on behalf of the Australian Family Association stated:

Statistically, family life is still where most women will do most of their nurturing. The Catholic Church has always insisted that the family is the fundamental unit of a healthy and functioning society. Many factors, mainly economic, are combining at the moment to make a successful family life extremely hard to achieve, yet we women know our responsibilities only too well. We appeal to the Bishops to become more familiar with the plight of families in Australia, for we need their help. We cannot appeal to governments on our own, or at least not successfully, as there are too many forces ranged

against us in contemporary secular society. We would be reassured by the public intervention on our behalf of the voice of the Australian Catholic Bishops, indeed of the whole Catholic community, including those influential Catholics who hold significant public office.

There were traditional views as well as more contemporary views of motherhood, and openness to combining roles or choosing roles. In contrast, the married woman in her role as wife received little attention.

Women were seen as the first teachers of the faith in the family and as having been formative of great men in the Church. A number of participants felt that women's key roles in family and faith education are undervalued. It was noted that women's role was central in "home schooling".

Some participants felt that women's roles are defined by whether they are married, single or religious. A small minority noted that the two aspects of the vocation of women are to be mothers and virgins.

6.4.3 Women as Evangelisers and Nurturers

Women are very present in the work of evangelisation and nurturing. They play key roles in education in the faith and in the transmission of love and care. In keeping with the Gospel example, they are the first to announce the "good news" in the Church. Their role is about service and going out to people. Women's pastoral care of the sick, youth, divorced, AIDS patients and other marginalised individuals and groups, was stressed. Often these women have no official positions or authority.

6.4.4 Women Assuming Greater Participation in the Wider Church

Women participate at various levels of the Church: at parish level and at diocesan level, and with national and international participation through women's groups. Today, they are assuming greater responsibility and diversity of roles such as special ministers of the Eucharist, pastoral associates and members of diocesan pastoral teams. The complementarity of men and women was valued. Women offer the Church a different view of the world from that of men. Some people noted that there has been enormous change since Vatican II. The large number of theologically educated women in the contemporary Australian Catholic Church was frequently referred to and seen as a great but often untapped resource. This point is illustrated by a presentation from a parish in Sydney:

This [the large number of female theological graduates] is an enormous potential resource in the Church. These women would certainly provide skilled workshops, and faith development at parish and diocesan level and enrich the life of their parish as well as having enriched their own lives. If authorised to do so they would be there to help others to understand and live their faith at a deeper level.

The imbalance of women involved at local parish level was highlighted, with the contribution of many times as many women as men. There was a strong emphasis that it is the women who keep the Church going, especially in distant parishes. The contribution of female pastoral workers in rural areas was recounted. The role of women in small community groups "walking the faith" in Western Australia and in small Christian communities in South Australia was noted, as well as the value of these groups. As one woman in Geraldton explained:

In rural and remote areas, women – married, single and religious – have been largely responsible for the transmission of Catholic teaching to children. Where there have been no priests, women have kept the Church going and alive, by their commitment, often with little support, except their own faith and belief. The participation of women in the rural areas can never be fully understood and should never be underestimated.

Some women drew attention to their participation through obedience to Church's teachings. The Mass as a touch-stone and central focus of the life of the Church was stressed. Some presenters noted that, as a result of the Church's relationship with women, a number of women are not participating in the Church at all or are on the margins, only attending Sunday Mass.

Many participants presented lengthy lists detailing the broad range of tasks undertaken by women either professionally or voluntarily within the Church. Some of the areas mentioned were teaching theology; giving seminars; writing on spirituality and theology; studying theology; ecumenical work; national and international roles through women's organisations; charismatic groups; educational and nursing roles; Catholic Women's League and its network; fundraising. It was noted that, by their involvement in "the world", the laity are participating in the Church. The world itself was seen as the sphere of the laity.

6.4.5 Limitations to the Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

A characteristic of the national discussion concerning ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia was the associated frustration of limitations imposed by the Church. It was noted that there was significant participation at all levels except in ordained ministry and decision-making roles.

6.4.6 Lack of Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership: Involvement in Subordinate Roles

The lack of involvement in decision-making and leadership emerged as a strong theme in the discussion of all four questions. Many characterised the roles of women as serving and supporting, nurturing and assisting roles rather than decision-making and leadership roles. It was stressed in various ways that

there were few women in authoritative roles and that generally women held a subordinate place in a hierarchical and patriarchal Church. Aboriginal women spoke of not having a role in the mainstream Church but having an important role in their own culture. Aboriginal women have leadership at their rituals but not in the Church.

It was generally felt that women undertake much of the activity in the Church and have the driving energy to get things done, but it was perceived that they are only encouraged and accepted in roles that are stereotyped and secondary. Thus, the present role of women in the Church is seen as domestic and ancillary. There are patterns of both inclusion and exclusion; women participate up to a certain level and then they are excluded.

A presentation on behalf of a Melbourne parish illustrates the essence of the major response to ways in which women participate in the Australian Catholic Church:

Women are able to participate in the Catholic Church in Australia, but only within strict parameters defined by a male-dominated hierarchy. The Australian Church continues to reflect attitudes towards women in all walks of Church life which are from a pre-Vatican II world. Women ably fulfil a myriad of indispensable roles at both parish and diocesan level. These roles are always subordinate and are confined to traditional female endeavours. Hence, women are highly representative in the areas of health, education and all practical parish support. Women have no power to direct policy making nor are they visible in leadership roles outside of traditional female endeavours within the Church structure. Not only does this reflect the prevailing attitudes to women in general, it also is indicative of the "glass ceiling" effect encountered by women outside of traditional areas in the wider community.

Current service "back-up" roles were seen as both positive and demeaning. Some women were happy in serving and back-up roles, while others also wanted to take on decision-making and leadership, or to serve the community in a different way. Decision-making and leadership roles were seen as ways of serving the community.

It was felt that there was little encouragement for women to undertake leadership, decision-making and responsible roles in the Church. Any assistance was restricted to more subordinate, helping ones. It was noted that priests and Bishops control the ways women participate. A participant who spoke on behalf of the Catholic Women's League at a New South Wales hearing highlighted this point:

There are many ministries open to everyone and most of these are available to women, but experience has shown us that this is dependent on whichever priest is in charge. As a result heartache, confusion and anger is caused. Catholic

Women's League with its strong network of branches and communication at Diocesan, State and National level has found that many women are denied access to these ministries because of manipulation by individual priests with their idiosyncratic views.

As a result, women find themselves in traditional, subservient, menial and handmaiden roles, that is those roles not valued highly. It was perceived that women are a source of cheap labour and “yes girls”. Women are encouraged to be passive and subservient. It was noted that it takes courage to step beyond the subservient roles.

There was discussion of degrees of participation. Some participants made a distinction between “involvement”, which they saw in terms of “being informed”, “taking part in” and “being consulted”, and “meaningful participation” which they saw as “making decisions” and “having responsibility and authority to act”.

6.4.7 Exclusion of Women from Priesthood and the Full Range of Ministries

Many participants saw women as already participating in all possible ways except for the priesthood. It was felt that, while many women are already fulfilling the role of deacon, it is unacknowledged. Women were seen as playing special roles in particular ministries such as pastoral work in prisons and hospitals. There was some frustration that women were not allowed to take on the full range of chaplaincy duties in such contexts. This was especially the case in rural areas. This point was illustrated by a participant in Western Australia:

In this Parish, without the women there would be no “church”. If all the women stayed home on Sundays the Service would be held by Father twice a month to a congregation of (on average) 3 men. The women in this Church do everything except be the acolyte, and perform the religious rites as a priest. Why? Because these higher levels of involvement are barred to women in our Church.

6.4.8 Invisibility of Lesbians in the Church

The issue of lesbians and their relationship with the Church was raised in one public hearing only. It was noted that lesbian women are not visible in the Catholic Church in Australia and those who do participate at many levels of church life do so hiding their sexuality. At a presentation in Adelaide, the chaplain to the women members of Acceptance-Adelaide Inc. spoke on their behalf:

It can be confidently said that lesbian women are not visible in the Catholic Church in Australia. There are those who do participate at many levels of Church life – as volunteers and paid workers – in parishes, organisations,

schools, social welfare and health services, and religious life. But they do so hiding their sexuality. While some gay men are open about their sexuality in the Church, this is difficult for women. But there are exceptions to this experience which might indicate a changing climate, at least among the laity.

6.5 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

6.5.1 Little Assistance and Support from the Church

The vast majority of participants who commented on this question felt that very little or no assistance and support were offered to women to participate in the Church. Many struggled to answer the question at all, finding it difficult to find any examples of assistance or support for women. Very little support was offered structurally with occasional financial support from parishes and individual priests. Only a small minority felt that there was sufficient assistance and support for women to participate in the Church.

An example of the overall response to this question of assistance and support given to women in the Church is taken from a presentation in Rockhampton:

Very little support and/or assistance is offered for full participation. Subservient duties are encouraged and on completion receive a "pat on the back". Women are not being empowered. In short, it is women who support each other in their ongoing struggle to be Church. This support is both formal and informal. A conditional support ONLY comes from the hierarchical church – the condition being that women do the job without challenge to the status quo. ... Even in the field of study, women are offered very little assistance. For the majority of Catholic women their studies must be undertaken at their own expense. They do not have access to the finance offered to members of religious orders or diocesan seminarians.

The amount of support was seen to vary depending on where one lived and on the attitude of the parish priest. A presentation in Shepparton highlighted this point:

Parishes differ enormously. I think the assistance and support for women's participation all hinges on the attitude and communicating availability of the Parish Priest, because everything has to come under his cover. He is responsible for what goes on in his parish ... Our parish priest is always available to talk to, and the participation of women in his parish testifies to his supportive attitude and the freedom he gives to women's participation.

Levels of support were directly related to the attitudes of key personnel, and especially parish priests, and were often dependent upon political correctness.

Some presenters felt that women only received encouragement, assistance and support to undertake support roles and not to undertake decision-making and leadership roles.

A call was made for women's needs to be made a financial priority for the Church. The Church was requested to support women's groups and women's issues. People responding to this question also noted that families need more assistance and pastoral care, and that carers also need more support.

A number of presenters mentioned a need for accessible faith education courses for women, and many of the small number of presenters who were women working in chaplaincy noted the lack of moral and emotional support for women in chaplaincy.

6.5.2 Assistance and Support from Theological Education and Faith Formation

Access to theological education and other forms of adult faith formation, especially training for catechetical work and pastoral ministry programs, drew the strongest response to the issue of current assistance and support offered to women. However, it was frequently added that this was usually undertaken at the women's own expense. It was considered that access to theological education helps women to participate in the life of the Church. There was generally thought to be a lack of financial support for women studying theology, although rare cases of sponsorship and financial assistance were noted as being encouraging. Some instances of parish sponsorship for theological education were appreciated. Financial and scholarship support for Aboriginal women was noted. Education through the Catholic education system, school fee relief, access to a range of courses, seminars and retreats, formation programs and renewals were common examples of support mentioned at the hearings.

6.5.3 Assistance and Support from Role Models: The Centrality of Jesus

Role models offered particular assistance and support. Mary was seen as an important role model, and, less frequently, other saints and other people. However, there were some criticism of faulty Mariology and some forms of Marian devotion. The central role of Jesus and the example of Jesus' relationship with women were also seen as critically important and cited as a source of hope and inspiration. Jesus' liberating attitude to women was emphasised in a presentation in Newcastle:

Jesus' liberating attitude to women scandalised the Jewish leaders. His dealings with women challenged and contested the male domination of his time. When, today, has any leader of the Church scandalised society in liberating women in the Church? Did Jesus see women as not equal? Never. He entrusted them with spreading the word of his resurrection because the men were all in hiding.

He moved freely with them. Women (the Samaritan women, Mary Magdalene and the woman at the well) were among the first to evangelise others. Jesus was living his words to "set the downtrodden free".

6.5.4 Some Support from Parishes and Dioceses

Many presenters highlighted the support and assistance received from parishes, in particular the experience of a parish which uses a collaborative style of leadership; priests open to collaborative ministries; parish meetings timetabled more realistically for women with families; and the support of deaneries. Pastoral care of chaplains was much appreciated. The Adelaide Archdiocese was referred to across Australia as supportive and open to the active participation of women. A presenter in Adelaide spoke of this support in the following way:

In this diocese [Adelaide], it is clear that the Archbishop recognises the importance of women's participation in the church. He supports and encourages the involvement of women in all aspects of church life. He not only says this, but he leads by example with the inclusion and active involvement of women on committees such as the Diocesan Pastoral Team.

6.5.5 Sacramental and Spiritual Support

Spiritual support offered by the Church was referred to by some participants who addressed this question, including the Sacraments and liturgy, Scripture, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, devotions, sacramentals, rosary groups, and associated activities which promoted prayer-life and relationship with God. Of the Sacraments, Baptism was frequently mentioned. The need for conversion and re-conversion was noted. The charismatic movement and Natural Family Planning were a support to some participants. A small number of presenters cited Church documents, especially the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Papal teaching reinforcing the dignity of women, especially the virtues of virginity and motherhood, as a source of assistance and support. Other presenters drew support from the "signs of the times" through positive elements of the women's movements and courses in women's studies.

6.5.6 Main Source of Assistance and Support from Women Themselves

The main source of support mentioned by most participants who addressed this question was women themselves, supporting each other through groups and friendships, and some elements of the women's movement. It was generally agreed that women support and affirm each other personally and through their own groups but that there is little support from the institutional Church. As a presenter in Broome explained:

While I can say that assistance and support for women to participate in the church is rather negligible, there are some occasions when wonderful support has been offered. Women receive support from women within the church and have formed themselves into groups to assist each other. Some official church members are very supportive. The ecumenical movement has also been a support.

Some presenters saw this Research Project itself as an encouragement. Movements such as WATAC were noted. Lay women leaders, for example in the Perth Catholic Education Office, and mothers as teachers were a source of support for some.

Female religious congregations and individual female religious were frequently cited as sources of support for women. Missionary Sisters of Service in Port Pirie and "Sophia" in Adelaide were specifically referred to as supports for some presenters.

Small groups were also frequently mentioned as sources of support. Some of these small groups were parish-based, others were linked with movements or Church organisations or religious communities.

Some parish priests and Bishops were seen as a source of support but this was acknowledged to be variable. The level of support and assistance was seen as varying substantially depending on the attitudes of clergy and Bishops. Other presenters felt that most priests were supportive. Pastoral workers, health carers, chaplaincy services and Church people who accept people "non-judgmentally" were also mentioned as sources of support.

Some of the Aboriginal women presenting at Queensland hearings specifically mentioned the Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council (AICC) and its youth programs as a source of assistance and support.

The view was presented from a few participants that women do not need assistance and support.

6.6 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Issues concerned with barriers to women's participation and ways in which women's participation could be increased were the major focus of the majority of the presentations. However, it should be noted that a small minority of presenters were of the opinion that there are no barriers to the participation of women in the Church. For example, a woman in Ballarat expressed the view:

There are no barriers for participation of women in the Church. We can do any of the things that need doing as well as men. In fact weekday masses are usually at a time that only retired men can go to.

A discussion of the key issues concerning barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia is presented below.

6.6.1 Exclusion from Decision-making and Leadership

The great majority of presenters saw women as being excluded from decision-making and leadership within the Church and confined to subordinate roles. Decision-making and leadership were generally seen as being concentrated in the hands of the clergy and Bishops, who are all male and celibate, in a hierarchical leadership model. This situation effectively locks all women and married people out of most decision-making in the Church. Because of the gender barriers to leadership, the Church was thought to be missing out on both the views and approaches of women. Even where women are present in such roles, the processes were still seen to be male and male-oriented. Not only are women under-represented among leaders and decision-makers, they are also not numerous among the “elites” who advise decision-makers.

An illustration of this concern about the exclusion of women from the decision-making procedures of the Church is taken from a presentation in Adelaide:

Many women feel powerless because we are not in a position to even raise issues for discussion, nor participate in the decisions of the church. Whilst this is possible at a local level, perhaps even unusually so in Adelaide, our frustration comes from the exclusion of women from the Councils of the Church, and from those bodies of our church responsible for decisions concerning church order, ministry and church teaching. Issues concerning ministry affect us deeply, and we feel as the baptised people of God that we have a responsibility to be involved, along with all of the baptised, in discerning future directions of the church. We believe that until this barrier to all women and, of course, to the unordained men in the church, is removed, the credibility of our church in the eyes of the world will remain so low that we will not be an effective voice in the justice movements of the world.

The patriarchal, hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the Church was seen as alienating many women and fostering leadership styles that are not favourable to women's interests and women's ways of doing things. The structures of the Church were seen as being large and impersonal. It was felt that leadership was not exercised in a collaborative or accountable manner. Not only were there few opportunities for input but there was also no forum for appeal against decisions. A presentation in Rockhampton illustrates this concern:

We acknowledge the Australian Bishops' attempts to respond to current political issues, particularly those of the Aboriginal people. However, as women, we struggle to come to terms with a church that appears to preach social justice for all when, in practice, ordained ministers withdraw delegated authority from women with no accountability for such actions. Where people have been

disadvantaged by Land Rights Legislation, the Australian Government is now considering appropriate channels for appeal. A source of great frustration for us, as disadvantaged women, has been that, within the Catholic institutional church structure, there is no forum or process for appeal against clergy decisions.

Further, it was strongly felt that women were excluded from decision-making, even in relation to issues that directly affected them, especially moral teachings and Church legislation on matters such as sexuality, contraception, divorce, remarriage and abortion. The hierarchy does not reflect the involvement of women in the Church and this essentially means that men decide what women do. A woman in Sydney expressed these strong feelings in the following way:

I have never heard of any opportunity for me personally – as an ordinary Parishioner – to take part in any decision-making process. Rather, I have always heard of decisions which the church has made well and truly after the event. ... I am still being told what I can and cannot do – even with my own body. The result of this is that I feel inadequate, ineffective and alienated from a male dominated church hierarchy – seemingly intent on playing power games and reinforcing traditions which exclude women.

While concerns regarding leadership and decision-making were frequently noted to affect lay men as well as women, leadership and decision-making in the Church were seen as an expression of sexism. A female presenter in Hobart explained:

And so I am offended by the suggestion that as a women I am “inappropriate” for certain ministries within the church. I make decisions with people about their lives every day, and I am offended to be excluded from making decisions within the church because I am a woman. I personally do not want to be a priest, but I do not want to be barred from full participation in the Catholic Church because of a combination of chromosomes that made me a woman.

6.6.2 Exclusion of Women from Priestly Ordination

The exclusion of women from priestly ordination was seen by a number of presenters as a major obstacle to the full and equal participation of women in the Church. Many, while agreeing with this view, did not see this situation as being likely to change in the short term or as the most important matter to try to address in the short term. The nature of ministry was seen as the broader and more fundamental issue which needed to be addressed. Some believed that women will not be able to participate in the Church fully and equally until the exclusion from ordination is lifted.

An associated issue which drew much attention and depth of feeling was the prohibition on the discussion of the ordination of women. This silencing of

women and men on this question was seen as an issue of justice within the Church.

An illustration of the concerns regarding the exclusion of women from priesthood and the prohibition on the discussion of the ordination of women is taken from a presentation in Wagga Wagga:

The failure of the Church to seriously grapple with the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood is a symptom of its refusal to read the signs of the times. The official silencing of discussion of the ordination of women by both the Pope and the chairman of the Roman Inquisition (nowadays euphemistically called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) is not only a barrier to women's participation in the Church, but something of which I, as a woman, but most of all, as a Catholic woman, am thoroughly ashamed. How can the Church honestly seek, and indeed arrive at, the truth if it does not allow full, honest and open dialogue?

Others saw women as being excluded from a range of opportunities for ministry. There were concerns about women's exclusion from the diaconate and their non-admittance as acolytes, although it was noted that women currently engage in many of the activities associated with diaconal ministry. Other significant sacramental limitations were addressed. Not having the power to anoint the sick and absolve was a frequently mentioned barrier, especially for those involved in pastoral care of the sick and dying, and those working in prisons. A presentation on behalf of the Catholic Hospital Chaplains' Associates in Adelaide noted that there are times when the tradition of allowing only ordained men to administer the Sacraments is "quite unhelpful":

Many women chaplains and visitors have seen important experiences of their ministry rendered incomplete or clumsy, because of their inability to actually honour sacramentally either the reconciliation that they see is happening right before them, or to celebrate the sacramental moment of the gift of God's strengthening in sickness through anointing. (This can be because the person does not want to retrace their steps, or because a priest is not available at an appropriate time, or a particular personality or stance would not be helpful in that situation, or because a woman may be the more appropriate person to minister at that time.) Always in ministry we are working in relationship, within the person, among persons and with God. We are not dealing in magic! So, whatever we do, needs to honour these relationships.

The fact that homilies are always from a man's point of view was seen as a difficulty both by those in favour of the ordination of women and those who were neutral or opposed to the ordination of women.

The compulsory celibacy of the priesthood was another strong theme. The lack of direct personal experience of marriage and family life was seen as impoverishing the ministry of the clergy. In addition, compulsory celibacy for the clergy excluded women from the particular ministry of a priest's wife and from indirect influence on the clergy. A presentation in Darwin captured some of the concerns regarding compulsory celibacy:

Enforced celibacy then belittles God's gift of celibacy even for those who are called to it. Some priests, because they are forced to live this celibate life, are afraid of women; some have to have illicit relationships with women, and some are even trapped into child abuse. The institutional Church has much to answer for in the issue of enforced celibacy with all its ramifications.

Clericalism was seen by many presenters as a serious barrier to the participation of both women and lay men in the Church. A number of presenters saw clericalism as a more fundamental barrier to women's participation than the exclusion of women from priestly ordination. It was noted that women religious have no sacrament for their ministry. A presentation in Sydney explained the point in the following way:

The danger lies in clericalism which has done enormous spiritual and psychological damage to the Church. By seeing priesthood as the be-all and end-all of ministry, we severely limit ourselves and fail to take full advantage of the many gifts that all kinds of people have to offer. By employing these gifts we could make the Church reap the spiritual rewards and also attract more people into the fold.

Women agitating for ordination were seen by a minority of presenters as a barrier to the participation of women in the Church. A presenter in Adelaide explained her difficulty:

I find a barrier to my faith when I hear and read that Catholics within the Church are pushing for the ordination of woman and do not accept Papal Authority on all matters of faith and doctrine. Many priests are silent on these issues. I feel that being an orthodox Catholic trying to practice the Faith of our Fathers is not looked upon with favour in the Catholic Church in Australia today.

The assumption that women's desire for ordination amounted to power-seeking and status rather than a spirit of service was seen by some as a barrier in itself.

6.6.3 Failure to Grant Equal Role and Status to Women in the Church

The lack of acknowledgment of and failure to grant equal role and status to women were experienced as a most significant barrier. Many presenters stated that women's contributions to the Church were not valued and that they do not

feel included. Some women feel like they do not belong because of their life situation, for example, being divorced. A woman in Wollongong spoke of her experience:

I have felt out of touch with this priesthood and the institutional Church at various times in my life but especially during pregnancy, when I was struggling with babies in the isolated "crying" room when stern priests were intolerant of children. I have felt excluded during marriage problems and the eventual annulment of my 24 year long marriage. Communication with me during this process was noticeable for its lack of sensitivity, compassion and information. It seems incomprehensible that a Catholic marriage of so many years could be declared unsacramental in a terse letter signed by a secretary without any sign of regret or sympathy from the official Church, or reference to the grief that such a decision must give the whole family involved.

Further, it was strongly stated that the Church was not reflecting the sound advances in society. This gap between the ecclesiastical and secular worlds was experienced as a scandal, as it was felt that the Church should be leading the way in the recognition and promotion of the true equality of all people. The absence of young women in the Church was seen to occur as a result of the gap between the attitudes of society and Church towards women. A woman in Tasmania explained:

I work in a profession where my knowledge and skill is acknowledged for itself, and in which it is recognised that my being a woman provides a complementary service to the men I work with. I work in the secular world, which is much further along the road of acknowledging women as equals than the Church which preaches our equality in the sight of God.

The exclusion of women on the basis of sex from Church structures, governance, administration of Sacraments, presiding at liturgies and involvement in decision-making meant that, for many participants, women were treated by the Church as second-class citizens.

The lack of inclusiveness by the Church of a range of people, for example those of different cultures and the poor, was a serious barrier. Further, it was felt that the exclusion of women is linked to the exclusion of the poor. Women are seen by some as the "anawim" of the Church. It was noted that the Church is not welcoming of poor people or of Aboriginal people, and could learn from women in this matter. A female participant, presenting on behalf of AICC in Rockhampton, spoke of one woman's experience at a Christian Conference:

As an Aboriginal woman she was put in a room to sleep by herself. A Sister put a mattress on the floor and shared the room with her. The Chairman later apologised on behalf of the group for the hurt and rejection. One woman's confession: "I ask

forgiveness because before I came here I prayed that I would not be in a room with an Aboriginal woman". The response was: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". A change of attitude resulted, but it was a very painful and humiliating experience for the Aboriginal woman and her companion.

Fundamental issues concerning the theology of personhood and the theology of sexuality were seen to underpin the Church's position on the role and status of women. It was felt that basic theological principles, such as the true and equal dignity of all men and women, made in God's image and likeness, and the goodness of sexuality, receive inconsistent treatment in the Church's teaching and practice. Women are regarded as merely producers and reproducers, mothers or virgins, wives or harlots. A submission received from a group of women from Western Australia states:

Those of us who were not mothers – for a diversity of reasons – felt that the Church seems to speak to woman first and foremost as mother and other expressions of female life are touched upon only infrequently. Women are too often defined by their reproductive role. Those who are single and/or childless, those women unable to have children, need to hear from the Church that there are many ways of giving life.

Arguments such as blaming Eve for Adam's fall are still used to reinforce negative insights concerning the role of women. As a result, women's bodies and prayer styles are not acceptable in liturgy and girls are excluded from serving on the altar in some parishes. There was a strong sense of the Church's rejection of women and their daughters.

The denial of women's experiences by the Church was seen as an associated barrier. In particular, the lack of understanding of many women's desire for ordination, as a means of service to a Church urgently in need of a renewed priesthood, was a source of much pain and anguish. A large group presentation in Rockhampton highlights this point:

Whenever the notion of the ordination of women is raised, there is an immediate assumption by church authority that women are seeking power. ... We want to refute, in the strongest possible terms, this notion that women seeking ordination desire power. Is the same assumption made about men entering seminaries? ... Ordination, we contend, is not about the power of exploitation or domination, but is about vocation and the authority to act out that vocation.

The trauma and grief of relinquishing mothers forced to give up their babies by Church people, often when the women were young and single, were highlighted as another example of the denial of women's experiences. The lack of process of consultation on a range of issues concerning the life of the Church, and women in particular, was presented as a barrier to participation.

There was a strong theme regarding the absence of female role models. Only stereotypes of women, which were seen as most inadequate to reflect the richness of the Catholic tradition and to inspire contemporary life, are presented. In addition, women were not seen as role models for Church. It was noted that impossible and faulty images of Mary are often projected. It was lamented that images of women as unworthy have been adopted by many women. A presentation on behalf of a parish in Melbourne stated:

Mary's life has been interpreted in a way lacking her full humanity. A refugee, a mother who gave birth in extremely difficult circumstances, a single mother (with a token husband) who led a life of hardship and sorrow and experienced the ultimate sacrifice of watching her son die a criminal's death. Yet what do we see as an image? The pure serene mother cradling her child – no tensions, trauma or passion. How can we relate to this?

Some participants saw the barriers to women's participation as being internal to women themselves. Lack of self-esteem and reticence on the part of women were cited. Women themselves defending the status quo and women's silence when abused were presented as barriers. Further causes of concern which were expressed were women's attitude to other women, women with divergent views disagreeing among themselves in an intolerant manner, the prejudice of both men and women, and distorted forms of Christian feminism.

6.6.4 Patriarchy, Clericalism, Sexism, Lack of Accountability

In general, it was experienced that women are oppressed and unrecognised by Church structures. The dominant concern was that the patriarchal structures exclude women. The patriarchal nature of the Church as a barrier to women's participation was a constant theme throughout the hearings. Many presenters suggested that Canon Law, Church customs and procedures exclude women and that there is a lack of recognition of such direct and indirect discrimination against women. Concerns about Canon Law were frequently expressed. A presentation in Melbourne stated:

Today, we are actually engaging in a paradoxical exercise. Men have invited women to tell them how women might participate in a Church in which all decisions are made by men? In the late twentieth century this is surely an anachronism and it highlights what is perhaps the single most important need to be addressed in today's Church – the fact that ordained ministry is identified with offices, functions and ministries which do not necessarily entail the exercise of the "the power of orders". In the present Church, only the ordained are deemed by canon law to be capable of exercising the power of governance in the Church. Offices that entail the exercise of that power are restricted to clerics. (cf. Canon 274)

The structures of the Church were seen as male, hierarchical and authoritarian. Each of these characteristics was viewed as oppressive by the great majority of participants who addressed the issue of barriers to women's participation. It was lamented that women's rich giftedness was not easily expressed in such a Church. Issues of patriarchy, sexism, clericalism and exclusive language were frequently mentioned together. The pervasive male image of Church was seen not to be in keeping with the vision of the Gospels. Sexism in the Church alienated both women and men. A presentation in Perth commented:

Our belief is that because of the current limitations placed on women by the constructs of the Church, the Church is less than it should be. That is, where some people within a structure are restricted in their capacity to participate, it impacts on the whole structure and limits its potential. Furthermore, such restriction limits the potential of individuals, to the extent that individuals and the communities to which they belong are less than they should be. Surely, our role in God's creation is to be and become as much as we are capable of, that is, to realise our potential.

The issue of the misuse of power was prominent. Some presenters described a desire, even a hunger, for power and control on the part of Church men and Church leaders. A presentation in Adelaide noted a distinction between "power over" and "power with":

It grieves me, and I believe, it grieves our God, that our institutional church is and is seen to be a predominantly male reality. That its members, in the late twentieth century, do not see this as a profound distortion of Jesus' life, teaching and praxis thoroughly amazes me. Rather they work hard to maintain an historical, man-made structure that exercises power over other lives, rather than sharing power with fellow human beings who are called by God to the dignity of full human agency, that is to their birthright of full subjectivity as human persons.

Over-centralisation and the lack of local autonomy of the Australian Church were considered a barrier to women's participation. The Australian Church's dominant Anglo-Celtic culture was also seen as problematic. The oppressive atmosphere of Rome was cited as a source of alienation.

The dissonance between what the Church preaches and what the Church does was experienced as a scandal by many participants. Changes in society concerning the role of women are not reflected in the Church. It was emphasised that Catholics are asked to take a counter-cultural stand but that society is ahead in the equality agenda. An example of this point is taken from a presentation in Melbourne from the Conference of Leaders of Religious Congregations in Victoria:

Furthermore, at this point of time, a striking contrast is evident between the status of women in society and the status of women in the Church. Certainly there are still barriers to surmount on the way to full participation of women in public life. Nevertheless, the legal obstacles have been removed and in principle women now have access to all professions and all positions of responsibility. This contrast between the Church and society is becoming more and more apparent and more and more contested. It is particularly difficult to explain this to young people.

A large number of the presenters stated that the attitudes of some of the Bishops and clergy, and especially parish priests, is a significant barrier to women's participation in the Church. However, it should be noted that presenters were frequently at pains to note and praise positive exceptions to this observation concerning both priests and Bishops. Such attitudes are sometimes expressed in the mockery of women and their concerns. By labelling people "radical feminists", or even "feminists", it was felt that they could be disregarded. It was lamented that many good attributes of the feminist movement, which stressed the equality of all people and the importance of equal access to education and opportunity, were dismissed by so many priests and Bishops. It was noted that, on the other hand, the Church herself had often promoted feminist values regarding the dignity and worth of women. In reflecting on the misunderstanding of feminism, a female presenter in Tamworth stated:

Properly understood, feminism is synonymous with "woman's emancipation" or "rights of women" rather than "rights equal to men". What feminists share is the impetus to critique and improve the disadvantaged status of women relative to men within a particular culture. Its struggle is to give birth to the "true woman" and by inversion to the "true man".

The most frequently mentioned barriers across Australia concerned the power of parish priests and their behaviour and attitudes towards women. It was felt that the parish priest can effectively prescribe the nature and extent of women's involvement in the parish. Together with this frequent dependence on the parish priest, participants expressed concern that parish priests cannot be effectively challenged by their parishioners. A presentation in Bunbury stated:

Under the present mindset, parishes "belong" to the parish priests rather than the laity. Parish councils act as advisory bodies but power of veto still rests with the priest. There has been little or no development of the understanding of the Priesthood of the People since Vatican II.

The attitudes of some priests and Bishops were cited as a particularly important barrier for women in the more remote areas of Australia where "parish-

hopping" is not a possibility. The effect of such attitudes and behaviour resulted in abuse of the pulpit, a lack of hospitality at the Eucharist and even the denial of the Eucharist to many. Inconsistency from one parish and diocese to another was another issue noted.

Some saw parish priests as generally holding entrenched sexist attitudes and exhibiting sexist behaviour. A strong sense of secrecy characterised the relationship of many clerics with the laity, an "us and them" mentality. Clericalism was a strong theme which included both sexual and psychological abuse by clergy.

Many presenters experienced priests as unaccountable and at times arbitrary and insensitive in the exercise of authority. A frequently cited example is that parishioners may put a lot of effort into something, and then it is stopped or dramatically changed by the parish priest. An example of this point was given in a presentation in Toowoomba:

A woman who is very active in a parish and holds the liturgy together in a number of ways while juggling work and family notes that decisions made by the all-female liturgy group are ignored by the priest with no consultation or discussion. Members begin to lose heart and ask "Why do we even bother?"

There is no grievance procedure in such cases. There was significant and nation-wide concern that there are no avenues for appeals against Church decisions or for dealing with dilemmas. The lack of accountability and any measuring of performance of those who have authority were referred to by many presenters.

Many presenters commented on the falling number of priests. While some saw this as an opportunity to explore greater lay involvement in key roles, a significant number lamented the growing number of priestless parishes. Pressured into the role of a "dispenser of Sacraments", the priest has come to be seen by many presenters as the worker of "magic".

The lack of pastoral care by priests, such as visiting the dying, presented barriers to participation. Many participants were anguished that there is no avenue for others to exercise ministry to sick and dying in a sacramental way. It was emphasised that it is often most difficult to ensure the sacramental element of palliative care. The problem of distance for those not in capital cities was highlighted.

Fear on the part of priests and Bishops was identified as another barrier to women's participation. This concern was a strong and constant theme in all the hearings. Fear, ignorance and discourtesy shown by many clergy and sometimes lay men towards women's participation presented serious obstacles. A presentation in Rockhampton illustrated this point:

We feel the greatest barrier is fear – fear of change. The male dominated church appears at times fearful of women – educated women in particular. Having experienced a long history of celibate brotherhood they lack the intimacy and the knowledge of how women perceive things.

There was the perception that the Church was seen as a “club” by priests and Bishops where the laity, and especially women, were not welcome or worthy. This fear encompasses both the clerical/lay division as well as men/women. The sense of fear extended to the clergy’s fear of risk, of challenge, of making mistakes; indeed, fear of change itself, especially when it involves the relinquishment of power. The particular difficulty men have in changing was emphasised by a man in Melbourne:

So I think it’s a difficult thing for men who have had power for years, for thousands of years, to relinquish it. ... So I think it’s very difficult for men to change. For some men in my age group particularly (in their 50s), they’ve been allowed to get away with so much for so many years that they can’t even think about change.

6.6.5 Lack of Recognition of Women’s Experience and Spirituality

The exclusion and lack of recognition of women’s experiences, perspectives and spirituality from Church teaching and spirituality were raised as another significant barrier. The current spirituality is experienced as “man-centred”. It was strongly felt that women’s experience is not heeded and that Church teachings do not take women’s experience into account, resulting in out-moded theologies. Others cited the lack of recognition of feminist theology. It was frequently noted that women’s experience, gifts and talents are not fully used in a Church which was so much in need of service by people of faith. The great energy of women scholars in the Church was highlighted in Rockhampton:

Women scholars in all areas of study – church history, biblical studies, moral, pastoral, systematic and sacramental theology – are at present creating an alternative body of theological reflections which can, and should, no longer be trivialised and ignored. Immense energy is being expended by women throughout the world, in order to reform and revitalise the life of the Church, at its basic levels. Women bring to the Church many gifts, not the least of which is tremendous enthusiasm and resources for transformation.

A lack of authentic rituals, and liturgy and worship styles which alienate women, were barriers raised by many presenters. The dichotomy between theologians and the magisterium was seen by some as unhelpful. Most presenters felt that the Church concentrates too much on laws and control. More specifically, it is “hung up” on sexuality, which it seeks to control. As a

result, many of the laws are experienced as guilt-inducing and lacking compassion.

The majority of the presenters cited aspects of Church teaching and practice as barriers to women's participation in the Church. Many suggested that tradition is used in a rigid and static way, history is presented as men's story and that Scripture is used in such a way that women's stories are excluded, for example in the selection of readings in the lectionary for Sundays.

A participant in Adelaide explained this point in the following way:

To hold to a notion of the unchanging nature of the Tradition would seem to counter this belief in the ongoing, living reality of God's revelation in a Church. Thus to hold that the traditional ways of appreciating women's participation cannot be subject to change would seem a distorted view of the nature of the living Tradition of the Church.

The way in which the Scriptures are interpreted and presented in homilies was seen as a barrier to women's participation. Scripture is used in a fundamentalist way presenting negative and blaming views of women, "the legacy of Eve", blaming Eve for Adam's fall. A female presenter in Sydney noted:

Participation according to the dictionary means "to share in". While women are assured that they are fully redeemed children of God, they are still made to feel that it is their fault that redemption was necessary in the first place! ... Women are seen as either Eves or Marys – either way definitely not human and certainly not helpful in living daily life.

A number of presenters noted that some Marian theology has been used to enforce the subservience of women. Mary is often presented as weak and submissive. Such faulty Mariology was mentioned by some participants as a means of limiting the participation of women in the Church and promoting passivity and subordination among women.

In particular, many participants saw the Church's teachings on sexuality as failing to incorporate the insights, perspectives and experiences of women, and as treating women as inferior persons. The influence of Plato and dualism was frequently cited as negative for women. The failure to address dichotomous attitudes to women, for example as saint or whore, was a concern. Many presenters said that women's sexuality is not understood or accepted. They felt that the practice of the Church actively rejects women's sexuality. Other presenters simply felt that women's roles are played down in the Church.

Some presenters felt that the problem was not so much Church teaching but the lack of reception of Church teaching. Church teaching proclaims and promotes the dignity and equality of women but this is not translated into practice. A woman in Adelaide expressed this concern in the following words:

Young women, together with all of us, note that the stance the Church takes on issues of social justice is seriously undermined by the gulf that exists between what the Church says and what the Church actually does in its exclusion of women from many aspects of Church life and ministry. Who will be Church to young mothers, single mothers, women who will look to women for an authentic expression of Church in 15 years time?

Many presenters spoke of the Church's failure to embrace diversity. The Church was not seen to be flexible enough to make people comfortable in diversity. As a result, there was sometimes expressions of hate between those of differing opinions.

Aboriginal women making presentations almost unanimously said that it is hard to find a place in the Church because one is an Aboriginal person. They spoke of a lack of understanding of who Aboriginal people are, and a lack of knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and their culture. The lack of acceptance on the basis of Aboriginality rather than of gender was said to be the main barrier to their participation in the Church.

It was emphasised that there is a failure to integrate Aboriginal and Christian spirituality. A presentation by Aboriginal women in Tamworth highlighted this barrier of racism:

The biggest issue facing Aboriginal women in society and in the Church is racism. This applies to men also. ... they do not pass you the collection plate because we are Aborigines. They think that we do not have any money. People still continue to change lines when coming to Communion so that they do not receive from us. ... There are less and less Aboriginal children in the Catholic school.

Lesbians members of the Church are ignored. The silence of the Church in regard to its lesbian members is seen as a form of harassment. Women whose sexual orientation is towards other women have long rejected the term "homosexual" yet the church persists with the term. Lesbian women are equated with gay men as if they were a homogenous group. As experienced in Confession and preaching, the lack of knowledge and sensitivity of priests on the issue of lesbianism has caused terrible hurt to women. Lesbian women who are employed by the Church experience a threat to employment. A presentation in Adelaide on behalf of the women members of Acceptance-Adelaide Inc highlighted these barriers to the participation of lesbian women. The following story is one example:

Heather speaks of her anxiety. I am a teacher in a Catholic school. But being a lesbian means that I have to be always on my guard, even though I am not in a relationship. Most of my friends are lesbians and we do a lot of

social things together. But I can't talk about my private life in the staff room in the same way that the others talk about their families. I might let something out accidentally which might trigger off their curiosity. It is a very lonely feeling. I am sure that if my principal knew I was gay she would start to look for some excuse to have me fired.

The majority of presenters were concerned that young people do not see Church as relevant to daily life and that large numbers of young women are leaving the Church. Young people, both male and female, were turning away from the Church.

There was frustration that Vatican II teachings have not been received, implemented and promulgated. Many presenters spoke of feeling spiritually starved or of the emptiness of their experience of Church. Need for ongoing conversion of the Church was noted along with the Church's unwillingness to change and reluctance to admit mistakes. Recent scandals in the Church were referred to and the Church's failure to reflect on underlying difficulties in Church teachings and practices was lamented. Some expressed concerns regarding the inadequate financial support to promote the participation of women.

The belief by some that the Church is a democracy and the perceived leniency of the modern Church were seen as barriers for some presenters. The current Adelaide Church was seen by some traditionalists as a barrier for them.

6.6.6 Lack of Gender Equality

Virtually all presenters suggested that the gifts of women should be recognised, acknowledged and affirmed, and that women should be encouraged to participate in the life of the Church. Some presenters said that women should be encouraged to participate in the Church at all levels including the Vatican. Feminine perspectives were seen as different from those of men and excluded. This lack of equality was inherent in the very structures of the Church.

Once more the point was made regarding the irony that Christians are asked to take the counter-cultural stand, but in this matter of the promotion of gender equality, today it is our society, rather than the Church, that is leading the way. The comments of a participant in Brisbane are an illustration of this issue:

Marginal, "helping" roles no longer reflect the abilities of women to participate productively in Church life – if indeed they ever did. Women now have the proven expertise to participate in Church life at the highest levels of leadership and authority. They do so in secular life. There is no sustainable reason to deny them this right in Church life. Far from lagging behind secular society in the incorporation of women into strategic positions, the Church

should be in the lead. Women expect it, and the Church, if it is to survive, needs it. For the Church to continue with its current practices of disenfranchisement of more than 70% of its active population on the basis of sex is totally anomalous, both in terms of Gospel values, and in terms of organisational strategy.

Many presenters felt that the gifts and talents of women are rejected rather than being recognised and used for the Church. In addressing concerns of gender equality, once more the concern was repeated that women's skills, gifts and talents are not fully utilised. This was perceived as both a barrier to women's participation and an impoverishment of the whole Church. A presentation in Adelaide noted:

The energy and gifts of so many of our young women today are being lost as a resource for our Church. Many young women continue to be involved in social justice action but see the Church as a joke while it continues to exclude women in ways no longer tolerated by society under Human Rights and Equal Opportunity legislation.

A number of presenters felt that the prevailing culture of the Church is sexist and relegates women to traditional roles rendering them invisible in other roles. Some referred to a "1950s style sexist Church" while others spoke of "patriarchal, hierarchical Church structures". It was noted that there is poor representation of women on committees and boards. Women were not seen as being given any authority within the Church, and those people who were given authority were not held accountable for their exercise of authority.

The majority of presenters saw the Church as unwilling to take on Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action processes accepted in society. This reflected tokenism and a lack of political awareness within a male dominated Church.

Some said that lay women are seen as the bottom rung of a hierarchy in which the clerics are at the top followed by religious men, lay men and religious women. The "clericalisation" of religious women puts them above lay women in this hierarchy. There is a significant gap between Church and society. An anti-feminist sub-culture was experienced in the Church by some participants. In this regard, the Church was seen to be uniquely consistent and inconsistent: on the one hand the Church has done much over the centuries to protect and promote the dignity of women, for example through the education of young women by Religious Orders. On the other hand, the feminist movement is seen to be dismissed by the official Church in an uncritical manner. This stance was a source of alienation of both women and men in relation to issues of gender equality.

6.6.7 Concerns about the Church's Stance on Sexuality, Marriage and the Family

Lack of value placed on motherhood and family roles by society and Church was seen as a significant barrier by many presenters. Motherhood in particular is insufficiently recognised and honoured. It was noted that the push for women to join the market economy erodes women's free choice. A presentation in Melbourne stated:

Our problems in family life are numerous. It is alleged by some that 10% of Australian families do not have one member bringing in a wage. Unemployment destroys families and the morale of our young. We find we cannot even exist comfortably on one salary, so our young women are being forced into the paid work force, while our babies are being brought up by paid minders. Worse, our young women are being taught that true self-fulfilment is found almost anywhere except in marriage and motherhood. Yet the pursuit of career at the expense of the domestic sphere appears not to have increased the happiness or wellbeing of our young women.

Many of the presenters saw Church teaching and practice in relation to sexuality, marriage and the family as a barrier to women's participation. It was felt that sexuality was generally repressed and that women's sexuality was feared and stigmatised. The teachings and pastoral practice of the Church were seen as failing to take into account or address women's views and experiences. For example it was suggested that generally the hierarchy has ignored issues such as rape in marriage. The Church's teachings on artificial contraception, abortion, sterilisation and IVF did not take into account women's experiences. The lack of credibility about both the teaching of and the process of decision-making concerning artificial contraception was also frequently stressed by presenters. Problems of both the content and process of developing the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* were emphasised across the nation, especially by those who were affected at the time of the publication of the document in 1968. It was noted that the Church's stance on many issues of sexuality is dismissed by the young as irrelevant as a result of its lack of credibility.

From a different viewpoint, some presenters at particular hearings expressed concern about what they termed "the contraceptive mentality". The failure of many Catholics to adopt the Church teaching on artificial contraception was seen as a barrier to some. Radical feminism was seen as a danger to the family. A presentation in Perth stated:

Catholics have become very confused about the teachings of the Church on various aspects of sexuality. In the absence of understanding and the perception that "they don't know what they are talking about" there has been a general rejection of teachings associated with marriage and procreation.

A number of presenters thought that women are not allowed by the Church to make their own decisions in marriage, for example in relation to birth control and traditional subservient roles of women within marriage. The exultation of submission and suffering, especially of women in family roles, was seen as a barrier. It was considered that celibate clergy are unable to understand women and family life.

Problems of the divorced and remarried were raised as serious difficulties, along with the treatment of solo parents and marriage annulment processes. It was felt that the Church's marriage and divorce laws were marked by legalism. Marriage breakdown, irregular marriages and the lack of self-esteem of dysfunctional families were all experienced as barriers to participation. It was noted that the Church needs to be more active in condemning domestic violence. A presentation by a woman in Perth emphasised the point:

Women who are victims of domestic violence have even greater needs – hence the necessity for clergy to receive specialised training on the issues constituting domestic violence. It is not right or just to leave the woman victim on her own and for the Church to stay silent on the issue. What message does this lack of action send out to victims of abuse? At the very least it gives the appearance of condoning the violence and harm.

Some participants spoke of the lack of support for full-time carers of people with disabilities.

A small number of presenters said that some women are prevented from participating in the Church by their spouses. Many presenters stressed the pressures on families and the many demands on women's time and energy. A few participants saw media coverage as undermining the Church's teachings on marriage and the family and thus discouraging women's participation in the Church.

6.6.8 Exclusive Language and Images

The great majority of presenters who spoke on the question of language and images saw exclusive language and images in relation to both humanity and God as a barrier to women's participation in the Church. The issue of exclusive social language drew the greatest attention. For example, a presentation in Melbourne stated:

Language reflects reality. Language makes meaning. The language we use tells us and others something about our values. . . . Once upon a time it seemed quite acceptable to address all of humanity as "man"; however our society, ourselves included, no longer find this so. Yet, so often throughout the liturgy of the Church and in its official documents there is the persistent use of man intended to include all people and the dominant use of masculine images in speaking of

God. We are increasingly aware of the effects that verbal abuse and insulting name calling can have on a person's self concept. Non-inclusive language does similar damage. . . . The other significant language issue for many Christian men and women is the sole use of masculine images and pronouns for God. Exclusive use of terms such as Father, Lord, and All-Mighty, they believe, distort the nature of God and God's relationship with us.

Concerning images of God, the problem did not appear to lie in the appropriate use of male images, but rather in their excessive or exclusive use which meant that the rich and varied understanding of the mystery of God was not expressed. Some presenters specifically stressed an excessive focus on the image of God as Father as a barrier to women's participation in the Church, while others spoke of their experience of exclusively male images of God. A presentation emphasised this point:

We restrict and limit the transcendent God when we limit our references to God as being exclusive to the male gender. If women are made in the image and likeness of God, why isn't this reflected in language about God also? God is Spirit and therefore neither male nor female. Consequently, any language about God will always be inadequate. However, it is important to strive to use the most appropriate language possible. By the over-emphasis on God as male, the Church limits our concept of who/what God is and therefore of how we can relate to God.

Through the "masculinisation" of language and God's images, the culture of the Church was seen by many as excluding women. The exclusive use of male images and language for God, and for humanity, especially in liturgy and worship, was a particular issue. While the majority of participants felt that God had been "masculinised", a small minority felt that the attempt to use inclusive language and images was a barrier to their participation. An illustration of this latter view is taken from a presentation of a woman in Adelaide:

I know that some women attend liturgies which alter the words of Scripture and the liturgy. I do not wish to go to these liturgies or want to. The vast majority of women do not wish to attend these liturgies. Why should changes be imposed upon every parish and all women when there is absolutely no genuine need? Why should political correctness and a muffling of Our Lord's words enter our precious Catholic Church? It should not. The vast majority of Catholic women do not want it under any circumstances.

6.6.9 Excessive Focus on Male Spirituality

Presenters who spoke about spirituality generally felt that the spirituality of women and those who were not Anglo-Celtic males was not accepted. Many

presenters thought that this situation has led to a spiritual poverty within the Church in Australia. Some said that the Church's spirituality was thus crippled and deformed, and focused excessively on male spirituality. Aboriginal presenters specifically noted the failure to integrate Aboriginal and Christian spirituality.

6.6.10 **Lack of Adequate Consultation and Communication**

Participants who addressed the issue of consultation and communication in the Church stated that in Church life, vocal women are dismissed and only certain kinds of women are consulted. A number of presenters said that the prohibition on the discussion of the ordination of women is itself a barrier to women's participation. This view was presented both by those who were in favour of the ordination of women and those who were not particularly concerned about the issue. Lack of communication, especially at a national level, presented barriers to participation. A presentation in Bunbury explained:

We need a diligent dissemination of information through all levels in our Church. For example, I have been shocked at the number of people who heard nothing about this Research Project until a few weeks ago when I told them. We sympathise with Parish Priests who receive so much mail through which they have to sort. To whom do they give this type of document? Some Parish Councils simply decided that it was not an issue for them. Other parish councils did not see the document at all. The issue of communication, especially in rural areas, is a vexed one ...

6.6.11 **Concerns Regarding Education**

Some participants felt that the lack of educational opportunities and an inadequate understanding of the faith were barriers to women's participation. Others saw frustration at the lack of reception, promulgation and implementation of the teachings of Vatican II as discouraging women.

A small minority of presenters saw the influence of educators in Catholic schools as undermining the rights of parents and expressed concern about the lack of faith in some Catholic schools. Religious education and sex education were the two areas where this was most pronounced. An example of this concern is taken from a presentation on behalf of Concerned Catholics in Rockhampton:

A barrier to women in the Church has arisen due to the fact that parents have lost their trust in the schools to provide sound Catholic teachings. They must be ever vigilant to counter false teachings, weak catechetics, and modern ideologies being taught in our schools. This task has become so heavy that some families have taken the drastic step of removing their children from Catholic schools in order to preserve the faith of their children.

6.6.12 Limitations and Inequality in Professional Service and Employment of Women in the Church

Some presenters saw limited employment prospects and the lack of a career path for women employed within the Church as a barrier to women's participation in the Church, especially in key roles. It was said that the employment of women within the Church was characterised by "dead-end jobs", short term contracts and the lack of professional development and career structures. It was considered that there was much inequality in Church employment. The payment of women was linked to their poor status and recognition. It was noted that much depends on priests in the contractual arrangement for pastoral associates. As a result of these barriers in the area of professional service and employment, it was lamented that women are not able to serve the Church as fully as their education and talents would allow. A presentation in Bunbury highlighted this point:

Our country has a high rate of unemployment. There are deacons and many lay men and women well trained in theology, highly skilful with leadership potential, yet they are not offered the positions.

6.6.13 Church Lagging Behind Society in Gender Equality

Many of the presenters spoke of experiencing a dissonance between their roles and status in society and within the Church. They felt that women are taken more seriously and treated more equally in society than they are within the Church. Many noted that young women would not tolerate this and that other women are leaving too. Some felt grieved that the Church is not leading the way in treating women as being equal to men. Others were less positive about the roles and status of women in society at large, seeing both Church and society as marked by a patriarchal culture. Some saw the Church as having taken on the patriarchal culture of the surrounding society. Rural isolation, experienced in many areas of Australia, was experienced as a barrier to participation in the Church. This difficulty was often linked to the need for better communication.

A small number of the presenters said that worldly influences, involving secular pressures, consumerism and the secular culture attacking the Church, were barriers to women's participation in the Church. They saw this as being expressed in feminism and women pushing for power and status. These presenters frequently criticised feminism without describing or defining their understanding of its meaning. For such participants, feminism seemed to be related to a pressure whereby the main or sole focus in the life of the woman was not on the family. Feminism was seen to be inappropriate for young women, and "career-oriented" women were said to have fallen for its ideals. A participant in Ballarat stated:

There is a danger that strident and militant feminists may succeed in their push to dominate the parish scene. Mary, the woman of Faith, may not be their model; power, not service, their motive for participation.

For some participants, single women and married women with no children were also seen as representing barriers to participation. The contemporary medical culture was noted as an obstacle.

Some presenters saw the attitudes of some women themselves as a barrier. They felt that some women had internalised and accepted the subordinate roles and inferior status accorded to them by society. Other presenters believed that socialisation, resulting in low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence among women, was hindering women's participation in the Church.

6.7 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

While the vast majority of participants suggested the following ways in which women's participation in the Church should be increased, a minority of presenters said no change was needed. A number of presenters simply stated that the Church should reverse all barriers outlined in response to Question Three and did not give specific detail concerning ways to address increased participation.

6.7.1 Inclusion of Women in Decision-making and Leadership

The vast majority of presenters wished to see women more included in the decision-making and leadership of the Church. A whole and equal participation with men was desired. It was felt that decision-making and leadership should be inclusive of both women and men, clergy and laity, and should be undertaken in partnership at all levels. Women should have equal access to decision-making at all levels rather than having merely advisory roles. A mandate is needed. Both the feminine and the masculine is required in order to find a more wholesome and balanced way. An urgent need was identified for informed discussion and broader consultation on decisions. A presentation from some women in Toowoomba requested that :

- *in decision-making at all levels in the Church, the shared wisdom of women be honoured;*
- *education and theologising around the whole concept of PARTNERSHIP and all its implications such as authority, collaboration, shared responsibility, accountability be undertaken by key bodies that exist in Church today.*

Both male and female ways of making decisions should be honoured and new leadership styles, including the approaches of women, should be introduced. Such a climate of mutuality and acceptance would better draw on all gifts and utilise female approaches to decision-making and problem-solving along with male approaches.

There were many suggestions concerning the need for more collaborative leadership. Leadership needs to be more in touch with the people and to operate out of the power of love rather than the love of power. It was proposed that the Church explore the strengths of women's styles of leadership in organisations and how these might impact on the Church. More collaborative leadership was desired and diocesan pastoral councils were suggested as a means of achieving this. In selecting women for such roles, it was recommended that the Church pick the best people, that is those women with suitable qualifications, backgrounds and personal qualities. It was suggested that an ombudsperson be appointed to handle grievances within the Church.

Aboriginal presenters suggested that Aboriginal leadership within the Church to minister to the sick and dying should come from within their own group. A presentation in Rockhampton on behalf of the AICC emphasised this need:

Special Ministers should include Aboriginal people; they want to be able to go to their own sick people with the Eucharist and spiritual support.

The community itself should nominate leaders who would then be commissioned. This could include Aboriginal women as deaconesses in their own communities. Aboriginal presenters also spoke of the need to unite families, for example at conferences, to keep the family together to ensure the involvement of children and teenagers. The introduction of married priests would assist both the Aboriginal and wider community.

Some saw lay leadership as inevitable and suggested that it be funded so that it is exercised on the basis of gift and calling rather than ability to pay for training or to donate time.

Some presenters thought that local Bishops should have more authority while others stressed the need for submission to Rome. It was suggested that there is need for priests and religious in leadership positions in rural parishes.

6.7.2 Ministry and Priesthood

There was a strong call to re-examine the theology of ministry, the gifts of women and the creation of new forms of ministry, as a presentation in Brisbane recommended:

In seeking to address the problems of a gendered culture and the ordination of women, that a reassessment of ministry and ministries in the Church take place.

The proposed outcome would be the exploration of new possibilities of ministry for both women and men beyond the gendered confines of our present reality.

Ongoing dialogue is needed about role of ministry in the light of Baptism. Issues broader than ordination require investigation. It was suggested that there is an urgent need to acknowledge that the ordination of women was an issue both for participants who spoke in favour of the ordination of women and also for those who were either unsure or opposed to women's ordination.

There were many calls for a renewed priesthood that would be inclusive of men and women, married and celibate. There was a strong call to change Canon Law, especially Canon 274, regarding ordination. An example of this call is taken from the presentation in Canberra on behalf of the group, Ordination of Catholic Women (OCW):

OCW calls on the bishops of Australia to listen carefully to these voices, to be courageous enough to stand against a blind acceptance of a church structure which was man-made at a point in history and which can be now un-made by men at another point in history. Such a stance would place the Australian bishops among the prophet Jesus and the women and men of the prophetic movement of the reign of God – among people who made life-threatening choices for the sake of an inclusive reign of God.

A number of presenters wanted to see women and married people of both genders in ministries of all kinds. Some participants suggested that women be ordained to the priesthood or diaconate. It was proposed that the Church explore the expansion of the deacon's role to include women as deacons and also explore women acolytes. It was felt that the permanent diaconate should be available for women. The need for courses for Aboriginal women to become deaconesses was suggested. In the words of a presentation in Alice Springs:

We believe that some changes could be implemented allowing for this gradual movement towards the full participation of women in the Church. Women could be "officially" commissioned by the Church to administer the sacraments of baptism, matrimony, and anointing of the sick (without of course "reconciliation"). Already women are marriage celebrants in our secular world. Without "Orders" people are excluded from administering the sacrament of 'reconciliation'. . . . Those who don't want a woman to perform these ministries would be free to choose a man. But why should those who prefer a woman be prevented from having their choice because others do not want it? If we don't like oranges we should not prevent others who do like them from eating them. However, over time, the palate could change if exposed to this new experience.

Particular ministries of many women, such as hospital chaplaincy, where the minister is unable to administer fully to the person, require urgent examination.

The importance of including female experience and perspectives on this issue was stressed. It was strongly recommended that women working in chaplaincy should be able to anoint the sick and the dying. The provision for carers of the sick to anoint and to hear confessions was a constant suggestion. A presentation in Canberra 'Regarding the Hospital Ministry' made this recommendation in the following way:

To go one step further, I will quote from a remarkable nun who has spent many years as chaplain in a large city hospital. In a letter to me she writes, and I quote: "the sooner chaplains and some ministers, mind you not all of them, are given the right and power to anoint people the better. How many confessions do we all hear? I have sat with a dying patient for a long time and out of the blue they say they would like to receive the last sacraments. I must leave them, not knowing whether they will live until I return, to find a priest. They are then confronted, often, by somebody they have never seen before, they are uncomfortable, and in five minutes he has done "the job" and gone. I myself am soon retiring, but I will continue to pray for change".

In a similar way, a presentation in Adelaide on behalf of the Sisters of St Joseph working in the Diocese of Port Pirie recounted the following story of a Josephite:

I have been a prison chaplain for a number of years. I have heard many informal confessions which were very unlikely to ever be repeated to a priest. The difficulties of women confessing to men, particularly sexual sin, could be likened to the difficulty some men have in approaching a woman doctor with some complaints.

Funding for hospital chaplains and the need to train chaplains in ethics were also suggested.

Along with the development of specific ministries to be opened to women and lay men, it was also recommended that such ministries be given appropriate titles and that the Church utilise the commissioning and mandating of ministers. It was suggested that women should be used as Catholic marriage celebrants.

Many suggestions called for a re-examination of Church structures and priesthood involving a Research Project on the existing system of priesthood. The need was emphasised to return to Jesus and the early Church, and to take into account both the Scriptural text and the context, to examine the issue of priesthood. In the role of the priest, it is important to identify what is essential to priesthood.

There was a view that priests are trying to do too many things, some of which are not specific to their roles and competencies as priests, and that some of these roles and tasks should be divested to appropriately qualified lay people. This would free priests to do more of the work that is specific to

their role and would reduce their workloads. It was noted that there is a need for more pastoral care than the priest can provide. The importance of delegation to parish teams in a collaborative ministry approach was seen as critical.

There were many suggestions concerning a re-examination of compulsory celibacy and the priesthood. It was felt that women and the entire Church would benefit greatly from the inclusion of married clergy. The importance of having Aboriginal married clergy would be consistent with their culture and would bring women forward as "men and women are always there doing things together". A presentation on behalf of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne stated:

We hope one day our men will be accepted as married priests within the Catholic structures. This would fulfil our obligation to the laws of Creation of all that is beautiful and good; and which would enable us "to have and live life to the full". (John 10:10)

There were frequent suggestions for women to give the homily once a month. Canons 766, 767 and 770 were cited in support of this suggestion. Women's giftedness in preaching should be a service to the Church. A frequent request was for homilies to be given from a woman's point of view and from the point of view of married men. It was felt that women and married men may be able to connect the Scriptures to the ordinary life experiences of the majority of the congregation in a very concrete and down-to-earth way.

The utilisation of large numbers of women with theological education in various capacities was suggested. Their loss to the service of the Church due to lack of opportunity was greatly regretted. Many presenters felt a need for qualified and experienced women to help minister to women.

6.7.3 Affirmation and Support of Women

There were many suggestions about the importance of affirming and supporting women. It was commonly felt that there is need for an attitudinal change, especially on the part of clergy, but also by other men and some women, so that women are acknowledged, affirmed, celebrated and thanked. For example, a presentation on behalf of the Catholic Women's League suggested:

Attitudinal changes amongst some traditional clergy and their congregations would assist women to participate more comfortably. Times have changed and perhaps we ourselves have been slow to realise what we have to offer as women.

Attitudes towards women, for example as saint or whore, need to be addressed. It was noted that attitudinal change requires time and dialogue. The need in

some cases for common courtesy and love as a central value in Christianity was highlighted. It was suggested that the Church note changes in the world around us regarding women's issues as "signs of the times".

Recognition and acknowledgment of women could be done at various levels of the Church. It was seen to be important to recognise the work of volunteers in the Church, the great majority of whom are women, and rejoice over the lives of ordinary women. A revitalisation and affirmation of women's groups such as the Catholic Women's League were also suggested.

A frequent request was the need to affirm roles of women in the home and promote support for women as mothers through assistance and lobbying. It was suggested by many that women should be encouraged to stay at home, especially for those women for whom work outside the home is not a matter of choice. It is important that adequate support is available at specific times of stress for women, for example pregnancy, miscarriage, postnatal depression, separation. While affirming motherhood, it was also seen as essential to recognise that there are many dimensions to womanhood.

The need for female role models was strongly suggested. There is a need to provide appropriate female role models in the Church, especially for the young. Exemplars of Catholic women as achievable role models should be promoted, as a presentation in Wollongong recommended:

Change the role models: why should they always be virgins and/or martyrs ... How many Australian women or men – religious lay or clerical – have heard of Rosemary Goldie – the first woman ever to hold an official post of authority in the Roman Curia – Under-Secretary of the Council for the Laity and an "auditor" at the last two sessions of Vatican II. Yes, she's an Australian ... How many know about Norma Parker? There is a women's prison in New South Wales named after her. She was a Catholic lay woman who was active in making social work a profession, an important figure in the reform of the New South Wales Child Welfare Department and a member of the St Joan's Alliance.

It was also suggested that the Church should emphasise the feasts of women saints. It was proposed that the Church research and explore a sound theology of Mary applicable to contemporary life.

The need for acceptance of diversity in the Australian Church, including the diversity of women, was requested once more. More tolerance was needed. The diversity of women's experiences should be valued and used in a positive way. Concerning lesbian women and the Catholic Church, greater sensitivity, education and dialogue were required. A presentation on behalf of the women members of Acceptance-Adelaide Inc noted:

The official teaching of the Church is quite clear: "They [lesbian women and gay men] must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every

sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” (Catechism, article 2358)

6.7.4 Gender Equality

Many presenters suggested that the Church’s teachings about non-discrimination need to be applied to its own affairs. The Church should use the skills and gifts of all men and women. It was suggested that an affirmative action plan is needed in the Church and that women should to be more visible. Public gestures of equality are needed. It was requested that women play a role on marriage tribunals and Bishops’ committees, and be present at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

6.7.5 Communication and Consultation

Several structural means of listening to, consulting with and giving a voice to women were suggested, including the following:

- women’s advisory boards at the parish, diocesan, state and national levels;
- women’s advisory bodies to Bishops and priests especially at the diocesan level;
- women on diocesan councils and at the Bishops’ Conference;
- more women on consultative bodies;
- women advisers to Bishops;
- women’s advisory positions;
- women’s research centre;
- national women’s Catholic council;
- national colloquium;
- national forum on the family;
- women’s commission;
- a commission for women with a research arm;
- an academy for the study of gender issues in the Church;
- an ACU Institute of Women’s Studies;
- a centre for the study of women’s history linked to ACU;
- a study of the sacraments and the sacramental life of the Australian Church to examine how women and their perspectives can be integrated more fully;
- each Australian Bishop visiting women-only groups on each of his pastoral visitations to parishes;
- the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference formally commissioning individual Bishops to attend women’s events each year as listeners only;
- the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference making a policy decision to speak out at every opportunity on the injustices to women in society and the economy, and formally commissioning women to act as its spokespersons in these matters.

At the public hearings and in the written submissions, repeated attention was given to three particular initiatives which are seen by many participants to be effective in promoting consultation with and participation of women. These initiatives are:

- the National Board of Catholic Women: Consultative Body to Bishops' Conference of England and Wales;
- the Taskgroup of the Archdiocese of Brisbane concerning "Women's Participation in the Life of the Archdiocese: Present Roles and Future Directions"; and
- the Diocesan Pastoral Team in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.

As a result of the repeated reference to these bodies, the RMG undertook an investigation of these initiatives to provide the Australian Bishops with detailed information concerning their background, purpose, composition, activities, particular challenges, reporting procedures, relationship to associated bodies and future directions. Detailed reports on these initiatives are included in the Appendices 12, 13 and 14.

A commission of women to make recommendations on the findings of this research was suggested. Others saw a need for a national Catholic women's organisation or for a broad commission to take forward the findings of the Project. Need for action as a result of the Project was stressed. It was seen to be crucial that the Bishops act on the marginalisation of women. Many said that the Bishops should listen to this consultation and act on it, hear the hurt of people, offer a genuine apology and change. An example of the need for action by the Australian Bishops in response to the research on the participation of women in the Church comes from a presentation in Tasmania:

This Research Project is a good place to start. But it is what happens from here on that is important. Will this be the beginning of new growth, or will the results be buried as our voices have so often been buried under a mountain of bureaucracy, legalism and defensiveness? I pass on the challenge. I believe in the power of the Spirit of God to work in all situations towards the good – I hope I am alive to see the results!

Many presenters stressed the need for listening and dialogue. They suggested that the Bishops should enter into further dialogue with women about their experiences and provide opportunities for the oral and written sharing of experiences. Forums were frequently suggested for compassionate listening to women's experiences, or to hear the views of both women and men. There was special concern to hear from young women. It was often suggested that such forums need to be an ongoing feature of the life of the Church.

It was generally agreed that more and better communication is needed at all levels and especially at the national level. Forums for discussion need to be created. It was suggested that sometimes it is advisable to take discussion out of Church contexts. It was also suggested that the Australian Church needs to improve its media profile.

6.7.6 Inclusive Language and Imagery

The majority of presenters said that inclusive language and images of God should be used while a minority said they should not. Many participants stressed the significance of language and strongly requested that the language and images we use for humanity and God should be inclusive of both female and male.

The introduction of inclusive language in liturgy, ritual and public statements was sought. It was also suggested that an inclusive lectionary be developed for Australia's use. Some presenters called for balance and compromise concerning inclusive language.

Many participants suggested that different images of God should be provided and encouraged. The use of inclusive religious imagery and more fluidity with images of God would more accurately reflect the Christian faith tradition. It was also argued that the official Church should embrace all New Testament images of Church and use symbols that are meaningful to Aboriginal peoples. An illustration of the requests for inclusive social and religious language is taken from a presentation in Sydney:

It is now over 15 years since all Federal Governmental documents, including inter-departmental memos, had to be written in inclusive language! It is a simple human decision – a Gospel decision surely – to include everyone and exclude no-one. . . . It is not fair to God to attempt to limit Godness by any one symbol. "Let God be God" and, as a Church, let us dare to practise using a variety of symbols to explore who God is – male symbols, female symbols, gender-free symbols. It's liberating, life-giving and fairer to God. We'll be a better "People of God" if we are to explore God.

6.7.7 Marriage and Family

Many presenters wished to see the Church more actively and practically supporting family life and honouring parenting roles, and motherhood specifically. Mothers wished to be recognised, supported and valued by the Church and society in general. There is need for strategies for the building up and strengthening of the family, including a public statement concerning the family. Practical means of supporting family life were suggested such as keeping families together in Church activities by ensuring the involvement of children and teenagers, and by providing facilities for babies and young children.

Many participants strongly suggested that the Church be more affirming and vocal on the value of women being full-time at home. There was a need to support real choice to be full-time mothers. It was also suggested that the Church should lobby the government to reform the Family Law Act, provide a home-maker's allowance and place the tax system on a family basis. It was requested that the Church speak out on single income families. The presentation in Melbourne on behalf of the Australian Family Association made the following request:

We call upon the Australian hierarchy to support us when we call for economic support for the family, either through a Homemaker's Allowance or through the taxation system. A very simple measure could help us significantly. At present, well over \$2 billion of taxpayers' money is spent on providing paid child care. We submit that this money should not be accessed through the child care industry. It should be divided up among all mothers of young children, thus giving these mothers a real choice about how they can best parent their babies. And the Catholic Church ought to be at the forefront of an insistent call for the primary inclusion of considerations of best parenting practice in the public discourse around social policies.

Support is required for solo parents. There is need for the Church to recognise diverse family structures, for example in homilies. A presentation in Adelaide suggested:

Women who already feel inferior within the institutional church, who are grappling with the aftermath of a marital breakdown and a loss of status in society need to be encouraged and supported in their jobs as provider and care-giver for their children. Language is often used which sets up the nuclear family of mother, father and children as the ideal! Our Sunday homilies could be used to acknowledge the different family structures that enrich our community.

It was frequently suggested that women, lay people in general, or married people specifically, contribute to homilies and the development of theology, especially in relation to marriage and family life. New research is needed concerning the theology of sexuality, marriage and the family. Women should be involved in marriage preparation. In the marriage ceremony, both parents should give the bride away. There is a need for preparation for parenthood. A number of participants suggested that the Church spread the message of the "Billings method" of family planning. It was proposed that the Church regularise all marriages in the Year 2000.

6.7.8 Parish and Liturgical Structures

It was suggested that women be allowed officially to preach homilies and that they be specifically mandated to do so. This was a constant request across the hearings. A submission on behalf of the Leadership Team of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands illustrates this recommendation:

I am suggesting that there now exists within the Church a body of women who constitute a valuable resource for the ministry of preaching, a resource which is waiting to be recognised and called into service. These women, on their own initiative, have educated themselves in ways which equip them for such service. It remains for them to be permitted, invited and enabled to share their informed understanding of the Word of God within the community of believers.

Liturgy should be a key place which “calls forth the lived experience of people”. Formation in liturgical leadership which was accessible in rural dioceses was recommended. There was a strong call to use theology graduates in parishes as many trained women are looking for ways to serve.

There were many suggestions concerning team ministry in parishes. The development of collaborative ministries was presented as a matter of urgency as it was seen the parish priests have too many roles. The need for delegation to parish teams in a collaborative ministry approach was identified as a most significant issue. Parish ministries must not be seen as personal property but rather as a matter of group leadership. Priests working alongside women, recognition of the pastoral associate and women on finance committees were examples of such collaboration. Married couples could be used as Mass servers. The need for the formation of the clergy in collaborative ministry was highlighted.

Practical suggestions concerning communication in parishes were proposed. More knowledge about what is going on in parish life was sought through greater access to technology and the resources of parishes. More convenient times for the Sacraments were requested and greater use of sacramentals was proposed. It was suggested that there should be a breakdown in school/parish barriers.

6.7.9 Wider Church

In the wider Church, there was a need to read the “signs of the times”, to discern the will of God and to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit. A presentation in Townsville stated:

Pope John XXIII, in 1963, reflecting on the “signs of the times” identified the emergence of women asserting their right to be treated with dignity and equality

as one of the three major thrusts of our times. (Pacem in Terris, n. 41) ... We believe that it would be a great mistake to underestimate the demands of this change of consciousness. It is an epochal shift that is challenging us at the beginning of the third millennium, a radical transformation of human culture and politics. Yet it is also a unique opportunity, a moment of grace. Never before in the history of the Church has there been a moment when we could stand at the vantage point we have today, and understand the long story of patriarchy, and glimpse the future that God has in store for us.

As a Church, it was proposed that we draw on our own history, including the history of women in the Church. It was noted that the Church is crying out to be saved, that transformation of the institution is required. Such renewal must involve attitudinal change, especially on the part of the clergy. Some suggested that a process of reconciliation concerning women and the Church was required. There were many requests for curial reform involving the appointment of popes for fixed terms, women cardinals and women in the curia.

A renewed perspective in theology is required to see the Church as a discipleship of equals. A presentation in Bathurst makes this request in terms of the parish:

I recommend individual Parishes be encouraged to view their communities as Discipleships of Equals. Investigation of the social structures and practices of the life of the Parish, a call to work towards creating genuine equality, encouragement of the belief that women are fully human of themselves and not just a derivative of men, relentless exposure of sexist practices could be employed and consciously utilised.

It was proposed that the Church must refer back to Jesus and his way of relating to women and men in the Scriptures. A change in image of Church is required from hierarchical structure to carer. The Church's compassionate side must be shown. Appreciation of the Third Rite of Reconciliation was expressed, but there was anguish that the Church developed the Rite but then withdrew it. Within the Church it was seen as important to accept differences and celebrate diversity. The aim should be unity in diversity rather than uniformity. A presentation in Melbourne highlighted the value of diversity in the Church:

We cannot have unity without justice but I feel we could have unity in diversity ... Difference is not a negative thing. It can actually portray another facet of the truth.

There is a need to decentralise and declericalise which involves structural change. It was noted that restructuring needs resources, perhaps from the national level. Time-lines for structural change should be set. Models of governance are required based on the shared responsibility of all the baptised.

The establishment of diocesan pastoral councils was strongly urged. Priestless parishes in relation to the diocesan structure require particular attention. There is a need to plan now for a future without religious. Action is required on the drift from country to city. The need to support local groups in rural areas was highlighted in many hearings. It was proposed that small groups, such as basic Christian communities, could be further utilised and that more religious could serve in rural areas. There was a suggestion to set up a "priests' exchange" between city and country.

There were many suggestions concerning the need for just models for handling grievances. Mechanisms for consultation, deliberation, discussion and conflict resolution are required throughout Australia. The appointment of an ombudsperson was proposed for consideration.

The promotion of social justice within the Church, especially in regard to women, was emphasised. A presentation in Sale asked:

Can we afford the drift of women from the Church? Can the Church afford to lose the insights women bring to leadership, and their gifts of ministry in the Church? In countries with anti-discrimination laws, how can the Church effectively champion social justice when it can be perceived to act unjustly towards women?

Particular reference was made to the "stolen generations" and to relinquishing mothers who felt compelled by the Church and society to give up their newborn babies. Many presenters stated that they would like to hear the Church speak out more on social justice issues. A greater awareness of injustices was called for in the health area. A presentation in Melbourne illustrates this request:

Women want a church that is prayerful and reflective, but one where the Gospel is the source of social justice. Yet how many of our churches recently prayed and proclaimed the Aboriginal issues, the search for justice, the cry of the stolen children? ... We rarely hear spokespeople for our Church challenging policies on hospital care, ... the rights of family.

A more active role for the mature laity was proposed. Ministry to the dying and alienated should be recognised and formalised. A process is required of awakening awareness to the need for more participation. Opportunities are required for young women to serve the community. It was proposed that the Church concentrate on the twenty to forty year-old age group. A few participants recommended the need to study men's participation in Church. It was noted that greater acceptance of people with disabilities is required. There were a few suggestions concerning greater ecumenical and inter-group cooperation, in particular the need to talk to women in other Churches.

A few presentations suggested that the Church should re-embrace orthodoxy and the traditional stance through the promotion of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Bishops were called on to defend the faith.

6.7.10 Spirituality

For those presenters who dealt with issues of spirituality, the major request was for wholeness in terms of spirituality: a whole person approach including feminine images of God. The development of a spirituality suited to women's needs was required.

In any renewal in the Church, an emphasis on spirituality is essential. It should be affirmed that women too are called to holiness. There is a need for conversion for all people. The Eucharist should be a central focus as a source of healing. The use of Aboriginal spirituality and symbols as part of the liturgy in the mainstream Church was also proposed. It was felt that a marriage of Aboriginal and Christian spiritualities is required.

6.7.11 Education

There were constant suggestions concerning the need for adult faith education involving theological, pastoral and scriptural training and lay ministry formation. Ongoing education in the faith, especially for parish ministries, was stressed. The lack of bridging courses and adult education was a matter of concern.

It was proposed that adult education, leadership training and theological education need to be provided at venues, times and costs that are accessible to women. Education and training of women for ministry and correspondence courses for women at home were frequently proposed. The provision of ministry courses to support Aboriginal women to work with their own people was stressed.

Many participants spoke of the need to sponsor the theological education of lay people, especially women. Various training and formation opportunities for women should be supported financially.

The formation and in-servicing of priests was seen as an urgent educational need. A presentation in Hobart emphasised this recommendation:

In my work, there is a statutory requirement for ongoing education, and the doctors who participate actively find it a rewarding experience. Surely we should expect similar from our ordained ministers, who have our spiritual health as their brief, and from those who call themselves committed Catholics. It is not enough to have been "educated" once, maybe thirty or forty years ago. Times have changed, the challenges have changed, and we have all grown older and more experienced. This experience needs to be augmented with ongoing education, and with occasions of seeing today's laity in honest action in reflecting on the Work of God, and in freely expressing their ideas and dreams and plans for the Church of tomorrow.

It was recommended by many participants that both the initial seminary formation and the ongoing education of priests and Bishops include women's perspectives, experiences and concerns in relation to matters such as sexuality, marriage, family life and domestic violence; grief counselling; women's history; female spirituality; and feminist theology. It was also suggested that women and married men should be involved in such training. It was proposed that education about the role of women and female theology are needed by all groups within the Church, including parents.

The matter of seminary training drew particular attention and specific suggestions were made including the use of women teachers in seminaries and the education of men and women together. An example of such recommendations is taken from a presentation in Broome:

To help break down negative and limiting attitudes in the Church, qualified women should be employed as educators, counsellors and spiritual directors in seminaries and theological institutions. A seminary and theological institute staff should be encouraged to model correct behaviour on the participation of women in the Church. This is easily achieved by employing women as theologians and lecturers (and not just in the area of women's studies). It is not right to see women in seminaries and major institutes only employed at the housekeeping and secretarial level. There is a place for women at the teaching level too. Subjects on the curriculum should include women and men's sexuality, topics that help bring about balanced and healthy relationships within the Church and participation without fear of women.

It was suggested that small groups be promoted in adult faith education structures so that they are more "women-friendly". The importance of creating an environment to suit people, not people to suit an environment, was highlighted. The need to give support to women in guiding youth was raised. The value of the inclusion of women on the Notre Dame Theology Board was presented.

There were requests to restore faith education in Catholic schools and the celebration of Mass in the Catholic school. Some presenters spoke of the need to strengthen orthodox teaching in religious education and to develop skills to teach knowledge at home, school and adult education levels. The importance of parents as first teachers of children was stressed. In religious education, parents' concerns must be taken on by schools. There is a need for sex education to be values-based. An example of these suggestions comes from a presentation on behalf of Concerned Catholics of Mackay and District in Rockhampton. Their recommendations include the following:



In the area of support for women and their families, we ask that:

- *The Religious Education programs taught within our schools are kept in line with the true teachings of the Catholic church understood by the Magisterium. This also, in the area of Adult Education.*
- *In the area of sex education programs in Catholic schools, we ask that parents be given back their rights to educate their own children in these matters of human sexuality. ... Therefore, we ask that sex-ed programs, as they currently stand, being integrated into most curricular areas, be abandoned.*

6.7.12 Church Teachings (See also Ministry and Priesthood)

It was frequently suggested that women, lay people in general, and married people specifically, contribute to homilies and the development of theology, especially in relation to sexuality, marriage and family life. It was noted the Church documents are developed by humans and that there can be changes in Canon Law.

Re-examination of issues of morality to include the perspectives of women and married men was called for. The education of both religious and lay people concerning morality and the formation of conscience was required. It was requested that priests preach the primacy of conscience from the pulpit. Freedom of speech and scholarship in the Church should be safeguarded and promoted.

It was suggested that there should be greater openness to feminist theology, including a feminist view of the Scriptures. Wider promulgation of Church teaching on women and contentious issues was sought by many. A few presenters stressed the use of Scripture, tradition and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

6.7.13 Professional Service and Employment

There were nation-wide requests for paying Church workers a just wage, providing realistic contracts and developing employment policies which offered security and parity of employment in the Church. The question of stipends for religious and their consistency of use were identified as issues to be addressed. It was also requested that funding for parishes to employ pastoral associates be examined.

6.7.14 Society and Culture

Generally, the wider society was seen to be further advanced than the Church in addressing issues concerning the role and status of women.

6.8 Summary of Key Findings of the Public Hearings

6.8.1 Overwhelming Response to the Public Hearings

The response to the request for presentations at public hearings throughout Australia was overwhelming and represented a significantly greater response than for similar consultations conducted both within the Australian Catholic Church and within the broader society. It should be noted that for the Australian Parliamentary inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the committee held 19 days of public hearings in 8 major cities with evidence from 181 witnesses (*Half Way to Equal: Report of the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia*, April 1992). This response is contrasted in the table below with the public hearings on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia which resulted in 32 days of hearings held in 23 urban and rural centres involving nearly 500 presentations, many of which were from groups and large organisations, as well as additional written texts from participants who were not able to present their views due to the introduction of a ballot system. The conduct of these two topic-related Australian inquiries in relation to their hearings is summarised below:

Australian Parliamentary Inquiry	Australian Bishops' Inquiry
Public Hearings: 19 days held in 8 major cities 181 witnesses	Public Hearings: 32 days held in 23 urban and rural centres nearly 500 presentations

This overwhelming response to the Bishops' inquiry is, in itself, a major finding indicating that the issue of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia is a crucial and controversial matter which requires public discussion in the presence of the Bishops of the Catholic Church.

In summary, it must first be recognised that a wide spectrum of views and emotions was presented at the hearings, ranging from degrees of satisfaction with the current participation of women to degrees of dissatisfaction that equality of role, status and opportunity for service are denied to women by the Catholic Church.

In many of the hearings, there was a polarisation of views: those wishing to maintain the current participation of women in the Church or even return to the position of the pre-Vatican II Church, and those seeking an expanded role for women. As a result of the experience of the public hearings, it became clear that the Catholic Church in Australia faces a particular challenge to address both the polarity of views and the need for respectful dialogue.

6.8.2 Greater Participation Sought for Women in the Church

The major conclusion from the hearings was that participants sought greater participation of women in the Church, especially at the level of leadership and decision-making. In general, it was felt that women in the Catholic Church in Australia are oppressed and unrecognised by many of the structures, teachings and practices of the Church. The dominant feeling was one of pain, alienation and marginalisation.

From the witness of the presentations at the hearings, it was obvious that, almost without exception, those who sought the greater participation of women were motivated by a spirit of prayer and service. It was clear that women do not seek power and privilege but rather the opportunity to respond to the many needs of the mission of the Catholic Church in the light of the Gospel message.

There was a marked absence of radical feminist views seeking to undermine the importance of marriage and family. This was in contrast to an occasionally-expressed fear that radical feminists had influenced the Bishops concerning the need for this inquiry into the role of women in the Catholic Church.

There were many expressions of gratitude to the Australian Bishops for the Research Project. It was seen as a sign of hope and a gesture of goodwill towards women in the Australian Church. However, there was also an accompanying concern about action flowing from the Project. The comment was frequently made that if there is no follow-up action from the Project by the Bishops, it would have been better if there had been no inquiry. The final vestige of hope for many women and men would be extinguished.

The key learnings from the public hearings are summarised and discussed under the themes of:

- decision-making and leadership;
- ministry and priesthood;
- role and status of women in the Church;
- marriage and the family;
- need for female role models;
- inclusive language and images;
- parish and liturgical practices;
- wider Church;
- spirituality;
- gender equality;
- communication and consultation;
- education;
- church teachings;
- professional service and employment;
- society and culture.

6.8.3 Decision-making and Leadership

The request for the expanded involvement of women in decision-making within the Church was a strong theme. It was felt that women are under-represented or excluded in decision-making and leadership within the Church and that positive measures should be taken to increase this representation. There was a general consensus that women and men are both needed in sound decision-making and leadership. Equality of men and women in decision-making on bodies was sought at all levels and in all the places in which decisions are made. It was noted that the few women who are in key roles are often not acknowledged.

Many felt that ordination and decision-making should be separated and that some of the issues were more to do with the distinction between clergy and laity than they were to do with gender. Suggestions for structures that would facilitate women's involvement in decision-making and policy-making included a board or register of women; diocesan, state or national commissions for women; and a National Catholic Women's Council with access to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

It was felt that leadership and decision-making are currently concentrated in the hands of the clergy and that this excludes the contributions of both women and lay men. Decision-making should be less centralised. Mutuality and collaboration were sought rather than the concentration of power in the hands of celibate male clergy. The laity, female and male, need to be in partnership with the clergy. More collaborative and accountable leadership was generally desired. Leadership and decision-making should be couched in terms of service and prayer.

6.8.4 Ministry and Priesthood

The ordination of women emerged as a significant issue but it was not the top priority in the short term for many participants. Many saw controversy over the ordination of women as a manifestation of a larger and deeper issue about the nature of ministry. The question of ministry should have priority over considerations of the ordination of women.

There was much agreement that the exclusion of women from ordination and the ban on discussion of ordination are barriers to women's participation in the Church. It should be noted that some participants were reticent to speak about the ordination of women, believing it to be "off limits" for the Project. Others took the pragmatic view that change was unlikely and therefore it would be more constructive and effective in the short term to turn one's attention to other issues and strategies. The meaning of ministry requires further study but the centrality of Eucharist has to have priority. The need for the re-examination of ministry and priesthood was seen as crucial for the full participation of women and for the mission of the Church.

There were many presentations in favour of the ordination of women and a smaller number that were against the ordination of women to the priesthood. Those in favour of the ordination of women saw it as an opportunity for service as an expression of faith whereas those opposed to the ordination of women felt that women seeking ordination were pursuing power and status.

Some presenters were in favour of married clergy and felt that the compulsory celibacy rule was more likely to change than the restriction of priestly ordination to men alone. The issue of continuity of personnel in parishes was a significant concern and the need for deacons, including women, was suggested as a response to this need. Recognition of the ministry of women in prisons and the role for women in ministry to the sick and dying, perhaps as deacons, was seen as a matter of urgency.

Issues concerning both the lack of access to sacraments and administration of the sacraments were raised as a matter of serious concern. A study of sacramental life was called for to consider the unfortunate perception of the priest as "magician"; the involvement of women in the anointing of the sick and the dying, and the hearing of confessions; and the expansion of women's role in sacramentals.

Many presenters displayed sympathy in relation to the pressures on priests but were critical of their lack of accountability and of the power invested in priests. Allegations of clericalism were made along with criticisms of the attitudes and behaviour of some clergy. However, a number of presenters expressed appreciation of particular clergy and dioceses.

6.8.5 **Role and Status of Women in the Church**

Women are seen as an integral part of the Church. Baptism was viewed as fundamental and the source of participation in the Church for all people. Participation and power were identified as different concepts. In general, it was felt that there is both direct and indirect discrimination against women within the Church, and both structures and processes exclude women. The Church is dominated by men and the roles of women in it are defined by men. Women were seen as second-class citizens of the Church. The skills and gifts of women need to be acknowledged. There is a particular quality that women offer to a situation.

The need for recognition, encouragement and affirmation of women was a very strong theme. The formal recognition and acknowledgment of women's contributions, involving the huge number of roles and tasks that women are actually performing, were stressed. In particular the need to affirm women in the home, the "domestic church", was highlighted as well as women's key roles in more remote rural areas.

The pain experienced by women in trying to stay in the Church needs acknowledgment. A "tearing dissonance" between the roles and status of women in society in general and women in the Church was experienced. It was felt that the Church was lagging behind society on gender equality when it should be leading. It was noted that, while many women are open to change, some women fear and oppose change. The feminist movement does not speak for all women.

The importance of attitudes towards women's participation in the Church, especially of the clergy, was critical. Structured planning for change concerning women's participation is required. It was recommended that the Church devote money and resources to women to enhance participation. Women can be restrained in their participation by finance and lack of knowledge of how finances work. The many demands on women's time and energy were stressed.

Most participants saw support for women to participate as coming from other women, small groups or personal relationships with God. Few saw the Church as a body as a source of support. It was felt that women assist the Church more than the Church assists women.

Many areas of Church life, whether in teachings or actual practice, were seen as excluding women's views, experiences and involvement either directly or indirectly. The exclusion of women and of non-ordained men from giving homilies was one example.

It was noted that the visually active roles of women are subordinate and often menial. The need for a balance of male and female images in the Church was emphasised.

There is a lack of understanding of women, their experiences and their feelings. Many presenters felt that the teaching and practice of the Church fail to draw on or take account of women's views and experiences. Presenters highlighted teaching and pastoral practice in the areas of sexuality, marriage and the family, artificial contraception, divorce and remarriage. In relation to sexuality, women are still presented as the occasion of sin. The dignity of women is not stressed.

6.8.6 Marriage and the Family

Great emphasis and value were placed on the family and women's roles as mothers and educators in the faith of their children. Women were seen as the heart of the domestic Church. Some presenters linked the concepts of the "domestic Church" and the "silent majority" especially in relation to the Research Project. The need to encourage, strengthen and affirm women in the home was stressed. It was felt that the domestic Church is insufficiently recognised. The family and motherhood are no longer at the forefront in today's Church. There is a need to proclaim that those who live the Gospel in

their daily lives, including mothers at home, are actively participating in the Church. A presentation in Adelaide highlighted this point:

In the Church, the family is often referred to as the domestic church, and marriage and family life are, at least in theory, regarded as a serious vocation. But as an institution, the Church seems to be structured in much the same way as society: the family tends to exist on the margins, and we tend to assume that our involvement in the Church is what takes place outside the family. And yet, family life is obviously vitally important for the Church's mission.

While the role of the woman as mother was highlighted repeatedly, the role of the married women as wife was referred to infrequently. The female experience of women as child bearers was seen as key. Given the theology of the Sacrament of Matrimony and high divorce rates, an over-emphasis on motherhood and an under-emphasis on the covenant relationship of wife and husband emerged.

Many felt that the Church's structures and practices did not always accommodate family life adequately or give sufficient pastoral support to families. Distress at the loss of children from the Church was a matter of much pain to a number of participants, leading some to a critique of current means of evangelisation and others to lament the Church's irrelevance to the young and failure to address issues of women's participation.

The theology of sexuality, marriage and family life was frequently raised. Many believed that it was inadequate and lacked the perspectives of women and of married men, especially on the issue of artificial contraception. Others were satisfied with the current teachings and theology but felt that they were not given sufficient emphasis or widely enough applied.

It was stressed that there are many demands on women including economic pressures on families and women working outside the family. Family obligations and the time factor for women have implications for women's participation in the Church. The current tax system was seen as unjust to families. The need to reform the taxation system to help the family was stressed as a matter of urgency.

It was seen to be critical that women should be free to choose whether or not to engage in work outside the family. Society's low evaluation of women's work in the home was a matter of concern.

6.8.7 Need for Female Role Models

There was much emphasis on the need for strong female role models, especially for younger women. Mary and other saints and role models were often mentioned, sometimes positively and at other times negatively. For example, while some participants saw Mary as a key role model and support in their participation in the life of the Church, others felt that they were hindered from

full participation by faulty Mariology. There is a need to explore spiritual models appropriate to contemporary life and theology. It was noted that, among the saints, there are few mothers.

6.8.8 Inclusive Language and Images

The use of inclusive language and images in relation to both humanity and God was a strong theme. While the majority of presentations sought more inclusive language and images, especially in relation to liturgy, Creed, theology, Church documents and official Church communications, others saw such a line of thinking as a barrier to participation. A central concern was the need to explore a variety of images of God in order to present more adequately the rich mystery of God.

6.8.9 Parish and Liturgical Practices

Participants sought a greater role for women in liturgy, including the role of deacon and other ministries. In the liturgy and homilies there was a need to preach from the Scriptures a lived faith experience, including women's experiences.

A strong need was identified for partnership and collaboration in ministries with priests, especially in priestless parishes. Priests should be seen as one in a team and not assume the centre role. It was noted that priests require help in areas of shared management and learning to be collaborative and co-responsible. Some participants saw the lack of priests as a grace for the Church. Variations between parishes were highlighted. The role of the parish council in Canon Law was cited and collaboration was urged. It was lamented that home visitation has diminished greatly in recent times.

6.8.10 Wider Church

Patriarchy, hierarchy and power, clericalism and sexism were strong themes. It was felt that ingrained attitudes of the hierarchy, clericalism and the historical evolution of a priestly caste represented significant obstacles to the full and equal participation of women. Some participants saw the fundamental issue in terms of clergy/lay, not man/woman; participation is required for all the laity. The difficulty in changing structures and attitudes behind them was stressed.

It was noted that patriarchy is not just a Church problem. Fear of change and males feeling threatened were identified as significant difficulties. Presenters acknowledged that the present was a difficult time for clergy, many of whom were supportive of greater participation by women.

The lack of accountability of priests was a strong theme. The need to clarify the model of Church and power was stressed. The lack of satisfactory grievance procedures was experienced as a serious problem.

The lack of faithfulness of the Church to the mission and example of Jesus was a key concern. Presenters referred to a contradiction between Jesus' activity and relationships with women and the current stance of the Church which is seen to perpetuate a division that Christ's death was meant to destroy. Many quoted Galatians 3:28 in this context: "There is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus".

The concerns about the current participation of women were seen as part of a wider question about the mission of the Church. The need for the Church itself to be evangelised was stressed. Dissonance between the teaching of the Church and the reality of Church was perceived as a scandal. The distinction between faith in God and faith in the Church was made: it is the Church that is problematic. It was noted that any change needs to have a sound base in faith and spirituality. The Church's own principles, as set out in its social teaching, should be applied to the issue of women and the Church. It was stressed that the ideas of Vatican II have not been fully implemented. There was a call for the celebration of diverse theologies and openness to the gift of feminist Christian theology. The Church was urged to be more inclusive in its stance and not to marginalise women. Some presenters wished to remind the Church that the ecumenical dimension should be recalled and greater ecumenical cooperation was suggested. The contribution by religious congregations to the Church was stressed by some participants, many of whom lamented the changed role of religious.

Attention was drawn to the difficulties of particular groups within the Church. The lack of genuine acceptance of Aboriginal involvement in the Church was highlighted. The importance and difficulties of the rural perspective were stressed across the nation; problems of isolation and lack of information were highlighted. It was emphasised that Catholic women in tiny rural communities have a special situation. The rural dimension must not be neglected. The value of basic Christian communities was noted. The absence from Church of people in the twenty-five to forty-five year age group was a significant concern. It was noted that the young look for lofty ideals.

The agenda of some participants was not so much about women in the Church as about the promotion of orthodoxy. Papal documents were valued, especially by those who were satisfied with the current participation or those who sought a lesser role for women. In relation to papal pronouncements, some presenters expressed concern about the loss of the "*sensus fidelium*", the "sense of the faithful".

6.8.11 Spirituality

There was a strong emphasis on spirituality. The importance of people's early spiritual formation was noted. The need for the development of feminine

spirituality was stressed. Many believed that the Church should explore images of the Divine and encourage women as spiritual directors.

6.8.12 Gender Equality

Complicity of the Church in promoting inequality, for example the promotion of religious vocations among sons and not daughters, was highlighted. The gift of sexuality itself was seen to be viewed by the official Church as a threat, and the requirement of compulsory celibacy for the priesthood was seen as a reflection of this view. The need for equal opportunity in the participation of men and women in the Church was stressed.

6.8.13 Communication and Consultation

There were many suggestions concerning the development of formal structures for listening to, consulting with and giving a voice to women. These recommendations included a commission for women at the diocesan level, a national board of women and a register of women. An affirmative action program for the Church was requested. It was proposed that all diocesan and parish councils should have a certain number of women. Some participants requested an apology from the Bishops concerning the treatment of women in the Church.

The importance of the media and communication was stressed. There was a strong need for communication to be improved using both the religious and secular press to communicate with the laity.

6.8.14 Education

There was a strong call for education. There was particular emphasis on the theological education of the laity, especially of women and adults, and of the continuing education of the clergy, particularly in relation to women.

The following dimensions of education in the faith tradition should be made accessible: theology, female theology, liturgy, ministerial and leadership formation, adult faith education, personal and spiritual development, and life skills. There is a need for both formal courses in a variety of contexts and informal education in the parish. Accessibility at the local level was stressed. Emphasis was placed on the need for training of the laity in leadership and planning, and for the training of priests for collaborative ministry. In particular, training for leadership in the Church should be made more accessible to women. More education in catechesis for adults was requested, involving reflections upon experiences of God in small groups and using education of adults as a model at parish level.

There were constant requests for women to be supported in a range of theological study and training through funding, scholarships and moral

support. The great success of pastoral formation programs subsidised by parishes was noted. It was stressed that adult faith education and formation in liturgical leadership were needed, especially in rural dioceses. Correspondence courses for women at home were sought.

There was a strong theme that both priestly formation and ongoing education include material on women and women's issues, women's spirituality and feminist theology. It was urged that women be involved in priestly formation and ongoing education, and that seminarians live in family situations.

The high number of women currently studying theology and pastoral studies was highlighted in many hearings. It was noted that women form the majority of theological graduates across Australia and have done so for many years. Further, it was emphasised that the great majority of these women study at their own financial cost and in conjunction with responsibilities of families and/or full-time Church service or other work. Throughout the public hearings, it was noted that the presenters were often theologically educated and articulate, especially in those areas which have offered substantial theological education. The theological education of many women is not being fully utilised. The huge reservoir of theologically educated women and their unused talents were noted as an untapped gift to the Church.

While the education of adults was the major issue, there was some concern about young people and defects in faith education in recent decades. Catholic schools were both praised and criticised. The need for authentic Church teaching, and values-based sex education taught by committed Catholics which recognise the rights of parents, was presented.

6.8.15 Church Teachings

Two areas of Church teachings were identified as issues of major concern: the theology of ministry, including the question of the ordination of women, and the theology of sexuality and the experience of non-celibate people being excluded in the formulation of Church teaching (See relevant discussion under "Ministry and Priesthood", "Role and Status of Women", "Marriage and Family").

6.8.16 Professional Service and Employment

Justice issues were considered to need exploration for example, in relation to a just wage for professional workers in the Church. The religious stipend was seen by many to be unjust. A lack of knowledge and information about the stipend was seen as a concern.

6.8.17 **Society and Culture**

There were no suggestions concerning the broader society and culture in relation to the role of women in the Catholic Church. Rather, the wider society was seen to be further advanced, in many respects, than the Catholic Church in addressing issues concerning the role and status of women.

CHAPTER 7

TARGETED GROUPS: VIEWS OF VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE CHURCH

- 7.1 Research Method
- 7.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women
- 7.3 Clergy
- 7.4 Women with Disabilities
- 7.5 Lay Men
- 7.6 Women from Lower Socio-Economic Backgrounds
- 7.7 Women from Non-English-speaking Backgrounds and Migrant Women
- 7.8 Refugee Women
- 7.9 Solo Parents
- 7.10 Ukrainian Women
- 7.11 Young Women
- 7.12 Summary of Findings of the Targeted Groups

7.1 Research Method

7.1.1 The Need for Targeted Group Discussions

After the public hearings concluded in July 1997, the RMG identified a number of groups whose voices had not been heard to a significant extent in the research to date. They were women in the Ukrainian Catholic Church; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; refugee women; women from a non-English-speaking background and migrant communities; solo mothers; women from lower socio-economic status groups; women with disabilities and their carers; young women; clergy and lay men.

For some of these groups techniques like written submissions and public hearings might have been too formal, intimidating and/or culturally inappropriate. As the RMG wished to hear the views of all sectors of the Church, it was decided that some form of focus groups or group discussions be undertaken to collect information on the experiences, perceptions, beliefs and opinions of these groups in relation to the key research questions.

Formal focus group research, with its requirements of expert observers and exact transcripts of meetings, was beyond the resources of the Project. It was decided that targeted group discussions would probably provide a comparable level of thoroughness in the collection of data to supplement the information from the written submissions and the public hearings.

7.1.2 Seeking Assistance

From October 1997, a number of people were approached to assist the RMG in conducting discussions with targeted groups. Community contact people were sought to gather a group together and, if necessary, to help find others to assist with the tasks of leading the group discussion and taking the notes which were to be forwarded to the RMG. Those identified as potential community contacts were people who had the trust of and an ongoing involvement with people belonging to the groups being targeted. Many of the community contacts also took on either the role of group leader, leading the discussion of the group and taking responsibility for sending in a report on the meeting, or that of note taker at the meeting. In most cases the involvement of members of the RMG was not required.

Potential community contacts were offered support from the RMG in terms of attending meetings to explain the background of the research and/or acting as note takers if necessary or desirable. Community contacts and group leaders were supplied with background information on the research, process notes on how the forums with targeted groups were to be run, a draft opening statement that could be used by a group leader at the commencement of a forum, and a group discussion synthesis sheet for reporting on the meeting.

7.1.3 Targeted Group Discussion Process

Detailed process notes were provided to those leading targeted group discussions. The process used was as follows:

A. Gathering a Group

The RMG used community contacts to gather groups of 6 to 10 people within each of the target categories. Community contacts were asked to seek participants with a range of life experiences and views and to make personal invitations to participants to take part, specifying a convenient time for the forum and choosing a familiar and comfortable place.

Many of the community contacts who assisted in the targeted group discussions had an ongoing pastoral engagement with the group being targeted. This contributed to the willingness of respondents to take part in discussions and the level of their trust and confidence in speaking frankly at the forum.

B. Opening Statement

When the groups convened, the first task of the group leader was to set people at ease and to make an opening statement. In the opening statement, the group leader explained the Research Project, how the group discussion would contribute to it, and what would happen to the materials produced, pointing out specifically that the notes taken would not be released. The roles of group leaders, note takers and any observers were explained to participants. Any questions or concerns raised by participants were answered.

It was stressed that the forum was not about making decisions or reaching consensus, but rather that the researchers wished to hear and understand the range of views and experiences present in the group.

At the end of the group leader's opening statement, each participant was invited to introduce herself/himself to the group.

After ensuring that the group understood its task, the group leader began the discussion.

C. Group Discussion

Group leaders initiated discussion among the participants using a semi-structured schedule of questions. Where the community contact did not also take on the role of leading the discussion, they were asked to assist the group leader to ensure that the schedule of questions was expressed appropriately for use with the particular target group. The group leader was responsible for keeping the discussion focused on matters relevant to the key research questions. Secondary questions were used to flesh out the four key questions of the Research Project in a way that would assist the particular group to respond to them. Group leaders also used prompts to probe for further information or to draw out the interaction between different views where necessary.

When the agreed time for the forum had elapsed, the group leader closed the discussion with thanks to the participants, reiterating how the material would contribute to the larger Research Project. The group leader was then responsible for ensuring that notes taken at the meeting were used to prepare and submit a report to the RMG.

Note takers were asked to allocate a number or letter to each participant in the discussion and then, as far as possible, to record verbatim what each participant said, noting the identifying number or letter for the participant. This allowed those analysing the data to track the clustering of views and the interaction between different sets of views.

In some cases observers were also present at the discussions. For example, in some discussions held within the Ukrainian Diocese, clergy, including the Bishop, attended discussions in order to understand better the views of women within the diocese. In other cases members of the RMG attended to assist in note taking or in order to help answer any questions about the Research Project. In each case it was important to explain clearly why each person who was not a member of the group was present.

7.1.4 Analysing the Data

In order to gain a reasonable picture of the views and experiences of the people in the various groups being targeted, the RMG sought to conduct at least three separate group discussions within the targeted categories. A geographical spread among the groups in each target category was also

sought. The information from all the groups in each category was collated and is the basis of the following report. Every attempt has been made to use the language of the targeted group. It should be noted that while some groups provided very detailed descriptive responses which could be used in quotations, the records of other groups were presented mostly in point style and did not lend themselves to quotation. Where possible, suitable quotations have been included so that the voices of women and men in each group can be heard.

Data gained from approximately fifty targeted groups are presented in the following alphabetical order in relation to their discriminator:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women;
- clergy;
- women with disabilities and their carers;
- lay men;
- women from lower socio-economic status groups;
- women from a non-English-speaking background and migrant communities;
- refugee women;
- solo mothers;
- women in the Ukrainian Catholic Church;
- young women.

7.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

Eight groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were formed, allowing responses from the following areas and groups in Australia:

- Aboriginal women at Erskineville.
- Aboriginal women at Parramatta.
- Aboriginal women in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The areas that we were able to visit to talk with the women were:
 - Cherbourg.
 - Ngutani Lue Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre.
 - Murri Ministry.
 - Stradbroke Island Aboriginal Catholic Women.
- Aboriginal women at St Martin de Porres in the Diocese of Darwin and other Aboriginal women in the Diocese of Darwin.
- Aboriginal women at Port Keats.
- Aboriginal women in the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Archdiocese of Perth.
- Aboriginal undergraduate students in Broome.
- Aboriginal women at the Catholic Ministry, Melbourne.

Groups leaders drew attention to the diversity of views and needs of Aboriginal women, and the particular context of their stories: "It must be appreciated that ... there are very different views and needs according to the environment of the community". "Keep in mind that these Aboriginal women's stories are in the context of colonisation, missions, stolen generations, and racism."

7.2.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Critical Importance of Aboriginal Women: "We are the Church"

The great contribution of Aboriginal women to the Catholic Church was highlighted by their outstanding participation in the Church. For example, it was noted that "95% of participants in the Murri Church are women":

If not for the Catholic women, we wouldn't HAVE a Church. It's the women who bring the children to Church; women who teach us who we are and who keep the faith. If people move away, it's the women who re-make the connections through marriages etc.

Participation Linked to the Integration of Aboriginal Culture and the Catholic Faith

Responses in relation to ways in which Aboriginal women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia emphasised the importance of the integration of Aboriginal culture and the Catholic faith. Where such integration occurred, providing ways for Aboriginal people to link faith and life, and faith and culture, meaningful participation was described. "When I started as a Catholic, I participated as a Catholic Aborigine. In the ministry, today, I can be an **Aboriginal Catholic**. I can bring my Aboriginality to the liturgy":

The pursuit of our own Aboriginal cultural adaptations in the Church is our way of contributing to the life of the Catholic Church in Australia. His Holiness the Pope in his visit to Australia spoke to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, at Alice Springs, of the fact that we should be "... allowed the happiness of being with God and each other in Aboriginal fashion" (Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs, 1986).

Examples of the incorporation of traditional Aboriginal culture into liturgical celebrations, and of the need for effective consultation with the local priest, were highlighted by stories such as the following:

When we have our Masses, we try to incorporate our culture, paintings, stations of the cross etc. Our traditional culture comes through how we celebrate. In early days we used to use Latin and did not understand it. Now we

include our Aboriginal Way. We as a Catholic community know how we want to celebrate – even different from other Aboriginal communities. Our new priest was not up on Aboriginal culture but he has learnt from us talking together. The people in the community took responsibility. We have learnt from our parents and elders and we are carrying on their traditions. We have to take time, develop relationships and keep consulting with the local priest. Our cultural art in our Church keeps us in touch with our history and people. Church means so much more to me now that our culture is so important. We combine also with other Churches. There are some combined meetings. Women are taking the lead ecumenically.

Participation Linked to the Active Involvement of the Aboriginal Women

Another dominant theme concerned the need for active involvement of Aboriginal women, especially in the preparation of meaningful liturgies.

Here, Liturgies are offered to the Aboriginal community on a weekly basis. At first we thought that may be too often, but we find that those who come want to come. It has become an important gathering for them.

It begins the week before. The group is involved in deciding where to hold the Mass. Then individual families have to look ahead to prepare the food they will bring etc. So they are thinking on it beforehand. Young people want to be there too.

One exciting thing about it – it is becoming the “heartbeat of the community”. People can begin to grow as Catholics, to overcome the gap in their lives between the experiences of church from their childhood, when they were “Invisible” in the Church, were not included and didn’t matter.

Co-operation Seen as the Key to Successful Ministry

Another key to the participation of Aboriginal women in the Catholic Church in Australia was associated with the value placed on constructive co-operation between groups:

While people all want to feel important, and while the importance of women’s roles and work is not to be under-rated, nor understated, we believe, constructive co-operation between men and women, and other groups, is the key to our successful Ministry. . . . Our Aboriginal ways of co-operation are part of the Gift we bring to the life of the Church in Australia. We serve only to deprive God of His love for us all if we do not co-operate; and allow his Spirit to work among us all.

It was stressed that Aboriginal women work side-by-side and are role models to their family and community. “We make decisions and what education our children should have within the Church’s teachings.”

Participation in Liturgy and Special Times of Baptism and Funerals

Participation in the Church was frequently linked with liturgical celebrations of the Eucharist, baptism and especially funerals:

Most Aboriginal people connect with the Church at times of baptism, and specially at funerals. Burial and the ceremony surrounding it is very important for Aboriginal people, so it is an important part of Aboriginal ministry. Their own Aboriginal ceremony and customs are very important at that time.

Participation Associated with the "Whole Experience" of Ministry

For many Aboriginal women, it should be noted that the model of Church is not a parish model. As such, their participation in the Church is associated with the broader experience of their ministry to each other:

The whole experience of ministering to each other is church, not just when people come to a ceremony at the church. You can't separate helping poor people, organising funerals, working with whites for reconciliation. You can't separate church and politics. The policies of the mission days destroyed us, separated us. Reconciliation is about acceptance, counselling is about supporting.

Leadership of Aboriginal Women in the Church

Participation through the leadership of Aboriginal women in parishes and in particular areas of the Church was highlighted:

Indigenous women, particularly in urban situations, have undertaken the role of Indigenous leadership in particular areas of the Church. For example, in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, women coordinate and facilitate a range of roles and programs including the field of ministry. ... If we move beyond the Church and identify Catholic women occupying leadership roles who are also involved on committees for Catholic education, ministry and ecumenism, then we can claim further leadership. An example of this is the only Indigenous Associate Professor at University of Queensland is a Catholic woman.

Diversity of Ways of Participation of Aboriginal Women

A great diversity of ways of participation in the Church were given by Aboriginal women. Involvement in the Church included participation in various forms of liturgical celebration, evangelisation, catechesis, youth ministry, pastoral care, theological study, community and Church leadership, home life, education, community work and creative roles such as artists and writers. Ways of participation were listed by the great majority of groups in a rich and random manner which supported the theme that participation of Aboriginal women was associated with the broad experience of ministry to each other and the wider community.

Limitations of Participation of Aboriginal Women

Significant limitations of participation were noted. Some Aboriginal women felt that they participated only at the level of support roles, on special occasions, and as a token gesture:

Working in Church offices/having positions and Church roles. Cleaning duties/cooking. This has been the experience of our older people. Liturgy groups, Eucharistic ministers, guest speakers, dancing, music, Bible studies. Sounds probably more than it is; only a handful are involved, usually only on a special occasion and not on a permanent basis. It's a token thing to have Indigenous people involved only in Indigenous issues. They need to be involved in other issues as well. Even when Indigenous people get involved, it's usually in support roles. Males have a major role and in some parishes, the parish liturgy "person" controls the lot.

The need for equality of women in the Church was emphasised in various ways: "Women need to be seen on the altar and become more involved in liturgy. Equality." "Women need to be up front more. Women need to be equal. Women need to be involved in decision-making."

7.2.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Little Assistance and Support Offered to Aboriginal Women

Overall, it is experienced that little assistance and support are offered to Aboriginal women to participate in the Church. Where support is provided, it is sometimes seen as a token gesture and greatly inadequate. It is felt that there are "big gaps in education, equity, social justice":

For those Aboriginal people and others undertaking ministry to Aborigines, whilst there are supportive individuals, a sense that there is little support, and no sound financial base within the Church system for this ministry.

It was noted that, in the past, support from religious sisters sometimes created dependence:

In the past ... some used the Sisters as a support and a taxi service. It sometimes created dependence. Then the Sisters would leave and lose contact. When the Sisters were living here, some of the Church furniture was sold off without our community approval. Our people had made the furniture and we felt the lack of consultation. They come and they go but we ARE the Church here.

The nature of the support is described in terms of the weekly celebration of the Eucharist; spirituality and belief in the Spirit; some financial support,

recognition, encouragement, acceptance and transport; theological studies at Nungalinga College, Darwin; and Aboriginal Agencies such as Murri Ministry.

The source of the support is primarily from other Aboriginal women. "Women help each other, the priest doesn't [get] involved." "We Aboriginal women help each other." "The women are not encouraged or supported in the Church. Instead, they wish to participate and only their determination is their driving force plus their faith."

Other sources of support are from the Elders of the community, priests, religious sisters and brothers, and other Catholic people.

Particular difficulties concerning assistance and support were noted in relation to the need for women's involvement in decision-making and involving the younger generation:

Make us feel we are part of the Church, after all we are the Church. Women need to be involved in decision-making. Women need to feel part of the Church instead of sitting down the back.

There is difficulty in getting the younger generation involved. Some are attracted to the Pentecostal sects and we feel that some of their beliefs and practices are so different from Aboriginal Spirituality.

7.2.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Failure to Link Celebrations of Faith with Aboriginal Culture and Life Today

The dominant theme concerning barriers to the participation of Aboriginal women related to cultural barriers experienced in the Church, in particular the failure of the Australian Church to link the celebration of the faith with Aboriginal culture and life today. The Murri women spoke of this issue in the following way:

There are great barriers to Murri liturgies. Bishops are not all at the same level of awareness. Often, for example, we have to use a Penitential Rite after a Smoking ceremony. Very few Murri men are involved; it's mostly the women. We are concerned about cultural awareness: Murri culture is seen as "add on" token representation. "Ask a Murri to be a speaker at your liturgy."

In the non-Aboriginal Church, the Aboriginal person "feels like an outsider". For example, the kneeling and singing are "foreign". In particular, Aboriginal women are not encouraged by white women to be part of the Church and sometimes feel patronised. "They [Aboriginal women] can be built up, given a job, experience the sign of peace, but outside Church, people don't want to know us, don't talk to us." There is a strong sense that the Church is still imposing its own views of the desires and needs of Aboriginal women, often for its own purposes:

They [Catholics and Religious] know nothing of the trauma etc. of being Aboriginal Catholic since 1843. What about Aboriginal women's history since then. Is the Church still imposing what they think is right; "you beaut" consultants to help Religious Orders to be more aware!! What is their logic in bringing in "experts". In taking up Jesus' concern for community life, are they trying to change the system and using Aboriginal Spirituality to do this. "This is what Aboriginal people want." This is hurtful spiritually and emotionally.

It was stressed that there were many demands on personal time to interact with non-Aboriginal groups, and often little sense of anything in return. A sense of "burn out" was experienced from "over use", with the same people always called on. "Volunteer and you are there for life." The difficulty of balancing family and Church obligations was cited. Reference was also made to the difficulties of gambling, alcohol and drug abuse.

Lack of Integration of the Catholic Faith and Everyday Life

The lack of integration of the Catholic faith and everyday life for the Aboriginal person presented a significant barrier to participation in the Australian Catholic Church. The experience of life now, as Aboriginal women, was not linked or connected to the experience of Church, liturgy and so forth. This unrelated Church experience, removed from everyday reality, was described as the "same old thing", "boring", "non-practical" or "non-participatory".

History of the Catholic Church and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

The history of the Australian Catholic Church and its relationships with Aboriginal people emerged as another significant barrier to the participation of Aboriginal people. As a result of the experience of the "mission-dominated Church" and "early mission pressure", many adult Aboriginal people have turned away from the Church. It was reported that this also affects a lot of young Aboriginal people as well as the participation of women. It was also felt that "the Bible can have connections to unpleasant mission experiences for some Aboriginal people, where it was 'rammed down our throat' by white authorities".

Lack of Consultation

It was frequently stated that consultation is not broad enough within the Aboriginal community. "The Church has to reach out more. A broad consultation is needed ... to hear many stories, not just one." The current use of networking was valued, but it was noted that it "needs to happen much more". "There are many talented women who can be involved." The concern was expressed that "when Aboriginal women have sometimes spoken out in the past, the Church doesn't listen, because it doesn't like criticism or change":

The clergy fail to consult with Indigenous women. No firm connections with agencies across the Church or with Aboriginal agencies within the Church. Church structures are set up but people hardly know who to make connections with.

Discrimination against Aboriginal People

Open racial discrimination within the Church emerged as a strong barrier, especially in Catholic schools and parishes:

How many people really understand Aboriginal people's needs? Many parish people don't. Kids going to Catholic schools STILL feel discriminated against and often teachers have little Aboriginal awareness. ... So the barriers are still there. ... Long memories of discrimination are hard to forget. Stereotyping; not accepted as equal; no open invitations by parishes and no recognition of work being done.

The Church's "attitude problem" towards Aboriginal people was described in terms of trust: "We are not trusted to do it right."

Decision-making and Leadership

Some groups reported that lack of women deacons and the failure to involve Aboriginal women in decision-making were barriers to participation. "Aboriginal women are the decision-makers and we need to be seen up front, not in the background or hiding behind the curtains." However, one group did not report dissatisfaction with male leadership. "It doesn't worry us that men are in charge. Other religious groups are very pushy and attract people through fear rather than through loving relationships."

Barriers Concerning Priests

A constantly recurring theme related to barriers concerning the clergy, in particular "judgmental and insensitive priests, pressurising and judging people". It was felt that once there has been a "period of absence", it was "too hard to go back" because of comments and "lectures" from priests such as "I haven't seen you for a long time". "Fear of this pressure and judgment from priests and then the guilt" presented barriers to ongoing participation:

Listening to the priests "make the most of it" at a funeral because there are crowds of us and then lecture us on alcoholism or get at us or tell us not to come to communion unless we are baptised. Using a funeral to separate us when funerals are so important to us.

Difficulties concerning the credibility of Aboriginal culture/spirituality were linked to parish priests:

A lot of the problems we have are with the parish priests. If they had some kind of respect, they would reach out more. They often parade out the old stereotypes of Aboriginal history e.g. the "roasting" of babies!

Male Domination

Male domination in the Church was a frequently-reported obstacle: "Men domineering. We feel uncomfortable, not free to make decisions. The hierarchy have to have the last say." Male elders in Aboriginal communities were also cited in this regard: "Sometimes in Aboriginal communities/families, the elder people, particularly male elders, resent and block younger Aboriginal woman becoming involved and initiating change."

Domination of the Church by White Australians

That the Australian Church was dominated by non-Aboriginals was a barrier to some Aboriginal women. "The face of the Church is still white. It is sometimes difficult to feel 'at home' in this Church."

No Role Models for Aboriginal Women

The lack of role models in the Church for Aboriginal women was cited as a difficulty:

Aboriginal women have an important and central role in raising the family but there is no role model in the official Church because Aboriginal women don't have a voice, therefore young people are not motivated to participate.

Lack of Support to Celebrate Communion Services

One group reported their concern about the lack of support to enable women to be Special Ministers and to celebrate Communion services:

It has to go through the parish priest and when the p.p. changes, the new ones don't always understand and don't encourage participation. Priests in their training should be able to look at the community and see who can be Special Ministers. We can't just leave it up to the Sisters. Mass times are changed without much consultation when the whole parish changes. . . . Our community is a relatively small one and we feel we are overlooked. We have at least 3 or 4 women who could lead the Sunday Service when a priest is not available. And not just in the Church either but also in significant areas, e.g. in people's homes or in the bush.

Exclusion from Church Due to Church Rules on Marriage

It was reported that many Aboriginal women feel excluded because they are single mothers or their "living situation" is judged against Church's rules on marriage. While the children can go to communion, the parents cannot because of their marital state, yet "receiving communion does not mean as much to the children":

Don't they [the Church] understand that we can't help it if we can't get our marriages fixed up. In our own society we are considered married properly because we are together for a long time.

Lack of Opportunities for Education in Faith for Adults

The lack of opportunities for contemporary theological education and adult faith development was another barrier to participation. "Many Aboriginal people aren't aware of the changes [of Vatican II] and of how they can participate."

Discrimination and Concerns in Catholic Education

Some groups reported concerns about discrimination in Catholic schools and a lack of Catholic ethos and teaching. It was felt that there is a need for knowledge of Aboriginal spirituality by all teachers in the Catholic schools:

There are problems in our Catholic schools with too many non-Catholic children. Are Catholic children getting the support or are schools taking ATSI kids for financial benefit? Families are complaining about discrimination in the schools. Non-Aboriginal families are claiming discrimination by Catholic and non-Catholic Aboriginal kids. Schools don't seem to be Catholic any more. We feel our kids are not getting good Catholic (Christian) values. We don't have much choice of schools due to distance. There is not as much Catholic focus in schools. Changes have been made without consultation and we feel there is little "Catholic" in the Catholic school.

Limitations Concerning Professional Service and Employment in the Church

The limitation of opportunity and future security for persons who invest in ministry as compared to a job in other organisations were seen as barriers.

7.2.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

The great majority of the responses from Aboriginal women sought and suggested change concerning their participation. However, one group noted that they "would like to see some small things change but most of us would like things as they are". This group explained that "a lot depends on the quality of the parish priest and at the moment we have one who is very open to people's needs". Like all the other groups, this group suggested a greater Aboriginal cultural involvement in the liturgy.

Integration of Aboriginal Culture and Church

In keeping with the response to the previous section on "Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church", there was an overwhelming request for the integration of Aboriginal culture and the celebration of Catholic faith. Bringing Church and culture together, uniting liturgical and cultural expression, were dominant themes:

*... we must always endeavour to be inclusive in celebration and ceremony.
What needs to be considered is the wholistic approach to participation of*

Indigenous Women in Church. . . Our way of life, Aboriginality and self-identity are based on people and places, environment and community. And this gives a sense of belonging. We have large numbers of Indigenous peoples who identify clearly as being Catholic and yet they do not participate only for particular reasons. Often churches do not create a sense of belonging for Indigenous peoples. Symbols, celebration and ceremony are important to us. There is only one Creator God and church and the people must move more clearly towards being inclusive of our ways, particularly on special occasions.

The Catholic Church has recognised this need to be inclusive but, in general, it was felt that there is much work still to be done. "Old ways and new ways must come together, not only for the Indigenous peoples but also for all people." Aboriginal ministry to their own Aboriginal people provides a way to break down the barriers of Church as it "invites in" and "is not frightening for people". However, it should be noted that not all Aboriginal people feel comfortable about incorporating Aboriginal culture in liturgies.

Some Aborigines have lost connections to the land and their traditions, but the Aboriginal way, their spirituality is an important element. Not all Aborigines are comfortable about incorporating Aboriginal customs in liturgies. This may be because some of them have been made ashamed or secretive about their Aboriginal customs in the past.

Specific suggestions were made to achieve this integration of faith and culture and faith and life. The request for the Church to be more "culturally aware" in dealing with and including Aboriginal women was emphasised in terms of the Mass and other Church ceremonies. It was suggested that the liturgy include culturally appropriate aspects in these celebrations such as the smoking ceremony, liturgical dance and song. Liturgies that have an Aboriginal cultural focus require the involvement of Aboriginal people. The development of meaningful liturgical celebrations involves the recognition by the Church of important family and cultural times, such as funerals, the rosary, Easter and Christmas. It was considered important to involve women and to get the children involved at an early age "on their own terms", for example, "liturgy under the tree, on the beach but have liturgy connected to them and their lives". It was suggested that youth liturgies for Aboriginal children which incorporate cultural aspects could be achieved through the school and the community. Acceptance by the priests of the Aboriginal culture is very important. It was suggested that priests in their training be exposed, both in studies and experience, to Aboriginal Spirituality, culture and history.

Recognition, Affirmation and Support of Aboriginal Women

The recognition of Aboriginal women's current involvement in the Church was sought. "Give recognition for work being done. Women don't go out and publicise this. Use notice boards in Churches." The need for encouragement and support for women to be more involved was stressed. "Support systems to be set up. Priests to remove barriers and work together with each other as a community. More support and involvement from other local people."

The Australian Church was urged to create opportunities for Aboriginal women to share their stories, to strengthen, encourage and teach other women in the Church. Role models for Aboriginal women need to be provided. As a reaction to the history of the Aboriginal people and the Church, affirmation was sought through the presentation of a loving image of God: "Letting us know that God loves us, giving us the right image of God, a loving image of God, getting rid of the God who doesn't like us".

Racial Equality

The need for recognition of full human dignity and racial equality was highlighted. It was requested that the Church be involved "in our problems, our land, our children, our men folk, showing us compassion but not putting us down":

We try not to reinforce the handout mentality. We work at supporting and encouraging people to develop their skills in looking out for themselves. This is not easy as there is a long history behind this relationship between Aboriginal people and the community. Non-Aboriginals, and some Aboriginal people who have grown up outside the Aboriginal community, sometimes lack understanding of these problems.

Gender Equality

Gender equality was also needed "for women to have their roles approved and equality recognised and their gifts appreciated".

Decision-making and Leadership

Achievement of the equality of Aboriginal women and men in the Church in both decision-making and ministry was sought:

While it is important to recognise that we, Aboriginal Catholic women, are also, one with Jesus Christ, we aspire to the full equality of women and men in the Church, in both ministry and decision-making. We as Aboriginal people have always made decisions, acted and spoken, as a community. We are the Church's community. We are a team. We are a family and kin.

It was recommended that the Church have Indigenous women as part of decision-making in all areas, especially in judgments and decisions which affect

them. It was suggested that Aboriginal women be invited to become involved in ministries, committees and so forth where decisions are made. "Give us more roles to play. Aboriginal women are up front." The Church was cautioned: "Beware of the white 'expert' who has been teaching a long time in an Aboriginal community".

Ministry and Priesthood

There were strong and heartfelt requests for the training and authorisation of both Aboriginal women and men for leadership and ministry. It was felt that people are prepared to be trained and that there is support from the community. "We'd love to be able to do some studies to become ministers. We are aware of the deep links between the Bible and life." It was noted that sometimes priests have to come long distances. It is expected that the invitation and training of Aboriginal women and men to be leaders and ministers, such as Eucharistic ministers and readers, would enable younger role models to be established.

There is a need for the Church to "authorise" Aboriginal leaders to lead celebrations such as funerals, marriages and bush Masses adapted to their needs and to prepare Aboriginal people for Baptism and Reconciliation. "We feel we are spectators in Church and we feel that clergy etc. are not being trained well for Aboriginal ministry." There were many requests for funds to train Aboriginal people to minister to their own people:

We would love to have people trained to lead our people. The sisters used to work with some in the community to prepare for Eucharist ... There are people prepared to take a leading role but there is no opening. We are able to prepare an ecumenical Good Friday service and would love to be able to do more. In times past, when there were many priests, we were able to celebrate in various cultural ways. The Church needs to "authorise" Aboriginal leaders to lead these kinds of celebrations – bush Masses, funerals, marriages etc. but adapted to our needs. This training will take money and the Church needs to provide this.

It was requested that there be married Aboriginal men as priests to minister to their people. Married priests seemed to be more in harmony with Aboriginal culture than celibate clergy:

We hope that one day our men will be accepted as married priests within the Catholic structures. This would fulfil our obligation to the laws of Creation of all that is beautiful and good; and which would enable us "to have and live life to the full" (John 10:10).

There were many requests for women deacons as women were seen "to do mostly everything within our Church". However, a few did not want women deacons and felt that women should remain as lay people and leaders within the

Church. There were also many requests for women's ordination: "We are already doing a priest's job". Some groups specifically requested that Aboriginal women be invited and trained to minister to Aboriginal people, not as priests, but as educated and aware Aboriginal women. The importance of shared roles in ministry was stressed once more as part of the Aboriginal culture.

Communication and Consultation

The need for greater communication and consultation with Aboriginal women was emphasised. It was noted that there are often poor consultative processes on the part of the Church whereby particular groups were not asked to contribute. It was suggested that the Church ask for more input and ideas from Aboriginal women "with the priests and parish councils listening to women, taking up and promoting their ideas":

*We ask that the wider Church stop talking TO and AT us and listen instead.
What does Reconciliation mean? Sitting down and listening to the story of
Aboriginal Catholic women. Please don't include other women from other
churches to be our Leaders!!*

Greater communication was sought in parishes. One group suggested: "Put up special feast days or occasions around the community like a calendar. Sunday newsletter for the week".

Parish and Liturgical Structures

All suggestions were concerned with women being allowed to take a more active and involved role in liturgy, gatherings and workshops for liturgy. Once more, the integration of culture and Church was requested. Specific requests included the following:

- women "to give sermons sometimes";
- "more culture at Mass and other Church ceremonies";
- liturgies which are "less priest-centred, less being 'preached at'";
- development of a children's and young people's Mass occasionally;
- support to celebrate Communion services;
- priests who "go out to the Aboriginal people, who connect to their real lives"; and
- the need for transport.

Wider Church

By far the greatest request concerned the need for more young people to be involved in the Church. "Help young women to get involved" was the dominant theme concerning the wider Church and Aboriginal women. Some women also felt that there is the need to support and encourage the Aboriginal men. "That our men should get more involved as this is the main reason

women are involved. More men should be involved within our Church." Evangelisation to the wider community and greater sharing at an ecumenical level were also sought.

Inclusive Language and Imagery

The main request related to language and imagery for Aboriginal women concerned the need for the integration of Aboriginal culture and the Catholic faith. However gender inclusive language was also sought:

We do aspire to the Church language to be inclusive of men and women. God calls on all our experiences to be brought to bear to the task of living out and mediating God's love and justice. Inclusive language would recognise this fact.

Marriage and Family

There were strong requests for support for marriage and the family:

Our Ministry especially aspires the return to family; there is too much division in society, too many isms . . . too much commercialism, sexism, and individualism and the like. The full and rightful inclusion of family can only be done properly by bringing men and women together in the Church.

There was particular reference to the need for the reunion and rebuilding of families as a result of "the stolen generation":

For Aboriginal people the family, their community are very important. Many things have happened in the past, and still happen today, to break down and damage this family framework. . . . The taking away of children was one thing. It has affected those taken. It has also had a big impact on those left. This is sometimes overlooked. Trying to deal with this, with the reunion of families, and the rebuilding of ties is a challenge.

It was noted that single Aboriginal mothers need spiritual and practical support – "not judgment and exclusion".

Spirituality

It was suggested that the Church encourage the involvement of all Indigenous women in sharing their stories to build up Aboriginal Spirituality. Support for gatherings was seen as very important. It was noted that "Koori women are becoming more able and ready to talk up. They want to exercise their own spirituality in the Church".

Education in Faith

Opportunities for education and training for both Aboriginal women and men were frequently suggested to promote participation in the Church. "Aboriginal women (and people in general) need a big increase in awareness and education in current Church thinking and in adult faith." It was stated that there is often a

strong faith commitment to the Church in Aboriginal women, but this needs to be built on through “re-education and adult faith development – incorporating cultural expression”. It was felt that Aboriginal men need the same educational opportunities to help them understand and to help them to change, that is “to allow and encourage Aboriginal women to be leaders and role models in the Church”. Reconciliation through education and involvement of Elders was highlighted.

Professional Service and Employment in the Church

It was suggested that the Church create more employment opportunities for Indigenous women in a range of roles and tasks in the Church.

Need for Action to Flow from the Project

The Aboriginal women stressed the need for action from the Church:

... when can we expect outcomes and changes to the current system? Our parents before us have been saying these things too and yet, here is another consultation! Is it money which entices parish priests? How much of their own commitment is there? Things are not all negative. There is much building on human resources and much change has slowly happened but that seed needs nourishing !!!

**Table 7.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women:
Summary of Responses to Key Questions**

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical role of Aboriginal women: “We are the Church” • Participation linked to integration of culture and Church; active involvement and cooperation • Liturgical celebrations • Whole experience of ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little assistance from Church • Support mainly from other Aboriginal women • In the past, support sometimes created dependence • Need for women’s involvement in decision-making and for involving younger women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural barriers, especially the failure to link the Catholic faith with Aboriginal culture and life today • History of the Australian Church and Aboriginal peoples • Racial discrimination within the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of Aboriginal culture and the Church, especially liturgy and culture • Affirmation and support • Racial equality • Gender equality • Involvement in decision-making and leadership • Training and authorisation for ministry and leadership
continued ...			

**Table 7.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women:
Summary of Responses to Key Questions** *(continued)*

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership of Aboriginal women • Great diversity of ways of participation • Limitations of participation noted as support roles, on special occasions, as a token gesture 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of involvement in decision-making and leadership • Insensitive priests • Male-dominated Church • Church dominated by white Australians • Lack of role models for Aboriginal women • Lack of support to celebrate Communion services • Exclusion due to marriage rules • Lack of opportunities for education in faith for adults • Discrimination in Catholic education • Limitations of opportunity and security for those in ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married priests • Women deacons • Women's ordination • Priestly training to include Aboriginal culture • Greater communication and consultation • More active role in liturgy • Involvement of young people • Inclusive language • Support for marriage and family • Sharing of Aboriginal women's spirituality • Opportunities for education in faith • Employment opportunities in the Church for Indigenous women

7.3 Clergy

The four groups of clergy included diocesan priests, priests from religious orders and some religious brothers. They were drawn from different States and dioceses.

7.3.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Outstanding Participation of Women in Supportive Roles

Overall, the results of the targeted groups of clergy highlight the great participation of women in supportive rather than leadership roles. Women form the majority of people at Mass and also the majority involved in parish activities. They are found to be more reliable on committees in terms of performance, attendance and general enthusiasm. It was noted that this outstanding participation of women in all aspects of Church life is limited only by gender in relation to the ordained ministry.

The most frequently mentioned ways in which women participate in the Church were in the areas of education and welfare services; through involvement in liturgy and sacraments; as pastoral associates; leaders in spirituality; Christian wives and mothers; faith educators of the young, and Religious Sisters.

Limitations to Women's Participation Noted

Limitations to women's participation were noted, especially concerning positions of leadership and through involvement in decision-making. One group stated: "The issue is not so much how women participate but the attitudes to women's participation." There was a concern that narrowness in the Church now may impact on women and their participation in the Church in the future.

7.3.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Growing Level of Recognition and Encouragement

A growing level of recognition and encouragement was noted. The growing awareness of women's issues in society and in the Church has encouraged particular initiatives to support women's participation from some Archdioceses, some sympathetic clergy, women's groups, women and the media.

Frequently-mentioned examples of support included:

- Educational opportunities: various tertiary and theological educational opportunities; sponsorship for ministry courses; opportunities for professional development, career counselling.
- Growing awareness and concern for women's affairs: proclamation of women's rights; the feminist studies now possible in some places; this Research Project; growing awareness of women's participation in the Church; supportive Church teachings and statements; publications and

writings; emerging role models; affirmative action; Archdiocese of Adelaide's policy; opportunities for dialogue and discussion; some instances of mediation/reconciliation processes.

- Some clericalisation of many ministries in the Church: pastoral associates; chance to work (though not always as equals) in team ministries; salaries and stipends available to support such work; chances to live and minister in mixed communities.

Significant Limitations of Support Noted: "The Glass Ceiling is Pretty Low"

While a growing level of support was described, significant limitations were also acknowledged: "the glass ceiling in the Church is pretty low"; "we are not so good compared to other churches". A gap for women in their thirties to fifties who are highly qualified was identified: "We don't help them with their apostolate." It was noted that there was not enough help given to women to be wives and mothers.

7.3.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Major Barriers Relate to Church Structures and Practices

The major barriers to women's participation relate to Church structures and practices, in particular, women's exclusion from leadership in positions of ministry and authority and associated decision-making; the continued use of exclusive language; current papal reluctance and Roman curial intransigence to address issues of women and the Church; patriarchal and authoritarian attitudes and traditions; and clericalism.

Lack of Opportunities for Decision-making and Leadership

The major barrier concerned lack of opportunities for participation in decision-making and leadership. It was felt that there was an undervaluing of women's experience and its regular absence from forums which lead to decisions in the Church. With the lack of women in positions of far-reaching authority, difficulties were envisaged for the future with men only in positions of authority. The invisibility of women was seen as an ongoing barrier. In this respect, it was noted that the role of pastoral associates in leadership was not recognised officially.

Gender Seen as a Barrier to Ministry and Priesthood

In the exclusion of women from and reservation of particular Church offices to males, gender was seen as a barrier to priesthood and other crucial ministry roles. It was noted that there is a wider issue than women not being ordained. As "ministry leads to priesthood", the Vatican is cautious about ministry. It was lamented that women are not allowed to be spiritual directors in seminaries,

despite the fact that they are desperately needed. Pastoral Associates are often not recognised by their own community, for example, no recognition on some parish bulletins or in ceremonies, and Christmas cards and Easter gifts given only to priests. It was reported that individual priests will not allow women to participate in some ministries, for example as altar girls.

Patriarchal Attitudes and Traditions

Frequent mention was given to patriarchal attitudes and traditions "which seem to have been reinforced by John Paul II and the Vatican bureaucracy in recent times". Papal reluctance and Roman curial intransigence in the face of calls to find opportunities for fuller participation of women were matters of concern.

The continuing presence of authoritarian attitudes and structures of patriarchy and chauvinism were seen as serious obstacles to women's participation. As one group noted: "Tradition is a big barrier – we carry a lot of baggage". Fear of schism in the Church was also mentioned as a barrier to women's participation.

The use of power and authority raised questions and the abuse of power was noted. The style of communication of Church authorities was also experienced as problematic. The current structure of Church; covert or open discrimination against women; clericalism; and closed-mindedness and fear on the part of many men with power in the Church were identified as ongoing obstacles to women's participation. It was a concern that discussions concerning women's participation were not promoted.

Devaluing of the Feminine Dimensions of Life

Across the groups, it was strongly felt that there is an insensitivity to and a devaluing of the feminine dimension of life. Theologies "frozen in time" which do not take account of developments in the social sciences and changes in the role of women in the wider society represent significant barriers to women and the Church. "There is a bit of 'we need the women to do what the men can't' mentality." It was noted that women's gifts are not being used in the service of the Church due to the disposition of priests or as a result of fear.

Women were seen as limited as a result of Church structures and practices; they "can advise, but the parish priest makes the final decisions". Lack of appreciation of women was perceived – 'women feel they are taken for granted'. A sense of powerlessness on the part of women was noted – "priests have sacramental/juridical power". "Women think they won't be heard so what's the use!" Issues of harassment also represented serious barriers to participation.

Traditionalist Catholic Organisations

Other barriers were associated with those who conscientiously object to the participation of women in the Church. It was felt that traditionalist Catholic organisations undermine the participation of women, especially through publications, lobbying, intimidation and secret reporting.

Church Teachings Concerning Canon Law and Birth Control

Some Church teachings represented particular barriers, especially the prohibitions in the Code of Canon Law and the Church's teaching on birth control where "women were left out of equation". "Women feel guilty – therefore not involved, not only non-participation but no identification."

Exclusive Language and Images

All groups of clergy highlighted the current use of language in prayer and in theology which leads to a sense of exclusion of women. The reluctance or even refusal of the Church to encourage inclusive language, such as in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, was experienced as a significant barrier. It was noted that, while the Archdiocese of Adelaide has tried to overcome this, the wider Church seems insensitive. It was felt that iconography was also problematic.

Inadequate Remuneration for Professional Service and Employment

Barriers to women's participation concerned inadequate, and in some cases unjust, remuneration for work done. Restriction of career paths was also mentioned.

Negative Attitudes Which Alienate Women

A number of social and cultural barriers to women's contribution were emphasised. It was noted that men sometimes have a fear of women. Traditional world views or mindsets lead to the exclusion of women. There is a failure to read the "Signs of the Times". Attitudes at the "grass roots level" also alienate women. Such attitudes of negativism create silence in the Church. It was felt that there is a need for men's role to be defined as well as women's. Reference was made to the demise in Religious Orders of women as a barrier to women's participation.

Women in some instances are seen as barriers themselves: "some women so conservative, others aligning themselves to the marginalised and fringes – they don't know where they belong". Extreme ideological feminism was identified as a barrier as well as the lack of charity sometimes among women.

7.3.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Ways to increase women's participation included reversal of all barriers noted above. All groups of clergy offered a range of suggestions to increase the participation of women with a major focus on Church structures and practices.

Particular suggestions related to the following areas:

- making those positions of leadership and decision-making where women are not included at present available to qualified women;
- recognising the need for affirmation and acknowledgment of women in the Church;

- the use and approbation of inclusive language texts Australia-wide;
- continuing clergy renewal, especially in relation to addressing clericalism;
- ordination of women “when considered within the collective evolution of associated issues of this time”;
- ordination of women as deacons;
- more sensitive, open and appropriate leadership from the Pope and the Bishops;
- the presence of women theologians, spiritual directors and formation personnel in seminaries; and
- security for women in full-time ministry.

Opportunities for Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

There were many suggestions for increased opportunities for women’s involvement in decision-making and leadership. It was suggested that the Australian Church “make those positions of leadership and decision-making where women are not included at present available to qualified women”. It was considered important to “find a way in which the wisdom of women is brought to bear on decisions in the Church. Too often it is an all-male discernment”.

Creating opportunities for team ministry or leadership was stressed. It was felt that pastoral associates and pastoral coordinators need to become part of “the consultors’ process of changes to parishes” and have involvement in parts of regional meetings. It was noted that the Brisbane Archbishop’s Advisor on Women’s Affairs attends curia meetings. It was felt that such opportunities would enhance decision-making.

Gender Equality

Proportional inclusion of women in power structures in the Church was proposed. It was considered that fresh perspectives are required. Women should be offered self-determination of their increased involvement.

Affirmation and Support of Women

An attitude in the Church which actively supports women and women’s groups was sought. For example, the new ministry of pastoral associates requires acknowledgment and women on a diocesan pastoral team need recognition. It was noted that women in public life all failed when they tried to follow the male style.

Use and Sanction of Inclusive Language

There were many suggestions that the use and sanction of inclusive language texts be introduced Australia-wide in the Church.

Ministry and Priesthood: Need for Clergy Renewal

Suggestions concerning ministry and priesthood often began with the importance of renewal for the clergy themselves. The need for continuing

clergy renewal was proposed in order to address both “the phobias of clericalism (misogyny)” and the clerical culture associated with the order of power and jurisdiction. At parish level, people see the power in the parish priest. The clergy recommended that this situation needs to be changed. Some parish priests do not allow the involvement of women and this needs “to be taken on at diocesan level”.

Equal Opportunity for Church Offices and Positions

Equal opportunity for Church offices and positions, “dismantling the glass ceiling!”, was suggested. The ordination of women was also proposed “when considered within the collective evolution of associated issues of this time”. It was suggested that there be “a real recognition of the diversity of ministries” in the Church; that the Church ordain women as deacons; and that the lay ministries of acolyte and lector be understood and instituted according to the Code of Canon Law and hence made open to both men and women. It was also proposed that the ban which excludes women from preaching be lifted. Clergy also recommended adult altar servers at Mass.

Need for Listening to the Voices of Women

The need for listening was emphasised: listening to the stories of women; listening without patronising. The question was asked: “What are we prepared to listen to women on?” Opportunities were requested for men and women to meet together to hear each other’s ideas in order to lessen defensiveness and fear. The importance of respectful dialogue and the need for charity were noted.

It was noted that bio-ethical teachings are directed from a male perspective and that the Church has not heard perspectives from women. “People make their minds up in good conscience. New ethical questions arising all the time.”

Need for More Appropriate Leadership

The need for more sensitive, more open and more appropriate leadership from the Pope and the Bishops was highlighted. It was suggested that “Rome give more freedom to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to lead the Australian Church by recognising the local needs and responding to them”. Religious orders could examine their own mandate, their own direction. At the parish level, patient promotion of best pastoral practice was sought.

Recognition and Promotion of Women’s Spirituality

Medieval women mystics and their deep spirituality were noted. Recognition of women as spiritual leaders was proposed. Encouragement should be offered to women to deepen their spirituality.

Education of Clergy and Male Religious to Involve Women

Education and consciousness raising, especially among the clergy and male religious, about women and their involvement in the Catholic Church were

suggested. The importance of clergy formation in relation to sexuality and celibacy was stressed. The involvement of women in the ethical and moral training of priests, especially in regard to sexuality, was sought. "Priests are no longer confident about this. Since the Pill, we don't talk about it; it's too hard!" There were frequent proposals concerning the need for the involvement of women theologians, spiritual directors and formation personnel both in seminaries and in the ongoing education of priests.

It was proposed that the Church train women deacons along with priests and that joint in-services for priests and Pastoral Associates be provided. More funding for training in pastoral work was requested.

Security for Women in Ministry

Security for women in full-time ministry was sought. It was felt that the appointment of pastoral administrators is very ad hoc and that training is minimalist. It was suggested that paid parish ministry needs to receive much more support and that pastoral associates have working contracts at the parish level. The Bachelor of Theology was seen as a minimum qualification for the pastoral administrator's job. It was noted that in Holland pastoral administrators receive the same training as priests and are appointed by the diocese. "Even without ordination, we must be able to offer this. Full-time employment is a problem in the Church. It is experienced by women as a 'Boys' Club'."

Table 7.2: Clergy: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great participation of women • Support roles • Education and welfare services • Liturgy and sacraments • Pastoral associates • Leaders in spirituality • Christian wives and mothers • Faith educators of young • Religious sisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing level of assistance from Church • Significant limitations of support noted: "the glass ceiling is pretty low" • Support from educational opportunities • Growing awareness and concern for women's affairs in society and in the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of opportunities for decision-making and leadership • Exclusion from priesthood and ministry • Patriarchal attitudes and traditions • Devaluing of the feminine dimension • Traditionalist Catholic organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in decision-making and leadership • Gender equality: proportional inclusion of women in Church structures • Affirmation and support of women • Use and sanction of inclusive language • Need for clergy renewal
			<i>continued ...</i>

Table 7.2: Clergy: Summary of Responses to Key Questions *(continued)*

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations of participation noted • Issue not so much how women participate but attitudes to their participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some clericalisation of many ministries in the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitions in the Code of Canon Law • Birth control • Exclusive language and images • Inadequate remuneration for professional service and employment • Negative attitudes in Church and society which alienate women • Some women themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry and priesthood: equal opportunity for all Church offices and positions • Need for listening to voices of women • Need for more appropriate Church leadership • Recognition and promotion of spirituality of women • Educating clergy to involve women • Security for women in ministry

7.4 Women with Disabilities and their Carers

Five groups from across Australia included women who have physical and/or intellectual disabilities and their carers, such as a mother of a young adult daughter who has Downs Syndrome; a woman in her mid-fifties with an intellectual disability, no sight and wheelchair bound; a woman who cares for her middle-aged brother who has Downs Syndrome and for her aged parents; a mother of an adult daughter who is severely autistic; a number of hearing impaired women; deaf women within the deaf community; older women with deterioration in their hearing due to advancing age; women suffering from mild to severe intellectual disabilities often accompanied by a range of physical disabilities. These women were either accompanied or represented by their mothers or carers.

It was noted that the following issues which were raised are in no way exclusive to women with disabilities but relate to the participation of all people with disabilities in the Catholic Church. It is also important to recognise that

the special contribution and difficulties encountered by the carers of the disabled are also particularly relevant to this research as the majority of carers are women. In particular, mothers were named as the principal carers of a disabled family member.

7.4.1 **Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia**

Participation of Disabled Women Depends on the Support of the Parish

The capacity of women with disabilities to participate in the Church depends on the level of disability and also on the acceptance, assistance and support of the parish priest and the parishioners. Where the latter occurs, there is some limited participation in the parish. It is also important to note the particular difficulties of carers of people with disabilities, the majority of whom are women. "Some people caring for a person with a disability cannot be actively involved with Church activities as there is no support to allow them to leave the home easily."

Contribution of the Disabled through their Presence and the Witness of their Carers

People with disabilities offer much "simply by their 'being' in Church congregations". They help break down the barriers, and reduce people's fears and prejudices. "They contribute in their own special way to bringing about a truly inclusive Church." Women who care for people with a disability also provide a special witness through their patience, compassion, understanding and love.

Participation in the Mass and the Sacraments

Women with physical and/or intellectual disabilities and their carers participate in the Mass and the Sacraments in various ways: through regular parish liturgy on a monthly basis; "Personal Advocacy Mass" each month with adaptations to enhance the participation of people with intellectual disabilities and their families; small group Masses twice a year; a Reconciliation service once a year; Catholic Care Family Masses which are held three or four times a year; Healing Mass; Carols by Candlelight; Christmas Mass; and weekly communion service in a special care home. It was noted that women with disabilities and their carers play a special role in the prayer life of the Church.

Active participation in parish liturgies is undertaken according to the level of disability; for example, greeters at the church door; participants in the offertory procession (with practice); singers, readers and special ministers of the Eucharist; members of the parish pastoral council; members of the hospitality team at Church; and members of the neo-catechumenate

community. Women with disabilities participate in faith education groups and in the social life of the parish such as parish/school fetes and the parish tennis club. There is also attendance at Antioch Movement meetings. However, it was noted that this group overlooks including them in extra activities.

Hearing-disabled women act as special ministers of the Eucharist, do the readings and prayers of the faithful, take flowers to and visit sick and lonely people, organise social events, and form support groups. It was noted that hearing-impaired women follow the Mass by reading their missals. One woman's husband relays, after Mass, what he remembers about the content of the homily.

Participation in the Care of Others

Women with disabilities also participate in areas of care such as pastoral visits and delivering meals for "Meals on Wheels" once a week. One woman with a mild intellectual disability has also assisted as a volunteer in the parish office and the parish school. This was the result of her mother suggesting to the office and school that her daughter would be able to make a worthwhile contribution.

Disabled women noted the great variety of ways in which women in general participate in the Church as theologians and canon lawyers; mothers training the Church of the future; members of study groups and parish committees; members of organisations such as WATAC, CWL, Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul Society, Friends of St Mary's; catechists; parish assistants and pastoral care workers; members of religious orders; teachers/principals in schools, both Catholic and State; liturgists, ministers of the Eucharist, readers; members of altar societies decorating and cleaning the Church; in choirs; and as volunteers in every group organised by parishes.

Limitations of the Participation of Disabled Women and their Carers

Participation is limited by the attitude of the priest and congregation, and the ability of the person with a disability. Some women with disabilities would like to go to Mass if they had someone acting as a carer to take them. It was also noted that some people caring for a person with a disability cannot be actively involved with Church activities as there is no support to allow them to leave the home easily.

7.4.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Very Little Assistance for those with Disabilities

There is very little or negligible assistance and support for those with disabilities. The nature and amount of assistance differs from parish to parish.

Lack of Real Support for the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired

For the deaf and the hearing-impaired, there are some specific pastoral services in some dioceses but there is still overall a lack of real support.

One group noted that the deaf receive some assistance and support: from pastoral workers and chaplains who can sign and discuss women's problems with deaf people; signed masses, baptisms, weddings, funerals, reconciliation and so forth; a deaf chaplain who organises and gives faith development talks; and people who visit others in need such as the sick, lonely and bereaved.

Support from the Selfless Care of Mothers

The main sources of support came from the selfless care of mothers of children with disabilities throughout their life cycle, the Personal Advocacy Program and Catholic Care.

Assistance and support for women in general was received from the opening up of study courses; acceptance of women as spiritual directors; women allowed to be observers at Synods; and so forth and inclusive language as used by a very small percentage of clergy.

7.4.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Lack of Facilities and Support for People with Disabilities and their Carers

Overall, there is a lack of facilities and support for people with disabilities, including the ageing, and their carers. These people experience significant barriers to their participation in the Church community, including at Sunday Mass. On the whole, disabled people and their carers do not feel welcome; they lack support and feel alone. The major barriers concerned the lack of understanding and assistance given to people with disabilities and their carers by the Church and the wider society.

The Present Hedonistic Society

A major barrier is the present hedonistic society which advocates survival of the fittest. In this context, people with a disability and the ageing population are vulnerable to the whims of those who do not wish to support the present welfare system by the taxes of an ever decreasing young population.

Need for Respite for Carers of People with Disabilities

The problems of the carers of people with disabilities were highlighted. These mothers/carers require respite services so that they can regain the energy to continue caring for the disabled member and other members of the family:

So many families are breaking down under the strain when Mum finds it difficult to cope. The divorce rate and separation are extremely high in these families which often become dysfunctional.

Lack of Understanding and Encouragement from People in the Church

Barriers related to a lack of understanding and support from people in the Church were reported. Some attitudes held by congregations and parish priests, and a lack of knowledge and understanding by bishops, priests and parishioners of people with disabilities represented significant obstacles to participation. Apathy in the Church towards people with a disability was cited as well as a lack of opportunities or encouragement to be actively involved. Often people seemed unaware of the capabilities of people with disabilities, such as deaf people.

People with Disabilities Do Not Feel They Belong in the Local Church

It was noted that people with disabilities lack confidence and need to be made welcome, to feel accepted and valued. It is clear that people with disabilities do not feel they belong in the local Church as priests, pastoral workers and parishioners do not attempt to speak to them or visit them. Mothers/carers of those with a disability often cannot get to Church because the disabled member in the family needs constant care.

Problems for the Disabled Concerning the Celebration of the Mass

Particular problems pertaining to the liturgy were described. It was felt that there is a loss of ritual, or less emphasis on the ritual, in Masses today. People with disabilities need to know what is coming next (routine) so they can pick up the cues and feel comfortable and secure. Too much emphasis on the verbal component of the Mass was reported. The visual components of the Mass are not emphasised enough such as gesture, symbol, ceremony and processions. Music is often fast and complex. "It can get people excited or agitated rather than induce a prayerful, reflective attitude." The Mass is too long for a lot of people with limited intellectual ability as their concentration or focus is easily lost.

Churches are sometimes very cramped, dark and uninviting. It can be threatening if people feel hemmed in. It was explained that many people with disabilities need their own space. It was lamented that there are not enough priests to communicate with deaf people.

Barriers to the participation of all women identified by the disabled included clergy bias towards women in general; clergy and lay men unwilling to accept women's equality in education; women seen as a threat – educationally and gender-wise; exclusion from decision-making; insufficient number of priests and the need to have married priests; and the lack of inclusive language.

7.4.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Need for Greater Inclusion of Women with Disabilities and their Carers in Parish and Liturgy

Suggestions of ways to improve and increase the participation of women with disabilities and their carers related mainly to parish and liturgical structures. These suggestions focused on the need for greater inclusion of women with disabilities and their carers through a range of practical strategies to welcome people with disabilities and accommodate their needs in the celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Mass, and other ceremonies. The need for pastoral care for people with disabilities and their carers was stressed, especially the urgent need for respite for the families who care for a disabled member.

Various Parish Supports for People with Disabilities

A number of practical suggestions at the parish level were made to provide support and encouragement for people with disabilities. These included the following:

- Identification of people with disabilities in the parish. A personal visit to find out their particular support needs. An invitation to join other parishioners for the Sunday liturgy celebration, together with a clear note showing the time of the most convenient Mass.
- Provision of one-to-one support. Someone to bring them to Mass, stay with them during the Mass, and help them to interact with other parishioners after Mass.
- Provision of transport for those who need it, using regular people, so trust and confidence is built up.
- Greeters outside the Church to assist people with special needs when they arrive: unloading wheelchairs, walking frames; reassuring people, putting them at their ease (even an advocate gets flustered in these situations and the anxiety is transmitted to their friend with disabilities); making sure there is a convenient place for them to sit (that is, convenient for them, as well as for others!); checking that there is someone supportive beside them.
- Adaptations to some parish liturgies to make them more inclusive of people with disabilities, such as:
 - processions in which people can be involved;
 - "pomp and ceremony" emphasised;
 - music with simple refrains so people can pick up the tune and join in the singing;
 - readings interpreted through "movement" while they are being proclaimed verbally; and
 - shorter homilies.

- Opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in various ministries, where they are able to do so with reverence and dignity, such as:
 - greeting people as they arrive;
 - altar serving;
 - music group;
 - movement group that interprets the readings;
 - bringing up the offertory gifts;
 - taking up the collection;
 - special Minister of the Eucharist; and
 - hospitality after Mass.

It was noted that when people with disabilities are involved in one of these ministries, it may be important to have a practice before every Mass, no matter how many times the person has done the task. A reminder of what is expected may take away the anxiety, increase confidence and ensure a more reverent attitude.

- Ongoing faith-education groups where people with disabilities can experience "Church" and "community" on a smaller scale.
- Opportunities for people to be involved in special ceremonies of the Church, such as:
 - Benediction with all the candles, incense, bells ringing, large flowing robes, dramatic adoration of the Eucharist, powerful hymns;
 - Stations of the Cross: repetition at each station; opportunity for private prayer and meditation; and
 - Second Rite of Reconciliation.
- Bright, open churches with easy access for wheelchairs (inside and outside) and space for people to sit without feeling crowded.
- Railings on ramps. One woman would have liked to have read at the lectern but could not because there was no ramp.
- A room where some disabled people could retire to so that they could still see through a glassed area and participate in the Mass but yet the noises and movement would not be a distraction to others.
- Raising awareness of the unique gifts and talents of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Recognition of the fact that people with disabilities have a lot to offer simply by their "being" in Church congregations.

Ways to improve and increase deaf women's involvement included the following:

- Asking deaf women to help more in their local church.
- Making the Mass in hearing Churches more "deaf friendly" by using overheads for the readings and prayers of the faithful, main points of the sermon, announcing which Eucharistic prayer and so forth is being used.
- Interpreters in hearing churches.
- More pastoral workers and priests who can sign and communicate with deaf people.
- Making priests and parishioners in hearing parishes aware of the problems associated with deafness and that deaf people can do things.
- If overheads are used enough there would be no need for prayer books or missals.
- Going a little more slowly to give people time to read the overheads.
- Having interpreted courses in parishes in different areas and having them advertised through appropriate centres.
- Arranging for people in the local parish to visit at times of bereavement.

Pastoral Care Urgently Needed for Both Women with Disabilities and their Carers

Many suggestions were made for pastoral care for both women with disabilities and their carers. It was noted that when pastoral care is aimed specifically at women with disabilities, the carers of such women need to be consulted. Parishes need an outreach program that raises awareness and concern for the families of women with disabilities.

There is desperate need for respite for the families who care for a disabled member. Whether it is the person with a disability or the family carer, both need understanding and support. Some kind of volunteer system in a parish would enable mothers, other carers and disabled women to attend Church. Supported accommodation is needed so that the family member with a disability can be assured of a safe home when the family can no longer provide the care either because of ill health or death.

It was noted that the person with a disability needs friendship through volunteer friends or being included in social activities. They need to be able to communicate their feelings. Many people with a disability seek friendships with normal people. It was recommended that all parishes have a female pastoral assistant, as women's nurturing capacity is so needed in the Church to bring new life.

Disabled women proposed the need for married priests, where spouses would have an influential role, and the ordination of women. They also sought the use of inclusive language.

**Table 7.3: Women with Disabilities and their Carers:
Summary of Response to Key Questions**

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the Church through their presence and witness of service of their carers • Participation depends on the level of disability and support of parish • Participation in Mass and Sacraments • Participation in the care of others • Limitations of participation noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little assistance from Church for those with disabilities and their carers • Lack of real support for the deaf and hearing-impaired • Support from the selfless care of mothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of facilities and support for people with disabilities and their carers • Present hedonistic society • Urgent need of respite for carers • Male-dominated Church • Lack of understanding and encouragement from the Church • People with disabilities feel they do not belong in the Church • Particular problems concerning the celebration of the Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of parish supports for people with disabilities • Pastoral care for women with disabilities and their carers • Need for married priests • Involvement in priesthood and ministry • Inclusive language

7.5 Lay Men

Seven groups of lay men, encompassing a range of age groups and backgrounds and single and married men, were drawn from various parishes and organisations including Youth Ministry Teams, Knights of the Southern Cross and Serra groups.

7.5.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Major Role of Women in the Church

There was much detailed attention given to the great value and variety of women's participation in the Church. It was noted that women participate in all aspects of the Church except ordained ministry and the decision-making

processes. One group commented: "In every aspect they are more active than men except in the hierarchy where they are not allowed." One group of young men stated that if you took women's roles out of the Church, "it would fall apart". They are "at the grass roots" and perform the majority of work in parishes and predominate numerically in service to Catholic Education, Diocesan Pastoral and related agencies, hospitals and prisons. Even in Religious Life, women outnumber priests and brothers combined:

On any objective level of analysis women dominate the life of the parish. They work in with the priest, and in effect, are his arms, legs and body. The participation of men is quite low by comparison and is particularly noted in the absence of male teachers in primary schools.

A list of parish groups showing the high percentage of women in thirty-six groups and activities accompanied this statement.

It was noted that women play a major role, in keeping with the image of Mary, in a supportive capacity. "Women have a tendency to bring things together/Men tend to act more as individuals."

The lay men described the particular ways in which women contribute to the life of the Church in relation to the parish, the wider Church, religious orders and education. Unlike all other groups in the Research Project, lay men made little or no reference to women's participation in the Church through motherhood and family life. Limitations to women's participation were noted in the areas of priesthood and decision-making.

Significant Involvement in Parish Life

Women participated in the life of the parish through liturgical activities such as membership of liturgy committees, organisation of liturgical activities, being Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, in the choir, part of offertory processions, readers, musicians and sacristans, and taking up collections. Women also acted as parish assistants, members of pastoral teams, the pastoral council, finance council/committee and parish office staff, tellers and bookkeepers.

Women were active in parish female societies, spiritual and corporal works, prayer and prayer groups, parish hospitality, welcoming groups, volunteer help programs, and fundraising efforts. They worked as RCIA and Baptism leaders, and members of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) and St Vincent de Paul Society.

Traditional Parish Roles Not Inclusive of Younger Women

Traditional "maternal" caring roles in a parish were given such as linking parish with school, promotion of "good values" in the home and schools, cleaning, altar preparation and various aspects of pastoral care. "One problem identified with this 'maternal' aspect of women's participation [caring roles in a parish] is that it is not particularly inclusive of younger women."

Increasing Role of Women in the Wider Church

Women's roles in the wider Church were described in the areas of health care, acting as aged care workers and bereavement leaders, and working in prisons. Women were part of social justice groups, leaders or followers, and part of the teams that proclaim the faith and act upon society using Christian values and principles. As members of youth groups and young adult groups, women have been a focal point for introduction to Church.

It was noted that women are now undertaking conventional ministry roles such as chaplaincy in universities and hospitals, spiritual direction and co-ordination, conducting funerals, and being Church wardens and members of Matrimonial Tribunals. They provide assistance to Bishops, such as through membership of the Bishops' Advisory Committee, and as a Bishop's Private Secretary, and act as missionaries.

Witness of Religious Orders

The importance of the witness of women as members of religious orders was stressed as well as their integral involvement in educating the young, particularly in the past and in rural areas.

Major Contribution to Catholic Education

The major contribution of women as teachers, religious educators, leaders and directors in Catholic education was highlighted. "In our Branch area, within the primary schools, women almost comprise 100% of teachers and aides." In a voluntary capacity women prepare children for the sacraments and work as catechists in State schools. It was noted that women are also teachers and students of theology; and of family and pastoral ministry.

Women's Participation as Wife and Mother Not Recognised

It is important to note that, while long lists were given about ways women participate in the Church, there was only one reference to women's participation through motherhood and family life from a young single lay man. Specifically, while there was significant input from more senior-aged men in the Church there was no recognition that women participate in the Church through their role as mothers. Further, there was no reference at all from lay men that women participate through their role as wives. This findings stands out in sharp contrast to the findings from other groups and other parts of the research.

Limitations of Participation Identified

The limitations of participation were highlighted, especially the lack of participation in the ordained ministry and the decision-making processes of the Church. It was noted by a group of young lay men that the Church has to reflect society in the equality of men and women.

7.5.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Women Given “Every Form of Assistance and Support”

Overall, the lay men perceived that women are given “every form of assistance and support” to participate in the Church. Women were seen to be given at least the same assistance and support as men. It was perceived that there is no discrimination other than non-acceptance into the priesthood and that Bishops and priests are supportive. Women have the opportunity to participate wherever they wish. One group only stated that very little assistance was given to women and that “they are motivating themselves”. It was noted that “the increasing prominence of some female Catholics is important in giving due recognition to women involved in the life of the Church”.

Range of Church Supports

It was considered that support came from theology, ministry and pastoral care courses; parish activities and administration; personal supports and acceptance of the views of women’s groups; group supports such as the CWL, St Vincent de Paul Society, Majellan and youth groups; and the special initiative to promote women’s participation through the Women’s Advisory Council in Brisbane. It was noted that the involvement of Catholic women, in a professional capacity as paid employees, has increased. However, the question was asked whether “these positions are merely being created so that the Church can appear to be less discriminatory”.

It was felt that women were also supported through the recognition of the equality of men and women: “Some parishes perceive men and women to be equal in status regardless of the contemporary arguments involving gender and political correctness issues”.

Sources of support came from the encouragement of the parish community; some Bishops and parish priests; special funding of women’s enrolment in courses; women’s religious orders; women’s groups; and “an emerging role of mentoring, by which women’s roles can be enhanced”.

Perception of Lay Men Concerning Support for Women at Variance with Other Findings

The perception of lay men that women receive “full support in all aspects of the Church” stands out in sharp contrast to the findings of other groups.

7.5.3 Barriers To Women’s Participation in the Church

Significant Barriers Identified Mainly by Younger Lay Men

Many groups of mature-aged lay men felt that there were no barriers to women’s participation or “practically none” other than exclusion from ordination. As one man explained, any barrier is based on the difference

between “the essence of man” and “the essence of woman”, with “men leaning more to leadership and decision-making”. “Possible hurdles” were noted such as the attitude of some Parish Priests. However, the groups of young lay men had a different perception; significant barriers were noted which related to Church structures and practices, and attitudes in the broader society. One young man summed it up in the following way: “For women to become more involved in a clerical role, there is a need to create changes in the Church – in structures, in tradition and attitudes of clergymen”. All groups agreed that there should be no barrier on the basis of gender.

Patriarchal Tradition of the Church

Of those men who perceived barriers to women’s participation, the tradition of the Church involving the male hierarchy and leadership was seen as the most significant barrier. In this tradition, women have been held back by the old value that is “it’s a male domain”. “Even though some roles are opening up to women, many feel apprehensive about moving into new roles because of the patriarchal tradition in which women find themselves.” Lay men considered that there is a “perceived threat by the traditionalists to a diminution of male power”.

Attitudes of Some Clergymen

Sexist attitudes of some clergy and their fear of educated women were seen as major barriers to women’s participation. Such negative attitudes involved some clergy’s “ego and attitudes”, “male preference”, “the mentality that men are the ones called or that there are roles that are specific to men ... curiously with roles that men have specifically made or designated for women”. One group described priests’ fear of women in the following way:

It was thought that some priests fear educated women, who are often equally or more educated in matters of theology than is the parish priest. Priests sometimes fear that women will seek to change them or to take on too active a role.

Personal barriers for women in the Church identified by men included fear and lack of confidence, skills and training. Another barrier to women’s involvement in the parish is attitudinal problems of “parish closed-mindedness to women’s participation or role of women” by some priests and parishioners.

There Should Be No Barriers on the Basis of Gender

It was agreed by all groups of lay men that there should be no barriers on the basis of gender:

The continued presence of “secret men’s business” in the Church, such as collection and counting of money, sends a negative message to women, particularly younger women. The determination of roles in the Church

according to gender lines was thought to be extremely restrictive, for example, in Catholic schools the "Ladies' Auxiliary" makes cakes, the "Fathers' Association" builds buildings.

Lack of Official Recognition of the Contribution of Women and the Laity

Lack of official recognition, encouragement, information, resources and support mechanisms for women were identified as barriers. It was felt that there is a need to make contributions from the laity more important.

Lack of Lay Female Role Models

It was also identified that there is a lack of female role models for women, other than women like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Blessed Mary MacKillop. It was suggested that "women other than religious sisters need to be visible for other women to inspire and encourage them".

Unsuitable Time Arrangements

Problems of time commitments and availability were highlighted such as "uncertainty of length of commitment when agreeing to take on Church appointments – time restrictions should apply". Times for programs were experienced as unsuitable for working women:

A woman only has 24 hours in a day. If they are working mothers, they have very little time. If they are mothers with young families, not much time. A large proportion of meetings or groups are around 7.30 p.m. Only a woman with no ties (single or grown-up family) could attend.

Exclusion from Decision-making and Leadership

The lack of women in leadership roles meant that women were excluded from the decision-making process. One "can't deny historically the Church has had a very male history. Barriers relate to roles of leadership. Final decisions are made by men". Young lay men considered that "both males and females can be leaders".

It was suggested that involvement in decision-making processes should be distinguished from priesthood, thus allowing the contribution of laity to decision-making:

The main barrier is exclusion from the priesthood. Women are excluded from the decision-making processes. Even if women are unable to become priests, the laity should be more involved in the decision-making processes – and that includes women as well. More talented and spiritual lay people (both men and women) could contribute to the decisions on behalf of the Church.

Exclusion from Priesthood

Current restrictions to priesthood were noted as a barrier by a mature-aged group and groups of young lay men. Young men expressed their concern in the following way:

Women can't become priests. People making this decision are the male hierarchy. Women priests? The decision is being made by a male ivory tower. Up to Vatican II there wasn't much emphasis on lay participation – therefore women were completely locked out. Does it go back to Genesis and the idea that women are the source of all evil – is this in the psyche of the Church?

Ban on Discussion of Women's Ordination

Apart from Church teaching on women's ordination, the ban on the discussion of this issue was seen to undermine the credibility of the Church seriously:

Further, disallowing the discussion of women's ordination, quite separate from the determination of the issue itself, undermines the Church's authenticity in claiming to be serious about women's participation.

Secularism and Lack of Priestly Leadership

One group emphasised barriers associated with the lack of good teaching and priestly leadership; false teaching and the prominence of dissent; secularisation and media values; the cheapening of Catholicism, intellectually and liturgically; and the loss of understanding of traditional roles.

Women's Traditional Image in Society

Cultural and social barriers were named in terms of traditional perceptions of women's roles and the value attributed to them:

Women's image in society is also a barrier, since society also limits women's roles and even when women are doing a contribution just like a man, they usually receive less rewards. It is an accepted practice to give women a less rewarding experience in general when they contribute to society or life in general. We can see this in our newspapers or any media, women are always put as a second resource.

Both Traditional and Feminist Attitudes of Women

Sometimes the attitudes of women themselves were seen as barriers. They accept the fact that "some roles and duties are best suited to men". On the other hand, "feminism, isolated attitudes of a few women towards Church and society" was also perceived as a barrier.

Marriage and the Family

Particular concerns in relation to marriage and family were seen as obstacles. Some divorcees cease to attend to their Faith due to the fact that they are unable to receive the Sacraments. It was noted that a more tolerant attitude to family breakdown may be necessary sometimes to save a mother and her children from a dangerous situation.

7.5.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Younger Men Proposed Changes to Increase Women's Participation

Many of the groups of mature-aged men stressed the view that women already participate fully: "We are of the view that women participate fully in the capacity that is allowed." "Our experience is that women are involved in all activities of the Parish." "Apart from priestly duties women can participate wherever they so desire." Once more, this was in contrast to the groups of younger men who proposed changes to increase women's participation, especially in relation to Church structures and practices, and involvement in decision-making. All groups of men, whether young or old, conservative or liberal, held a common view that there should be no discrimination in the Church on the basis of gender and that there should be greater recognition, affirmation and support of women.

Recognition, Affirmation and Support of Women

All groups of lay men suggested that there be greater recognition, affirmation and support of women: "Increased recognition of the work women do in the Australian Church is important in fostering women's participation".

Support from the hierarchy of the Church was seen to be critical. It was considered essential to "recognise not only what women do but also the *value* of women's participation". One group suggested that there "should be a greater focus on the achievement of nuns and the example of celibate participation by women".

Women should be encouraged to seek positions in the Church. It was suggested that the Church provide prominent female church leaders as guest speakers.

Personal invitations to participate should be extended to women, especially young people. For example, "Women should receive a personal invitation to participate from friends who know them well enough and feel they would be interested". "At end of Mass, an announcement to women to participate, e.g. RCIA, and have some women to meet respondents":

I think the whole thing should be approached in a more sincere way ... establish structures that will target women specifically and will support them in their roles in church, just like sometimes we find specific groups that help women into society.

Gender Equality to Be Promoted

All groups of lay men agreed that there should be no discrimination in the Church on the basis of gender. Every effort must be made to abolish any discrimination on the basis of gender in a genuine attempt to "break down the barriers" around male domination. As a conclusion to their discussion, one group expressed this idea in the following way:

One of the key points to emerge from the discussion was the extent to which perceived gender roles are limiting. Everyone brings different gifts to the Church – some to clean the church, others to bake cakes, others to visit the sick, still others to run schools, others again to be writers, spiritual directors, theologians, leaders and visionaries. The occupation by a person of any of these roles should not however be determined by their gender, but rather, by their gifts.

The promotion of the total partnership role for everyone in the Church community was sought. It was felt that the Church needs to address “those fears which will stifle it”. “A spirit of cooperative goodwill between the roles of men and women should be the *affirmative action* of the Church.” Achievement of a balance of women’s and men’s participation was seen as important. It was suggested that the Church ensure female representatives on all parish councils and Bishops’ advisory committees.

Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

Involvement in consultation and decision-making processes was strongly suggested at all levels. A greater number of women in decision-making structures, including in key posts in the Vatican, was seen as important in signalling the Church’s authenticity in its approach to women’s participation:

Allow women into the decision-making process at the highest level (even though they may not be priests). A video on Vatican II showed thousands of Bishops – not a woman among them – quite extraordinary! An observer of the Church might ask: “How can you call yourself ‘universal’ and deny women their fundamental role?”

A separation of priesthood and decision-making was suggested. One young lay man stated that he did not want women to be priests in order to graduate to the hierarchy. “Decision-making needs to be made at a different level. I want to be contributed to by them – benefit from their preaching.”

Priesthood and Ministry

There were different views on the ordination of women. Many groups supported the ordination of women:

There seems to be no legitimate argument, apart from historical, as to why women are excluded from ordination by the Church. Why shouldn’t there be the possibility of a female Pope?

Many suggestions were made concerning the admission of women to ministries such as Acolytes, Lectors, Funeral Ministers and Marriage Celebrants. It was suggested that lay people, both men and women, be invited to preach occasionally at Mass.

There was widespread agreement that the issue of women's ordination be discussed:

There should at least be more open discussion about the ordination of women. Views differed on the question of whether women should be ordained, but there was general support for the view that it should be more openly discussed.

Parish and Liturgical Structures to Be More Inclusive of Women

There was much agreement that women be included in all aspects of the work and life of the parish, for example, in all parish councils, administration and pastoral work within dioceses and parishes; eucharistic ministry; liturgy committees; and as Special Ministers. It was noted that some Parish Priests resist such inclusion of women.

On the whole our branch felt that women participated equally in all aspects of the parish with the obvious exception of our own order [Knights of the Southern Cross] and the priest's role. It was felt that this participation was crucial to the successful functioning of our parish. We acknowledge that this is not the case in all parishes. Women should be encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the parish. This could be encouraged by providing training in areas such as Scripture reading, public speaking, meeting procedures etc. Support mechanisms such as providing transport, childcare, prominent female Church leaders as guest speakers etc would be beneficial. Most importantly, the parish should at all times foster an encouraging, non-threatening and supportive atmosphere in all areas to promote the participation of women.

Need for Lay Women as Role Models

It was proposed that women other than religious sisters need to be visible to inspire and encourage other women.

Wider Church

The establishment of a women's Bishops' Advisory Committee was suggested. There were requests for evangelisation and sound teaching, and more media involvement by orthodox women.

Spirituality

The need for ongoing spiritual formation for the whole Church was emphasised. "Keep eyes on the Big Picture: Growth in holiness, the Kingdom of God, the Church for others." It was felt that there is a need to have a more mature Church through adult formation involving psychology and relationships.

Education

An educational formation program to prepare women for positions of responsibility in the Church was suggested.

Table 7.4: Lay Men: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major role of women • Involvement in parish life • Increasing role in the wider Church • Witness of Religious Orders • Contribution to Catholic education • Participation as wife and mother not recognised • Limitations of participation noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women given every form of assistance and support from Church • Range of Church supports noted • Perception of lay men at variance with other findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few barriers identified other than ordination • Barriers identified mainly by younger men • Should be no barriers on basis of gender • Patriarchal tradition • Attitudes of clergymen • Lack of official recognition of women and laity • Lack of lay female role models • Unsuitable time arrangements • Exclusion from decision-making and leadership • Exclusion from priesthood and ministry • Ban on discussion of women's ordination • Secularism and lack of priestly leadership • Women's traditional image in society • Attitudes of other women • Difficulties concerning divorce and family breakdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger men proposed changes • Recognition, affirmation and support of women • Gender equality • Involvement in decision-making and leadership • Open discussion on women's ordination • Admission to various ministries • Parish and liturgical structures more inclusive of women • Lay women as role models • Greater consultation • Promotion of orthodoxy • Spiritual formation for the whole Church • Education of women for responsibility in the Church • Inclusive language not discussed

7.6 Women from Lower Socio-Economic Backgrounds

There were eight groups of women from lower socio-economic backgrounds including young and middle-aged women, women with adult children, single mothers and married women, widowed, employed and unemployed women. They came from a range of States and parishes.

7.6.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Support Roles in Parish

These women described a range of ways in which women participate, almost exclusively at the parish level, involving the following: participation in the Eucharist, Liturgy of Word and offertory processions; helping on the altar; acting as Special Ministers; taking up the collection; counting; making altar bread; participating in the choir; acting as organists; fundraising; helping with the sacrificial giving; helping with the maintenance of the Church; decoration; flower arranging; cleaning the brass and silver; laundering the vestments; welcoming new parishioners; assisting in tuckshop in the Catholic schools; catechetics; participating in Sacramental preparation, faith-sharing groups and in the Rosary; leading Lenten discussion groups; home visitation (mainly religious sisters); taking Holy Communion to “the shut-ins”; organising a phone-in for getting people to Mass; helping at St Vincent de Paul Society; meeting weekly in a social concern group; being in social activities and playgroups; working in mission offices as secretaries; being a pastoral associate in a parish and a member of a Religious Institute; “just offering your services” and “just being there – all agree that this was important”.

Role as Mothers

The “mothering” role was also noted: “I educate my children and try to impart Christian values”. Participation in the Church through the experience of Catholic schools was noted and seen to be positive at both the primary and secondary levels. The experience of the Church through Antioch was also significant. One young woman said, “This was a major part of my life at the age of 18”.

Sensitivity to the Needy

From the list of ways of participating produced from the various groups, it is significant that women’s participation was perceived almost exclusively in relation to the parish with occasional reference to mothering roles in the home. There was also a particular sensitivity from these women towards the needy in society, for example weekly meetings in a social concern group “to work things out and make things better for the poor, connecting them with the Good Shepherd Sisters community service centre”.

Care and Compassion of Women

One group leader noted that these poorer women make no connection between the caring and compassion, which they show as a constant feature of their lives, and being in the Church. Nor do they feel supported by their participation in the Church for their community work:

They are all women of deep compassion, who express that in very concrete ways with the people they meet from day to day, and who think and talk out of compassion. On the whole, they do not make a connection between this way of living and their participation in the Church. They believe that many people in this area, either feel as if they are not good enough to belong, or believe that they are perceived in that way.

Limitations of Participation as Support System of the Church

There was much awareness of the limitations of their participation. One woman commented, "I'm told I belong but my participation is minimal. I would like to do more than serve teas after Mass." Another group reported: "We are 'pew fillers' – more than three-quarters of the Church on Sunday is women." There was dissatisfaction that women participate "in every way except what priests do". In the words of another woman, "Father tries to explain why things are the way they are!! But 'I feel history is a poor excuse'." Many of these women saw themselves as the "support system" of the Church with no power in decision-making.

7.6.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Very Little Assistance and Support

Generally, it was considered that the Church offered them very little assistance. Some of the women felt that it was a hard question to answer.

Sources of Support: Mostly from Other Women

It was noted that most support comes from women encouraging one another in what they are allowed to do. Some priests were very supportive and encouraging. Some of the groups noted that the priests supported limited participation. Another support has come from nuns:

One woman who left the Church for some time said that when she came back she discovered how much the nuns had changed. Since they have come out of their habits and veils, she has lost her fear of them and appreciates their presence amongst them as women to women. By joining them as women the Sisters have given them inspiration and the courage to keep going.

Support from Catholic Education

The Catholic education area was experienced as supportive. It was noted that when parish and school are closely linked there are many positive experiences. At secondary school "the encouragement to join in was big". A young woman commented that she was "not so much encouraged now by the Church" since she had a baby. Other sources of support were family and parents, discussion groups and the women's own faith.

7.6.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

While the overwhelming response was concerned with barriers to participation, some women from one group felt there were few barriers: "There's not many things they're barred from if they want to participate". It was noted that there are not the barriers that there used to be: "Women never used to help with communion or read".

Role and Status of Women: Women and their Work Not Valued

There was significant concern that the structures, teachings and practices of the Church often exclude women and the marginalised. "Women are not valued by the Church – nor is their work." "The Church does not want us to participate – I've never heard anything but 'woman thou shalt not ...'" It was noted that women communicate well with women and they tend to more easily share faith experiences. This needs to be honoured by the structural Church.

Lack of Equality and Hypocritical Stance to Women

The lack of equality concerning decision-making and leadership, ministry and priesthood was a strong theme: "If the Church is a business I can buy shares but they must be non-voting ones".

The Church was seen as hypocritical in its relationship to women:

We sometimes experience the institutional Church as hypocritical when it demands so much of us while some men within the structure with power and knowledge seem so unwilling to change and make Church relevant to women and to the young.

Women's Exclusion from Ministry and Priesthood

The Church's stand on the ordination of women was a significant barrier along with male dominance in the Church. "Males decree women as not being able to be leaders (priests!)." Another woman said: "Are we really expected to believe that Jesus intended that there be six sacraments for women and seven for men?" That women are not able to be deacons, "they were in the early days of the Church's history", was an associated problem. While women have a role in sacramental preparation, it was noted that it was extremely limited in the dispensation of sacraments.

Importance of the Centrality of the Eucharist

The importance of the centrality of the Eucharist rather than an exclusively male priesthood was stressed:

If women are called to be priests, they can't be, because it is seen as a "males only" job. The Mass is the important thing; who celebrates it, male or female, doesn't really matter.

Ban on Discussion of Women's Ordination

There was concern over the papal instruction that there was to be no discussion on women's ordination: "You can't tell people not to discuss something ... people will continue to do what has to be done, despite such unreal instructions."

Male-dominated Church

The male-dominated Church was seen as a barrier to the formation of sound teaching:

The institutional Church has constructed all the rules and is also responsible for Canon Law. Hence, in the present situation only men can determine changes. The experience, knowledge and understandings of women are never brought to bear on these laws in their formulation or modification. However, we do bring our perspective to bear on the real life living out of the Gospel e.g. contraception, homosexuality. It's time the Church listened to women.

It was felt that society is beginning to change in this regard and that it was time for the Church to give the lead. It was considered that women are feared by Church authorities:

As in society and in the work place, so too in the Church. Men want to have the control and don't like the women spreading their wings. I know from my experience in the work place they find it hard to work as a member of a team and don't like a woman being in charge. In the parish, they find it hard to have a woman as president of the St Vincent de Paul Society and as the Co-ordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council. In our leadership team there are more women than men. Time for the Church to show society the way, to give the lead.

It was felt that the structural Church is diminished to the extent to which it refuses the involvement of women and does not allow their voice to be heard.

Marginalised Feel Excluded by the Structure and Morality of the Church

It was noted that the marginalised feel excluded by the whole structure and morality of the Church, for example on birth control. One group leader

presented the experience of a thirty-year-old professional woman whose “professional life takes her into areas of work for justice, especially for poorer disadvantaged women”:

One of her most startling comments was that “the people who need the Church most are the most repelled by it”. Her reasons for saying this are that the marginalised: women, the poor, gay people, single mothers, to mention a few, feel excluded by the whole structure and “morality” of the Church (e.g. on birth control). In her work among the poor, especially with women, she finds that they do not turn to Catholic agencies in their deep personal needs, except for food hand-outs. Such hand-outs change nothing of the structure of society. She does not see the Church as an agent for structural change because the Church is unwilling to change its own patriarchal structure.

There were concerns over the discriminatory attitude of some people in the Church towards the marginalised, those who are “different”.

Inadequate Communications

Inadequate communications presented barriers to women’s participation. It was recognised that while some priests in the present structure are good communicators, this is not the norm:

The Church’s teaching is not “user-friendly”; it is transmitted to us via priests/bishops who often give their own bias or ignorance in transmitting information. This can result in people being given contradictory information, which is often destroying to them.

It was experienced that Church is structured like a business and not for families or women. “Mass is an adult experience and can be very difficult for women attending with children; maybe we sometimes need a more relaxed way of praying.”

Animosity of Husbands over Women’s Church Involvement

There were particular difficulties over the animosity of husbands towards the Church because of the wife’s involvement:

C cited as reasons for her withdrawal from parish life her husband’s animosity to the Church, which he sees as being “on about money”. He resented the time that she took to take part in Church activities, expecting her to be at home. Family life became very difficult when he was disgruntled on account of her Church involvement. She spoke also of receiving a letter recently from her parish priest asking for involvement in Planned Giving, a letter she resented.

Catholic Education for the Elite

Catholic schools which are now viewed as being for the elite, or for families who are not Catholic, were cited as barriers. The push to get enrolments was seen to be about numbers and money, rather than Christianity.

Church Teachings Concerning Mariology and Birth Control

Barriers concerning particular Church teachings related to birth control and Mariology were emphasised:

While we are blessed as Catholics to have such a positive model as Mary, Mother of God, we sometimes feel she has been used against us and made into an unreal, impossible-to-imitate woman.

Unjust Conditions of Employment in the Church

Significant issues were raised about the unjust employment conditions and remuneration of pastoral associates as employees of the Church. The following story of a single lay women is illustrative. This Pastoral Associate was a group leader from a lower socio-economic status parish. She requested that her concern be considered in relation to women from lower socio-economic background as her employment conditions within the Catholic Church have forced her into this category:

I am a single lay woman ... Through my employment in the Catholic Church, I fit into a low economic status as I'm presently being paid a Victorian Stipend for a religious, less tax and superannuation as I am told that that is all the parish can afford. I receive a per kilometre amount for using my car and provide my own accommodation, etc. I believe I am called to work in Parish Ministry but in order to do so it can mean accepting employment packages that are considerably less than those enjoyed by the employers: the parish priests. My contract is dependent on the Parish Priest remaining in the same Parish. After more than ten years employment in parishes ... there seems to be little prospect of Long Service Leave as this is not portable. As my pay is very low, so are the contributions made to my superannuation fund, so that I have concern about how I will financially survive once I am no longer employed. While I very much enjoy, am challenged by and have a sense of fulfilment in what I do in the parish, financial concerns are stressful on me as an individual and so can affect my performance at work.

I am well qualified with Accreditation as a Pastoral Associate in Melbourne; a Bachelor of Education; a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education; a Diploma in Ministry (N.P.I.); a Bachelor of Theology and I am currently working towards a Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Ministry and yet my pay is less than \$20,000 per year and I have no job security. This seems a bit ironic when the priest I am working with, for whom I have a great deal of respect and I

acknowledge that he does have responsibilities which the Church will not permit me, as a woman to have, has no formal qualifications and yet his employment package is considerably better. It is difficult not to feel envious at times. ...

Like many lay Pastoral Associates, my theological education has been gained in my own time and at my own expense apart from some funding from CROPP. For three years I had a round trip of 180 kilometres on my day off in order to attend lectures. There doesn't seem to be any Sabbatical Leave available for lay women who have been working in parishes for a length of time and yet this could be very valuable for them and hence for the parishes in which they serve.

... While my pay is the same as that of my predecessor, a member of a Religious Institute, the parish also provided a rent-free convent for her to live in and a car. It would seem that in many cases parishes will offer only a religious stipend. For a lay person to compete for the job they have to be prepared to accept this in order to be employed in the area of work to which they feel called. The religious stipend in Queensland would seem to be at a more realistic level for the employment both of those who are members of religious institutes and those who are not. At present I doubt that I can afford to continue to work for much longer at my present rate of pay and may have to look for work in another field although I will find this personally painful and my experience and talents will be lost to the Church. If Pastoral Associate positions, particularly for those qualified, and in parishes where there is only one priest ... were to be declared ecclesiastical offices, this may allow for the improvement of salary packages by decreasing fringe benefit taxes. ...

Social and Cultural Barriers for Women from Lower Socio-economic Backgrounds

For women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, there were a number of social and cultural barriers concerning participation in the Church. The lack of transport and child-minding facilities was noted:

In areas like ours [western suburbs of Sydney], lack of transport and child minding facilities. Desire to participate in Eucharist, meeting groups etc thwarted by lack of adequate facilities.

Poverty, the "dollar struggle", for these women was a significant barrier. It was noted that women are now having to work to support the family. As a result, they are often too tired at night for additional involvement and having to catch up with family chores at the weekend. Cultural and language barriers for migrant women were also cited. The societal change concerning Sunday from a day for relaxation and Church to one which is often much like any other day was experienced as an obstacle, as well as animosity towards religion in the workplace.

7.6.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Affirmation and Support of Women

There was a strong call for the affirmation and support of women, and for equality of opportunity to serve the Church for both males and females. A more welcoming atmosphere encouraging more personal involvement for women was proposed. Women's participation would be increased by valuing and acknowledging their giftedness, insights and contributions. One woman commented, "While the image of the Church as the place where priests talked down to us has changed, it is only for some. For others it hasn't happened."

Gender Equality: Equal Opportunity for Men and Women to Serve

Requests for gender equality were strong. There is great need for open mindedness in the Church, especially concerning the equality of opportunity for both sexes to serve the mission of the Church. "When will the official Church learn that in Christ there is no male or female?" In the words of another woman, the major way in which the Church can increase the participation of women is by taking to heart the words of Paul (Gal. 3:27-28) "*For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*".

Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

Many proposals were made to involve women in decision-making and leadership especially concerning the future of the Church:

We feel a need for visionary leadership in all our parishes and dioceses – we feel lucky to have a woman religious coordinating our community and can see that this is a way to move forward into the future Church.

It was suggested that the Australian Church set a percentage goal to be achieved by a set date concerning inclusion of women in decision-making situations in the structural Church.

Requests for Issues Concerning Ministry and Priesthood to Be Re-examined

There was a call for many of the issues concerning ministry and priesthood to be re-examined. It was proposed that the Church establish procedures to ordain women who want to be ordained in the same way as men. Celibacy must become optional. Canon Law should be changed to enable women to exercise authority in the Church, as in judges of the Matrimonial Tribunal needing to have their judgments supported by priests. The Church should involve qualified and experienced women in all pre-marriage programs. It was felt that

celibate males are not appropriately experienced and therefore not necessarily the best people to present and/or prepare such programs.

It was recommended that the Church look seriously at Sacramental theology and practice:

Is what is happening at present necessarily the best way for us as a sacramental Church to proceed? Is it possible to continue with our present dependence on a diminishing number of ageing priests?

Need to Bring Feminine Qualities to Church Ministry

The need was identified to bring feminine qualities to the Church's ministries, not to "take over" from men but to allow women significant roles and full participation. It was asked why women, many of whom are well educated in Church matters, cannot speak at Mass.

More Inclusive Parish and Liturgical Structures

There were a number of suggestions to increase participation in parish and liturgical structures. These included:

- the greater inclusion of solo parents through more opportunities for them to join in things such as social occasions to meet with people in similar circumstances;
- the inclusion of women in pastoral teams in all parishes;
- the involvement of women in sacramental programs at all levels;
- the use of language and liturgical styles that include women rather than exclude them;
- greater sensitivity towards the needs of mothers and families: "My child cried in Church and I was asked by the priest to go outside. I did and never returned – a mother's place is *not* at Church"; and
- addressing questions of transport in low socio-economic areas of parishes.

The Church to Become More Relevant to Youth

There were strong calls for the Church to become relevant to the next generation.

We are living in times of rapid and massive change and we feel that institutional Church is often not aware of the issues nor is it listening to us. The next generation is different; will the Church be relevant to them? What is it prepared to do so that it can become relevant?

It was suggested that the Church do some research into the Church/groups which are attracting our youth. What do they do/teach? How do they minister? What is their attraction? Is there something we could learn from them? "As mothers, we really *care* about this issue."

Need for a Listening and Compassionate Church

There were strong requests for the Church being able to see both sides of an issue and for genuine compassion for the poor. The importance of listening, of being able to see both sides, was stressed. The vision of the Church with “a compassionate heart” is expressed below in the words of a group leader of women in Queensland:

As they spoke, these women did not really distinguish between men, women or children in the matter of participation in the Church. If I could sum up what they were looking for from the Church, it would be a welcome, understanding, and a chance to speak and be heard. They are very clear that the Church should have a compassionate heart. They are all women of deep compassion, who express that in very concrete ways with the people they meet from day to day, and who think and talk out of compassion. On the whole they do not make a connection between this way of living and their participation in the Church.

More support by individual priests for meaningful participation by women was requested as well as counselling services for solo parents.

Inclusive Language and Imagery

There was the request that the Church use language and liturgical styles that include women rather than exclude them.

Involvement of Women and Families in the Education of Seminarians

Proposals for education focused exclusively on the training of priests. It was requested that qualified women be involved in seminary training programs. Those training to be priests could – maybe should – live with a functional Catholic family for a period of time (maybe a month) during their training so they have experience to inform their thinking.

Church Teaching: Birth Control and Mariology

It was suggested that the Church address issues of birth control and faulty Mariology.

Professional Service and Employment

Justice issues concerning the professional service and employment of women in the Church needed to be addressed. These women wished “to see job opportunities for talented women in the Church which receive a living wage” and “to see job opportunities in the Church as a place where women can be recognised and promoted”. People and priests should be educated about the need for social justice in the employment of pastoral leaders and pastoral associates and exploring ways that dioceses can support such pastoral workers in their particular contribution to the Church.

**Table 7.5: Women from Lower Socio-Economic Backgrounds:
Summary of Responses to Key Questions**

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support roles in parish • Mothering role • Membership of Religious Institutes • Community service: sensitivity to needy • Limitations of participation noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little assistance from Church • Support mainly from other women • Inspiration and courage from religious sisters • Some priests • Catholic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and their work not valued • Lack of equality regarding decision-making and leadership • Exclusion from priesthood and ministry • Male-dominated Church • Exclusion of marginalised • Inadequate communication • Animosity of husbands over women's involvement • Other women • Birth control • Mariology • Unjust Church employment conditions • Social and cultural barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmation and support of women • Gender equality: equal opportunity for both sexes to serve • Involvement in decision-making and leadership • Involvement in priesthood and ministry • Need to bring feminine qualities to ministry • More inclusive parish and liturgical structures • Making Church more relevant to youth • Listening and compassionate Church • Inclusive language • Seminary training programs to include women and families • Addressing birth control and Mariology • Just employment, salary and conditions for women

7.7 Women from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds and Migrant Women

The three groups of women from migrant and non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB) included a variety of ages, and a range of national and cultural backgrounds. However, despite frequent requests, there was no response from Asian women. Participants were drawn from different States and dioceses. The information from this group is closely related to data from the groups of "Refugee Women".

7.7.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Invisible Participation for NESB Women

For NESB women, participation was interpreted as "invisible", mainly as "being a good Mum", "raising kids to put in the Church", "teaching values" and cleaning the Church, arranging altar flowers and priests' food preparation.

Fluency in English Enables More Active Participation

As NESB women became more fluent in English and more educated, they became more active participants at the "grass roots level" as parents, secretaries, parishioners, special ministers and altar girls, through reading the Scriptures at Mass, preparing children to receive First Communion, giving baptism talks for parents and godparents, organising youth pastorals, singing in the chorus and also helping in the collection. It was noted that there is often a conception that "Church" is limited to the "building".

Language as a significant factor affecting the participation of NESB women is highlighted in the following way by a group leader:

Some of the older women made the point that while Mass in Italian (twice a week) was helpful when they first came to Australia (after World War II), they now choose to attend the English Masses, and to take part in English-speaking activities. They feel strongly that they and their children need to "belong" in the English-speaking "world", although they recognise that their first language, and the associated attitudes and practices, helped them when they were newcomers to Australia.

Women in Leadership Roles Noted by Second Generation Australian Women

A group which included women who were second generation Australians noted that some women in the Catholic Church in Australia participate in the Church in the following leadership roles:

- parish leadership roles as pastoral associates; school teachers; leaders of parish organisations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society;

- leadership roles in dioceses or states such as vicars for religious; and members of marriage tribunals and Bishops' teams; and
- lecturers in Catholic seminaries, teachers' colleges, universities and so forth.

Lack of Confidence of NESB Women to Undertake "Visible" Participation

Significant limitations of the participation of NESB women were raised. It was noted that "participation" has not been modelled by earlier generations of women and this remains so for today's women and their daughters. Inexperience and a perception of male dominance results in a lack of confidence to undertake "visible" participation.

7.2.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Little or No Assistance Offered to Women

Little or no assistance and support were seen to be offered to women. There was a singular account after a hospital illness of a priest's home visit which was a highlight.

Educational Assistance Valued

In some parishes, English classes for NESB women were considered to be most valuable in promoting participation in the parish. A group of Spanish women highlighted the educational and moral support received from their priest:

Our main assistance comes from our priest who provides us with reading material such as books and pamphlets and also gives us his moral support so we can grow in our different roles within the Church.

The following assistance and support for women in Australia was noted by the group which involved second generation women: access to educational opportunities in seminaries and Catholic universities; some financial support while studying; and occasional paid ministries in parishes and dioceses.

7.7.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Many Demands on the Time of NESB Women

Major barriers are related to social and cultural issues, Church structures and teaching and practices. Time factors for NESB women represent a significant barrier to participation as there is often the need to work to support the family, which takes precedence over all else. Women's role as mothers was also noted as time-consuming.

Male-dominated Church

Male dominance and power, and the misuse of Church resources were stressed. It was felt that priests are "so scared" of women's participation and any subsequent loss of power and status.

Church Teaching Which Prohibits Women's Full Participation

Significant barriers relate to perceptions of sinfulness inherited from earlier generations and perceived Church teaching which prohibits women from full participation, for example issues related to birth control. As a result, major Church attenders are older women who are less likely to take on an active role.

Negative Attitudes to Women's Ministry

It was noted that there are often negative attitudes of some members of the Church to women's ministry. There is a need to teach the community to accept a woman as celebrant for funerals and baptisms.

Exclusion of Women from Priesthood and Ministry

The lack of opportunities to fill certain roles, such as the permanent diaconate, equally with men was seen as a significant difficulty.

Insufficient Information about Possibilities for Women's Participation

In general, it was considered that insufficient information about possibilities for participation in the Church is available. In all these matters, it was reported that non-English-speaking women are particularly disadvantaged.

7.7.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

NESB women proposed the following suggestions concerning Church structures and practices as ways to increase women's participation: the need for affirmation and support of women; greater gender equality leading to open access to all roles including priesthood; improved information and communication; and revision of the teaching on birth control.

Affirmation and Support of Women

It was suggested that women be affirmed and supported by inviting women who are not participating in the Church to do so.

Equal Access to "Visible" Roles

Open access to all roles with less gender discrimination in active "visible" roles was sought. It was considered that open-minded attitudes in the Church would lead to the establishment of the equality of women's and men's participation in the Church as the norm.

Improved Information and Communication

Improved information and communication about possible roles for women and men were proposed including informative workshops, questionnaires and discussion with parishioners and clergy about the increased participation of both men and women.

Priesthood and Ministry

It was suggested that the Church allow women to be priests.

Teaching and Preaching on Birth Control

Revision of teaching and preaching on birth control was sought.

Table 7.6: Women from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds and Migrant Women: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Invisible" participation for NESB women• Support roles in parish• Mothering role• Fluency in English a key to active participation• Women in leadership roles noted by second generation Australian women• Limitations of participation noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little or no assistance from Church• English classes in some parishes• Educational assistance valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many demands on the time of NESB women• Male-dominated Church• Church teaching which prohibits women's full participation• Birth control• Negative attitudes to women's ministry• Lack of equal opportunities in ministry• Insufficient information about possibilities for women's participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affirmation and support of women• Gender equality: equal opportunity for service in "visible" roles• Improved information and communication• Involvement in priesthood and ministry• Revised teaching and preaching on birth control

7.8 Refugee Women

Many contacts were made with groups and organisations concerned with refugees. However, significant difficulties were encountered in forming groups of refugee women. It was explained that these women were concerned with immediate matters of survival rather than with issues concerning the participation of women in the Australian Catholic Church. The English language was often a barrier to discussion. After much persistence, three groups were formed: one group of Vietnamese women; a second group of staff members of a Catholic Secondary College which has a very high percentage of

students from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and another group of thirty-six female students, all of whom were from migrant backgrounds and many of whom had settled in Australia as refugees.

7.8.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Limited Participation and Perceptions of Church of Mature-aged Refugee Women

It was noted that mature-aged refugee women often have limited participation as "Church" has significance mainly in terms of "Catholic", "sacrament", "father" and "Catholic schooling". Their spirituality was seen to be "unquestionable".

Young Women Refugees Identified a Wide Range of Roles and Tasks of Women

The above response is in sharp contrast to young women refugees who noted that women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia in a wide variety of roles and tasks. It was observed that the majority of practising participants in the Australian Church are female. Specific ways of participation include domestic Church duties such as cleaning; ministries within parishes involved with the celebration of liturgy; as caretakers of children's liturgy; teachers of sacramental programs; catechists; evangelisers of the faith; altar servers; in support/gathering groups; women's groups involved in prayer; retreat work within parishes; as organisers of pilgrimages; in missionary work; and as feminist theologians publishing spiritual works.

7.8.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Little or No Support and Assistance Currently Offered to Women

The refugee groups perceived that there is little or no support and assistance currently offered by the Church to women to participate in the Catholic Church.

Assistance and Support from the Refugee Community Rather than from the Church

The sources of assistance and support identified by refugee women were the refugee community itself, parents, women and women's networks, and theological courses. For mature-aged refugee women, the support is received from the refugee community rather than from the Church. Young refugee women responded that support is received from parents by providing "relief from children" to enable involvement in the Mass; women's organisations and

networks; those who acknowledge privately and publicly the work of women; and from theological and liturgical courses which encourage people to know more about their traditions.

7.8.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Cultural Background a Barrier for Mature-aged Refugee Women

For the group of mature-aged refugee women, it was noted that their cultural background represented a significant barrier. Their cultural background is so vastly different from that of most Australians. One group leader explained this in the following way:

Our group consisted of women from poor families in Vietnam, both urban and rural. They had very little education and worked at home or in the family business seven days a week, hence no social group, no Sunday Mass. In Australia, these women struggle with the new language, have been involved with the unjust "piece" work, are still in the low economic bracket and depend on their husbands as the "spokesperson". Husbands are mostly unemployed.

Stereotypes of Women and their Roles Seen as Barriers by Young Refugee Women

It was noted that the children are more Australian in their attitudes and way of life. Young refugee women experienced the world or culture they were born into as a barrier. "The older generations are a barrier to themselves – keeping their own traditions." Stereotypes of women and their roles were experienced as barriers both in the cultural tradition and in the Church. The overburden of family commitments was noted.

Exclusion of Women in Church Structures and Practices

As the main barriers to participation, young refugee women emphasised the lack of inclusivity of women in Church structures and practices, in particular in decision-making and priesthood.

Limitations and Lack of "Movement" Concerning the Role of Women in the Church

Being a woman both in the Church and society was cited as a fundamental barrier to participation. Limitations placed on roles which are part of being Church were emphasised as well as the difficulty of breaking entrenched attitudes and ideas regarding the traditional position of women. Lack of "movement" in the Church's structures and practices, lack of re-examination of the *status quo*, and the length of time it takes to adapt or institute changes were experienced as ongoing barriers to women's involvement.

Patriarchy and Misuse of Power and Position

Church tradition concerning the “maleness” of the dimensions of faith and the misuse of power and position by men in the Church were cited as significant obstacles.

Use of Exclusive Language Experienced as Offensive

In its lack of inclusivity and its offensive nature, the use of language by the Church was seen as consistent with a policy of exclusion. The poverty of the Lectionary and the exclusion therein of some significant scripture related to women were noted. It was felt that the question of who is an apostle (appointee) of Christ needs to be examined.

Decision-making and Leadership

The exclusion of women from decision-making bodies and the lack of genuine representation on official boards were lamented.

Priesthood and Ministry

That “women cannot partake in the seventh Sacrament of Ordained ministry” was cited as a significant barrier to participation.

7.8.4 Ways in Which Women’s Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Greater Inclusivity Requested

Young refugee women proposed a number of ways in which women’s participation in the Church could be increased. Key suggestions centred on the notion of “inclusivity” involving women in decision-making and leadership; greater involvement in Sacramental ministry including the ordination of women; use of inclusive language; and the application of gender equality in Church structures and practices.

Gender Equality

It was requested that the Church encourage a balance of roles for both sexes and that women “take up their right to a full and active participation”. A transferral of roles in the Church was suggested, involving a calling of males to some pastoral positions. It was urged that the role of the laity should not be judged or determined on the basis of gender.

Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

“Honest” representation of women in decision-making and leadership was sought. The inclusion of women in councils and organisations concerned with decision-making was suggested as well as opportunities for women to speak out and have a voice.

Ministry and Priesthood

There were requests for greater involvement in Sacramental ministry and the admission of women to ordination.

Inclusive Language

The use of inclusive language was urged.

Table 7.7: Refugee Women: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited perception of participation especially of mature-aged refugee women• Wide range of roles and tasks identified by young women refugees• Limitations of participation noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little or no assistance from Church• Support from community rather than Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural background• Stereotypes of women and their roles as barriers for young refugee women• Limitations and lack of movement concerning women's role in the Church• Patriarchy and misuse of power• Use of exclusive language experienced as offensive• Lack of equality regarding decision-making and leadership• Exclusion from priesthood and ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater inclusivity of women• Gender equality: equal opportunity for both sexes to serve• Involvement in decision-making and leadership• Involvement in priesthood and ministry• Inclusive language

7.9 Solo Parents

Three groups of solo mothers met in three different Australian States. All members were solo parents including divorced, separated and single mothers.

7.9.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Participation of Women as Solo Mothers in the Parish and in the Wider Church

Solo parent groups spoke of the ways that women participate:

- as solo mothers who are themselves a gift to the Church in their strength and determination:

For it is in the strength and determination in the lived experience of such women that we find the message of hope and transformation that the Gospel teaches us. Therefore these women are vital to the life of the parish and indeed to our Church in dealing with the real struggles of real people;

- in the parish as cleaners, readers, special ministers of the Eucharist, musicians and catechists; and
- in the wider Church as teachers in Catholic schools, lecturers, members of the CWL, religious sisters, and women as “culture bearers”.

Limitations of Participation Noted Concerning Decision-making

The limitation of participation due to the restriction to “non-decision-making roles in general” was noted.

7.9.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

No Assistance or Support by the Church for Solo Parents to Participate

All groups indicated that there was no support or assistance that enables single mothers to feel they can participate in the Church. “It is hard enough for a single mother to even attend Mass and look after children, aside from looking for ways to participate”:

In the main, women have come to expect little. In personal and domestic life women turn to family and other-than-Church organisations. Often they have been made to feel the guilty one rather than the victim, the rejected one rather than one to be helped.

Support from An Occasional Priest and Religious Sister

However, there was some experience of support from an occasional priest and religious sister “who has real understanding of life and living”.

7.9.3 Barriers to Women’s Participation in the Church

These groups of solo parents gave their main attention to barriers to participation, especially in relation to Church structures and practices, and in particular to the male domination of the Church, inappropriate pastoral

practices of the clergy, lack of acceptance of solo parent families, and fundamental concerns about the nature and process of annulment.

Male Domination of the Church

These women identified male domination as a major barrier, especially the hierarchy of clerics, involving lack of consultative modes; little encouragement; tokenism on committees and boards; perception of women as servers; and men's fear of ridicule, reprisals and rejection, especially among the hierarchy of male clerics.

Lack of Acceptance of Solo Parent Families

A strong sense of lack of acceptance by the Church was expressed by solo parents:

A successful marriage is the ideal and of course that makes us less than ideal. So for sole parents, we feel that we can never quite make the mark in the eyes of the Church.

It was noted that this lack of acceptance of solo parent families leads to breakdown in the relationship between the Church and solo parents:

We all agreed that we have experienced the dreadful homilies which talk of the "broken families" and/or the "failed marriage". We have heard from the pulpit how children from divorced/single parent families are "damaged"! This of course only reinforces any guilt that a mother might feel because she has had to leave a difficult marriage. It also serves to widen the gap between sole parents and the Church when this arrogant ignorance is tacitly supported.

As a result, solo mothers experienced isolation in the parish situation:

Fitting into a parish situation can be difficult particularly as a one parent family. Single women are often viewed with suspicion. We are often made to feel that we are so desperate that we would "move in" on any man – married or otherwise! It is also feelings of isolation and of being different that are hard for us.

Lack of Appropriate Pastoral Care by the Clergy

Generally, the care from the clergy in the time surrounding the marriage breakdown was not experienced as good as many priests have no skills in counselling couples who are experiencing difficulties:

If a woman approaches a priest and lets him know that she is in an impossible situation due to an addiction that her husband has then clearly it is reprehensible for him to tell her that she must stay because her husband is "sick". Or to be told, as another woman and her husband were, to go and pray about their difficulties is a completely inappropriate response and shows a complete lack of understanding of the situation.

Lack of Focus on Young People and Women

A strong concern was expressed that the Church is focused on the elderly and “staid” rather than young people or women:

As a young mother, the Church seems to be focused on the elderly and staid when the young of the Church are looking for a spirituality that is real to them. The Catholic Church in general terms hasn't the ability to relate to young people or women. Is it because our priests are unmarried that they can't relate to women?

Annulment: Its Relevance, Process and Effects

The issue of the annulment process stirred a great deal of emotion with the groups, more so than any other issue. A lot of discussion centred around the relevance of the annulment. There was a strong feeling that the annulment process is intrusive because of the nature of the questions, and perhaps even damaging because people have to relive much of the trauma:

We had many questions surrounding the so called “healing” nature of the Annulment process. There is nothing healing about the process! We certainly don't feel that priests are skilled in handling the preliminary elements required in the process.

The notion of having to prove that it was never a marriage was a source of anger. It was experienced that “people who don't get an annulment, get married outside the Church and leave as a result”. However, it was stated that people can feel ostracised from the Church if they have remarried outside the Church and take Communion:

The Church does discriminate against people who have remarried without an annulment and who work within the Catholic system, e.g. in schools. Or even those who marry someone who is not a Catholic and do not obtain an annulment. This can prevent capable people from being promoted in their jobs. The alternative is to be very discreet and not to advertise one's living arrangements. You must look like you are living a Catholic lifestyle!

7.9.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Recognition, Affirmation and Support of the Role of Solo Mothers

Concerning ways to increase the participation of solo mothers in the Church, the major focus was on ways to affirm and support the role of the single mother through recognition of the role, acceptance of sole parent families as authentic families, provision of appropriate assistance for people going through marital breakdown and review of the annulment process.

Addressing the Issue of Belonging as Many Women Feel Alienated

It was requested that the Church address the issue of belonging as many women feel alienated and not accepted by people within Church structures. The Church could foster inclusiveness by recognising and accepting minority groups including solo parents. The Church was advised: "Reach out and hear their stories". There is a need for the Church to confirm the role of the single mother in the community and recognise the role of women in the development of the faith of their children.

Equal Partnership in Decision-making and Leadership

Women want to be equal partners in the Church. There is need for the Church to say "What can we do to make your religion more accessible and meaningful to you?" Women's desire to share in "real" decision-making and use their leadership gifts was most evident. It was also requested that the Church have married clergy.

Recognition of Sole Parent Families

Recognition of sole parent families as "regular families" was sought. "Sole parent families want to be known as *families*. People don't talk about widowed parents in the same way. Death commands respect – divorce receives contempt!"

Assistance to Those Facing Marital Breakdown

Assistance to parishioners who have faced or are facing marital breakdown was requested. "This is an important area since there is an increase in the percentage of divorces."

Need to Address the Issue of Annulment

An urgent need was experienced to address the issue of marriage annulment: its relevance, nature and processes.

Provision of Child-minding Facilities during Mass

As single mothers, we have our children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When we attempt to take our children to Church, some of the congregation (not the priests) look down on us if our children make a noise. All mothers of young pre-school children would appreciate a creche, perhaps in the church hall, so that we could actually hear a homily and participate in the Church's celebrations.

Table 7.8: Solo Parents: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Witness of strength and determination of solo mothers• Support roles in parish• Educational roles in wider Church• Religious sisters' role• Women as "culture bearers"• Limitations of participation noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No assistance or support from Church• Experience of solo parents made to feel guilty rather than the one to be helped• Support from an occasional priest or religious sister	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male domination of the Church• Lack of acceptance of solo parent families• Lack of appropriate pastoral care by the clergy• Lack of focus on young people and women• Fundamental difficulties with annulment: its relevance, process and its effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition, affirmation and support of the role of solo mothers• Addressing issue of belonging as many women feel alienated• Equal partnership in decision-making and leadership• Married priesthood• Recognition of sole parent families• Assistance to those facing marital breakdown• Need to address issue of annulment

7.10 Ukrainian Women

At the request of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, three group discussions were held involving the following membership:

- one meeting in North Melbourne which included eleven Ukrainian women and Bishop Peter Stasiuk CSsR DD;
- one in the Sydney suburb of Chester Hill with a group of ten Ukrainian women and the Very Revd Mitrat Zenon Chorkawyi, the Vicar General of the Eparchy [Diocese] of Saints Peter and Paul; and
- one in Canberra with eight Ukrainian women from Canberra and Queanbeyan in the home of Mrs Olga Kolomyjec and her husband, the Revd Zdan Kolomyjec, Parish Priest of Canberra's Ukrainian parish.

7.10.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Ukrainian Church in Australia

Women Comprise More than Fifty Percent of the Ukrainian Church

The women of the Eastern Ukrainian Church felt that they belong and participate in both the Ukrainian Church and the Western Rite. It was noted that women make up more than 50 percent of the Ukrainian Church. The Church was perceived as patriarchal in regard to its history and its culture.

Positive Experience of Married Clergy in the Eastern Rite

Several times it was noted that the Eastern Rite has married clergy. Men are allowed to marry before their diaconate. In comparison with the Western Rite, this gives them a different experience which was spoken of in positive terms. "I believe in married priests. The celibate priest misses a very important experience – raising a family. How can he minister with real understanding?"

Distinctive Roles for Men and Women: Women Are Like the "Handmaids"

There are distinctive roles for men and women. Women are like the "handmaids", involved in such activities as fundraising; taking care of flowers and altar cloths; cooking; addressing the spiritual side; visiting the sick; and moral education in the family. "Participation is knowing what the Gospel is about, ... what Christ's message is ... and interaction with fellow Christians."

Education Seen as Key to Participation

Ukrainian women believe that education is the key to participation. It was felt that there is a need to educate all Catholics about all aspects of the Church including the Eastern Rite.

Women Do Not Participate in Visible Ways in Liturgy

It was noted that women play a key role in areas such as education but the demarcation lines are drawn very strongly and women do not participate in visible ways in liturgy. Women participate through several women's organisations and religious groups in the parish. The woman on the Ukrainian Council as a representative of the laity said that, as a woman, she is highly valued for her contribution and she believes that all women on that Council are also valued.

It was explained that the women in the Ukrainian Church have "never rocked the boat" as it was seen to be too important that Ukrainian Catholics survive as a group. Now they are entering into a time of change and a time of freedom to question.

7.10.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Ukrainian Church

Women Supported in the Community but Not in Liturgy

It was felt that women are supported in the community but not in liturgy. It was noted that the Bishops' in-services for participation have been successful

but yet tradition is ingrained. Close communication with the priest was identified as important.

Support among the Women

There is support among the women for one another that enables a great depth of spirituality.

Support When You Are Seen to Be "Doing the Right Thing"

It was commented that there is plenty of support when you are seen to be "doing the right thing". One woman expressed it in the following way:

You are put to the side if you speak your mind and are your own person. You are marginalised by clergy and community. We need the creative people yet they are perceived as a threat. You have to stand alone. In a society that has anti-discrimination laws, it seems amazing that a situation like this can exist.

7.10.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Ukrainian Church

Exclusion of Women from the Liturgy of the Church Is the Greatest Question

One of the biggest barriers is the liturgy in the Church. The Ukrainian women believed there needs to be encouragement and opportunity for the participation of women, especially in the area of liturgy. Participation in liturgy is the real question for these women. "Participation in liturgy is taboo." A woman who had sons who were priests said that, at their ordination, there was no role for women in the liturgy other than holding a candle. All the support people were male and elderly. The fact that the Ukrainian Church does not allow the ordination of women is in itself seen as a barrier by some.

Changed Role of Women in Society Highlights Their Lack of Inclusion in a Strongly Visual Tradition

It was noted that this matter of participation of women in liturgy in the Eastern Rite is different in different areas. The Cathedral is sacrosanct. The women commented that they had neither seen a woman take an active part in "big" Masses nor heard women's voices in the Cathedral. There is no feminine perspective. This was seen to be particularly significant as the Eastern Rites have such strongly visual traditions, for example the importance of icons. It was noted that the role of women has changed in society. "It is a different world. It's a matter of inclusion; the visual part of inclusion." Some believe it is better to change slowly, to start with one of the Sunday Masses. At the moment a woman can participate if the priest allows. One woman who went to Ukraine noted that there women were even involved in taking up the collection plate.

Older Generation Resistant to Change

Another barrier was the older generation who were seen as resistant to change and who had "never been accountable to anyone". The resistance to change

throughout the Church group was noted. The women in one group felt that they were the middle generation and that any change would be slow and step-by-step. This group, "caught in the middle", felt the pressure of the older generation preventing change and curtailing them from allowing their children to engage in change. They explained that the pressure from the older generation arose from the belief that there is a certain way to behave in the Church and "they want it to be the same as it was a hundred years ago". One woman recalled that her parents stood by themselves when they came to Australia. They had no parent figures or role models themselves.

Patriarchal Church

The culture of men, particularly the men in the hierarchy, who "do the thinking" while women are "like the handmaids" was seen as alienating by some of the women. The patriarchal Church was viewed as "being the least democratic institution in whole world".

Lack of a Visible Role for Women

The lack of a visible role for women in the Ukrainian Church was viewed as a barrier. "Women are always behind the scene. The Ukrainian Church is very visual and you don't see women." The following example was given:

*... when the Church mentioned people who had a significant role in some event
... they named them as individuals – when it came to the women or the girls
they were named as a group, they were not named individually.*

In general, it was felt that "women often come across as an amorphous mass: no kudos; no prominence".

Trivialisation of Women and their Exclusion from Decision-making

The trivialisation and exclusion of women in decision-making were a serious concern: "they [the patriarchal Church] either put women on a pedestal (its like being an ornament, a vase of flowers but that is also very marginalising) or ignore them". The committee structure of the Church, which excludes women in any policy setting, was emphasised.

It was remarked that participation is the same for girls and boys and there is a feeling of equality in informal out-of-church settings. Girls read and serve although they do not do this on Sundays in the Church. So what is acceptable in the context of the youth gatherings does not happen in the "official" Church.

Loss of the Young, Especially the Alienation of Girls

There was a particular concern about the loss of the young, especially the alienation of girls. The lack of altar girls was seen as a barrier. "There aren't too many young people in our Church. The older people dominate and we wait till they die before their roles are taken on." The concern about the exclusion of young

women was stated by one woman in the following way: "The question is about the absence of a sense of inclusion. Girls in the future will feel less involved." Another said: "Our daughters are always outraged at the discrimination."

It was noted that youth want to find a place in the Church where they can be more active and participate. They want an opportunity to meet regularly with their peers.

Women Who Resist Change Seen as a Barrier

For some, women themselves who did not want change or women who are "too timid" to initiate change were seen as a barrier:

There was a thought that religious sisters could give communion when necessary. The priest, the sisters and the lay people should be able to distribute communion. The bishop intervened. He had allowed that to happen in the Church and he was crucified. Who crucified him? The women. It was the women, he felt, that did not want the change.

Many Demands on Women's Time

It was stressed that the many demands on women with family responsibilities and involvement community activities are very time-consuming:

Membership of any ethnic group gives rise to problems. Commitment to your community means that you live a hectic life. Even on holidays, the community always has an activity. As a result, many have withdrawn [from the Church].

Insufficient Support from Priests

Insufficient support from priests was another difficulty. "In the Ukrainian community we have brought our children up well. What we are losing is rapport between priests and our young people, priests who have alienated the young." As a result, children are being deprived of their heritage:

The priest is God. Clergy are pressured by marrying tradition with culture. Different cultures exist within the Ukrainian Eastern Rite Church, for example Brisbane and Canada. The listening is selective.

Lack of Education among the Clergy about the Equality of Women

The lack of education among the clergy about the equality of women was identified as a barrier. "They need to be educated about women, about equality, about roles of women, about types of women." Education towards a system "that makes room for women" was sought.

Lack of Information and Communication in a Small and Scattered Community

Further barriers concerning Church structures and practices were identified. The lack of understanding of the liturgy was raised as well as the general lack

of understanding in passing on knowledge to children. It was felt that there was no education to help people develop their spirituality. "Sermons are not relevant or filling a need." Severity over silence in the Church was seen as an obstacle. There was a lack of communication in the Church and information about changes. Distance was another barrier in a Church which is "so scattered". A sense of isolation was noted. The smallness of the community, the existing community not being welcoming of newcomers and the lack of new people were seen as associated barriers.

Ignorance of Some Australians and Catholics about the Ukrainian Church

The ignorance of some Australians and Catholics about the Ukrainian Church was a concern. It was noted that, in Catholic schools, not enough is known about the Eastern Rite. People belonging to this Rite have to ensure others are informed about the Ukrainian Church, for example, by taking a pro-active stance and taking off the Easter Monday when the Eastern Rite Easter is celebrated. It was noted that the holy day, which is not the same date as the Western Rite Easter, is not recognised in the Catholic education system so the absence is recorded as sick leave.

Inclusive Language Not a Problem as the Ukrainian Language Is Like French

Concerning inclusive language, it was explained that this issue was not the same problem as in other parts of the Australian Catholic Church: "The Ukrainian language is like French – the problem is not there in the way in which it exists in English."

7.10.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Ukrainian Church Can Be Increased

Promoting Gender Equality as a Matter of Urgency

Proposals were made to promote gender equality. It was suggested that, as a matter of urgency, the Church identify those places and roles where women would "shine" or else run the risk of losing the young women:

Women should have greater involvement. A lot of roles await them. It's hard to define exactly where. Many roles undertaken by men could be complemented by women but attitudes in our Church need to change.

Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

The importance of women undertaking leadership and decision-making roles was stressed as advantageous for the whole Church. Women were seen as transmitters of faith to the next generation. It was felt that if women want to have a career in the Church, they should be encouraged, as women bring different leadership qualities. It was emphasised that the Church needs all such gifts and qualities:

Keep our beautiful traditions but we must also progress. I don't think changes will come until women are part of the decision-making in the Church. ... People are waiting for a leader.

Active Roles for Women, Especially the Young

The need for active roles for women was stressed:

I love my Church. There is a magnetic attraction to go to my Church. I'd like some modernisation for the younger ones, especially my daughter. Instead of a passive role, I'd like to see them [young women] having active roles.

There was a particular concern about change in the Church and targeting the young people:

I'd like my children to feel there is a place for them in the Church. A bit more open, with priests and nuns more welcoming. I'd like to pass that on.

There were calls for female altar servers:

I'd like to see female altar servers. My daughter – I want to see her loving the Church and happy to be coming there. Our girls have more "up and go" than we do. Keep our traditions but add some changes, even though they are minor.

Better Communications

The opening up of communication channels and better communications were requested. It was suggested that the distribution of material about what is happening in the Church would be helpful.

Education of Clergy about the Participation of Women

The education of clergy concerning the greater participation of women was seen as a key:

*The clergy has a big role for the older people. They will be influenced greatly by whatever the clergy think. The clergy have to encourage the change and be aware of the problems. So educate the clergy about the needs and the opportunities. If the change was supported across all of the priests, if they could stand **together** as clergy, young and old, it would be a real advantage.*

There were suggestions for a pro-active stance by the clergy to educate people, to explain changes so that the whole Church is walking together. "The *modus operandi* needs to be worked out ahead and the change implemented step-by-step." It was proposed that sermons could be relevant to the Gospels and to today.

Education to Be Targeted for Specific Change

It was also proposed that education has to be "slow, real and energetic and has to be targeted" to "particular aspects where something can be done". Opportunities were requested to understand and pass on liturgy. It was also suggested that women form study groups that can look at unanswered questions.

Table 7.9: Ukrainian Women: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women comprise more than 50 percent of the Ukrainian Church • Positive experience of married priests in the Eastern Rite • Distinctive roles for men and women: women are like the "handmaids" • Education seen as key to participation • Women do not participate in visible ways in liturgy • Limitations of participation noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assistance or support in liturgy • Support in the community • Support when you are seen to be "doing the right thing" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of women from liturgy the biggest question • Changed role of women in society highlights their lack of inclusion • Older generation resistant to change • Patriarchal Church • Lack of visible role for women • Trivialisation of women • Exclusion from decision-making • Loss of the young, especially alienation of girls • Women who resist change • Many demands on women's time • Insufficient support from priests • Lack of education among clergy about the equality of women • Lack of information and communication in a small and scattered community • Ignorance about the Ukrainian Church • Inclusive language not a problem as language like French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting gender equality as a matter of urgency • Involvement in decision-making and leadership • Active roles for women, especially the young • Better communications • Education of clergy about the participation of women • Education to be targeted for specific change

7.11 Young Women

Five groups of young women were convened and included women from a range of backgrounds: young working women, university students, women studying theology at a Catholic theological institution, professional women, single and married women, and women with young children. The groups were formed in a variety of ways, for example, one group through the local Bishop, and others through the Young Christian Workers (YCW), university chaplains and administration, and members of the ACLRI. Of the five groups, four expressed significant concerns about the Church's failure to meet the needs of young women and feelings of alienation. In contrast, one group expressed conservative views and sought action concerning traditional teachings and practices.

7.11.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Nature of Women's Roles Seen as Marginal, Limited and Voluntary

The major issue identified concerning the ways in which women currently participate in the Church was the nature of their roles as marginal, limited and voluntary in contrast to the domain of ordained priests.

It was felt that women need to be involved in all key domains to which they can contribute:

- in education as primary educators of their children, and in home schooling and teaching in Catholic schools;
- as members of Religious Orders;
- through the vocation of marriage, motherhood and family life;
- at parish/local level on parish councils and using feminine qualities of nurturing in service of people in the community; and
- also on the broader level, through policy determination and positions of power within the Church.

Importance of Women's Participation through Paid Roles

While many of the roles for women in the Church were seen to be exclusively the domain of older women with more time to volunteer their services, young women felt it was important that women participated through paid roles as well.

Greater Participation by Women in Religious Orders Due to Positions in Administration

It was considered that women in Religious Orders have had a much greater participation because they have high powered positions in the administration of Catholic schools, hospitals and social welfare institutions. It was noted that they have a certain freedom to be the prophetic voice of the Catholic Church

and are not inhibited or threatened by the male patriarchy. While they are able to be the conscience of much of the Church, it was felt that their voice has not usually been heard by the general Catholic Church as there was perhaps no vehicle for communication.

Major Areas of Participation Include Married, Religious and Single Life

Major areas of participation which were noted include married, religious and single life:

- the vocation of marriage, motherhood and family life;
- consecrated religious life;
- single life involving the sanctification of daily work;
- interior life: spiritual development, growth in holiness, prayer and participating in the life of the Mystical Body of Christ;
- education as primary educators of their children, especially concerning prayer and devotion; teaching through example;
- use of feminine qualities of nurturing, compassion, personal skills and caring to support education; home schooling, teaching in Catholic schools;
- involvement in works of mercy: visiting the sick, emotional support, social work and work on devotional/piety stalls;
- participation on parish councils; and
- involvement in YCW; it was noted that many leadership roles were fulfilled by women in Sydney.

Limitations of Participation

Due to lack of involvement at the broader level, some young women felt that they do not participate in the Catholic Church in Australia as they are able to be only passive members of a parish "regarded as a convenience doing only menial tasks".

7.11.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Women Not Encouraged to Make a Contribution Beyond Safe "Household" Tasks

Generally, young women felt that they were not encouraged to make a contribution beyond safe "household" tasks and that there were no channels open to them to facilitate participation in the Church.

Some Assistance from Church Teachings, Structures and Practices

Some young women identified the following aspects of Church as offering support: the Sacraments, prayer, the Magisterium, the Pope, the hierarchy, authority, teachings, Catholic doctrine, Mary and other spiritual models, the saints and organised charities.

Some Assistance from Priests and Women involved in Pastoral Care

Some sources of assistance came from some priests who acknowledged their need for help in running the parish and from women involved in pastoral care who encouraged other women to join.

7.11.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Major barriers for young women were concerned predominantly with Church structures and practices which failed to meet the needs of young women.

Failure to Meet the Needs of Young Women Who Aspire to Serve in Influential Roles

"The biggest problem in the Church is the failure to meet the needs of young women." Young women are discouraged by the fact that few roles exist to which they can aspire and few positions of direct influence are open to women. Most of the women felt they were being encouraged to aspire to a certain level only. This was particularly problematic for young women studying theology:

As young women with feminist ideals we are being taught that we can aim for everything and anything but as Catholic women we face a conflict between this and what the Church's position is on many issues affecting young women as well as those of great interest to young women. This was the same for women who were "strong" feminists as well as those who characterised themselves as moderate. The Church positions "feminism" as radical and many women within the Church are "conservative" feminists. The Church needs to be able to accommodate the spectrum of feminist thought. The conflict between feminism and the "Church line" is great (one woman said that she thinks no one realised how great it actually is), and so many women leave the Church to avoid this conflict. One participant was able to find some middle ground while others did not. All agreed that there was little understanding of this conflict and its impact on young women.

The future of the Church was seen to be closely related to the participation of women. As one group stated: "You can't talk about women's participation apart from where the whole Church is going".

Highly Educated Women Seen as a Threat to Male Power

It was felt that, overall, women are seen as a threat to male power. "When people speak of women taking public roles in the church the common objection concerns women's bid for 'power'." In particular, highly educated women are seen as a threat. "Many priests have not kept up to date in their theology and so many men and women in the pews are now better educated theologically than the priests." It is seen that the priests are threatened by this and refuse to let the women "in" to any debate. There was a sense that people were "talked down to" and not treated as the adults they are.

Male-dominated Church Perceived as Rigid and Unbending by Young Women

It was reported that women find themselves unrecognised in the Church where the men “make the rules and determine the issues to be addressed”. In an age where lives are so flexible in every aspect, the Church comes over as rigid and unbending with no place for dialogue. With emphasis given to adherence to rules and regulations, the sense of the Church being “community” is lost. It was noted that the recent document from Rome on the laity had a very depressing effect on young women who felt that there was no place for them as young women in the Catholic Church.

No Reasoning with Official Church on Teaching on Birth Control

Because of “the bland and unbending way” Church teaching regarding the contraceptive pill is presented, many women feel guilty with regard to the Church – whether they are “practising” Catholics or not. It was reported that many opt out of Catholic practice because there is no way of reasoning with the official Church about the matter.

Concern with Aspects of Church Teaching on Sexuality and Divorce

Concern was expressed with aspects of Church teaching on sexuality and divorce. Church teaching on divorce was seen to be restrictive as it was noted that women are often trapped in marriages that are unhealthy and which put them at risk.

Lack of Compassion and the Scandal Surrounding Priests

It was reported that many people’s experience is that priests (and the official Church) are condemnatory rather than compassionate. It’s “All or nothing!” If mistakes are made you don’t feel accepted – e.g. young people who live with a partner can’t find a way through. They are “condemned”. On the other hand, it was reported that people’s identity as Catholics has been badly affected by the sexual crimes and scandals of some priests.

Church Experienced as Irrelevant, Especially for Youth

The perception was that, for the majority of people, especially youth, the Church is irrelevant. Many young people who do remain in the Church experience the Mass as irrelevant and are turned off by it, and eventually leave the Church altogether. The experience of Sunday Mass was one “where so often the priest simply speaks old pious platitudes often with football references and he is nowhere in touch with the lives of the people in front of him”. In the words of one group leader:

I found it interesting that with [the young people] there was no feeling of great animosity towards the Church or any sense that the Church had anything to offer them. It truly was of little relevance.

A significant culture gap was experienced between priests and women. It was noted that priests tended to keep apart. Because priests have never been married, there was little in common. Negative attitudes towards single mothers and female special ministers were experienced.

Insufficient Attention Given to Youth

Insufficient attention is given to youth, especially the 20 to 30-year-old age group. On a parish level, the "politics" of the parish and clique-like groups of parishioners represent a barrier for young people to enter parish life.

Lack of Support for Families with Young Children

There is a lack of support for families with young children. For example, they feel unwelcome and unsupported in parish Masses.

Need for True and Full Church Teaching and Practice

One group stressed the need for true and full Church teaching and practice. They expressed concern about a lack of leadership and action by bishops and priests in accordance with their office; the teaching of error and dissent in Catholic institutions; erroneous views of women's roles, especially confusion concerning the nature of priesthood; teachers not practising the faith; abuse of liturgy reducing children's liturgies to cheap entertainment; lack of substance in homilies; lack of daily Mass; little opportunity for Eucharistic adoration; poorly-trained priests; "sappy, vacuous" hymns; and lack of support for families with young children.

7.11.4 Some Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

Ways emphasised to increase women's participation were the need to acknowledge the equality of men and women, and address issues concerning the apparent conflict between feminism and the Church.

Strong Call for Gender Equality

There was strong emphasis on the need to acknowledge gender equality within the Church:

Acknowledge that women and men are equal. Once this is truly understood and acknowledged, men and women will participate in partnership and the Catholic Church will be the true Church where each of us will find Jesus.

The need for Church structures to reflect the partnership of men and women was also stated:

The face of the Church is seen locally. So the local structure should reflect the partnership of men and women. A strong pastoral team needs to be seen to be

providing leadership in our parishes. We cannot continue to be at the mercy of the dynamism (or non-dynamism) of the priest.

It was suggested that priests need to be formed in such a way that they expect to work with teams in a collaborative manner.

Bridging the Gulf between Feminism and the “Unreal” Church

Efforts must be made to bridge the gulf between feminism and Church’s position thereon by meeting people “where they are at” instead of ignoring the reality as occurs now:

Most importantly, some [young women] felt offended by the Church’s position on issues of great importance to them such as sexuality, contraception, divorce, social justice and the environment. No one speaks to young women and the Church’s position on certain issues shows a lack of understanding of the realities facing young women today. Women are extremely frustrated at the male hierarchy of the Church. Also, they have been forced to find their own positions on issues such as those listed above. This is because when they seek a position from the Church it is unreal and the Church is not open to the complexities of all these issues. As one participant stated, the Church is not meeting people where they are at.

A broadening of Church teachings on women and their participation was requested.

Women in Official Paid Positions in Church Structures

Women should have official paid roles in Church structures, and these roles need to be made public. The women’s names, for instance, should appear on lists of parish personnel and they should be seen on the podium at official Church functions, e.g. Parish Masses.

Women as Visible Role Models and Church Spokespersons

It was noted that young women in particular need more visible role models in the Church in order to identify with being “Church”. They need to see women as Church spokespersons – “not men all the time”. Women need to be quoted along with men and seen in the official party at Church functions.

Need for Female Priests and Married Priests

The need was expressed for the greater availability of priests. It was felt that the Church should ordain female priests and allow married priests.

Inclusive Language

While the great majority of the groups sought the use of inclusive language, women from one group felt the Church should prevent politicised translations and especially remove “inclusive language”. This group proposed that the Church should use sacred language, doctrinal hymns, and true Catholic culture and art.

More Adequate Provision of Mass

At a parish level, there should be adequate provision of Mass at more appropriate times for workers and families. Churches should be designed with needs of mothers and young children in mind.

Improved Liturgies

As many young women find liturgies dull and irrelevant, there is a need to improve liturgies, change the culture of clericalism and introduce pastoral assistants to unburden priests.

Request for Priests to Be Open to Change

Young theological students recognised that parish priests are stretched but asked for priests to be open to change. This could be encouraged through ongoing training for priests which would make the Church more friendly to young women. It was proposed that having a Youth Worker, employed or voluntary, should be as much a part of the parish or regional Church structure as having a priest.

Concentration on the Community Aspect of the Local Church

New ways should be found to concentrate on the community aspect of the Church. It was felt that every effort must be made to bind people together, to provide companionship and social life. Women, who are generally competent at building local community and providing human services, should be given such positions officially in parish life. Strategies to avoid isolation should be put in place, with particular attention to migrants and older persons. The parish was envisaged as a place to gather together in a welcome atmosphere, with childcare provided, to discuss issues, such as Lenten group type discussions about faith.

More Emphasis on Compassion and a Right Teaching on the Primacy of Informed Conscience

There needs to be more emphasis on compassion when the official Church presents its teachings. Emphasis should be given to a right teaching on conscience and the primacy of informed conscience. Priests need to approach people with a respect for their consciences and a sense of compassion.

Greater Access to Theological Education

It was suggested that women should be encouraged to be educated theologically and thereby be allowed to seek formal, paid positions within the Church. Those women in the group studying theology wanted to be able to use their education in a positive manner. Access to theological education could be improved through scholarships and so forth.

Opportunities for Spiritual Formation

It was suggested that opportunities for spiritual formation are needed through parish retreats and spiritual direction. One group noted that better spiritual education is required involving Catholic mothers; Catholic teachers colleges

faithful to the Magisterium; good programs on Catholic faith and syllabuses; and obedience to the Magisterium.

Table 7.10: Young Women: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's roles seen as marginal, limited and voluntary • Important that younger women can participate through paid roles • Greater participation of women in Religious Orders due to higher positions in administration • Major areas of participation include married, single and religious life • Limitations of participation noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assistance to make a contribution beyond safe "household" tasks • No channels to facilitate participation • Some assistance from Church teachings, structures and practices • Some assistance from priests and women involved in pastoral care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet the needs of young women who aspire to serve the Church in influential roles • Highly educated women seen as a threat to male power • Male-dominated Church seen as rigid and unbending • No reasoning with official Church on birth control • Concern with aspects of teachings on sexuality and divorce • Lack of compassion by and scandal surrounding priests • Church experienced as irrelevant especially for youth • Insufficient attention given to youth • Lack of support for families with young children • Need for true and full Church teaching and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality and emphasis on partnership • Bridging gulf between feminism and the Church • Women in official paid positions • Women as visible role models and Church spokespersons • Need for female priests and married priests • Inclusive language, sought by most young women • More adequate provision of Mass • Improved liturgies • Priests open to change • Church more relevant to youth • Concentration on community aspect of local Church • More emphasis on compassion and right teaching on primacy of informed conscience • Greater access to theological education • More spiritual formation

7.12 Summary of Findings of the Targeted Groups

This Chapter has attempted to present the views of specifically targeted groups whose voices were not heard to a significant extent in either the Written Submissions or the Public Hearings. The information on the groups was presented in the following order:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women;
- clergy;
- women with disabilities and their carers;
- lay men;
- women from lower socio-economic status groups;
- women from a non-English-speaking background and migrant communities;
- refugee women;
- solo parents;
- women in the Ukrainian Catholic Church;
- young women.

Every attempt has been to give a full portrayal of the feelings, issues and concerns of each group concerning the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. Where material was available, The Report has endeavoured to include a range of suitable quotations to enable the distinctive voices of each group to be heard.

The ten targeted groups represent a wide range of people and concerns in the Australian Catholic Church: women and men; our first inhabitants, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those newly-arrived in Australia; single, married and religious; laity and clergy; rural and urban; educated and uneducated; youth and older generations; those who feel at home in the Church and those alienated by the Church and so forth. Despite the range of backgrounds and particular circumstances of each group, the responses from the various groups included a great number of common issues and concerns. Indeed, the summary of the findings of the targeted groups has identified that similar points about the participation of women in the Catholic Church were made repeatedly by the groups. While there is much in common between the groups, the findings also identify group-specific insights and concerns which require attention. As a result, the conclusions of this Chapter present a summary of the findings which highlights common issues as well as group-specific insights and needs.

7.12.1 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Major Contribution of Women in a Great Diversity of Roles and Tasks

The major contribution of women to the Catholic Church in Australia was constantly emphasised. Women form the majority of Church congregations and

are the backbone of the local Church. The statement, "Women are the Church", was made by all sectors of the Church. The affirmation of "We are the Church" was particularly strong from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who make such an outstanding contribution to their Church.

It was frequently stated that women participate in every way "except in the ordained ministry". Much attention was given to describing the great diversity of roles and tasks which women undertake in the Australian Church, mostly on a voluntary basis. Women's leadership roles in education and social services were highlighted, as well as the high numbers of women undertaking theological education. In recent years, the increasing contribution of women to the wider Church was noted, especially in the areas of education, social welfare and spirituality.

The contribution to the Church of particular women through their very presence was noted, especially the witness of the disabled and their carers, and the strength and determination of solo parents. It is significant that women's participation in the Church through the care of others was noted by women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the disabled and Aboriginal women. Fluency in English was seen as a key to the participation of NESB women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women emphasised that the integration of the Aboriginal culture and the Catholic faith was critical to their participation.

In keeping with other aspects of the research, it should be noted that no group spoke of the participation of women in the Church in terms of the workplace. The role of work in the secular society was not seen as an aspect of participation in the Church.

Participation in Support Roles Rather than in Areas of Leadership and Decision-making

It was identified as significant that women participate in support roles rather than in areas of leadership and decision-making. In general, this restriction on the role of women was seen to be an unfortunate limitation in a Church with an ageing priesthood whose numbers are declining. It was considered that, in Australia today, many women have the necessary education, appropriate background and skills, personal qualities and strong religious commitment to serve the Church in ways which go beyond supportive roles.

Participation in Liturgy and Sacraments

A highlight of the way in which women participate in the local Church was through their involvement in liturgy and Sacraments. Not only were women seen as the majority of any congregation, their active role in the preparation of the liturgy and in the preparation of children and adults to receive the Sacraments was noted. Post-Vatican II changes which have enabled women to participate in ways such as Special Ministers of the Eucharist were noted, as

such changes have enabled women to be a more visible presence in the Church. However, it was frequently noted that practices concerning the role of women in the liturgy vary considerably from parish to parish, depending on the attitude of the parish priest. For the women in the Ukrainian Church, the exclusion of women from the liturgy of the Church was seen as their greatest barrier and concern. These women highlighted the positive experience of married priests in the Eastern tradition.

Participation as Mothers

The participation of women in the Church as mothers was a constant theme. Through their daily work as mothers, in raising a family, in imparting values, and in educating children in the faith in the home setting, women were seen as participating explicitly in the Church.

Failure of Lay Men to Note Women's Participation through the Mothering Role

However, there was one significant exception to this view, as lay men did not describe women's participation in the Church in terms of their mothering role. As this finding was at variance with the findings of other groups, additional groups of lay men with varied backgrounds were formed to check the accuracy of this finding as well as lay men's perception on the assistance offered to women in the Church.

It would appear that a particular theological, pastoral and educational challenge has been identified. While women and the clergy perceive that a major feature of women's participation is in the domestic Church as mothers, lay men, especially middle-aged and more senior men, appear to perceive Church primarily as an institution. Within this framework, women's work in the home is not understood as part of their participation in Church. The clergy identified women's role as mothers as a major feature of their participation in the Church.

Within the context of marriage and family life, another related finding concerns the comparative lack of attention given to the role of wife in women's participation in the Church. The value of motherhood is stressed, with little or no attention given to the role of wife and the theology of marriage.

Participation as Religious Sisters

The witness of women as members of Religious Institutes was valued. Particular mention was made of their leadership roles in education, health care and social welfare, and also to their ongoing contribution to rural and outback regions of Australia.

Limitations of Participation Noted

While people were asked to give ways in which women participated in the Catholic Church in Australia, it is significant that, while doing this, no group

failed to note the limitations to women's participation, especially in relation to decision-making and leadership. The young women, in particular, highlighted the perception of the role of women in the Church as marginal, limited and voluntary. The clergy emphasised that what was important was not how women participated, but rather the attitudes in the Church to women's participation. Overall, it was felt that the future of the Church and the participation of women were closely linked.

7.12.2 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

Very Little Assistance and Support Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

In keeping with other areas of the research, this issue produced the least response as it was generally considered that the Australian Catholic Church offered women little, very little or no assistance and support to participate in the Church.

Sources of Support Mainly from Other Women and the Women's Movement

Where support was identified, it came mainly from other women and women's groups. The growing awareness and concern for women's affairs in society was seen as perhaps the most important source of encouragement. However, some occasional assistance from the Church was noted from some supportive priests and religious sisters, and from opportunities for education, especially theological courses.

Aboriginal women noted that, in the past, particular forms of support sometimes created dependence. Some declericalisation of many ministries in the Church was seen by the clergy as a support for women's participation. Women from lower socio-economic backgrounds cited their experience of Catholic education in both primary and secondary schools as most supportive of their participation in the Church.

The availability of English classes in some parishes assisted NESB women. Solo mothers noted that they were made to feel the guilty party rather than women to be helped.

Significant Limitations of Support Noted: "The Glass Ceiling is Pretty Low"

Significant limitations of support were noted by all groups with the exception of lay men. Young women felt that women were not encouraged to make a contribution beyond safe "household" tasks and that channels were not open to facilitate participation. Ukrainian women noted that support was offered when women were seen to be "doing the right thing". The clergy acknowledged significant limitations: "the glass ceiling is pretty low". It was noted that the Catholic Church is not as supportive as other Christian churches. A gap in the apostolate of highly qualified middle-aged women was identified.

Lay Men's Perception of Assistance to Women at Variance with All Other Groups

Once more, the findings of the groups of lay men were at odds with the findings of the other targeted groups on this issue. Lay men, especially the middle-aged and senior men of the Church, considered that women were given every form of assistance and support through a range of Church agencies. This research finding suggests the need for particular educational and pastoral considerations.

7.12.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

Apart from the groups of lay men, the major concern in all other groups related to barriers to women's participation in the Church and associated suggestions to increase participation. The fundamental barrier concerned patriarchal attitudes and traditions which were seen to be inconsistent with the person and message of Jesus Christ and which failed to take into account developments in the social sciences and changes in the role of women in the wider society.

Male-dominated Church

Patriarchal attitudes and traditions which failed to reflect the vision of the Gospel in the context of the modern world were cited as the fundamental barrier to women's participation. It was felt that these attitudes had been reinforced by John Paul II and the Vatican bureaucracy in recent times to the detriment of the teachings and spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Authoritarian attitudes and the misuse of power and position were seen as serious obstacles to women's participation. Fixation on rules and regulations; a rigid and unbending manner; and lack of compassion and of opportunity for dialogue were frequently-cited characteristics of a Church in need of renewal.

It was felt that society is beginning to change concerning the role and status of women and that it was time for the Church to respond. The structural Church was seen to be diminished to the extent to which it does not involve women and allow their voice to be heard. It was felt that much fear existed among the clergy and especially in the hierarchy: fear of ridicule, reprisals and rejection. Lack of "movement" in the Church's structures and practices, lack of re-examination of the *status quo*, and the length of time it takes to adapt or institute changes were experienced as ongoing barriers to women's involvement.

Exclusion from Leadership and Decision-making

The major effect of the patriarchal Church was the exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making. It was felt that there was an undervaluing of women's experience and its regular absence from forums which lead to decisions in the Church. With the lack of women in positions of far-reaching

authority, difficulties were envisaged for the future with men only in positions of authority. It was considered that wise decision-making required the involvement of both men and women. As one woman noted: "If the Church is a business, I can buy shares but they must be non-voting." In a Church which claims to be Catholic, universal and sacramental, this invisibility of women was seen as an ongoing barrier.

Exclusion of Women from Priesthood and Ministry

In the exclusion of women from and reservation of particular Church offices to males, gender was seen as a barrier to priesthood and other crucial ministry roles such as the permanent diaconate. While women have a role in sacramental preparation, it was noted that it was extremely limited in the dispensation of sacraments. It was stressed that it was the centrality of the Eucharist that was important rather than an exclusively male priesthood.

Ban on Discussion of Women's Ordination

Apart from Church teaching on women's ordination, there was unanimity that the ban on the discussion of this issue was seen to undermine seriously both the credibility of the Church and the Church's authenticity in claiming to be serious about women's participation.

Lack of Gender Equality in the Church

It was agreed by all groups that there should be no barriers on the basis of gender. However, while there is much rhetoric in the Church concerning the equality of all people, it was felt that a lack of true gender equality exists in the Church. A serious conflict was identified between feminist ideals proclaiming equal opportunity, dignity and rights, and the Church "line" and practice. It was considered that there was little understanding of this conflict and its impact on women, especially the young. The conservative feminist stance of many women in the Church was noted. It was felt that the Church needed to accommodate the spectrum of feminist thought.

Devaluing of the Feminine Dimensions of Life

Across the groups, it was strongly felt that there is an insensitivity to and a devaluing of the feminine dimension of life. A lack of appreciation of women and their work was highlighted and there was a sense that women are taken for granted. It was noted that women's gifts are not being used in the service of the Church due to the disposition of many priests or as a result of fear. The trivialisation of women was seen as a source of great alienation. A sense of powerlessness on the part of women was also noted. The Church was seen as hypocritical in its relationship to women in demanding so much while some men within the hierarchy appeared so unwilling to change and make the Church relevant to women and to the young. Lack of official recognition,

encouragement, information, resources and support mechanisms for women were identified as barriers. It was felt that there is a need to make contributions from the laity more important.

Sexist and Condemnatory Attitudes of Some Clergymen and their Fear of Educated Women

Sexist attitudes of some clergy and their fear of educated women were seen as major barriers to women's participation. It was felt that, in general, women are perceived as a threat to male power in the Church, in particular, highly educated women. Men in the Church raised barriers through fear and lack of confidence, skills and training. The findings of the targeted groups indicated that many people's experience is that priests and the official Church are condemnatory rather than compassionate. It was felt that priests have alienated the young. It was also noted that some young people's identity as Catholics had been badly affected by the sexual crimes and scandals of priests.

A constantly recurring theme among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women related to barriers presented by the clergy, in particular judgmental and insensitive priests. Difficulties concerning the credibility of Aboriginal culture and spirituality were linked to parish priests.

Church Teachings Concerning Canon Law and Birth Control

Some Church teachings represented particular barriers, especially the prohibitions in the Code of Canon Law, the teaching on birth control where "women were left out of equation", and faulty Mariology.

Particular Concerns Regarding Marriage and the Family

Concerns in relation to marriage and family were experienced as major obstacles. Church teaching on divorce was seen to be restrictive as it was noted that women are often trapped in marriages that are unhealthy and which put them at risk. It was proposed that a tolerant attitude to family breakdown may be necessary sometimes to save a mother and her children from a dangerous situation. Some divorcees cease to practise their faith due to the fact that they are unable to receive the Sacraments. A strong sense of lack of acceptance by the Church was expressed by solo parents. It was noted that this lack of acceptance of solo parent families leads to breakdown in the relationship between Church and solo parents.

Many Aboriginal women feel excluded because they are single mothers or their "living situation" is judged against the Church's rules on marriage. There were strong requests for support for marriage and the family, with particular reference to the need for the reunion and rebuilding of families as a result of "the stolen generation". It was noted that single Aboriginal mothers need spiritual and practical support – "not judgment and exclusion".

Church Experienced as Irrelevant, Especially for Youth

There was a strong perception that the Church is irrelevant for many people, especially for youth. It was also noted that many young people who do remain in the Church experience the Mass as irrelevant. There was a particular concern about the loss of the young, especially the alienation of girls. A strong concern was expressed that the Church is focused on the elderly and conservative rather than on young people or women. It was felt that insufficient attention is given to youth, especially young people in their twenties. On a parish level, the "politics" of the parish and clique-like groups of parishioners represent a barrier for the involvement of young people. It was noted that traditional parish roles for women were not inclusive of younger women. A significant culture gap was experienced between priests and women; it was felt that, because priests have never been married, there was little in common.

Lack of Lay Female Role Models

A lack of female role models, other than women like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Blessed Mary MacKillop, was emphasised. It was suggested that women other than religious sisters need to be visible in the Church as a source of inspiration and encouragement.

Use of Inclusive Language and Images

It was felt that the current use of language in prayer and in theology leads to a sense of exclusion of women. The use of non-inclusive language by the Church was seen as consistent with a policy of lack of inclusivity and the offensive nature thereof. The reluctance or even refusal of the Church to encourage inclusive language, such as in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, was experienced as a significant barrier by many groups. The poverty of the Lectionary and exclusion of some significant scripture therein related to women were noted. In the Ukrainian Church, inclusive language was not the same problem as in the rest of the Australian Catholic Church as the Ukrainian language is like French in its construction.

Inadequate Communication and Consultation

Lack of communication and consultation presented barriers to women's participation. In the widely-spread Australian Church, the difficulty of distance and a sense of isolation were reported. It was recognised that while some priests are good communicators, this is not the norm in the present structure. In general, it was considered that insufficient information about possibilities for participation in the Church is available. In particular, it was frequently stated that consultation is not broad enough within the Aboriginal community.

Traditional Attitudes towards Women in Society

Some cultural and social barriers were named in terms of traditional perceptions of women's roles and the low value attributed to them. Stereotypes of women and their roles were sometimes experienced as barriers both in a particular cultural tradition and in the Church. However, in general, it was seen that Australian society was leading the way concerning the affirmation and encouragement of equal opportunity of women.

Women Themselves as Barriers, Especially those Intolerant of Change

Sometimes the attitudes of women themselves were seen as barriers: the very conservative and intolerant stance of some and the extreme ideological feminism of others. It was felt that traditionalist Catholic organisations undermine the participation of women, especially through publications, lobbying, intimidation and secret reporting.

Many Demands on Women's Time

Women with family responsibilities and involvement in community activities are faced with many demands on their time. This was particularly the case for women who are members of an ethnic group. Time factors for NESB women and those from a lower socio-economic background represent a significant barrier to participation as there is often the need to work to support the family, which takes precedence over all else.

Inadequate Remuneration and Unjust Employment Conditions for Women in the Church

Barriers to women's participation concerned inadequate, and in some cases unjust, remuneration for work done. Restriction of career paths and the limitation of opportunity and future security for persons who invest in ministry as compared to a job in other organisations were seen as barriers. A particular concern was raised about the unjust employment conditions and remuneration of pastoral associates as employees of the Church.

Lack of Education of Clergy about Women

The lack of education among the clergy about the equality of women was identified as a barrier. It was felt that the clergy needs to be educated about women, equality and the roles of women. Education towards a system "that makes room for women" was sought.

Concerns about Catholic Education

Some groups felt that Catholic schools were for the elite, or for families who are not Catholic. The push to get enrolments was seen to be about numbers and money, rather than Christianity. Other groups reported concerns about discrimination in Catholic schools and a lack of Catholic ethos and teaching. It

was felt that there is a need for knowledge of Aboriginal spirituality by all teachers in Catholic schools.

Lack of Facilities and Support for Families with Young Children and the Disabled

A lack of support for families with young children was noted, especially solo parent families. For example, such parents feel unwelcome and unsupported in parish Masses. Overall, there is a lack of facilities and support for people with disabilities, including the ageing, and their carers. Problems concerning considerations of time commitment and availability were highlighted because of uncertainty of length of commitment when agreeing to take on Church appointments. It was stressed that limits to time commitment and time in office should apply. Times for programs were also experienced as unsuitable for working women.

Lack of True and Full Teaching and Practice

Within the groups of lay men and young women, some concerns were raised concerning the lack of true and full Church teaching and practice, including a lack of leadership and action by bishops and priests in accordance with their office; the teaching of error and dissent in Catholic institutions; erroneous views of women's role, especially confusion concerning the nature of priesthood; the cheapening of Catholicism, intellectually and liturgically; poorly trained priests; secularisation; and anti-Christian media values.

Failure to Link the Celebration of the Faith with Aboriginal Culture and Life Today

The dominant theme concerning barriers to the participation of Aboriginal women related to cultural barriers experienced in the Church, in particular the failure of the Australian Church to link the celebration of the faith with Aboriginal culture and life today. The lack of integration of the Catholic faith and everyday life of the Aboriginal person presented a significant barrier to participation in the Australian Catholic Church. The history of the Australian Catholic Church and its relationships with Aboriginal peoples emerged as another major impediment. Open racial discrimination within the Church was identified as a strong barrier, especially in Catholic schools and parishes.

That the Australian Church was dominated by non-Aboriginal people was an obstacle to some Aboriginal women. The lack of role models in the Church for Aboriginal women was cited as a difficulty.

Lack of Understanding and Assistance Given to People with Disabilities and their Carers

For women with disabilities, the major barriers concerned the lack of understanding and assistance given to people with disabilities and their carers

by the Church and the wider society. The present hedonistic society which advocates survival of the fittest was cited as a fundamental problem. The difficulties of the carers of people with disabilities were highlighted. Some attitudes held by congregations and parish priests, and a lack of knowledge and understanding by Bishops, priests and parishioners of people with disabilities, represented significant obstacles to participation. Apathy in the Church towards people with disabilities was cited, as well as a lack of opportunities or encouragement to be actively involved. Often people seemed unaware of the capabilities of people with disabilities.

Lack of Transport and Child-minding Facilities Identified by Women from Lower Socio-economic Backgrounds

Women from lower socio-economic backgrounds identified a number of social and cultural barriers concerning participation in the Church, including a lack of transport and child-minding facilities. The societal change concerning Sunday from a day for relaxation and Church to one which is often much like any other day was experienced as an obstacle, as well as animosity towards religion in the workplace.

Lack of Acceptance and Support for Solo Parent Families

A strong sense of lack of acceptance by the Church was experienced by solo parents, leading to a breakdown in the relationship between them and the Church. As a result, solo mothers experience isolation in the parish situation. Generally, care from the clergy in the time surrounding the marriage breakdown was not experienced as effective as it was found that many priests had no skills in counselling couples with difficulties.

Significant Concerns about the Nature and Process of Annulment

The annulment process emerged as a most significant issue and a great source of alienation for solo parents. There was a strong feeling that the annulment process is intrusive and damaging because of the nature of the questions asked. The notion of having to prove that there was never a marriage was a source of anger.

Ignorance of Some Australians and Catholics about the Ukrainian Church

The ignorance of some Australians and Catholics about the Ukrainian Church was a concern. It was noted that, in Catholic schools, not enough is known about the Eastern Rite.

Mature-aged Lay Men Did Not Perceive Barriers to Women's Participation

Many groups of mature-aged lay men felt that there were no barriers to women's participation or "practically none" other than exclusion from ordination. This finding was in contrast to all other groups. However, the groups of young lay men had a different perception where significant barriers

were noted which related to Church structures and practices, and attitudes in the broader society.

7.12.4 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

It was frequently stated that ways to increase women's participation included reversing all barriers noted above.

Opportunities for Involvement in Decision-making and Leadership

Many suggestions were made for increased opportunities for women's involvement in decision-making and leadership. It was proposed that the Australian Church make those positions of leadership and decision-making where women are not included at present available to qualified women. It was considered important to find ways in which the wisdom, gifts and qualities of women are brought to bear on decisions in the Church.

Involvement in consultation and decision-making was strongly suggested at all levels. A greater number of women in decision-making structures, including in key posts in the Vatican, was seen as important in signalling the Church's authenticity in its approach to women's participation. A separation of priesthood and decision-making was suggested. It was recommended that the Australian Church set a percentage goal to be achieved by a set date concerning inclusion of women in decision-making situations in the structural Church. The importance of women undertaking leadership and decision-making roles was stressed as advantageous for the whole Church and especially for the future of the Church. It was also suggested that the Church have Indigenous women as part of decision-making in all areas, especially in judgments and decisions which affect them.

Re-examination of Ministry and Priesthood

Across all groups, there was a call for many of the issues concerning ministry and priesthood to be re-examined. Equal opportunity for Church offices and positions was proposed. The need was expressed for the greater availability of priests. It was felt that the Church should ordain female priests and allow married priests. It was suggested that the Church establish procedures to ordain, in the same way as men, women who have a vocation to the priesthood. Celibacy must become optional.

The Code of Canon Law should be changed to enable women to exercise authority in the Church. It was suggested that there be a real recognition of the diversity of ministries in the Church; that the Church ordain women as deacons; and that the lay ministries of acolyte and lector be understood and instituted according to the Code of Canon Law and hence made open to both men and women. It was recommended that the Church look seriously at Sacramental theology and practice, and promote the greater involvement of

women in Sacramental ministry. It was also proposed that the ban which excludes women from preaching be lifted. The Church should involve qualified and experienced women in all pre-marriage programs. It was felt that celibate males lack relevant experience and are therefore not necessarily the best people to prepare and/or present such programs.

There were strong and heartfelt requests for the training and authorisation of both Aboriginal women and men for leadership and ministry. It was felt that there are people prepared to be trained and that there is support from their communities. There were many requests for funds to train Aboriginal people to minister to their own people.

Open Discussion of the Issue of Women's Ordination

There was widespread agreement that the issue of women's ordination be discussed. While views differed on the question of whether women should be ordained, there was general support for the view that it should be more openly discussed.

Strong Call for Gender Equality as a Matter of Urgency

There was strong emphasis on the need to acknowledge gender equality within the Church. It was proposed that the major way in which the Church can increase the participation of women is by taking to heart the words of Paul (Gal. 3:27-28): *"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"*.

All targeted groups agreed that there should be no discrimination in the Church on the basis of gender. Every effort must be made to abolish such discrimination in a genuine attempt to break down the barriers of male domination. Gender equality was needed for women in order to have their roles approved, equality recognised and their gifts appreciated. It was suggested that, as a matter of urgency, the Church identify those places and roles where women would "shine" or else run the risk of losing the young women. Women should be offered self-determination of their increased involvement.

Proportional inclusion of women in power structures in the Church was proposed. The promotion of the total partnership role for everyone in the Church community was sought. Achievement of a balance of women's and men's participation was seen as important. It was suggested that the Church ensure female representatives on all parish councils and Bishops' advisory committees.

Racial Equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The need for recognition of the full human dignity of and racial equality for Aboriginal peoples was highlighted. A compassionate involvement of the Church in Aboriginal communities was requested.

Recognition, Affirmation and Support of Women and Women's Groups

There were frequent requests from all groups for greater recognition, affirmation and support of women. An attitude which actively supports women and women's groups was sought in the Church. Support from the hierarchy of the Church was seen to be critical. It was considered essential to recognise not only what women do but also the value of women's participation. It was noted that genuine acknowledgment and publicity should be given to the work women already perform in the Church. The need for recognition and encouragement of Aboriginal women's involvement in the Church was stressed.

Women should be encouraged to seek positions at all levels in the Church. It was suggested that the Church provide prominent female Church leaders as guest speakers. Personal invitations should be extended to women, especially young people. The Australian Church was urged to create opportunities for Aboriginal women to share their stories in order to strengthen and encourage each other as women in the Church. It was suggested that affirmation and support for the role of the single mother be shown through recognition of her contribution.

Acceptance of solo parent families as authentic families, provision of appropriate assistance for people going through marital breakdown and a review of the annulment process were also suggested.

Improved Communication and Consultation

Improved information, communication and consultation about possible roles for women and men were proposed. The need for listening was stressed: listening to the stories of women; listening without patronising. There were strong requests for the Church being able to see both sides of an issue. Opportunities were sought for men and women to meet to hear each other's ideas in order to lessen defensiveness and fear. The importance of respectful dialogue was noted. The establishment of a women's Bishop's Advisory Committee was recommended.

Use and Sanction of Inclusive Language

There were many suggestions that the use and sanction of inclusive language texts be introduced in the Church Australia-wide. It was proposed that the Church use language and liturgical styles that include women rather than exclude them. The main request concerning language and imagery for Aboriginal women concerned the integration of Aboriginal culture and the Catholic faith. However, gender-inclusive language was also sought. While the great majority of the groups sought the use of inclusive language, women from one group felt the Church should prevent politicised translations and remove any inclusive language.

Need for Lay Women as Role Models

The need for visible contemporary lay women as role models in the Australian Church was a constant theme. It was proposed that women other than religious sisters need to be visible as a source of inspiration and encouragement. It was noted that young women in particular need more visible role models in the Church in order to identify with being "Church". They need to see women as Church spokespersons as much as men. It was stressed that women need to be quoted along with men and seen in the official party at Church functions.

Support for Marriage and the Family

There were strong requests for support for marriage and the family. Particular reference was made to the need for the reunion and rebuilding of Aboriginal families as a result of "the stolen generation". It was noted that single Aboriginal mothers need spiritual and practical support, not judgment and exclusion. Recognition of sole parent families as "regular families" was sought as well as assistance to parishioners who have faced or are facing marital breakdown. An urgent need was experienced to address the issue of marriage annulment, its relevance, nature and processes.

Revision of Teaching and Preaching on Birth Control

Revision of teaching and preaching on birth control was sought. It was considered that there needs to be more emphasis on compassion when the official Church presents its teachings. Emphasis should be given to correct teaching on conscience and the primacy of informed conscience. It was suggested that priests need to approach people with a respect for their consciences and sense of compassion.

Bridging the Gulf between Feminism and the Church's Position

A broadening of Church teachings on women and their participation was requested. It was proposed that efforts be made to bridge the gulf between feminism and the Church's position by meeting people "where they are at" instead of ignoring the current reality.

More Inclusive Parish and Liturgical Structures

There was much agreement that women be included in all aspects of the work and life of the parish, for example, in all parish councils, administration and pastoral work within dioceses and parishes, eucharistic ministry and liturgy committees, and that they be appointed as Special Ministers. Among Aboriginal women, all suggestions were concerned with women being allowed to take a more active and involved role in liturgy, gatherings and workshops for liturgy. The integration of culture and Church was requested.

There were a great number of practical suggestions to increase women's participation in parish and liturgical structures. Most frequently made

suggestions included greater sensitivity towards the needs of mothers and families; churches being designed with the needs of mothers and young children in mind; provision of child-minding facilities during Mass times; provision of Mass at more appropriate times for workers and families; greater inclusion of solo parents; strategies to address questions of transport in low socio-economic areas of parishes; and improved liturgies. It was proposed that new ways be found to concentrate on the community aspect of the Church.

Suggestions of ways to improve and increase the participation in the Church of women with disabilities and their carers related mainly to parish and liturgical structures. These suggestions focused on the need for greater inclusion of women with disabilities and their carers through a range of practical strategies to welcome and accommodate the needs of the disabled in the celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Mass, and other ceremonies. The need for pastoral care of people with disabilities and their carers was stressed, especially the urgent need for respite for the families who care for a member with a disability.

Integration of Aboriginal Culture and Church Celebrations

There was an overwhelming request for the integration of Aboriginal culture and the celebration of the Catholic faith. Bringing Church and culture together was the dominant theme. It was reported that ministry of Aboriginal people to their own provides a way to break down the barriers to participation in the Church. The request for the Church to be more culturally aware in dealing with and including Aboriginal women was emphasised in terms of the Mass and other Church ceremonies. It was noted that liturgies that have an Aboriginal cultural focus require the involvement of Aboriginal people. Acceptance by priests of the Aboriginal culture was considered very important. It was suggested that priests in their training be exposed, both through studies and experience, to Aboriginal Spirituality, culture and history.

Need for More Young People to Be Actively Involved

By far the greatest request in relation to the wider Church concerned the need for more young people to be involved in the Church. There were strong calls for the Church to become relevant for the next generation. The need for active roles for young women was stressed.

Need for Clergy Renewal

Suggestions concerning ministry and priesthood often began with the importance of renewal for the clergy themselves. The need for continuing clergy renewal, in order to address both the phobias of clericalism (misogyny) and the clerical culture associated with the order of power and jurisdiction, was proposed. Young theological students recognised that parish priests are very busy but asked for priests to be open to change. This could be encouraged through ongoing training for priests and making the Church more friendly to

young women. The education of clergy concerning the greater participation of women was seen as key. The need for more sensitive, more open and more appropriate leadership from the Pope and the Bishops was highlighted.

Recognition and Promotion of Women's Spirituality

The need for the ongoing spiritual formation for the whole Church was emphasised. The medieval women mystics and their deep spirituality were noted. Recognition of women as spiritual leaders was proposed. Encouragement should be offered to women to deepen their spirituality. Opportunities for spiritual formation and education were sought through parish retreats, spiritual direction and educational programs. It was suggested that the Church encourage the involvement of all Indigenous women in sharing their stories to build up Aboriginal Spirituality.

Education of Clergy about Women and the Catholic Church

Proposals for education focused mainly on the training of priests. Education and consciousness raising, especially among the clergy and male religious, about women and their roles in the Catholic Church were seen as key. Clergy formation around sexuality and celibacy was stressed. The involvement of women in the ethical and moral training of priests, especially in regard to sexuality, was sought.

Education of Clergy and Male Religious to Involve Women

There were frequent proposals concerning the need for the involvement of qualified women theologians, spiritual directors and formation personnel both in seminaries and in the ongoing education of priests. It was proposed that those training to be priests live with a functional Catholic family for a period of time during their training so they have practical experience to inform their thinking.

Joint Training for Priests and Pastoral Workers

It was also proposed that the Church train women deacons along with priests and that joint in-services for priests and Pastoral Associates be provided. More funding for training in pastoral work was requested.

Education and Training in Adult Faith for Both Aboriginal Women and Men

Opportunities for education and training for both Aboriginal women and men were frequently suggested to promote participation in the Church. It was stated that there is often a strong faith commitment to the Church by Aboriginal women, but this needs to be built on through re-education and adult faith development incorporating cultural expression.

It was felt that Aboriginal men also need educational opportunities in order to facilitate Aboriginal women becoming leaders and role models in the Church. Reconciliation through education and involvement of Elders was highlighted.

Greater Access to Theological Education and Paid Positions in the Church

It was suggested that women be encouraged to undertake theological education to allow them to seek formal, paid positions within the Church. Access to theological education could be improved through scholarships and so forth. An educational formation program targeted directly to women to facilitate their full involvement in the Church was proposed.

Opportunities Created for Women in the Professional Service of the Church

There were constant requests for women to participate more visibly in the professional service of the Church and to be offered more opportunities for employment in the Church, especially in leadership and decision-making positions. The need was seen for talented women to be offered positions in the Church which receive a living wage and where women can be recognised and promoted. It was also suggested that the Church create more employment opportunities for Indigenous women in a range of roles and tasks in the Church.

Addressing Unjust Remuneration and Employment Conditions for Women in the Church

It was proposed that justice issues be addressed concerning adequate remuneration and employment conditions for women in the Church. Priests and people should be educated about the need for social justice in the employment of pastoral leaders and pastoral associates. Security for women in full-time ministry was sought. It was felt that the appointment of pastoral administrators is very *ad hoc* and that training is minimalist. It was suggested that paid parish ministry needs to receive much more support and that pastoral associates have working contracts at the parish level.

Table 7.11 Targeted Group Synthesis: Summary of Responses to Key Questions

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major contribution of women in a great diversity of roles and tasks except ordained ministry• Participation in support roles rather than in areas of leadership and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very little assistance from Church• Support mainly from other women and the women's movement• Occasional support from some priests and religious sisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male-dominated Church• Exclusion from leadership and decision-making• Exclusion from priesthood and ministry• Ban on discussion of women's ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reverse all barriers• Opportunities for involvement in decision-making and leadership• Re-examination of ministry and priesthood• Married priests• Optional celibacy• Women deacons
			<i>continued ...</i>

Targeted Group Synthesis: Summary of Responses to Key Questions
continued

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in liturgy and Sacraments • Mothering role • At variance with other groups, failure of lay men to note mothering role • Membership of Religious Institutes • Major contribution to education, health care, welfare services and spirituality • Limitations of participation noted especially in relation to decision-making and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, especially theological education • Limitations of assistance noted: "the glass ceiling is pretty low" • Lay men's perception that much assistance is offered to women at variance with other groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of gender equality • Devaluing of feminine dimensions of life • Sexist and condemnatory attitudes of some clergymen and their fear of educated women • Church teachings concerning Code of Canon Law, birth control and faulty Mariology • Concerns regarding marriage and family • Church irrelevant, especially for youth • Lack of lay female role models • Use of exclusive language and images • Inadequate communication and consultation • Traditional attitudes towards women in society • Some women themselves, especially those intolerant of change • Demands on women's time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement of women in Sacramental ministry • Open discussion of women's ordination • Gender equality as a matter of urgency • Racial equality for Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander peoples • Recognition, affirmation and support of women and women's groups • Improved communication and consultation • Use and sanction of inclusive language • Lay women as role models • Support for marriage and the family • Revised teaching and preaching on birth control • Bridging gulf between feminism and Church • More inclusive parish and liturgical structures

Targeted Group Synthesis: Summary of Responses to Key Questions
continued

Women's current participation	Assistance and support for women	Barriers to participation	Ways to increase participation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate remuneration and unjust employment for women in the Church • Lack of education of clergy about women • Concerns about Catholic education • Lack of facilities and support for families with young children and the disabled • Lack of true teaching and practice • Failure to link celebration of the faith with Aboriginal culture and life today • Lack of support for people with disabilities and their carers • Lack of transport and childcare facilities • Lack of support for solo parent families • Concerns about annulment • Ignorance about Ukrainian Church • Mature-aged lay men did not perceive barriers to women's participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of Aboriginal culture and Church • More young people being actively involved • Clergy renewal • Recognition and promotion of women's spirituality • Education of clergy about women and the Catholic Church • Educating clergy and male religious to involve women • Joint training for priests and pastoral workers • Education and training in adult faith for both Aboriginal women and men • Greater access to theological education and paid positions in the Church • Increased opportunities for women in the professional service of the Church • Addressing unjust remuneration and employment conditions for women in the Church

CHAPTER 8

SURVEY OF CATHOLIC CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

- 8.1 The Participation of Women in Catholic Church Organisations
- 8.2 The Participation of Women in Theological Education in Australia
- 8.3 Summary of Findings of Survey of Catholic Church Organisations and Theological Institution

In this chapter two matters are addressed in relation to the Australian context: the participation of women in both Catholic Church organisations and theological education at the Catholic theological colleges and at the Catholic universities, Australian Catholic University and the University of Notre Dame Australia.

8.1 The Participation of Women in Catholic Church Organisations

To gather data on the participation of women in Catholic Church organisations a request was sent to national Church agencies for data about women's participation in their sector. The national agencies were asked to provide such data if they held it centrally or alternatively to seek the data from individual institutions under the umbrella of each agency. Data were particularly sought from the health care, social welfare and education sectors but also from other agencies.

The national agencies or their individual institutions were asked to supply answers to four questions:

1. What proportion of people participating in your organisation in the following ways are women?

Roles and tasks	Percentage of people performing these roles and tasks who are women
Leadership, Management	
Middle-management, professions, supervision, coordination	
Para-professional, secretarial, administration, clerical/support, technical trades, voluntary work, fundraising, "caring"	
Other	

2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in your organisation?
3. What are barriers, if any, to women's participation in your organisation?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in your organisation could be increased?

The response from organisations to the request for such data was not overwhelming. Set out below are the number of organisations by sector which did provide data.

Sector	Number of organisations providing data
Catholic Health Care	42
Catholic Education	12
Catholic Welfare	11
Other National/Diocesan Organisations	5
Other Groups and Movements	9
Total	79

Care must, therefore, be taken to avoid generalising from these organisations' data to each sector or to Catholic organisations as a whole. However, the data from these seventy-nine (79) organisations are instructive and patterns can be discerned therein. What follows is a discussion of the data, provided by the responses from each sector to the four questions listed above, with most attention being focused upon the health care, education and welfare sectors.

8.1.1 The Participation of Women in Catholic Health Care Roles and Tasks

Tabled below are the combined responses from Catholic health care organisations to the question seeking the proportion of women undertaking particular roles and tasks in each organisation.

Table 8.1: Proportion of Women Undertaking Particular Roles and Tasks in Catholic Health Care Organisations
(The numbers in the columns are numbers of organisations)

Proportion of women (%)	Leadership, management	Middle-management, professions, supervision, coordination	Para-professional, secretarial, administrative, clerical, technical, voluntary, fundraising, caring	Other
100	16	18	2	—
95–99	1	5	10	1
90–94	1	3	14	2
85–89	—	1	6	1
80–84	2	4	5	—
75–79	7	3	—	1
70–74	1	3	2	1
65–69	—	1	—	1
60–64	1	—	1	—
55–59	—	—	—	—
50–54	9	—	—	1*
45–49	—	—	—	1*
40–44	—	—	—	—
35–39	—	—	—	—
30–34	—	—	—	1*
25–29	1	—	—	—
20–24	—	—	—	—
15–19	—	—	1	1*
10–14	—	—	—	1*
5–9	1	1	—	—
0–4	2	1	—	—
Total Number of Organisations ^a	42	40	41	12

* Five health care organisations referred specifically to the percentage of women on their Boards of Management.

∅ Not all organisations provided percentage figures in each category.

For ease of reference the roles and tasks detailed in Table 8.1 will be referred to respectively as leadership–management roles, supervision–coordination roles (i.e. middle-management and professional roles) and para-professional–support roles (including volunteer and carer roles). Table 8.1 should be read thus, for example by reading down the columns: of the 42 health care organisations which provided data 16 organisations had 100 percent women in leadership–management roles, in another 7 organisations women held between 75 and 79 percent of the leadership–management roles and in a further 9 organisations

between 50 and 54 percent of the leadership–management roles were held by women. In short, in 38 out of 42 health care organisations reporting data, women hold 50 percent or more of the leadership–management positions.

The position is even more striking when supervision–coordination roles are considered. In these health care organisations 38 have reported that women perform these roles in at least 65 percent of cases. Indeed, 18 organisations reported that 100 percent of supervision–coordination roles performed in their organisations were performed by women. Similarly, in 37 of these same organisations women filled at least 80 percent of the para-professional roles.

The important conclusion to be reached from the data in Table 8.1 is that women dominate the para-professional–support level and the supervision–coordination level in Catholic health care organisations. Their dominance is less at the leadership–management level but quite clear nevertheless. In the “Other” column in Table 8.1 five health care organisations are shown reporting the percentages of women on their Boards of Management.

Assistance and Support Offered to Women to Participate in Catholic Health Care Organisations

This question brought forward a wide range of responses. A small number of organisations, all of whom indicated women performed all or almost all roles and tasks at all levels, indicated the absence of any specific assistance and support to women to participate in their particular health care organisation. Other organisations simply noted that they followed principles of equality in employment opportunities and affirmative action while one or two other organisations indicated gender was not a consideration in the employment of staff in their organisations.

However, most of the reporting organisations indicated some specific measures of support and assistance to women. The most commonly offered measures are listed below:

- workshops and seminars to increase knowledge and improve opportunities for promotion or to undertake higher duties positions;
- job-sharing;
- part-time work;
- opportunities for professional development within the organisation and via external courses, conference attendance, etc.;
- flexible hours of work;
- child-care facilities;
- family/sick leave provisions to care for sick, dependent relatives;
- independent counselling unit for staff;
- management training specifically for women;

- mentoring arrangements and support networks for women;
- mother-friendly workplace with a special parenting room for feeding new born infants, changing and bathing infants, etc.;
- special parental leave provisions and return-to-work options.

The Catholic health care organisations that provided data varied greatly in size and purpose. Several large hospitals provided data indicating that they have in place complex and comprehensive packages of support and assistance for women in their organisations. Smaller nursing homes, where all employees and managers are women, were much more likely to report, as in the words of one such organisation, that “full assistance and support are given to all levels of staff”.

Barriers to Women’s Participation in Catholic Health Care Organisations

What are the perceived barriers to women’s participation in these organisations? This is a crucial question, especially as the data provided by the reporting organisations show them to be largely led, managed and staffed by women.

Thirty-three (33) reporting organisations indicated simply that there were no barriers at all to women’s participation in their organisations. Some of the remaining nine (9) organisations noted particular barriers to women’s participation. The full list of these barriers is presented below along with the number of organisations reporting each category.

Participation barrier reported	Number of health care organisations reporting barrier
• Women needing to balance family commitments and job requirements	1
• Women’s lack of confidence, knowledge and job experience to seek progress in the organisation	2
• Lack of accredited women medical specialists	1
• Lack of child-care facilities	1
• Flat organisational structure	1
• Women being in low-paid casual work and unable to progress in the organisation	1

Ways to Increase Women’s Participation in Catholic Health Care Organisations

Given the picture already provided by these organisations it was interesting to note the suggestions they provided to increase women’s participation in their organisations. All of these suggestions are listed below, plus the total number of organisations making each suggestion. The presentation of these data in this way allows any overall patterns of suggestions to be identified and indicates whether such suggestions are particular to individual organisations.

Suggestions to increase women's participation in health care organisations	Number of health care organisations making the specific suggestion
• More women on the Board of Management	4
• Allowing priests to marry so wives can participate in the organisation	1
• More money to increase total staff	1
• More women volunteers	1
• Need to have women gain access to tertiary education to have a more fulfilling career path	1
• More opportunity for women to develop communication skills	1
• Specific programs to target employing women in non-traditional areas in hospitals	1
• More men in the organisation, especially for heavy work	2
• Help for women to coordinate family and work commitments	1
• Better child-care facilities	1
• Better promotional opportunities for women	1
• More information regarding planning and organisational change	1
• More funds for training	1
• Greater understanding of lay leadership	1
• Board representation for nursing section in the organisation	1

As tabulated in the previous section, most of the nineteen (19) suggestions made were individual to particular organisations or, in one case, to two organisations. The exception is the suggestion from four (4) health care organisations to put more women on their Boards of Management. Table 8.1 shows that five (5) organisations provided data on the percentage of women on their Boards.

The overall picture of the Catholic health care organisations which provided data is of organisations led in most cases by women, with most middle-management and para-professional-support roles filled by women, in which women's participation is supported, and in which barriers to such participation are specific to particular organisations. Individual organisations are seeking ways to increase women's participation, including representation on some Boards of Management. In the next section of this Chapter, data provided from the education sector are reported.

8.1.2 The Participation of Women in Catholic Education Roles and Tasks

In its most recent publication concerning Australian schools the Bureau of Statistics (1998: p.12) notes that in 1997, 18.93 percent of primary school students in Australia attended Catholic primary schools. Among Australia's secondary school students 20.64 percent attended Catholic secondary schools. This same publication (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998: p.81) displays the full-time equivalent staff figures for Catholic schools in 1997 broken down by area of activity, category of school and major function. These figures are presented in Table 8.2A.

Table 8.2A Full-time Equivalent of School Staff in Catholic Schools by Area of Activity, Major Function and Category of School: Australia 1997

Major function	Primary schools			Secondary schools			Total		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Teaching staff	3360	14178	17538	8808	10979	19787	12168	25157	37325
Specialist support staff	18	140	158	145	288	433	163	428	591
Admin. & clerical staff	96	3094	3190	556	3346	3902	652	6440	7092
Building operations & general maintenance staff, etc.	286	166	452	855	302	1157	1141	468	1609
Total	3760	17578	21338	10364	14915	25279	14124	32493	46617

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998) *Schools Australia* Catalogue 4221.0, page 81

The data in Table 8.2A tell a clear story. In the Catholic primary school sector in Australia women are 80.8 percent of the teaching staff, 88.6 percent of the specialist support staff, 97.0 percent of the administrative and clerical staff and 36.7 percent of the building operations and general maintenance staff. In the Catholic secondary school sector women are 55.5 percent of the teaching staff, 66.5 percent of the specialist support staff, 85.8 percent of the administrative and clerical staff and 26.1 percent of the building operations and general maintenance staff.

It is clear that women are the majority of teachers in both Catholic primary and secondary school sectors. However, the Bureau of Statistics does not provide data about the proportion of men and women principals in Catholic schools. Data supplied by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Catholic Education Commission show the distribution of principals by State and by school type.

Table 8.2B: Principals in Catholic Schools by School Type and Gender: Australia 1997

State or Territory	Primary schools			Secondary schools			Combined primary and secondary schools		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Queensland	125	70	195	45	32	77	4	0	4
New South Wales	165	258	423	90	40	130	25	6	31
Victoria	165	217	382	60	30	90	6	5	11
Tasmania	10	15	25	4	1	5	3	4	7
South Australia	35	41	76	7	6	13	9	8	17
Western Australia	60	50	110	23	5	28	8	11	19
Northern Territory	3	9	12	2	0	2	1	0	1
ACT	9	13	22	4	2	6	2	1	3

To seek some pattern in the data presented in Table 8.2B the percentage of female principals in each category of school in each State has been calculated and is displayed in Table 8.2C below.

Table 8.2C: School Sector by State

Primary schools	Women principals %	Secondary schools	Women principals %	Combined primary and secondary schools	Women principals %
Qld	35.9	Qld	41.6	Qld	0
NSW	61.0	NSW	30.8	NSW	19.4
Vic	56.8	Vic	33.3	Vic	45.5
Tas	60.0	Tas	20.0	Tas	57.1
SA	53.9	SA	46.2	SA	47.1
WA	45.5	WA	17.9	WA	57.9
NT	75.0	NT	0	NT	0
ACT	59.1	ACT	33.3	ACT	33.3

In the primary sector, except in Queensland and Western Australia, the majority of school principals are women. In Queensland the percentage is just above one-third while in Western Australia it is 45 percent approximately.

The pattern for the secondary sector is different. Only in Queensland and South Australia do women make up two-fifths of secondary school principals. In New South Wales, the ACT and Victoria the proportion is about one-third, in the other States even less. In the primary-secondary combined sector in four States approximately half the principals are women while in the other four jurisdictions the proportion is less.

It is further instructive to examine data relating to the largest Catholic school system in Australia, namely that in the State of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Table 8.3 below sets out data relating to principals for 1997 for all Catholic schools in NSW and the ACT, both those conducted by religious congregations and those which are systemic.

**Table 8.3 Principals in Catholic Schools (Systemic and Congregational)
in NSW and the ACT: 1997**

Archdiocese and diocese	Primary schools						Secondary schools						Combined primary and secondary schools					
	Religious order principals			Lay principals			Religious order principals			Lay principals			Religious order principals			Lay principals		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Armidale	1	2	3	12	7	19	–	–	–	4	–	4	–	–	–	1	1	2
Bathurst	–	2	2	8	15	23	–	–	–	3	2	5	–	–	–	5	1	6
Broken Bay	–	–	–	11	25	36	1	–	1	8	3	11	1	–	1	1	–	1
Lismore	–	2	2	26	8	34	2	–	2	6	1	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Maitland- Newcastle	–	2	2	31	15	46	–	–	–	8	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	–
Parramatta	–	10	10	16	24	40	3	2	5	16	2	18	2	1	3	–	–	–
Sydney	1	14	15	20	78	98	8	10	18	15	13	28	7	2	9	2	–	2
Wagga Wagga	–	3	3	16	9	25	–	3	3	3	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wilcannia- Forbes	1	3	4	5	10	15	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Wollongong	–	3	3	7	18	25	3	2	5	6	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–
Canberra- Goulburn	–	2	2	19	19	38	2	1	3	5	2	7	1	1	2	7	–	7

Source: Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales (1998) *Statistics 1997* Sydney, page 2.21. Note: Six (6) Special Schools have been excluded from the data. Four (4) have women principals.

The detailed data in Table 8.3 can be summarised by calculating the percentage of women principals within each sector – primary, secondary and combined primary/secondary schools – and for both religious order and lay principals within each sector. This summary is set out below.

School sector by type of principal: NSW and ACT	Percentage of women principals
Primary Schools	
Religious Order Principals	93.5
Lay Principals	57.1
Secondary Schools	
Religious Order Principals	47.4
Lay Principals	24.5
Combined Primary and Secondary Schools	
Religious Order Principals	26.7
Lay Principals	15.8
All Schools: NSW and ACT	
Religious Order Principals	65.7
Lay Principals	49.4

In the largest Catholic school sector in Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, some 65.7 percent of religious order principals and 49.4 percent of lay principals are women. However when disaggregated by school type we find very different pictures for the primary schools compared to either secondary schools or combined primary and secondary schools. In the former, women are the bulk of principals among religious order principals (93.5%) and slightly more likely (57.1%) to be lay principals. But among secondary school principals women are the minority, markedly so among secondary school lay principals (24.5%). Finally, in the combined primary and secondary schools, the proportion of lay women principals is even lower at 15.8 percent.

Assistance and Support Offered to Women to Participate in Catholic Education

Only twelve (12) Catholic Education Offices provided data in response to the request for data about women's participation in the education sector. However, all twelve organisations provided data concerning what assistance and support they provided to women in their organisations, what the perceived barriers are to women's participation in the education sector and by what means women's participation in Catholic education could be increased. Each of these issues is now reported on and discussed in turn.

The data in Tables 8.2 and 8.3 show that in Catholic schools in Australia most teachers, specialist support staff and clerical and administrative staff are women. In the primary sector the school principals leading these staff are women in the majority of cases. In secondary schools where women staff again predominate (except in building and maintenance support) the staff are led by men, overwhelmingly so in secondary schools with lay principals and in combined primary and secondary schools.

The measures of assistance and support offered to women staff make interesting reading and are summarised below for the twelve Catholic Education Offices providing data regarding their schools.

Measures of Assistance and Support Offered to Women in Catholic Education

These were stated to be:

- job sharing arrangements;
- Affirmative Action Committees functioning to identify needs for professional development opportunities for women staff, e.g. management preparation courses, career planning workshops, leadership training, conflict resolution workshops;
- support for women to develop career paths by means of job performance appraisals and time for further studies;
- provision of part-time work arrangements to suit family commitments;
- use of Affirmative Action Officers to implement Affirmative Action programs, the first step being the raising of awareness of women's needs in the organisation;
- mentoring programs for women;
- professional development during working hours to avoid intrusion into out-of-work times.

The limited data from this research do not in any sense allow us to state that these are general practices throughout Catholic education in Australia. However, they certainly provide examples of what is being done to assist women in that sector.

Barriers to Women's Participation in Catholic Education

Despite the lack of responses from Catholic Education Offices the data provided on this question by those which did respond provide important pointers to areas which need addressing. One response indicated: "No specific assistance is given to women especially in terms of career development. Positions are very gendered".

Other responses, all listed below, highlight both structural barriers to women's participation in Catholic education and the complexity of factors involved. The full list of responses on this point is as follows:

- Positions in the organisations are gendered; women religious can cross these barriers but not lay women.
- Young men's careers are advanced, not young women's careers.
- Assertive women are always seen as aggressive.
- Male attitudes ensure men make all the decisions.

- The requirement of travel and being away from home in more senior positions means women are not attracted to these positions.
- Trying to balance parenting and family responsibilities with work responsibilities is a barrier.
- The actual workloads of senior positions in Catholic education deter women from applying for these positions.
- There is a perception by women that certain positions must be held by men e.g. Deputy Principal in all-boys secondary schools.
- The actual lack of women in the highest levels of management in Catholic education lessens the possibilities of mentoring for those women who might aspire to such posts.
- Where job share policies do not exist and women have family responsibilities, a limit is placed upon women's abilities to pursue an uninterrupted career in Catholic education.
- Some women do not pursue senior management roles in the education sector because of their concerns at being involved in constant conflict resolution, industrial relations matters and the adversarial aspects of these roles.
- There is a lack of pre-promotional opportunities for women to develop the confidence and skills required at senior management levels.
- An attitude is held by some clergy that senior positions in education should be held by men as these clergy are more comfortable working with men.
- Lack of encouragement by some parental groups for women to take on senior management positions in Catholic education deters them.
- Parts of the organisation of Catholic education still have aspects of a male-dominated hierarchical structure.
- The attitude that some men still hold that makes it difficult for them to work with women as equals.

It is stressed that no data are available as to the incidence of these barriers to women's participation in Catholic education across the whole sector. Hence the Report is silent on that point. What can be stated is that these identified barriers have been put forward by survey returns from 10 Catholic Education Offices from Geraldton to Sydney. Not all offices mentioned all barriers but the above points provide a comprehensive list.

The barriers seem to fall into three types – **attitudinal**, **structural** and **job-related**. Barriers that spring from people's attitudes can be removed by concerted education programs and Catholic education authorities in many cases are undertaking those programs. Structural barriers to women's participation are much harder to change. Recognising that they exist is the essential first step to their removal. Job-related barriers, as evidenced below, can be removed by programs which prepare women to undertake senior management posts.

The final question to Catholic education authorities asked them to indicate

the ways they are suggesting to increase women's participation in Catholic education. Of course, the data already presented show women to be the majority of classroom teachers, specialist support staff and administrative-clerical staff in Catholic education where women are well represented. Listed below are all the suggestions provided to the Research team to increase women's participation.

Suggestions to Increase Women's Participation in Catholic Education

Participation could be increased by:

- school-based affirmative action committees;
- maintaining open, non-gendered policies;
- ensuring leadership in Catholic education grounded in collaboration and mission not an egotistical conception of leadership;
- genuine, caring relationships in the workplace to help women participate;
- encouraging women by positive attitudes to them and by giving them responsibilities and opportunities to show their capabilities and to display their skills;
- more consultation with women;
- affirming that women's caring for their families gives them an understanding of life;
- career path guidelines, career workshops and job-share guidelines in Catholic education organisations;
- flexible working hours policies;
- detailed clarification of the job requirements of senior management positions in Catholic education;
- inviting women to take part in specific projects;
- jobs redesigned to suit women balancing family and career responsibilities;
- making the workplace more family-friendly;
- child-care facilities;
- lessening of the male exercise of authority and decision-making;
- senior women as models of leaders to encourage more women to apply for such senior posts.

These suggestions together provide an integrated perspective on the workplace. A family-friendly workplace is needed, taking account of women's dual roles at home and at work. Jobs need to be designed with these cross-pressures in mind, and to provide the opportunity for women to be mentored to undertake management roles and to lead at senior levels so as to develop careers where their gifts can be exercised.

8.1.3 The Participation of Women in Catholic Social Welfare Roles and Tasks

Eleven Catholic social welfare organisations spread across Australia from Bunbury to Sydney responded to the invitation to provide data about the four

key issues. Again it is stressed that this is not a representative sample of Catholic social welfare organisations. However the data these eleven bodies provided do give an insight into them and from this analysis all other social welfare organisations can reflect upon their own practices.

Unlike for the Catholic education sector there are no large, reliable Bureau of Statistics databases highlighting the participation of men and women at different levels in Catholic social welfare organisations. Tabled below are the limited data provided by the eleven (11) organisations which responded to the survey. Table 8.4 shows the proportion of women in these organisations undertaking particular roles and tasks.

Table 8.4: Proportion of Women Undertaking Particular Roles and Tasks in Catholic Social Welfare Organisations
(The numbers in the columns are numbers of organisations)

Proportion of women (%)	Leadership, management	Middle-management, professions, supervision, coordination	Para-professional, secretarial, administrative, clerical, technical, voluntary, fundraising, caring	Other
100	2	2	5	—
95–99	—	—	2	—
90–94	1	1	1	—
85–89	—	1	—	—
80–84	2	3	1	1
75–79	1	—	—	—
70–74	—	—	1	—
65–69	—	—	—	—
60–64	—	—	—	1
55–59	—	—	—	1
50–54	1	2	—	2
45–49	—	—	—	—
40–44	—	—	—	—
35–39	—	1	—	—
30–34	—	—	—	—
25–29	1	—	—	—
20–24	—	—	1	—
15–19	1	—	—	—
10–14	—	—	—	—
5–9	—	—	—	—
0–4	2	—	—	—
Total Number of Organisations	11	10	11	5

Even given the small number of social welfare organisations responding to the survey there is still some pattern in the data in Table 8.4. If a line is drawn across Table 8.4 at the 80 percent level, five out of eleven of these organisations had 80 percent of their leadership and management positions held by women; seven out of eleven organisations had 80 percent of their supervision–coordination–professional positions occupied by women; and in nine out of eleven organisations 80 percent of the para-professional–support roles were held by women. While not as clear-cut a pattern as we observed for health care organisations, it is clear that among these social welfare organisations women are most likely to be doing the para-professional–support work, the supervision and coordination work and in slightly less than half the cases most of the work associated with leadership–management roles. It was noted that in two of these organisations there were no women at all in leadership–management positions.

The next three questions put to these organisations generated similar data to those provided by Catholic health care and education organisations concerning assistance and support provided to women in social welfare organisations, barriers to women’s participation and ways to increase it.

Assistance, Barriers and Increased Participation for Women in Catholic Social Welfare Organisations

The following section details the types of assistance and support to women in Catholic social welfare organisations, barriers to their participation and ways to increase women’s participation in these organisations. Unlike previous discussions in this Chapter, data provided on all three matters, drawn from the returns from the eleven organisations, are consolidated into Table 8.5.

Before commenting upon the consolidated suggestions in Table 8.5 two matters must be stressed. Two organisations noted “no specific assistance” was offered to women in these particular cases and a third organisation commented no specific assistance to women “is needed”. At the same time three organisations in their responses to the question concerning ways to increase women’s participation noted that their organisations and Catholic social welfare organisations in general “needed more men”.

In the data in Table 8.5 by now familiar themes are repeated. Those organisations providing family-friendly working conditions in various forms are seen to be providing assistance and support to women participants. There is, however, a perception of an uneasy relationship of women at executive levels working with male clerics and there is also an expressed need in some organisations to highlight the presence of women through conference participation, by executive appointments of competent women and by helping women balance career and family commitments.

Table 8.5: Assistance, Barriers and Increased Participation for Women in Social Welfare Organisations

Assistance and support offered to women in catholic social welfare organisations	Barriers to women's participation in catholic social welfare organisations	Ways to increase women's participation in catholic social welfare organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation responsive to women's family needs: flexible working hours • Opportunities given to women to undertake "higher duties" to try out higher levels of management responsibility • Senior women staff act as mentors for other women • Provision of ongoing training • Job sharing • Part-time work available • Paid family leave • Balance deliberately sought between needs of clients and of women staff with responsibilities for family and/or elderly parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the informal level in the organisation • domination of a clerical-patriarchal system • Some clergy seeking to put barriers in the path of women religious • Lack of career paths for women • In the manner in which the organisation is structured the family responsibilities of women preventing them from being "on call", being able to travel as part of the job and being able to take part in professional activities • Male power hierarchy presenting the culture of the organisation within which all solutions to problems are proposed • Executive women needing to work much harder than executive men to "sell" programs to the clergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and state conferences for women • A "spokeswoman role" in the organisation • More competent women at the executive, decision-making level nationally • Great maturity for social welfare work – most workers are women with family commitments; they need help to balance work and family • Decision-making and general work practices becoming less exploitive of women • Not favouring religious in position applications – less competency/skill is expected of them than others applying for same posts

8.1.4 Assistance, Barriers and Increased Participation for Women in Groups, Movements and Diocesan and National Organisations

Of the 79 Catholic organisations which submitted data following the Research team's invitation, the final group of 14 organisations have been placed together. These organisations cannot be placed under the rubric of health, education or welfare organisations but comprise groups and movements

within the Church plus a sprinkling of Diocesan organisations and one national organisation.

Among the small number of groups and movements which provided data the leadership and membership are overwhelmingly women. Among the Diocesan organisations this is not the case. Men are in the majority of leadership positions with women occupying supporting roles and clerical-administrative roles. What is important to focus upon is the information provided about assistance and support to women in these organisations, barriers to their participation and suggested ways to increase their participation. Table 8.6 holds the details.

Table 8.6: Assistance, Barriers and Increased Participation for Women in Groups, Movements and Diocesan and National Organisations

A. Groups and movements		
Assistance and support offered to women	Barriers to women's participation	Ways to increase women's participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invitations to women to join by parish newsletter, word-of-mouth, personal invitation• Meetings held at night for women who work; other meetings held in the daytime for women not in the paid workforce• Training courses and spiritual activities designed for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long held cultured views in Australian society about men being leaders; this is changing as women's gifts, talents and leadership potential are being realised• Curiously some clergy encouraging women to lead small, local parish groups but not encouraging women to become deeply involved in national movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking out women and giving them the training and opportunity to be leaders• Clergy and other women encouraging women to join groups and movements within the Church• Holding meetings at night so working women can attend them• More publicity for the work of groups and movements within the Church at all levels

B. National and diocesan organisations

Assistance and support offered to women	Barriers to women's participation	Ways to increase women's participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time positions being available • Job sharing being available • On-the-job training • Leave to attend external courses • Active policy to recruit women to committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of child care arrangements at the place of work • Lack of an affirmative action policy • Often lack of women with adequate financial management experience • The actual organisational structures of the Church preventing women's greater and more effective participation in Diocesan organisations. • Often women staff preparing advice on questions and issues which senior males and clerics in the organisation use to make themselves appear competent in the eyes of the Bishops • Women often being restricted to secretarial tasks and supportive roles when they would like to, and are capable of, assisting on projects and taking the decisions they are employed to make. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively recruiting women to fill vacant positions; seeking out women with the relevant backgrounds to make a contribution to Diocesan organisations • Examining alternative models of effective work • Using the gifts of many women working in the organisation • Involving women in the planning, formulation and implementation of policy and the development of programs • Clergy needing an education program to help them see that strong, intelligent women deeply yearn to participate in the Church • Appointments at Director level more often being women • The Church making efforts to catch up with feminism, embracing a better balance in Church organisations by recognising women do participate significantly and effectively within all aspects of Church life

Table 8.6 reveals some common elements but also some obvious differences in the data from groups and movements and that from national and diocesan organisations. Women are assisted to join and to participate in groups and

movements in the Church where personal invitations and encouragement to join emanate from existing members and the clergy. Meetings which are timed so women from the paid workforce can attend help enormously. Women are seeking not only the opportunity but the training to be leaders of these Church groups and movements. Some women face a barrier to their increased participation, a barrier encountered before in the Report's data. This is the cultural view that men are the natural leaders of organisations; women are supporters.

At the Diocesan and national organisation level this barrier also exists in several forms, but these organisations have positive suggestions to breaking down these barriers:

- actively seeking to recruit women to leadership positions;
- examining alternative models of "leadership", and additionally of "headship";
- involving women at all levels of policy planning, formulation and implementation; and
- embracing Christian feminism.

8.1.5 Assistance and Support to Women, Barriers Faced by Women and Ways to Increase Women's Participation: A Synthesis

Up to this point in this Chapter detailed data have been presented on the participation of women in seventy-nine (79) Catholic organisations across Australia. No attempt has been made to summarise these data. In the section which follows, these data are combed through looking for common themes under each major heading, assistance and support to women in Catholic organisations, barriers faced by women seeking to participate in these organisations, and measures to increase women's participation in these same organisations. To assist the reader these common themes are set out in tabular form.

The synthesis of the data from Catholic organisations shows that certain common measures of assistance and support are available to women across these organisations:

- part-time work;
- job-sharing;
- flexible work hours; and
- in-house training programs and seminars.

Within particular organisational sectors many organisations do much more in terms of affirmative action, career planning, mentoring programs for women and the like.

Table 8.7: Assistance and Support, Barriers to Participation and Ways to Increase Participation: Synthesis

Common measures of assistance and support offered to women in Catholic organisations	Common barriers to women's participation in Catholic organisations	Common ways to increase women's participation in Catholic organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time positions available to suit family commitments • Job-sharing • Flexible hours of work • Training programs, workshops and seminars within the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural view permeating organisational culture that some positions in organisations, especially at senior levels, must be held by men • Balancing family and job responsibilities placing limits on career development • Organisational structures preventing women participating as fully as they could or would wish to • Lack of mentoring for women and lack of affirmative action policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate, active recruitment of competent women at the executive, decision-making level who will act as mentors to other women • Encouraging women by positive attitudes to them and by giving them opportunities and responsibilities to show their leadership capabilities and skills • Involving women in planning, formulating and delivering policies and programs • Redesigning jobs to help women who are balancing careers and families • Changing the culture of organisations so that men and women, clerics and laity, collaborate in participation in the Church's mission

But the organisations which provided data also exhibited four common barriers to women's participation:

- a cultural view within organisations of some positions, especially senior positions, being held by men;
- the endless struggle for many women to balance family and job responsibilities;

- actual organisational structures (often described in the data as male, clerical and hierarchical) that prevent women participating as fully as they could or would wish to; and
- lack of mentoring for women and of affirmative action policies.

Let it be perfectly clear that these same barriers exist for women in many private and public organisations in Australia. In the present case the data have indicated five commonly identified means to remove these barriers and to increase women's participation in Catholic Church organisations. The means suggested by these organisations themselves are:

- deliberate active recruitment of competent women to the executive, decision-making level in Catholic organisations – these women, acting as mentors, will give confidence to other women to apply for such senior positions;
- deliberate encouragement of women to display leadership skills and abilities by giving them opportunities to do so and responsibilities within the organisation to prepare them for promotion;
- involving women in planning, formulating and delivering organisational policies and programs;
- job redesign to help women balancing careers and families; and
- fundamentally changing the culture of Catholic organisations to facilitate the participation and collaboration of men and women, clerics and laity, in the Church's mission.

8.2 The Participation of Women in Theological Education in Australia

In 1998 the Catholic theological colleges and institutes across Australia and the two Catholic universities, Australian Catholic University and the University of Notre Dame Australia, were contacted by the RMG and asked to provide data on the enrolment of women in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Theology. The RMG's definition specified that studies in Theology constitute at least 50 percent of the course, or a major study in the case of undergraduate programs. All institutions responded and the RMG here records its gratitude to Deans, Registrars and Office Administrators who provided the following data. In the remainder of this Chapter these data are presented, by institution, by level of course and by individual course.

Table 8.8: The Participation of Women and Men in Undergraduate Theological Education in Australia by Institution and by Course
(Figures are numbers of persons; not all institutions provide the same courses)

Institution	Cert of Ministry		Dip Rel Studs		Dip Theol		Dip Theol Studs		Dip Pas Min		Dip Soc Just Studs		Dip of Ministry		Dip Pas Studs		B Theol		B Min		BEd		BA	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Vianney College, Wagga Wagga#																	10	0						
Pius XII Seminary, Brisbane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	22	-	-	-	-	-	-
St Paul's National Seminary, Sydney	-	-	6	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catholic Institute of Sydney, Sydney	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	36	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catholic Theological Union, Sydney	-	-	-	-	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	21	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	9	3	13	3	4	-	-	-	-	71	103	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catholic Theological College, Melbourne	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	117	116	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	63	102	-	-	-	-	-	-
St Francis Xavier Seminary, Adelaide	7	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	11	15	12	19	-	-	-	-
Catholic Institute of Western Australia, Perth ^o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	301	-	-
University of Notre Dame																								
Australia, Fremantle	-	-	-	-	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	32	7	-	-	-	-	10	5
Australian Catholic University: Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Ballarat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	413*	1739*	18	79

Note: # Students at Vianney College undertake a Bachelor of Sacred Theology.

- * The Principal of the Jesuit Theological College (JTC) within the United Faculty of Theology (UFT), Revd Dr B Byrne SJ, advised that JTC students are unable to be distinguished from UFT students in these statistics. JTC reflected the UFT pattern of 62 percent female and 38 percent male students.
- Ø The BEd numbers for the WA Catholic Institute comprised 34 men and 135 women teachers upgrading to BEd and 20 men and 166 women doing an undergraduate BEd but taking studies at the Catholic Institute.
- ♦ The Australian Catholic University Primary Teacher Education students all do a 7-unit (a unit requires a semester of study) sequence comprising 4 units in Theology, 2 units in Religious Education and 1 unit in the Philosophy of Catholic Education.

Table 8.8 shows the actual enrolments in each undergraduate program in which 50 percent or more comprises Theology or in which a major in Theology is studied. One obvious feature of Table 8.8 is the wide range of undergraduate courses currently available in the theological colleges and institutes and the Catholic universities. Set out below are the data in Table 8.8 clustered together into two broad categories, Bachelor degree enrolments and Diploma/Certificate enrolments, respectively.

Table 8.9: Numbers of Women and Men Enrolled in Bachelor Degree and Diploma/Certificate Courses in Theology Including Religious Education in Australia, June 1998.

Course	Number of men	Number of women	Percentage of women
Bachelor of Theology	403	425	51.3
Bachelor of Ministry	12	19	61.3
Bachelor of Education: (Major in Theology including Religious Education studies)	467	2040	81.4
Bachelor of Arts: (Major in Theology)	28	84	75.0
Diploma/Certificate Courses	39	62	61.4
Total enrolments in undergraduate theology programs including religious education	949	2630	73.5

An obvious feature of Table 8.9 is that it shows some 3,579 persons were undertaking undergraduate studies in Theology including Religious Education in either the Catholic theologates or the Catholic universities in 1998. Almost 74 percent of these persons were women. The bulk of all these students, some 2,500 out of the 3,579, were undertaking Bachelor of Education (BEd) programs either as pre-service teaching students or as in-service teaching students. In these BEd programs students typically studied a major strand incorporating units in Theology, Religious Education and the Philosophy of Catholic Education. Of these BEd students some 2,150 were students at Australian Catholic University.

The second largest group of undergraduate Theology students highlighted in Table 8.9 are those undertaking the degree Bachelor of Theology (BTheol) (n = 828). Unlike the BEd students, of whom over four-fifths are women, women are a slight majority of BTheol students (52%). A glance back to Table 8.8 shows that women BTheol students clearly outnumber men BTheol students at particular theologates, Yarra Theological Union, the United Faculty of Theology and on a vastly smaller scale Pius XII Seminary.

Table 8.10: The Participation of Women and Men in Postgraduate Theological Education in Australia by Institution and by Course
(Figures are numbers of persons; not all institutions provide the same courses)

Institution	Grad Cert Theol Stds	Grad Cert RE	Grad Dip Theol	Grad Dip Ministry	Grad Dip Theol Stds	Grad Dip Rel Ed	Bach of Divinity	M Theol	M Min	MA in Theol Stds	Master of Theol Stds	MEd Rel Ed	M Phil	D Theol	Doctor of Ministry	EdD	PhD
	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F	M F
Pius XII Seminary, Brisbane	- -	- -	13 27	6 6	- -	- -	- -	14 9	6 1	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Catholic Institute of Sydney, Sydney	4 12	- -	2 1	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	7 17	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Catholic Theological Union, Sydney	3 5	- -	- -	- -	2 5	- -	- -	4 3	- -	19 16	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	10 10	- -	2 -	2 3	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Catholic Theological College, Melbourne	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 -	- 1	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 -	- -	- -	- -
United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	7 13	6 1	- -	- -	1 -	- -	- -	- -	3 -	- -	- -
St Francis Xavier Seminary, Adelaide	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- 5	1 -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Catholic Institute of Western Australia, Perth	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	6 5	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle	- -	- -	8 11	- -	- -	- -	- -	17 3	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 -	- -	- -	- -	2 -
Australian Catholic University	2 8	28 114	- -	- -	22 34	109 304	- -	7 7	- -	30 53	- -	84 124	10 6	- -	- -	2 3	19 9

Table 8.10 displays the enrolments of men and women in postgraduate theological education in Australia in a wide range of courses offered by the Catholic theologates and the Catholic universities ranging from Graduate Certificate courses through to Doctor of Theology (DTheol), Doctor of Education (EdD) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees.

Table 8.11 below clusters together this wide range of program enrolments to highlight the patterns in the data. Importantly Religious Education programs are separated out.

Table 8.11: Numbers of Women and Men Enrolled in Postgraduate Courses in Theology Including Religious Education in Australia, June 1998

Course	Number of men	Number of women	Percentage of women
Grad Certificate in Theology	9	25	73.5
Grad Cert Religious Education	28	114	80.3
Grad Diplomas in Theology and Ministry	53	84	61.3
Grad Dip Religious Education	119	314	72.5
Bachelor of Divinity	7	13	65.0
Master's degrees in Theology and Ministry	116	119	50.6
Master's degrees in Religious Education	91	29	58.6
Doctor of Theology	1	–	0
Doctor of Ministry	3	–	0
Doctor of Education	2	3	60.0
Doctor of Philosophy	21	9	30.0
Total enrolments in postgraduate theology programs including religious education	450	810	64.3

Table 8.11 holds several important findings. First, more than three-fifths of students undertaking postgraduate courses in Theology, including Religious Education, in Australia are women. However there are variations according to type and level of course. At the Graduate Certificate level, whether in Theology or Religious Education, women form the bulk of students. At the Graduate Diploma level this is much more likely in Religious Education (72.5%) than in Theology (61.3%). At the Master's level women are clearly the majority in Religious Education (58.6%) but men and women are equal in enrolments in Master's degrees in Theology. At the doctoral level men are clearly the majority of candidates.

Taken together Tables 8.9 and 8.11 highlight an important interaction between occupation and the study of the theological disciplines at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. A preponderance of students at either level are women; a large proportion of these are school teachers or student teachers.

Returning to Table 8.10 the place of Australian Catholic University, which commenced as a university on January 1, 1991 can be observed in the field of postgraduate theological and religious education. Of the 1260 persons engaged in such courses in June 1998, some 975 or 77 percent were enrolled at Australian Catholic University. Of this University's enrolments almost four-fifths are in Religious Education at Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master's and Doctoral level.

8.3 Summary of Findings of Survey of Catholic Church Organisations and Theological Institutions

This Chapter has examined the participation of women in Catholic Church organisations in Australia in relation to their employment, particularly in the health care, education and welfare sectors, and to studies in theological education. Data provided by the employer organisations or their national agencies and by the Catholic providers of theological education allow important conclusions to be drawn. Overall, participation of women as employees or students of these Catholic organisations is high, but at the senior level for both branches, i.e. participation in leadership roles and in doctoral degree studies respectively, the percentage of women declines significantly. The data from employer organisations highlight the structures and processes in Catholic Church organisations needing change to improve women's participation, particularly in management-leadership roles, and the steps which have commenced to effect such change. The data from the Catholic theologates and universities highlight the relationship between theological study and the profession of teaching.

CHAPTER 9

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

9.1 Background to the Research Project

9.2 Purpose of the Research Project

9.3 Methods of Investigation

9.4 Summary of Findings

9.5 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

9.6 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

9.7 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

9.8 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

9.9 Conclusions

9.1 Background to the Research Project

The Research Project on "The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia" was the initiative of the Catholic Bishops of Australia. Issues relating to women in the Catholic Church had been raised with the Australian Bishops for some time. As a result, the ACBC requested that the BCJDP organise a Research Project on "The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia". The Research Project was conducted for the ACBC by the BCJDP, ACU and the ACLRI.

In 1993, the BCJDP agreed to explore ways to respond to issues concerning women and the Catholic Church in Australia under the guidance of Bishops Brennan and Manning. On June 23, 1994, a working party comprising representatives of ACU, the Research Department of the ACBC and the BCJDP met to develop a detailed research proposal. On August 21, 1996 Cardinal Clancy, the President of the ACBC, launched the national study. The BCJDP subsequently asked the working party to take on the role of the RMG.

In the apostolic letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, released by the Vatican on May 30, 1994 immediately before the first meeting of the working party, Pope John Paul II declared that the Church did not have the authority to ordain women as priests and this teaching was to be "definitively held by all the Church's faithful". It is important to note that the publication of this Apostolic letter on "Ordination and Women" had much significance for the Project. The position of Pope John Paul II was very clear and it was the intention of the Research Project to be true to the Pope. The ordination of women was not the focus of the research. The question of the participation of women in the Church was seen as a broader issue. However, in any discussion open to all people on the participation of women in the Catholic

Church in Australia, it was inevitable that this issue would be raised by some who responded to the Project.

During the conduct of the Research Project, there were several media releases which provided updates on its progress. Regular progress reports were provided to the BCJDP, personal briefings given to the Cardinal and Bishops associated with the BCJDP and the Central Commission, and a detailed presentation made to the Plenary Meeting of the ACBC on May 26, 1998. Such reports concerned the progress and processes of the Research Project, not the findings. The Report of the Research Project *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus* was given to the BCJDP on April 7, 1999, and to the Plenary Meeting of the ACBC on April 12, 1999.

9.2 Purpose of the Research Project

The overall aim of the study was to gather data on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. In order to achieve this aim, the Research Project addressed four key questions:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation can be increased?

Development and piloting of the key questions occurred over a period of fifteen months with women and men from a range of backgrounds. The four key questions were designed to give coherence to all aspects of the research.

It was intended that the information obtained would provide a solid basis for:

- theological reflection;
- pastoral planning; and
- dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues.

At the inaugural meeting of the working party, the following three points were made about the purpose of the Project. It was intended to provide a foundation for the Bishops' responses to the concerns of women rather than being the total response in itself. The study would be of interest to other Church agencies and Committees of the ACBC, for example the Committee on the Laity, the Committee on Doctrine and Morals, and the Committee on Family and Life. Its findings could also be of use to lay movements and local faith communities.

The *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women*, July 1995, has been a source of inspiration for the Research Project. The following section was cited frequently as part of information on the Research Project:

Women's dignity has often been unacknowledged and their prerogatives misrepresented; they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude. This has prevented women from truly being themselves and it has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity. ... And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision. ... Yes, it is time to examine the past with courage, to assign responsibility where it is due in a review of the long history of humanity. (n. 3)

The nature of the Research Project as a data-gathering exercise was stressed by the ACBC. While findings and conclusions of the Project are provided, it was not part of the RMG's brief to provide recommendations, as the formulation and promulgation of recommendations remain the responsibility of the Bishops of Australia.

9.3 Methods of Investigation

9.3.1 Use of Both Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Over many months, the RMG discussed how best to carry out this investigation for the BCJDP. Chapter 1 of this Report details how the RMG worked through the issues which led to the choice of the following methods:

- contextual papers relating separately to:
 - (i) the history of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia,
 - (ii) the role of Catholic women in the ecumenical movement;
- written submissions called for in various ways throughout the Australian community;
- public hearings at a large number of centres across all States and Territories to allow the Bishops to hear presentations and individuals and groups with different views to listen to each other;
- analysis of the data from the CCLS, especially from Questionnaire H relating to the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia;
- discussions with some fifty targeted groups whose voices had not been heard to a significant extent in other forms of data gathering;
- analysis of data concerning the four key questions provided by Catholic organisations in the health, social welfare and education sectors, theological institutions and other groups.

The choice of methods to undertake such a complex investigation is essentially controversial. Why these methods? Why not others? The RMG decided that,

within budgetary constraints, the use of the above-listed multiple perspectives allowed maximum participation in the research and would provide the BCJDP with a wealth of data gathered from many thousands of people through a variety of methods.

The methods utilised are those of the social sciences. As Ian Castles, formerly the Commonwealth Statistician, stated in a recent essay (July 1998) for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, there is no “wide measure of agreement about the meaning of the word ‘method’ in this context” (p. 295). Indeed, in this same essay, Castles noted the divide in the social sciences between those who “make more and sophisticated use of statistics in drawing inferences from the results of surveys and experiments” and those “who reject entirely the use of statistics in their work” (p. 305).¹

The approach of the RMG was to use *both* quantitative and qualitative methods to shed light on the investigation’s four key questions. In this inquiry, basic quantitative methods associated with the large-scale sample survey have been used. In relation to the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups, more qualitative methods have also been employed to understand some thousands of people’s views, expressed in their own words and contexts, about the four key questions focusing upon the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

A brief description of each method is set out below, followed by a chart presenting an overview of the various research approaches. In summary, each research approach, with its own particular audience and research methodology, was seen to be essential and complementary.

9.3.2 Written Submissions

The first of the main ways in which the community was invited to assist in the Research Project was through written submissions from individuals and groups. The call for written submissions was made at the launch of the Project on August 21, 1996. Responses were sought from women and men, young and old, those who are actively involved in Catholic Church structures and those who are not. An overwhelming response was received – more than 2,500 submissions from individuals and groups. Group submissions comprised approximately thirty percent of the submissions and often represented large group responses from parishes, Church organisations and other groups.

A comprehensive framework to code the submissions was developed over a period of twelve months. Thirty-four coders were involved in coding the submissions on a voluntary basis. They included women (the majority) and

1 I. Castles, ‘The Methods of the Social Scientist’, *Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Challenges for the Social Sciences and Australia*, vol. ii, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, July 1998, pp. 295–306.

men, religious and lay professional people with a background in theology. Two tests revealed high levels of accuracy. The coding was completed by the end of June 1998. The coding frames were then processed by an experienced data processing company which used a process of data verification to ensure 100 percent accuracy in data entry. A database containing the codes from all submissions was then constructed. Additional comments which could not be accommodated by the coding frame were collated and used to complement the database. Coders identified 676 submissions as containing a range of material suitable for quotation or as being especially significant. These were analysed in conjunction with the results in the database and the additional comments.

The main findings of the written submissions represent those which were identified in 200 or more submissions, that is eight percent or more of the submissions. In addition, particular or unique insights offered by only a few submissions and identified by coders as significant were also used to shed further light on these findings.

9.3.3 Catholic Church Life Survey

The CCLS, a pastoral project of the ACBC, was conducted in November 1996. It was constructed so as to include a sample that would represent statistically urban and rural parishes from each of Australia's 28 territorial dioceses. The sample incorporated 281 parishes and resulted in about 102,000 people participating in the Survey.

Every attender aged 15 years and over at all Masses in participating parishes on a particular Sunday was requested to complete a questionnaire. In most parishes, the Survey took place during the time normally reserved for the homily but in others it was completed before the beginning of Mass or at the end. Parishes found that most people needed about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

One component of the Survey was an additional multi-choice questionnaire commissioned by the RMG and containing a series of questions related to women's participation in the Church. The questionnaire was completed by approximately 4,500 attenders in Catholic parishes throughout Australia representing about 5 percent of attenders in each parish in the sample.

9.3.4 Public Hearings

The third of the main ways in which the community was invited to assist in the Research Project was through a series of public hearings conducted between May 13 and July 24, 1997. Responses were sought from the same wide range of individuals and groups invited to make the written submissions. To accommodate the unprecedented number of requests from both Bishops (to host a hearing) and members of the public (to make a presentation), hearings

took place in 22 of Australia's territorial dioceses. In total, public hearings were held over 32 days in 23 centres throughout Australia with about 500 people making presentations at the hearings, either individually or in small groups. Given the overwhelming number of requests to make a presentation at the public hearings, a process was required to select presenters. So that each individual and group had an equal chance to present at the hearings, a ballot system was used in most of the capital cities. Those who were unable to present at a hearing as a result of not being selected in the ballot were invited to submit their intended presentations in writing.

It was seen as important that the hearings should be authentic listening exercises, open to all people wishing to make their voices heard. For each hearing, panels, which included at least one Bishop, usually the local Ordinary, and one or more members of the RMG, were formed. On almost every occasion, at least half of the panel members were women. Each hearing was chaired by a woman appointed by the local Bishop.

At the conclusion of each day of hearings, a synthesis of the hearing was prepared by the panel members including the Bishop. Written presentations from people who did not have the opportunity to present at hearings were included in a national synthesis. All points recorded in the synthesis of each hearing were incorporated into the findings of the public hearings.

9.3.5 Targeted Groups

After the public hearings concluded in July 1997, the RMG identified a number of groups whose voices had not been heard to a significant extent in the research to that date. They were women in the Ukrainian Catholic Church; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; refugee women; women from non-English-speaking backgrounds and from migrant communities; solo mothers; women from lower socio-economic status groups; women with disabilities and their carers; young women; clergy and lay men. For some of these groups, techniques like written submissions and public hearings might have been too formal, intimidating or culturally inappropriate. As the RMG wished to hear the views of all sectors of the Church, it was decided to hold targeted group discussions to collect information on the experiences, perceptions, beliefs and opinions of these groups in relation to the key research questions. Information was gained from approximately fifty groups across Australia over a period of thirteen months.

9.3.6 Survey of Catholic Organisations and Catholic Theological Institutions

At the time of the launch of the Research Project (August 1996), a survey on the participation of women in Catholic Church organisations was sent to national Church agencies to collect data about women in their sector. The national

agencies were asked to provide such data if they held it centrally or to seek the data from individual institutions under their umbrella. Data were particularly sought from the health, education and welfare sectors but also from other agencies.

Information was elicited on the proportion of women involved in various roles and tasks, assistance and support offered to women to enable their participation, barriers to their participation, and ways to increase women's participation. Responses were received from 79 organisations.

In both the written submissions and the public hearings, there were frequent references to the large number of women in Australia undertaking theological education. As a result, the RMG wished to provide comprehensive and accurate statistics about the number of women and men doing theological studies in Australian Catholic tertiary institutions. In April 1998, the RMG undertook a national survey of all Catholic institutions which provided undergraduate and/or postgraduate theological courses. Responses were received from all theological institutes offering courses in theology in Semester One 1998, including eight theological colleges, two Catholic universities and one other Catholic institute.

9.3.7 **Use of Contextual Papers and Contextual Information**

To position the Research Project within a broader picture of society and the Church, the Report contains two contextual papers and, in an appendix, an overview of the role of women in contemporary Australian society.

The first contextual paper concerns the history of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia, especially since the Second World War. The second paper places the research in the ecumenical context by considering the wider participation of women in the Christian churches. In Appendix 20, the role of women in Australian society is presented through extracts from recent editions of *Australian Social Trends*.

9.3.8 **Overview of the five research approaches**

Table 9.1 An overview of the five research approaches is set out below.

Approach	Date	Audience	Response
<i>Written Submissions</i>	August–December 1996	Women and men who are actively involved in Catholic Church structures and those who are not	Over 2,500 submissions from individuals and groups Group submissions made up 30% of responses

Approach	Date	Audience	Response
<i>Catholic Church Life Survey</i>	November 1996	National survey of Church attenders aged 15 years and over	4,500 Church attenders from each of Australia's 28 territorial Dioceses
<i>Public Hearings</i>	May – July 1997	Women and men who are actively involved in Catholic Church structures and those who are not	Hearings took place in 22 of Australia's territorial Dioceses over 32 days in 23 centres with about 500 people making presentations, either individually or in small groups Written presentations from people unable to present at hearings were included
<i>Targeted Groups</i>	October 1997 – November 1998	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women Clergy Women with disabilities and their carers Lay men Women from lower socio-economic status groups Women from NESB and migrant backgrounds Refugee women Solo mothers Women in the Ukrainian Catholic Church Young women	Reports from approximately 50 groups

Approach	Date	Audience	Response
<i>Survey of Catholic Organisations and Theological Institutions</i>	August – December 1996 (Catholic organisations) April 1998 (theological institutions)	Catholic Church organisations Catholic theological institutions which provide theological courses	Responses received from 79 Church organisations Responses from all institutions offering theological courses

9.4 Summary of Findings

9.4.1 Overwhelming Response to the Research Project Highlights its Crucial and Controversial Nature

The response throughout Australia to the requests for written submissions and presentations at public hearings was overwhelming and represented a significantly greater response than to similar consultations conducted both within the Australian Catholic Church and in the broader society. This outstanding response is, in itself, a major finding indicating that the issue of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia is crucial and controversial.

9.4.2 Wide Spectrum of Views and Emotions

In summary, it must first be recognised that a wide spectrum of views and emotions was identified in the research, from varying levels of satisfaction with the current participation of women, to varying levels of dissatisfaction arising from perceptions that equality of role, status and opportunities for service is denied to women by the Catholic Church in Australia. In many aspects of the research, there was a polarisation of views: there were those wishing to maintain the current participation of women in the Church or even return to the position of the pre-Vatican II Church, and those seeking an expanded role for women. A great diversity of views about the nature of the Church was also evident. Different models and visions of Church were presented either explicitly or implicitly.

It is clear that Catholic women in Australia are not a homogeneous group but are, in fact, extremely diverse with regard to education (including theological education), age, social and economic situation, ethnic background, religious tradition (even as Catholics), life experiences, and sexual and marital status.

A major finding of the Research Project is the pronounced contrast, summarised below in sections 9.4.3 and 9.4.4, between the views and feelings of the Church attenders who responded to the CCLS and participants in the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups. In reflecting on this difference, it is important to recall the different audiences addressed by the various research approaches, as outlined above. However, it should also be noted that the different audiences are not mutually exclusive groups. For example, the involvement of many Church attenders was evident in the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups where many individuals and groups (often representing parishes) spoke of their Mass attendance.

9.4.3 Feelings of Belonging Expressed by Respondents to the CCLS

An overview of the profile of respondents to the CCLS reveals that:

- they have a considerably older profile than the Catholic population in general – the median age of Church attenders aged 15 and over at the time of the survey was 52 years; the median age of Catholics of the same age range in the 1996 Census was 38 years;
- nine-tenths of them attend Mass every week or more often;
- women outnumber men in the ratio of about three to two;
- in most forms of participation in Church life, women are more likely to be involved than men;
- more than half of Church attenders are not involved in any regular way in other parish activities;
- young people and separated and divorced people are under-represented;
- those aged 15–39 are less likely than respondents aged 40 or more to participate in parish groups, to feel a sense of belonging to their parish, to agree that the parish is meeting their spiritual needs, and to accept without difficulty the authority of the Church to teach on matter of faith or morals.

The majority of respondents to the CCLS reported that:

- they felt a strong sense of belonging to their parish;
- their spiritual needs were being adequately met in the parish;
- they had never felt unwelcome in the Church in recent years;
- those who accepted responsibility in the parish were given sufficient assistance to complete the task;
- they experienced or observed no barrier to women's participation;
- the two best ways to increase women's participation were through prayer and increasing women's involvement in decision-making and Church administration.

9.4.4 Feelings of Pain and Alienation Expressed by Participants in the Written Submissions, Public Hearings and Targeted Groups

The dominant feeling of participants in the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups was one of pain and alienation. A dichotomous relationship with the Church was experienced by both individuals and groups characterised by such feelings as love and commitment yet anguish and alienation. Pain, alienation and often anger resulted from a strong sense of women's marginalisation, struggle, disenfranchisement, powerlessness, irrelevance and a lack of acknowledgment within the Church. The frustration yet persistence of both women and men in trying to stay in the Church despite their dissatisfaction with the Church's treatment of women was evident. The frankness and sadness of those who had left the practice of the faith and of those who have considered "unbecoming" a Catholic as a result of the Church's treatment of women were obvious. It was clear that many people have hope but in many cases it is faint. There was a heightened sense of frustration at the blockage of the much-needed gifts of women from service to the Church.

The sense of alienation and anguish resulting from the issues concerning women and the Church was shown by all categories of individuals and groups such as the young and elderly, women and men, laity and religious, and was not characteristic of any particular group.

It was reported that many of the Australian Catholic women involved in the ecumenical movement, both within Australia and internationally, experience quite acute frustration and anger with the Catholic Church today. Unlike their counterparts in other Christian churches where all roles of ministry and witness are now available to women, they feel consistently debarred from participating in any significant decision-making, leadership or consultative roles within their own Church. For them, the Catholic Church, in stark contrast to most other Christian churches in Australia today, continues to pursue a policy of gender discrimination and inequality. This situation they both lament and deplore.

9.4.5 Concern over the Loss of the Young Seen as a Matter of Urgency

The ongoing decline in Church involvement in Australia, especially by the young, was a source of much anguish and pain. A sense of urgency marked many of the calls for change regarding the participation of women – the need to act now, especially to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the young women (and men) who feel that the Church is out of touch with contemporary life.

9.4.6 Need for Action to Flow from Research Project

There were many expressions of gratitude to the Australian Bishops for the Research Project. It was seen as a sign of hope and a gesture of goodwill towards women in the Australian Church. However, there was also an

accompanying concern about action flowing from the Project. The comment was frequently made that if there is no follow-up action from the Project by the Bishops, it would have been better if there had been no inquiry.

9.5 Various Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

9.5.1 Women Seen as Integral and Central to the Life of the Church

That women are integral and central to the very nature and life of the Church was highlighted in all aspects of the research. Women and men were seen as equal in Baptism together forming the "Body of Christ". An understanding of the Church as "the People of God" involving "a Discipleship of Equals" was stressed. It was considered that the future of the Church and the participation of women were closely linked.

9.5.2 Women's Contribution since the Earliest Days of the Australian Catholic Church

Since the earliest days of the Catholic Church in Australia, it was found that women have made an immense contribution to the life of the Church, whether as religious sisters, as mothers of families or as dedicated single people. Their incalculable contribution was characterised by the enormous energy and love that women have put into promoting the life of the Church in Australia in increasingly varied ways. The figure of Blessed Mary MacKillop was seen as a symbol of this contribution. Two obvious features of the history of women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia were the ongoing involvement of women in the mission of the Church beyond the home, and the desire of women to be accepted as fully-functioning adults, seriously included in the decision-making processes of the Church.

9.5.3 Women Greatly Outnumber Men in the Vast Majority of Forms of Participation in the Church

Women were described by all sectors as "the backbone of the local Church". It was strongly emphasised that it is the women who keep the Church going, especially in rural areas.

9.5.4 Limitations to the Ways in Which Women Participate in the Catholic Church in Australia

Those who described various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia emphasised frequently the limitations to women's participation imposed by the hierarchy. The fundamental issue was not the

various ways in which women do participate but rather the significant ways in which women are debarred from participation.

It was stressed that there was significant participation at all levels except in ordained ministry and decision-making roles. Many characterised the roles of women as serving and supporting, nurturing and assisting roles rather than decision-making and leadership roles. Young women, in particular, highlighted the perception of the role of women in the Church as marginal, limited and voluntary. It was considered that there was manifold participation of women but lack of recognition within the Church. The need for recognition, affirmation and celebration of women's contributions to the Church was highlighted in the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups.

9.5.5 Major Contribution of Women through a Great Diversity of Roles and Tasks

Women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia was presented as diverse and myriad. Much attention was given to describing the great diversity of roles and tasks which women undertake in the Australian Church, mostly on a voluntary basis.

9.5.6 Women's Visible Participation in the Liturgy since Vatican II

A major way in which women currently participate in the Church is through liturgical preparation and involvement, especially as special ministers of the Eucharist and as readers. Women's visible participation in the liturgy since Vatican II was seen as most significant. However, it was frequently noted that practices concerning the role of women in the liturgy vary considerably from parish to parish, depending on the attitude of the parish priest. For the women in the Ukrainian Church, their exclusion from the liturgy of the Church was seen as their greatest barrier and concern.

9.5.7 Women's Participation in the Parish

In addition to women's involvement in the liturgy, another major form of participation involved community service, social welfare and social justice activities and other voluntary caring roles in the parish. Women's participation as members of parish councils was highlighted.

9.5.8 Women's Participation in the Home

Motherhood and family roles were seen as central and given much emphasis. As mothers, Catholic women participate at the heart of the Church, in the "domestic Church". Through their daily work as mothers, in raising a family, in imparting values, and in educating children in the faith in the home setting, women were seen as participating explicitly in the Church. The importance of

motherhood and family for both the Church and society was emphasised. In contrast to the prominence given to motherhood, the married woman in her role as wife received much less attention.

9.5.9 Increasing Participation of Women in the Wider Church

It was noted that, today, women participate at various levels of the Church at parish level, diocesan level, and at national and international levels through women's groups. Women are also assuming greater responsibility and diversity of roles. Women's leadership roles in education, health care and social services were identified. The catechetical and educational roles of women were highlighted. Prominence was also given to women's participation in the Catholic Women's League, especially in relation to wider Church and Catholic organisations.

9.5.10 Predominance of Women among Students of Theology

The large number of theologically educated women in the contemporary Catholic Church in Australia was frequently referred to and seen as a great but often untapped resource. It was noted that most women undertake theological education at their own expense and in their own time. In a national survey of Catholic institutions which provide theological courses, women comprised almost 74 percent of persons undertaking undergraduate studies in theology and almost 64 percent of students undertaking postgraduate theological courses. The data from Catholic institutions and universities also highlighted the relationship between theological study and the teaching profession.

9.5.11 Women as Members of Religious Congregations

The witness of women as members of Religious Congregations was valued. The varied participation of religious sisters in the contemporary Church was stressed. Particular mention was made of their leadership roles in education, health care and social welfare, and their ongoing contribution to rural and outback regions of Australia.

9.5.12 Witness of Caring Women

The contribution to the Church of particular women through their very presence was noted, especially through the witness of the disabled and their carers and the strength and determination of solo mothers. Women's participation in the Church through the care of others was noted especially by women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, disabled women and Aboriginal women.

9.5.13 Ecumenical Dimension of Women's Contribution

The ecumenical dimension of women's contribution to the Catholic Church was highlighted. Many Australian Roman Catholic women currently participate in myriad diverse ways in the official ecumenical church structures and projects, both within Australia and internationally. In a broader context, it was found that women from all Christian churches have contributed significantly to the development of the modern ecumenical movement since its inception.

9.6 Assistance and Support Currently Offered to Women to Participate in the Church

9.6.1 Satisfaction with Assistance and Encouragement by Respondents to CCLS

Data derived from the CCLS revealed that both women and men had received sufficient practical assistance and encouragement when they had accepted responsibility for doing something in the parish or the wider Church. However, it should be noted that just over half the respondents said that they had not accepted any such responsibility. Almost three-quarters of the respondents who had accepted such a responsibility reported that they had received all the practical assistance and encouragement they needed, with one-third of the remainder saying they experienced a lack of support from the people but not from the leaders.

The satisfaction with the level of assistance and support by respondents to the CCLS stands in contrast to the respondents from the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups which stated that little assistance and support were offered to women to participate in the Church.

9.6.2 Little Assistance and Support from the Church Identified by Respondents to the Written Submissions, Public Hearings and Targeted Groups

Responses to the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups revealed that only a small minority were satisfied that there was sufficient assistance and support for women to participate in the Church. It was considered that little support was offered structurally, with only occasional financial support from parishes and individual priests. Greater assistance and support were requested to enable women to participate more fully and equally in the life of the Church.

9.6.3 Assistance and Support from Theological Education and Faith Formation

All aspects of the research identified that the highest level of assistance and support came from access to theological education and other forms of adult faith formation, especially training for catechetical work and pastoral ministry

programs. However, it was frequently added that this was usually undertaken at the women's own expense. It was considered that access to theological education helps women to participate in the life of the Church.

9.6.4 Lack of Assistance for Participation in Decision-making and Leadership Roles

There was agreement across all aspects of the research that the lowest levels of assistance and support received concerned participation in decision-making, leadership roles and social action and social justice activities. It was frequently mentioned that women only received encouragement, assistance and support to undertake ancillary and support roles. Young women, in particular, felt that women were not encouraged to make a contribution beyond safe "household" tasks and that channels were not open to facilitate participation. Ukrainian women noted that support was offered when women were seen to be "doing the right thing". The clergy acknowledged significant limitations as "the glass ceiling is pretty low". It was noted also that the Catholic Church was not as supportive as other Christian Churches.

9.6.5 Greatest Source of Assistance Received from Other Women

Where assistance and support were received, the greatest source came from other women, including support from women religious and women's groups. The clergy were also named as a source of support with special reference to the parish priest. It was noted that some priests and Bishops were supportive and encouraging although this support varied depending on the priest, parish or diocese. Where encouragement was given, it was principally in the form of assistance for women to participate in parish lay ministries.

9.6.6 Assistance and Support for Women in Catholic Organisations

The synthesis of the data from Catholic organisations showed that certain common measures of assistance and support were available for women across these organisations, including part-time work, job-sharing, flexible work hours and in-house training programs and seminars. However, many organisations offered additional assistance and support for women such as affirmative action, career planning and mentoring programs for women.

9.6.7 Assistance and Support from Role Models: The Centrality of Jesus

In the public hearings, it was stressed that role models offered particular assistance and support. Mary and, less frequently, saints and other people were seen as important role models.

However, there was some criticism of faulty Mariology and some forms of Marian devotion. The central role of Jesus and the example of Jesus'

relationship with women were also seen as critically important and cited as a source of hope and inspiration. Jesus' liberating attitude to women was emphasised.

9.7 Barriers to Women's Participation in the Church

9.7.1 Great Majority of Respondents to CCLS Did Not Experience Barriers to Participation

Results from the CCLS indicated that the great majority of Mass attenders do not feel unwelcome in the parish and do not experience barriers preventing them from participating in the Church in the ways they wish. However, certain Church teachings or policies are perceived by some women and men as inhibiting participation, especially when it comes to having a greater say in making decisions. These perceptions were stronger among frequent Mass attenders than they were among less frequent attenders, and were particularly strong among those who are currently divorced. Although the majority of respondents have not experienced a barrier preventing them from taking on leadership roles in the Church and have not known a woman who has experienced a barrier to her participation, a substantial minority (25%) of female respondents and almost as large a proportion of male respondents (23%) have observed such a barrier. The barriers most likely to be experienced arise from the exercise of authority in the Church, Church practices that favour men for certain positions, and opposition or lack of support from priests.

9.7.2 Barriers to Women's Participation a Major Focus for Respondents to the Written Submissions, Public Hearings and Targeted Groups

The question concerning barriers to women's participation drew the greatest response from participants in the written submissions, public hearings, and targeted groups. Only a small minority of responses supported current forms of participation and believed that there were no barriers to the participation of women in the Church. This strong response stands in contrast to the results of the CCLS where the great majority of Mass attenders did not feel unwelcome in the parish and did not experience barriers preventing them from participating in the Church in the ways they wanted.

A short discussion of the major barriers to women's participation is presented below, along with a list of other frequently-mentioned barriers.

9.7.3 Patriarchal and Hierarchical Nature of the Church Seen as the Fundamental Barrier to Women's Participation

The fundamental barrier concerned patriarchal attitudes and traditions, which were seen to be inconsistent with the person and message of Jesus Christ, and

which failed to take into account developments in the social sciences and changes in the role of women in the wider society. It was felt that such attitudes had been reinforced by Pope John Paul II and the Vatican bureaucracy in recent times to the detriment of the teachings and spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

The structures of the Church were experienced as male-dominated, hierarchical and authoritarian. Authoritarian attitudes and the misuse of power and position were seen as serious barriers to women's participation.

A fixation on rules and regulations, a rigid and unbending manner, and a lack of compassion and openness to dialogue were frequently-cited characteristics of a Church in need of renewal. The negative attitude towards women on the part of some of the clergy, especially parish priests, was also experienced as a significant obstacle.

9.7.4 Discrimination in the Church on the Basis of Gender

The failure of the Church to grant equal roles and status to women was experienced as a most significant barrier. The lack of gender equality and the exclusion of women from some areas of the Church's ministry and governance, sometimes described in terms of the "sin of sexism", were a source of alienation for both women and men. Many areas of Church life, whether in teachings or actual practice, were seen to exclude women's views, experiences and involvement either directly or indirectly. The issue of gender equality was raised in terms of both theology and justice. Fundamental issues concerning the theology of personhood and the theology of sexuality were seen to underpin the Church's position on the role and status of women. It was felt that basic theological principles, such as the true and equal dignity of all men and women, made in God's image and likeness, and the goodness of sexuality, receive inconsistent treatment in the teaching and practice of the Church. For many people in the Church, the exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making roles meant that women were treated as second-class citizens. Within Catholic organisations in Australia, a lack of mentoring for women and a lack of affirmative action policies were identified as barriers. Further, it was considered that the Church was not reflecting sound advances in society. This gap between the ecclesiastical and secular worlds was experienced as a scandal, as it was felt that the Church should be leading the way in the recognition and promotion of the true equality of all people. The absence of young women in the Church was evidence of a disparity between the attitudes of society and Church towards women.

9.7.5 Exclusion from Decision-Making and Leadership

The exclusion of women from the decision-making processes of the Church was seen as a most significant barrier to full participation of women and a

serious impediment to sound decision-making in the Church. Decision-making and leadership were generally seen as being concentrated in the hands of the clergy and Bishops, who are all male and celibate, in a hierarchical leadership model. This situation effectively excluded all women and married people from most decision-making in the Church. It was strongly felt that women were excluded from decision-making even concerning issues which directly affected them, especially moral teachings on issues such as sexuality, contraception, marriage, divorce and abortion. Because of the gender barriers to leadership, the Church was thought to be deprived of both the views and approaches of women. Even where women are present in such roles, the processes were still seen to be male-oriented. Further, it was felt that current leadership in the Church was not exercised in a collaborative or accountable manner. Not only were there few opportunities for input but there was also no forum for appeal against decisions.

Overall findings of the survey of Catholic organisations and theological institutions revealed that the participation of women as employees or students of these Catholic organisations is high, but at the senior level for both branches, that is, participation in leadership roles and in doctoral degree studies respectively, the percentage of women declines significantly. A cultural view was perceived that some positions, especially senior positions, must be held by men. The data from employer organisations highlight the structures and processes in Catholic Church organisations needing change to improve women's participation, particularly in management-leadership roles.

9.7.6 Exclusion of Women from Priestly Ordination

The exclusion of women from ordination and from other crucial ministry roles such as the permanent diaconate was experienced as a major obstacle to the full participation of women. The exclusion of women from the priesthood was seen as a denial of women's right by Baptism to full participation in the Church, as well as a denial of their gifts and talents in the service of Christ and the Church at a time of great need. For many, the nature of ministry was viewed as the broader and more fundamental issue which needed to be addressed. It was stressed that what was important was the centrality of the Eucharist rather than an exclusively male priesthood. In various aspects of the research, it was noted that respondents were reticent to speak about the ordination of women, believing it to be "off limits" for the Project. Others took the pragmatic view that change was unlikely and therefore it would be more constructive and effective in the short term to turn one's attention to other issues and strategies.

The ban on the discussion of the ordination of women was seen as a barrier and a matter of justice in the Church. There was much agreement,

even among people who took differing positions, that the issue of women's ordination be discussed. While views differed on the question of whether women should be ordained, there was support for an open discussion of the issue.

9.7.7 The Question of the Ordination of Women Has Not Been Received by the Faithful as Expressive of their Catholic Belief

The findings of the research from the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups indicated that the question of the ordination of women has not been resolved in that it had not been received by the faithful of the Church as expressive of their Catholic belief. This finding is supported by the results of the CCLS concerning respondents' acceptance of the Church's teaching on the ordination of women. Only 42 percent of Church attenders accepted the teaching with no difficulty. A particular characteristic of the response to the question on the ordination of women was the high number of respondents (27 percent) who stated that they do not accept the teaching that women cannot be ordained priests. Younger adults were most likely to reject the teaching on the ordination of women (34 percent of women and 28 percent of men aged 15 to 39) and these figures are only marginally higher than for women and men in their 40s and 50s. What is particularly noticeable is the quite high proportion of older respondents aged 60 or more who also reject this teaching – 20 percent of women and 23 percent of men. This contrasts sharply with the fact that only 3 percent of this age group do not accept the Church's teaching authority in general.

9.7.8 A Range of Other Barriers

A range of other barriers was identified including:

- compulsory celibacy of priests;
- the Church teaching and practice in relation to sexuality, marriage and the family;
- traditional teaching on artificial contraception;
- discrimination against the divorced and remarried;
- lack of role models, especially for young women;
- lack of relevance of the Church to young people;
- failure to identify the changing role of women in society as a "sign of the times";
- inability of the official Church to listen to women's voices;
- sacramental limitations of women chaplains;
- women's contribution being undervalued;

- lack of recognition of women's experience and spirituality;
- lack of education of clergy about women;
- the tradition of social, professional and religious inferiority concerning women;
- systems and structures of the Church not being in touch with the contemporary needs and experience of people;
- entrenched ideas which are resistant to change;
- sexual scandals within the Church;
- the Church's traditional teachings concerning women;
- decision-making reserved to clerics;
- the clergy's fear of women's participation;
- few opportunities to participate in leadership of the Church;
- lack of inclusive religious imagery and language;
- lack of inclusive social language;
- family responsibilities;
- lack of value placed on motherhood and family roles by society and Church;
- the current attitude of the superiority of men in our society;
- lack of adequate consultation and communication;
- failure of the Church to embrace diversity;
- lack of understanding of Aboriginal peoples and their culture;
- failure to integrate Aboriginal and Christian spirituality;
- lesbian members of the Church being ignored;
- lack of educational opportunities;
- lack of Catholic ethos and teaching in some Catholic schools;
- limitations and inequality in professional service and employment of women in the Church;
- worldly influences, involving secular pressures, consumerism and the secular culture;
- women themselves, especially those intolerant of change;
- radical feminism;
- lack of acceptance and support for solo parent families;
- significant concerns about the nature and process of annulment;
- difficulties of rural communities involving isolation and lack of information;
- lack of facilities and support for families with young children and for the disabled;
- lack of understanding and assistance given to people with disabilities and their carers;
- lack of true and full Catholic teaching and practice;
- lack of transport and child-minding facilities for women from lower socio-economic backgrounds;
- ignorance of some Australians and Catholics about the Ukrainian Church.

9.8 Ways in Which Women's Participation in the Church Can Be Increased

9.8.1 Greater Participation Sought for Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

More than half of the attenders who completed Questionnaire H in the CCLS responded to the invitation to say what they thought were the two most important ways of increasing women's participation in the Church. They indicated that the most important ways of promoting women's participation are prayer, increasing involvement in decision-making and Church administration, reforming beliefs and practices that do not promote equality, appointing women as spokespersons for the Church and creating opportunities for theologically qualified women to make a greater contribution to the Church. All of these were seen as more important than making greater use of inclusive language.

Given that the Survey was conducted after the publication of the apostolic letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this Report, it should be noted that a list of nine suggestions to increase women's participation did not include "Ordaining women as priests". It was not included as the list contained only those means of promoting women's ordination that could be acted upon. However, reference to beliefs of the Church was included in the suggestion "Reforming beliefs and practices in the Church that do not promote equality".

The overwhelming response of the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups sought greater participation for women in the Church, in particular through the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels of the Church; an examination of the nature of ministry and of the ordination of women; reform of Church structures and practices to remove gender inequalities; establishment of a balance of men and women on all Church advisory groups; promotion of opportunities for women to participate in the leadership of the Church; and the full utilisation of women's talents in the service of the Church.

9.8.2 Importance of Prayer in the Promotion of Women's Participation

When asked to nominate the best way to increase women's participation, by far the most popular choice of respondents to the CCLS was "Prayer". This contrasts with the responses received in the other research approaches where prayer was not identified as a suggestion in its own right. In both the written submissions and the public hearings, prayer was noted to precede, accompany and/or follow specific suggestions for action.

A short discussion of the major ways which were proposed to increase women's participation in the Church is presented below, along with a list of other frequently-mentioned suggestions.

9.8.3 Increasing Women's Involvement in Decision-making at All Levels

The request to increase women's involvement in decision-making at all levels was by far the most frequently-made suggestion. Involvement in decision-making was often linked with a call for women's participation in leadership. It was felt that decision-making and leadership should be inclusive of both women and men, clergy and laity, and should be undertaken in partnership at all levels. The need for women to be involved in decision-making and policy formation, particularly on issues which affect women, such as sexuality, contraception and marriage, was emphasised.

An urgent need was identified for informed discussion and broader consultation on issues to arrive at decisions. At diocesan and parish level, it was frequently recommended that a task force of lay men, women and clergy be convened to develop collaborative decision-making processes to be implemented at parish, diocesan and agency levels and to identify key occasions when such processes should be used.

9.8.4 Call for a Re-examination of the Nature of Ministry

A major finding concerned the identification of an urgent need to acknowledge that the ordination of women was an issue. This was proposed by all sectors of the Church – those in favour of the ordination of women and those who were either unsure or opposed to women's ordination. With the exception of the findings of the CCLS explained above, the request to permit women to be ordained priests was a constant theme in the written submissions, public hearings and targeted groups. Proposals related to this issue were most frequent in the written submissions which ensured the greatest degree of confidentiality of authorship.

There were frequent calls for a renewed priesthood that would be inclusive of men and women, married and celibate. Revision of the Code of Canon Law, especially Canon 274 regarding ordination, was requested. It was proposed that the issue of the ordination of women be explored in the broader context of an examination of the nature of ministry and that the question of women's ordination remain open for discussion and further discernment. The proposed outcome would be the exploration of new possibilities of ministry for both women and men. Further, it was suggested that the Bishops of Australia raise these issues in Rome.

There were many suggestions concerning a re-examination of compulsory celibacy and the priesthood. It was felt that women and the entire Church would benefit greatly from the inclusion of married clergy. The positive experience of the inclusion of married priests in the Eastern Rite was noted.

In addition, it was proposed that the Church explore the expansion of the deacon's role to include women as deacons and also explore the possibility of

women acolytes. An examination of particular ministries of many women in pastoral care, such as hospital chaplaincy, was seen as a matter of urgency. It was strongly recommended that women working in chaplaincy should be able to anoint the sick and the dying.

There were strong and heartfelt requests for the training and authorisation of both Aboriginal women and men for leadership and ministry. It was felt that there are people prepared to be trained and that there is support from their communities. There were many requests for funds to train Aboriginal people to minister to their own people. Having Aboriginal married clergy was seen as consistent with their culture, important and it would bring women forward as “men and women are always there doing things together”.

9.8.5 Reforming Beliefs and Associated Practices That Do Not Promote Equality of Men and Women

The need to reform beliefs and associated practices that do not promote equality was recommended in all aspects of the research. It was proposed that the Church’s teachings about non-discrimination need to be applied to its own affairs. The Church must refer back to Jesus and his way of relating to women and men in the Scriptures. Attitudes towards women, for example categorising them as saints or harlots, need to be addressed.

In the wider Church, there was a need to read the “signs of the times” in relation to the changing role of women, to discern the will of God and to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit.

A need to reform Church structures to remove gender inequalities and establish a balance of men and women on all Church advisory groups was emphasised. While it was acknowledged that entrenched attitudes and structures take time to change, it was felt that the Church could act positively by increasing female representation at all levels, in pastoral, ministerial and administrative areas.

9.8.6 Promoting Gender Equality and Opportunities

The importance of the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, both within the wider society and in the Church, was stressed. It was felt that a policy of non-discrimination between men and women in the Church leadership would represent “no more than catching up with what is recognised, and indeed lawful, in other fields of human endeavour”. Much attention was given to the need for affirmative action and the development of policy and programs. It was suggested that an affirmative action plan is needed in the Church and that women should be more visible at all levels of the Church. Public gestures of equality are needed. It was requested that women play a role on marriage tribunals and Bishops’ committees, and be present at the Bishops Conference’s Plenary meetings.

There was overwhelming agreement by all sectors of the Church that there should be no unjust discrimination in the Church on the basis of gender as both man and woman were created *“in the image of God”*. Every effort must be made to abolish discrimination in a genuine attempt to break down barriers to women’s participation. It was proposed that the major way in which the Church can increase the participation of women is by taking to heart the words of Paul in Galatians 3:28: *“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*.

9.8.7 Promoting Opportunities for Women to Participate in Leadership in the Church

In conjunction with suggestions to foster the equality of women, it was further proposed that opportunities be provided for women with suitable qualifications and backgrounds to assume positions of leadership at all levels. It was recommended that a range of educational and training opportunities be provided so that leadership positions can be taken up by an informed laity. There is a need to see women as well as men as Church spokespersons. It was stressed that women should be quoted along with men and seen in the official party at Church functions.

9.8.8 Fostering Women’s Participation in Management–Leadership Roles in Catholic Organisations

Results of the survey of Catholic organisations indicated the following five commonly identified means to remove barriers and to increase women’s participation in Catholic Church organisations:

- deliberate active recruitment of competent women to the executive, decision-making level in Catholic organisations. These women, acting as mentors, will give confidence to other women to apply for such senior positions;
- deliberate encouragement of women to display leadership skills and abilities by giving them opportunities to do so and responsibilities within the organisation to prepare them for promotion;
- involvement of women in planning, formulating and delivering organisational policies and programs;
- job redesign to help women to cope with the responsibilities of both careers and families; and
- fundamentally changing the culture of Catholic organisations to facilitate the participation and collaboration of men and women, clerics and laity, in the Church’s mission.

9.8.9 **Allowing Women's Talents to Be Fully Utilised**

It was recommended that women's talents and gifts be utilised more fully in the service of the Church. With a more mature understanding of sexuality, women's wisdom and experience would benefit the whole Church. Acknowledgment and affirmation of the diversity of women's experience and strengths, which could be offered to the Church and wider community, were sought. It was frequently noted that the large number of women graduates in theology represents a valuable and untapped resource for the Church. It was recommended that possibilities for placing the education, gifts and faith of such women at the service of the Church be investigated.

9.8.10 **Other Ways to Increase Women's Participation in the Church**

Other major ways to increase women's participation in the Church included suggestions to:

- provide access for women to pastoral, religious and/or theological education;
- encourage women to have a voice in the Church;
- educate women and men in the vision of shared leadership;
- recognise women's great contribution to the Church;
- use inclusive religious imagery and language;
- use inclusive social language;
- allow women to preach;
- foster respect for women's unique contribution to the Church;
- increase women's involvement in the parish;
- set up communications processes within the Church with broad consultation;
- address Church teachings associated with sexuality and marriage including the exclusion of many people from full participation in the Church on grounds related to sexuality and marriage;
- promote continuing education of the clergy;
- develop processes for dealing with sexual abuse;
- value diversity, including the diversity of women, in the Australian Church;
- provide lay female role models in the Church, especially for the young;
- develop more collaborative ministries, especially through the establishment of diocesan pastoral councils;
- provide greater support for marriage and the family;
- revise the teaching and preaching on birth control;
- bridge the gulf between feminism and the Church's position;
- foster the active involvement of young people, especially young women;
- recognise and promote women's spirituality;
- address unjust remuneration and employment conditions for women in the Church;

- recognise and promote racial equality for ATSI peoples;
- integrate Aboriginal culture and Church celebrations;
- foster greater sensitivity, education and dialogue concerning lesbian women and the Catholic Church;
- publish the results of the Research Project;
- ensure that the Research Project is followed by action.

9.9 Conclusions

The Research Project has produced a wealth of data on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia through a variety of research methodologies. The investigation has highlighted:

- a wide spectrum of views and emotions experienced as a result of the Church's stance on the role of women;
- the diverse and myriad contribution of women to the life of the Australian Church where women outnumber men in all forms of participation except in the ordained ministry, leadership and decision-making;
- varied perceptions concerning assistance and support currently offered to women to participate in the Church, but overall agreement about the lack of assistance for participation in decision-making and leadership roles;
- where barriers were identified, they related to Church structures and practices including the process of decision-making, the exercise of authority in the Church, practices and beliefs that favour men for certain positions, and opposition or lack of support from priests;
- that women's participation be increased through prayer; involvement in decision-making at all levels; acknowledgment that the ordination of women is an issue; examination of possibilities concerning a renewed priesthood inclusive of men and women, married and celibate; reform of beliefs and associated practices that do not promote equality of men and women; promotion of opportunities for women to participate in leadership roles in Church administration and organisations; and the full utilisation of women's talents.

9.9.1 Two Contrasting Perceptions of the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

In the conduct of the Research Project, two broadly contrasting perceptions emerged concerning the participation of women in the Church in Australia, each involving a cluster of characteristics. While the following features of these two approaches are not exhaustive, they include those characteristics which can be identified with some confidence as a result of the Research Project. It is clear that these two broad perceptions of the role of women are not gender-specific.

In dealing with women's issues, as with any social problems of great complexity, it is necessary to be wary of rigid dichotomies. However, the following table of contrasting perceptions highlights a polarity which is evident in the Catholic Church in Australia and which has theological and pastoral implications.

Those who show satisfaction with the current role of women in the Church:	Those who seek to expand the current role of women in the Church:
Seek maintenance of the <i>status quo</i> or a return to traditional teachings, piety and values	Call for renewal based on the vision of Jesus and the Gospels
Stress obedience to the Pope and the hierarchical nature of the Church	Desire to see the spirit and vision of the Second Vatican Council implemented with emphasis on the Church as the People of God
Refer to Church documents, especially the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>	Refer to Scripture and the early Church
Emphasise authority and doctrine	Stress the need to consider contemporary biblical and theological scholarship
Are concerned that tolerance undermines truth	Value diversity in unity and the breakdown of discrimination
Highlight the traditional role of women as wives and mothers, and in consecrated life	Highlight the increasingly varied contribution of women to society and to the Church
Are concerned that men and boys are not sufficiently present and active in the Church	Display feelings of pain and alienation concerning the limitations on the role of women in the Church
Emphasise concerns about worldly influences, involving secular pressures, consumerism and the secular culture	Experience as a scandal that the wider society is leading the way concerning the equality of women
See the Church as being in conflict with a hostile world	Lament the failure of the institutional Church to read the "signs of the times" concerning the equality of women
Express concerns regarding the lack of Catholic ethos and sound teaching in Catholic education	Identify the value of the large group of theologically educated women in Australia
Perceive that women seeking ordination seek power and status	Perceive that women seeking ordination wish to be of service to the Church
Believe that feminism is incompatible with Church teaching	Value moderate feminism
Are comfortable with exclusive social language and religious imagery	Call for the use of inclusive religious language and imagery and inclusive social language

9.9.2 Dominant Common Characteristics of Perceptions Concerning the Participation of Women in the Church

While the characteristics listed above highlight differing perceptions of the role of women, there are some characteristics which both groups have in common. Dominant common characteristics identified in the research include:

- love of and commitment to the Church;
- concerns for the future of the Church, especially in relation to the alienation of young people;
- agreement that there be no unjust discrimination against women in the Church on the basis of gender;
- recognition and affirmation of the great contribution of women to the Australian Church.

9.9.3 Need for Listening and Dialogue

In some of the public hearings, the distinguishing characteristics presented were so pronounced that a polarisation of views on the role of women in the Church was evident. One of the greatest challenges to emerge from the research is the need for the Church to listen to women when they speak about their experiences, needs and aspirations. The public hearings, as authentic listening exercises, were appreciated greatly as rare opportunities in the Australian Church. It is necessary that a variety of forums be available for respectful listening to the range of views about the role and status of women from various sectors of the Church and for promotion of genuine dialogue. It is instructive that the first encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964), noted the following characteristics of dialogue:

1. *Clarity before all else; the dialogue demands that what is said should be intelligible.*
2. *Our dialogue must be accompanied by meekness ... It is peaceful, has no use for extreme methods, is patient under contradiction and inclines towards generosity.*
3. *Confidence is also necessary; confidence not only in the power of one's own words, but also in the good will of both parties to the dialogue.*
4. *Finally, the prudence of a teacher ... who is always at pains to learn the sensitivities of the audience. (n. 81)*

In a dialogue conducted with this kind of foresight, truth is wedded to charity and understanding to love. (n. 82)

9.9.4 **Equality of Women and Men Created in the Image of God: An Issue for the Whole Church**

The dominant issue arising from the research is gender equality – recognising the equal dignity of women and men created in the image and likeness of God. This understanding of equality does not imply the sameness of men and women, but rather complementarity and mutuality. The findings of the research demonstrate that, while there is a range of views concerning women and the Church, there is virtually no disparity of views based on gender. It is concluded that issues concerning gender equality are not just concerns for women only but rather issues for the Church as a whole. It is true that many women are alienated from the Catholic Church. It is also true that many men are alienated.

9.9.5 **Tensions in the Findings**

The results of the Research Project highlight tensions in the Catholic Church in Australia and in the universal Church:

- An understanding of the Church as the saving presence of Christ was seen as fundamental to its nature. However, the contemporary Church was experienced by many as failing to reflect the person and message of Jesus, especially in his radical relationship with women.
- The alienation of many women from the Church arises not because the demands of serving the Gospel and the Church are too great, but rather because there are too few and limited ways to be of service in the decision-making, leadership and ministerial roles of the Church.
- Of those currently studying theology in Australia at present, women form the majority at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, usually undertaking their studies at their own expense. However, there are few opportunities for such women to utilise their qualifications and experience beyond the teaching profession.
- In recent years, the Church has given prominence to human dignity and rights and yet the official Church is seen as having failed to apply fully its own social justice teachings to the participation of women in the Church.
- The demands of the Gospel are proclaimed to be counter-cultural. However, the Church is seen to be lagging behind the wider Australian society in recognising and affirming the equality of women.
- The task of the contemporary Church to discern God's revelation in relation to the equality of woman and man as one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28) requires that, in the examination of its tradition, the Church differentiate between cultural norms and the Gospel message.
- The current priority given to a celibate male priesthood is seen to be at odds with the proclamation that the Eucharist is the source and summit of Church life.

- The Catholic Church in Australia is experiencing a crisis in vocations to the male celibate priesthood. The current priesthood is ageing and declining in numbers. Many women in the Church experience what they regard as a strong call to use their talents and gifts in the service of Christ and the Church through the priesthood. It is felt that the Church is failing to recognise genuine signs of the presence and purpose of God.

9.9.6 A Moment of Grace in the Catholic Church in Australia

In 1963, Pope John XXIII, reflecting on the “signs of the times”, identified the emergence of women asserting their right to be treated with dignity and equality as one of the major thrusts of our times (*Pacem in Terris*, n. 41). In the contemporary Church there is an urgent need to read the “signs of the times”, to discern the will of God and to be open to renewal. The scope of the task and the demands of this change of consciousness are not to be underestimated. Yet, at the commencement of the third millennium, many see this challenge as a unique opportunity, a moment of grace in the Catholic Church in Australia. The participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia has been examined with courage. Leadership is required to articulate a vision that is more inclusive of women and men who have come to feel they are on the margins, that they are not being listened to. Effective management of such change is then required.

It is hoped that the results of the Research Project will provide a basis for renewed theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women. It was stated at the commencement of this Report that the *Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women* was a source of inspiration for the Research Project. The words of this letter are recalled once more to highlight our need to follow the example of Jesus Christ in his relationship with women:

It is thus my hope, dear sisters, that you will reflect carefully on what it means to speak of the “genius of women”, not only in order to be able to see in this phrase a specific part of God’s plan which needs to be accepted and appreciated, but also in order to let this genius be more fully expressed in the life of society as a whole, as well as in the life of the Church. (n.10)

When it comes to setting women free from every kind of exploitation and domination, the Gospel contains an ever relevant message which goes back to the attitude of Jesus Christ himself. Transcending the established norms of his own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness. In this way he honoured the dignity which women have always possessed according to God’s plan and in his love. As we look to Christ at the end of this Second Millennium, it is natural to ask ourselves: how much of his message has been heard and acted upon? (n.3)

APPENDIX 1

Writers of Contextual Papers: Biographical Information

"Women in the Australian Church: An Historical Perspective"

Dr Sophie McGrath is an historian with a special interest in women's history which she has taught at the Catholic Theological Union, Hunter's Hill. She holds a B.A. (Syd), Dip. Ed. (New Eng.), M.Ed. (Syd.) and a Ph.D. in history from Macquarie University. She has researched and published in the areas of the philosophy of Christian education, the education of Catholic girls, women religious in the history of Australia, and feminism and the papacy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her current research interest is the Catholic Church and women's suffrage in Australia.

"Women in the Australian Church: An Ecumenical Perspective"

Denise Clare Sullivan, a nucleus member of the International Grail Movement, currently lectures at Signadou Campus of Australian Catholic University where her specialty is ecumenical studies. Executive Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith relations, she is also an official Catholic representative on the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia, Deputy Chair of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Ecumenical Commission and a member of the Council of St Mark's (Anglican) National Theological College. A member of the Roman Catholic official delegation to the 7th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, 1991, she edited the papers of the Pre-Assembly ANZATS/WCC Ecumenics Course, *Living Ecumenism: Christian Unity for a New Millennium* (Melbourne, Joint Board of Christian Education, 1995).

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines for Written Submissions



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Guidelines for Written Submissions

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia** involves a variety of means of collecting data. Interested individuals and groups, whether male or female, young or old, actively involved in Church structures or not – are now being invited to make written submissions by **1 December 1996**.

Your views are important. Please help the research team to understand your views clearly and process your submission efficiently by following the guidelines below.

- In your submission please address one or more of the following key questions:
 1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? These ways could be described in areas such as the home, parish, diocese, educational and healing ministries of the Church or women's groups.
 2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
 3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
 4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?
- Submissions may take the form of letters, lists of points, or papers no longer than ten A4 pages. Shorter submissions are welcome. **Alternatively** you may choose to use the submission form provided.
- Submissions or parts of submissions will be treated in strict confidence upon request but anonymously submitted material will not be accepted. The Research Management Group will include in its final report on this project a list of written submissions and presentations at hearings. It may also refer to those submissions and presentations in the text of the report and other publications. **If you do not want your submission or any part of it to be used in any one of these ways please indicate this clearly.**
- Submissions must reach the address below by **1 December 1996**.

Thank you for taking the time to read these guidelines.

If you have any queries please contact Sandie Cornish at the address below.

The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia Research Project
19 MacKenzie Street, NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060
Tel: 02 9956 5800 Fax: 02 9956 5782

19 MacKenzie Street • North Sydney • NSW • 2060 • Tel: 02 9956 5800 • Fax: 02 9956 5782

A research project conducted for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development & Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Written Submission From:

Name:

Organisation:
(if applicable)

Postal Address:
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Total Number of Pages: (please do not exceed 10)

Confidentiality:

The final research report will include a list of submissions received. The text of the report, and other publications, may also refer to some of these submissions. If you do not want your submission or any part of it used in either of these ways, please indicate this below.

- ☐ please DO NOT include details of this submission in the research report's list of submissions received.
- ☐ please DO NOT refer to this submission (or the part of this submission which has been circled in red) in the text of the report or other publications.

Office Use Only

Submission No:

Date Received:

Thank you for taking the time to make a submission.

If your answers do not fit in the space provided, please attach extra pages firmly and indicate clearly which questions, if any, your extra pages relate to.

**Please mail your submissions to the address below by
1 December 1996.**

19 MacKenzie Street • North Sydney • NSW • 2060 • Tel: 02 9956 5800 • Fax: 02 9956 5782

A research project conducted for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development & Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

Submission No:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? These ways could be described in areas such as the home, parish, diocese, educational and healing ministries of the Church, or women's groups.

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2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?

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Submission No:

3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia?

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4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia can be increased?

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The Participation of Women in the
Catholic Church in Australia
Research Project

19 MacKenzie Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

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WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

closing date: 1 December 1996

Submissions from individuals or groups on any aspect of the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia are welcome. Submission writers are encouraged to address the following questions:

- 1 What are the ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- 2 What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
- 3 What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
- 4 What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Submissions can take the form of letters, lists of points, or papers no longer than ten A4 pages.

Submissions should be sent to:

Sandie Cornish

The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in
Australia Research Project
19 MacKenzie Street, NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

HEARINGS

1997

Hearings will be held in capital cities and provincial centres across all Australian States and Territories during 1997. The times and places of these hearings will be advertised nationally.

Those wishing to make presentations at hearings will be asked to arrange an appointment through the BCJDP Secretariat after the times and places have been advertised.

As the hearings approach, the BCJDP Secretariat will provide information on the process that will be used.

TIME FRAME

1 Dec 1996: deadline for written submissions.

late 1996: National Church Life Survey with subsample of participants responding to questions about the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

mid 1997: hearings in State and Territory capital cities and selected provincial centres.

late 1998: research findings reported to the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about this research project please contact

Dr Michael Costigan
Ms Sandie Cornish

BCJDP Secretariat
19 MacKenzie Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Tel: 02 9956 5800
Fax: 02 9956 5782

The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia



**A National Research Project of the
Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference**

undertaken by:

The Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development
and Peace; the Australian Catholic University;
and the Australian Conference of Leaders
of Religious Institutes

Bishops' Commission Research

Women's dignity has often been unacknowledged and their prerogatives misrepresented; they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude.

...And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision.

Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women, n 3.

- This Australia-wide research is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops of Australia. It is being conducted for them by the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP), the Australian Catholic University (ACU), and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI).

Management of the Research

- Bishop Kevin Manning, Secretary of the BCJDP and Chair of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, has oversight of the project.
- The Research Management Group, appointed by the BCJDP, is comprised of: Bishop Kevin Manning (Convenor), Ms Sandie Cornish (BCJDP Secretariat and Secretary to the RMG), Dr Michael Costigan (BCJDP Executive Secretary), Professor Peter Carpenter (ACU), Dr Marie Macdonald (ACU), Sr Margaret Malone (ACU), Sr Sonia Wagner (ACLRI), Mr Bob Dixon (Project Officer, National Church Life Survey).

Research Objectives

This research will gather information about the ways in which women currently participate in the Church and how their participation can be increased. It will help Church bodies to reflect on and promote the Gospel vision of the equal dignity of women and men, to discuss the issues in a constructive way, and to plan for the future.

Research Questions

The research project will focus on four key questions:

- 1 What are the ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- 2 What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
- 3 What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
- 4 What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Responses are sought from women and men, young and old, those who are actively involved in Catholic Church structures and those who are not.

Ways of Getting Involved

There are three main ways in which you can assist in this research project:

1. Written Submissions

- Written submissions from groups or individuals are being called for. Your submission will be welcome whether you are female or male, young or old, attached to parish structures or not.
- Your submission should address one or more of the project's key research questions (listed above).
- Submissions can take the form of letters, lists of points, or papers no longer than ten A4 pages. Shorter submissions are welcome. A set of guidelines for submissions is available from Sandie Cornish at the BCJDP Secretariat.
- Submissions should be sent to the following address by

1 December 1996:

**BCJDP Secretariat
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney NSW 2060**

2. Hearings

- Hearings will be held in a number of capital cities and regional centres across all Australian States and Territories during 1997. The times and places of these hearings will be advertised nationally.
- Presentations to hearings should address one or more of the project's key research questions. (see left)
- If you or your group would like to make a presentation at a hearing, you will need to arrange an appointment through the BCJDP Secretariat. Information on how the hearings will be conducted will be available from:

BCJDP Secretariat

19 MacKenzie Street,

North Sydney, NSW, 2060

Tel: 02 9956 5800

Fax: 02 9956 5782

3. Questionnaire

- Information will be gathered from women and men through a questionnaire administered in a scientifically selected sample of parishes across Australia. This questionnaire will be part of the larger National Church Life Survey.
- A subgroup of approximately 10,000 participants in that survey will be asked questions about women's participation in the Church.
- There will be a representative sample of parishes from all dioceses.

Gospel Vision

This research project should help us to find practical ways of renewing and expressing our commitment to the Gospel vision of the dignity of women. We welcome your interest in this research and urge you to take part in it and to pray for its success.

APPENDIX 3

Written Submissions from Individuals

Ann Aboud ST LUCIA QLD 4067	Margaret Anderson PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120	M Balnaves SCULLIN ACT 2614
Kate Abba EPPING NSW 2121	Ms Mary Appleton MURCHISON VIC 3610	K Bambridge ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870
Karin Abrams CHERRYBROOK NSW 2126	Mrs B Ariens NOBLE PARK VIC 3174	Ms C Bambridge MANLY NSW 2095
Mrs Rosanna Abrams CHERRYBROOK NSW 2126	Mr David Armenores CLEAR ISLAND WATERS QLD 4226	Margaret Bampton HYDE PARK SA 5061
Margaret Adams MENTONE VIC 3194	Ms Alma Armstrong GIRALANG ACT 2617	Noelene Bangel KENTHURST NSW 2156
Julianne Adams O'Bryan MELBOURNE VIC 3004	Helen Armstrong KENSINGTON NSW 2033	Mrs Jarrn Banner WAHROONGA NSW 2076
Mrs Marcia Adeloju MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553	Mrs Angela Arthur KEW VIC 3101	Sr Sue Baragry CANTERBURY VIC 3126
Elizabeth Afribo SWAN HILL VIC 3585	Ms Josephine Arundell CAMBERWELL VIC 3124	Sue Barker WINDSOR NSW 2756
Mrs Patricia Agnew MACKAY QLD 4740	Mrs Elizabeth Arundell TALBOT VIC 3371	Mrs Jeanette Barlow JERILDERIE NSW 2716
Ms Jacinta Agostinelli RESERVOIR VIC 3073	Ms Liz Askie CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290	Anita Barnes DAGUN QLD 4570
W Ainsworth SOUTH OAKLEIGH VIC 3167	Maureen Atkins KYABRAM VIC 3620	Jan Barnett CAMMERAY NSW 2059
Ms Patricia Airey ASPLEY QLD 4034	Susan Attard NORTH ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4701	Audrey Barr AYR QLD 4807
Ms Madonna Airey TOOWONG QLD 4006	Mrs Mary Attard VINEYARD NSW 2765	Mrs Marie Barrett SALE VIC 3851
Ms Josephine Alexander GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150	Sr Mary Augustine GANMAIN NSW 2702	Mrs Joan Barrow YAGOONA NSW 2199
Jeannine Alexander LENNOX HEAD NSW 2478	Brenda Auret LANGFORD WA 6147	Sr Eunice Barry JAMESTOWN SA 5491
Mr John Allen KENSINGTON NSW 2033	Ellen Austin STUART PARK NT 0820	Sr Joan Barry PORT LINCOLN SA 5606
Doris Allen KINGSFORD NSW 2032	Clare Avalon BALWYN VIC 3103	Mr Peter Barry WARREN NSW 2824
Marisa Allen NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW 2151	Glenys Avard COLBINABBIN VIC 3559	Margaret Bartley WOLLONGONG EAST NSW 2520
Jan Almgren WAHROONGA NSW 2076	Mrs Ceila Babbage MINLATON SA 5575	Doris Bastian BATEAU BAY NSW 2261
Mrs Jan Altmann MT LAWLEY WA 6050	Mrs Elizabeth Back ATHELSTONE SA 5076	Beth Bateman BEGA NSW 2550
Mr Joe Alvaro CROYDON NSW 2132	Sr Gwen Bade QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620	Mrs Margaret Bates WODONGA VIC 3691
Sr Evelyn Ambrey DUNEDOO NSW 2844	Mrs Jane Baker YASS NSW 2582	Ann Baumber MOUNT OUSLEY NSW 2519
Jane Anderson ALBANY WA 6330	Fr Gerry Baldock WENDOREE VIC 3355	Mrs Louise Bayley ST HELEN'S PARK NSW 2560
Ms Judy Anderson CLEAR ISLANDS WATERS QLD 4226	Mrs Kay Ballantyne MADDINGTON WA 6109	Collette Bayley TRARALGON VIC 3844
Frances Anderson EUROWA NSW 2806	Joyce Balnaves KALEEN ACT 2617	Ms Jane Beard CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Ms Catherine Bearsley MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149	Dr John Boffa ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870	Serena Breese CABRAMATTA NSW 2166
Margaret Beaumont LEETON NSW 2705	Sr Patricia Boland MEREWETHER NSW 2291	Ms Val Breiner TENAMBIT NSW 2323
Mr Geoff Beckley BALGOWLAH HEIGHTS NSW 2093	P Bolger MANLY NSW 2095	A Brennan ARARAT VIC 3377
Margaret Begg MT GRAVATT QLD 4122	Mrs Lyn Bolton EAST RINGWOOD VIC 3135	Miss Molly Brennan BENDIGO VIC 3550
Sr Maria Bell KEW VIC 3101	Mrs Margaret Bond THE ENTRANCE NSW 2261	Kathy Brennan BROOKLYN PARK SA 5032
Jo Bell KOJONUP WA 6395	Rosemarie Boneham THORNLEIGH NSW 2120	Ms Donna Brennan BROOKLYN PARK SA 5032
Sr Sheila Belleville BALLARAT VIC 3354	Jan Boniwell TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Ms Elizabeth Brennan MIRRABROOKA WA 6061
Angela Bendotti PEMBERTON WA 6260	M Bono No address recorded	Christine Brenton ST CLAIRE NSW 2759
Carol Bennett GEEBUNG QLD 4034	Mrs Jill Boon BRUCE ACT 2617	Mr Rollo Brett FARRER ACT 2607
Noaleen Bennett KINGSGROVE NSW 2208	Joyce Bostock NEW FARM QLD 4005	Joan Brewer DULWICH SA 5065
Mary Bennett SHEPPARTON VIC 3630	Miss Margaret Bouffler BURWOOD NSW 2134	Sharon Brewer THEODORE ACT 2905
Judy Benson CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053	Mrs Mary Boulton MODBURY NORTH SA 5092	Gabrielle Brian NORTH ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4701
Sr Yvonne Berecny DARWIN NT 0801	Julia Bourke BALMAIN NSW 2041	Ms Carol Briscoe PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444
Mrs Marie Berwick DROUIN VIC 3818	Mrs Maureen Bourke WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280	Sr Mary Britt STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
Cheryl Betts DUBBO NSW 2830	Ms Maria Bourne BENALLA VIC 3672	Anne Brolly EAST DONCASTER VIC 3109
Maureen Bevan BURRA SA 5417	Ms Helen Bowers CARCOAR NSW 2791	Mrs Enid Brookes DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047
Margaret Beverley NEWHAM VIC 3442	Mary Bowman KYABRAM VIC 3620	Diana Brookes MOLONG NSW 2886
Marie Biddle HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110	Phyllis Boyd SANDRINGHAM VIC 3191	Mrs Margaret Broomhead LATHAM ACT 2615
Fr C Bijmau KENSINGTON NSW 2033	Ms Monica Boyes DENMARK WA 6333	Mrs Nora Brosnan GLENVALE QLD 4350
Ms Mary Binks DAVENPORT TAS 7310	Ms Kathryn Boyle GISBORNE VIC 3437	Mrs Patricia Brown ALBERT PARK VIC 3206
Ms Barbara Birehall UPPER MT GRAVATT QLD 4122	Mrs Betty Bradshaw WERRIS CREEK NSW 2341	Mrs D W Brown BRAY PARK QLD 4500
Mrs Rosemary Birrell TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Sr Robyn Brady MT MAGNET WA 6638	Sr Margaret Brown CAMBERWELL VIC 3124
Miss Valmai Bland ANNANDALE NSW 2038	Miss M Brancik WATERLOO NSW 2017	Zella Brown COOMA NSW 2630
Patricia Blanks EAGLEHAWK VIC 3556	Ms Jane Branigan BENALLA VIC 3672	Mr Trevor Brown LANE COVE NSW 2066
Ms Cath Blunt THARWA ACT 2620	Mrs Elizabeth Braund HERNANI NSW 2453	Joan Brown LANE COVE NSW 2066
C Bobbie BRADBURY NSW 2560	Anna Brcic No address recorded	Rev Fr John Browne WEETHALLE NSW 2669
Carla Bocalatte DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047	Lyn Breen GOLDEN SQUARE VIC 3555	Barbara Browning CURTIN ACT 2605
Mrs M Body HOLBROOK NSW 2644	Rosemary Breen INVERELL NSW 2360	Mrs Jill Brundley WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Mary Bryant LEETON NSW 2705	Catina Caifla LEETON NSW 2705	Ms Majorie Carroll TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350
Mrs Mary Buccell BOOMI NSW 2405	Stephanie Caldwell CLEAR ISLAND WATERS QLD 4226	Betty Carroll WEST KEMPSEY NSW 2440
Miss Myra Buckingham GLADESVILLE NSW 2111	Sr Amy Caldwell TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Kathleen Carroll YOUNG NSW 2594
Kathleen Buckingham PYMBLE NSW 2073	Gwenda Callaghan ST MARYS NSW 2760	Maglene J Carter BLACKTOWN NSW 2148
Josephine Buckley BENALLA VIC 3672	Sr Virginia Calpotura GLEN IRIS VIC 3146	Susan Carter CARLINGFORD NSW 2118
Miss Joan Buckley ROYAL EXCHANGE NSW 2000	Mrs Margaret Cameron McKINLAY QLD 4823	Sr Joan Cartridge FRANKSTON VIC 3199
Mrs Pauline Bucoual-Sezun BELMONT VIC 3216	Barbara Campbell AVALON NSW 2107	Mrs Anna Casey EMERALD QLD 4720
Sr Sarah Buggan BENDIGO VIC 3550	Kaye Campbell JAMBOREE HEIGHTS QLD 4074	Sr Eileen Casey GOULBURN NSW 2580
Mrs Simonette Bunder KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500	Sr Maura Campbell MAITLAND NSW 2320	Ms Maureen Casey NORTH ROCKS NSW 2151
Sr Christine Burke ADELAIDE SA 5000	Ms Helen Campbell MOORABBIN VIC 3189	Sr Maureen Casey NORTH TURRAMURRA NSW 2074
Liz Burke HAWTHORN EAST VIC 3123	Mrs E. M. Campbell SANS SOUCI NSW 2219	Marie Casey STANHOPE VIC 3620
Kathleen Burkett REDCLIFFE QLD 4020	Mary Campion MAITLAND NSW 2320	Alice Cassar ST CLAIRE NSW 2759
Jan Burling TAMWORTH NSW 2340	Rosemary Canavan PARA HILLS SA 5096	Frank Cassidy CANBERRA ACT 2601
Ms J Burns MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149	Mrs Patricia Cannard GEEBUNG QLD 4034	Isobel Cassidy SURREY HILLS VIC 3127
Barbara Burns WANGARATTA VIC 3677	Mr Raymond Canning HACKETT ACT 2602	Margaret Cauman CROYDON VIC 3136
Mrs A Burrows PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120	Jennifer Cannon-Berry DUBBO NSW 2830	Rose Cavallo MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650
Anita Buswell WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Margaret Cardy KEW VIC 3101	Sr Monica Cavanagh QUAKERS HILL NSW 2763
Marie Butcher NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW 2151	Mrs C Carey HORSHAM VIC 3400	Catherine Mary Cavanagh WOY WOY NSW 2256
Sr Geraldine Butler HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110	Barbara Carey SHEPPARTON VIC 3630	Mary Cedrac MEADOWS SA 5201
Mrs Margaret Butts BEAUMARIS VIC 3193	Mrs Carey WILMINGTON SA 5485	Mrs D Cewasio OFFICER VIC 3809
Ms Carmel Byrne COOEE BAY QLD 4703	Jan Carney MYRTLE BANK SA 5064	Rosemary Chandler BURNBURY WA 6230
Ms Maureen Byrne URUNGA NSW 2455	Mrs Joan Carolan BEVERLY HILLS NSW 2209	B Chandler CLAREMONT TAS 7011
Carmel Byrne WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Miss Mary Carolan MOUNT KEMBLA NSW 2526	Dorothy Charkin MOSMAN NSW 2088
M Cabrini WEST KEMPSEY NSW 2440	Mr Martin Carolan MOUNT KEMBLA NSW 2526	Kate Charles CAMBERWELL VIC 3124
Mrs Sandra Cadwallader KILLARA NSW 2071	Sr Eileen Carr SUNSHINE VIC 3020	Ms Patricia Charter KIRRAWEE NSW 2232
Clare Caesar TORONTO NSW 2283	Denise Carroll BROADBEACH WATERS QLD 4218	Ms Mary Cheng GLADESVILLE NSW 2111
Deacon Ken Cafe GARbutt QLD 4814	Mrs Marita Carroll KINGAROY QLD 4610	Mrs J Chesworth GARRAN ACT 2605
Mrs Joyce Cahill ROCKDALE NSW 2216		Mary Chicherio LINDFIELD NSW 2070

Mrs Barbara Chigwidden
 GANMAIN NSW 2702
 Patricia Chigwidden
 GANMAIN NSW 2702
 Carmel Chigwidden
 GANMAIN NSW 2702
 Mr Francis Chrimes
 NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215
 Ms Chris Christensen
 NEWMARKET QLD 4051
 Marie Churchill
 GOONELLABAH NSW 2480
 Ms Amy Clancey
 GOLDEN SQUARE VIC 3555
 Sr Rita Clancy
 DAISY HILL QLD 4127
 Mrs Catherine Clancy
 DEEPPENE VIC 3103
 Mrs Mary Clancy
 KENNINGTON VIC 3550
 Estelle Clancy
 MOSMAN NSW 2088
 Mrs Maureen Clark
 ONKAPARINGA HILLS
 SA 5163
 Mrs D. P. Clarke
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 Mrs Marialouise Clarke
 PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120
 Cecily Clayton
 NARANGBA QLD 4504
 Sr Mary Cleary
 BEACONSFIELD TAS 7270
 Mr John Clements
 SPRINGWOOD NSW 2777
 Loretta Clifton
 ETTALONG BEACH NSW 2257
 Margaret Cloran
 LANE COVE NSW 2066
 Mr Fergus Cloran
 LANE COVE NSW 2066
 Mrs Patricia Clough
 EPPING NSW 2121
 Kath Clune
 EARLWOOD NSW 2206
 Mrs T Coco
 BUNDABURG QLD 4670
 Ms Patricia Coffey
 BONNY HILLS NSW 2445
 Frances Colahan
 ROBINA QLD 4226
 Mrs Kay Cole
 CANTERBURY VIC 3126
 Eva Cole
 RUGBY NSW 2583
 Ron Coleman
 WEST RYDE NSW 2114

Mrs Carmel Coles
 MT ELIZA VIC 3930
 Ms Monica Collins
 ADAMSTOWN NSW 2289
 Antoinette Collins
 ALLAWAH NSW 2218
 Mrs Marg Collins
 NARRE WARREN VIC 3805
 Shirley Collins
 PYMBLE NSW 2073
 Pat Collinson
 THIRLMERE NSW 2572
 Ms Clare Colman
 CROYDON PARK NSW 2133
 Sr Mary Coman
 PORTLAND VIC 3305
 Mrs Joyce Comino
 BUSBY NSW 2168
 Kathleen Condell
 WOLLONGONG NSW 2500
 Judy Condon
 GEEBUNG QLD 4034
 Ms Clare Condon
 MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204
 Mrs Helen Connell
 MERMAID WATERS QLD 4218
 Judy Connolly
 DORRINGTON QLD 4060
 Mary Connolly
 TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350
 Lisa Conroy
 CALWELL ACT 2905
 Jeanette Conway
 EAST KEW VIC 3102
 Margaret Cook
 BENDIGO VIC 3550
 Ms Julie Cook
 MANNING WA 6152
 Mrs Patricia Cook
 YUNGABURRA QLD 4872
 Ms A Cooke
 ASCOT QLD 4007
 Patricia Cooke
 JURIE WA 6516
 Miss Sheila Coolican
 PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120
 Cecilia Cooper
 CORRIMAL NSW 2518
 D Coppo
 INGHAM VIC 4850
 Joan Corfee
 MULGRAVE VIC 3170
 Br Paul Corkeron
 ST MARYS NSW 2760
 Mrs Marcia Cornick
 MACLEAN NSW 2463

Mr George Cosentino
 RIVERSIDE TAS 7250
 Mrs Maria Cosentino
 RIVERSIDE TAS 7250
 Brandy Cosgrove
 BALMORAL NSW 2088
 Mrs Anne Cost
 PAYNESVILLE VIC 3880
 Dr Michael Costigan
 KIRIBILLI NSW 2061
 Ms Sharon Cother
 KINGSWOOD SA 5062
 Mrs Alisa Cottam
 TUMBARUMBA NSW 2653
 Rosalie Cotter
 HAWTHORN VIC 3122
 Mrs Monica Cotter
 ROSEVILLE NSW 2069
 Barbara Cougher
 JUNORTOWN VIC 3551
 Grace Coughlan
 DAPTO NSW 2530
 Patricia Cousins
 SPALDING SA 5454
 Mrs Pina Cousins
 WANGI WANGI NSW 2267
 Dr T Coyle
 CAIRNS QLD 4870
 Sr Carmel Coyle
 SHELLHARBOUR NSW 2529
 Mr Michael Cramer
 CROYDON HILLS VIC 3136
 Mrs Lorraine Craven
 EVANS HEAD NSW 2473
 M Crawford
 COONAMBE NSW 2829
 John Crawford
 COONAMBLE NSW 2829
 T. M. Creagh
 CAIRNS QLD 4870
 Sr Mary Cresp
 LEICHHARDT NSW 2040
 Sheila Croad
 SOUTH WEST ROCKS NSW
 2431
 Jackie Crocker
 BAYVIEW QLD 4868
 Marie Cronin
 BRINSMEAD GLEN QLD 4870
 Mrs Maxine Cross
 CORAKI NSW 2471
 Fr John Crothers
 ENMORE NSW 2042
 Margaret Crow
 NARRABEEN NSW 2101
 Sr Rosemary Crowe
 BENALLA VIC 3672

Sr Margaret Anne Crowe
GRIFFITH NSW 2680

Sr Aileen Crowe
NOBLE PARK VIC 3174

Mrs Beth Crowhurst
GLENROY VIC 3046

Marguerite Crute
RUSHWORTH VIC 3612

Benedicte Cruysmans
BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023

Mrs Dinny Culican
EAST KEW VIC 3102

Sr Marie Cummins
CARINGBAH NSW 2229

Elsie Anne Cunningham
WENDOUREE VIC 3355

Mrs Jennifer Cunningham
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

Ms Helen Curmi
FAIRFIELD VIC 3078

Kathleen Curmi
SURREY HILLS VIC 3127

Fay Curran
DONDINGALONG NSW 2440

Carolyn Curro
NELSON NSW 2765

Ms Margery Curtis
MT LAWLEY WA 6050

Mrs Jeanette Cusack
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Mary Cusack
PT AUGUSTA SA 5700

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DANDENONG VIC 3175

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Mrs Ann Daley
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Mr Dennis Dalgliesh
KENTHURST NSW 2156

Paula Dalgleish
TERRIGAL NSW 2260

Sr Anne Dalton
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Mrs Mary Daly
COMO WA 6152

Mrs Mary Daly
PARKWOOD WA 6147

Fr Kevin Dance cp
ST IVES NSW 2075

Mrs Winifred Daniel
EAGLEHAWK VIC 3556

Fr Brendan Davey
ARARAT VIC 3377

Ms Kieran Davies
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Dr Vaughan Davis
MAROUBRA NSW 2035

Mr Trevor Dawes
PARALOWIE SA 5108

Patricia de Groot
HASTINGS VIC 3915

B de Meyrick
MOSMAN NSW 2088

Mr Leo A L Dean
DIMBOOLA VIC 3414

Ms Evelyn Deane-Freeman
MT BARKER SA 5251

Mrs Marie Deans
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ms Barbara Debono
INGHAM QLD 4850

Ms Josephine Deere
BEXLEY NSW 2207

Leoni Degenhardt
NORMANHURST NSW 2076

Mrs M Delane
KOORDA WA 6475

Sr Helen Delaney
ALPHINGTON VIC 3078

Mrs Kathleen Delaney
DURHAM LEAD VIC 3352

Sharon Delaney
FLAXLEY SA 5153

Sue Delaney
LONGUEVILLE NSW 2066

Ms Jan Delaney
MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149

Ms Christine Dempsey
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

O M Dempsey
RANDWICK NSW 2031

Robert Denahy
WHITLANDS VIC 3733

Mr Gerard Denaro
ROCHEDALE QLD 4123

Mrs Theresa Denny
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Francis Dent
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Sr Denise Desmarchelier
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

Zoe Detmold
No address recorded

Barbara Devine
WARATAH NSW 2298

Mrs Anne Dewar
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Mrs Jean di Benedetto
SURFERS PARADISE QLD 4217

Valerie Dibben
NARARA NSW 2250

Ms Carolyn Digges
BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023

Shirley Digges
CARLTON VIC 3053

Mr David Digges
BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023

Mrs Virginia Digges
DARLING POINT NSW 2027

Elaine Dillon
BLACKBURN VIC 3130

Fiona Dodds
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146

Mrs Colleen Doherty
WOY WOY NSW 2251

Peter Donnan
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Teresa Donnellan
BROOKLYN PARK SA 5032

Margaret Donnellan
RUSSEL LEA NSW 2046

Rosalie Donnelly
KANWAL NSW 2259

Mrs Jacqueline Donohue
COOK ACT 2614

Mrs Isabel Donovan
CROYDON VIC 3136

Mrs Marie Dooley
COORPAROO QLD 4151

Catherine Dooley
GLENROY VIC 3046

Annette Dooley
TINGHA NSW 2369

Mr Dermot Dorgan
NAREMBURN NSW 2065

Elizabeth Douglas
WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280

Moyra Dovolil
HARTWELL VIC 3124

Mr Brendan Dowling
SOMERTON PARK SA 5044

Sue Downes
BUNBURY WA 6230

Mrs Jennifer Downie
ADELAIDE SA 5001

B Downie
MACARTHUR ACT 2904

Patricia Downs
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Pia Doyle
CAPEL WA 6271

Josephine Doyle
MARIAN QLD 4753

Sheila Doyle
WEETANGERA ACT 2614

Mr Cyril Drew
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146

Miss Corinne Driscoll
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Ms Virginia Drogemuller
GRENFELL NSW 2810

Fran Drum
RUPANYUP VIC 3388

Mary R Duck
EASTWOOD NSW 2122

Mrs Mon Ducrow
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

Mr John Duffy
BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023

Beryl Duffy
PARKWOOD QLD 4214

Mrs Pauline Duggan
INVERELL NSW 2360

Elizabeth M. Duluk
PARKSIDE SA 5063

Norah Duncan
MERINGUR VIC 3496

Maria Dunell
ORBOST VIC 3888

June Dunford
VERMONT VIC 3133

Mrs Leatrice Dunlea
MUDGEERABA QLD 4213

Angela Dunne
MOUNT ISA QLD 4825

Mrs Isabel Durney
NORTH EPPING NSW 2121

Sheila Durno
LINDISFARNE TAS 7015

Mary Duskas
CABRAMATTA NSW 2166

Rosemarie Dustmann
MINTO NSW 2566

Marie Dwyer
MOONEE PONDS VIC 3039

Mr Tim Eakin
NORTH IPSWICH QLD 4305

Sr Lyn Eastmure
BALD HILLS QLD 4036

Ms Susan Eaton
LISMORE NSW 2480

Sr Bernadette Edgecombe
EAST KEW VIC 3102

Ms Pam Edmonds
TAIGUM QLD 4018

Tracey Edstein
RAYMOND TERRACE
NSW 2324

Bev Edwards
ELIZABETH VALE SA 5113

Karen Edwards
Santa Sabina College
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Ms Sheelah Egan
HUGHES ACT 2605

Mrs Lois Elkin
CROYDON VIC 3136

Mrs J Elliot
BRIGHTON TAS 7030

Kathleen Elliot
WINNELLIE NT 0821

Mr Stephen Elliot
WYNDHAM VALE VIC 3024

C Ellis
BELLINGEN NSW 2454

Ms Catherine Ellis
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

Mrs Veronica Emslie
LEEMING WA 6149

Margaret English
ANNANDALE NSW 2038

Audrey English
PENSHURST NSW 2222

Mrs Ellen Falk
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

A Fallmo
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Sr Suzanne Farbarn
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Ms Helena Farland
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

Mrs Rosemary Farnden
KINGSWOOD SA 5062

Mrs Dorothy Farrant
NUMURKAH VIC 3636

Moya Farrell
LAMBTON NSW 2299

Sr Jennifer Farrell
WHYALLA STURT SA 5608

Archbishop Leonard Faulkner
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Peter Faullkner
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Patty Fawkner sgs
GLEBE NSW 2037

Mr Basil Fearon
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Sr Terisita Felsman
KEDRON QLD 4031

Mrs L Fenech
ARMADALE VIC 3143

Donald Ferguson
KEW VIC 3101

Mrs Susan Ferguson
NORTH BONDI NSW 2026

Mr Kevin Fergusson
GROSVENOR PLACE SYDNEY
NSW 2000

Mr Bryan Fernandez
BROOKLYN PARK SA 5032

Julita Fernandez
LINDFIELD NSW 2070

Ms Averil Fernandez
ROSEMEADOW NSW 2560

Ms Janet Fevri
WAITARA NSW 2077

Mrs Helen Fielden
VALLEY VIEW SA 5093

Sr Margaret Fields
BOX HILL VIC 3128

Nane Filio
No address recorded

B Filt
ERICA VIC 3825

Elizabeth Fisher
RIVERTON WA 6148

Ms Rita Fitt
CALWELL ACT 2905

Mrs Anne Fittler
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Dianna G M Fitz-Gerald
HOLDER ACT 2611

Bob Fitzgerald
BOX HILL VIC 3128

Mrs Carmel Fitzgerald
EMU CREEK VIC 3539

Claire Fitzgerald
MARRYATVILLE SA 5068

Mr Terry Fitzsummons
INVERELL NSW 2360

Elizabeth Flamsteed
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Eileen Flanagan
BRIGHTON VIC 3186

Clare Flanagan
EAST KEW VIC 3102

Mrs M Flanagan
GIRGARRE VIC 3624

Tonia Flanagan
KEMPSEY NSW 2440

Margaret Flannagan
BALWYN VIC 3103

Wendy Fleming
BUNDOORA VIC 3083

Ms Jenny Fleming
ROBINA QLD 4226

Elizabeth Fletcher
GLEBE NSW 2037

Fr Frank Fletcher
ERSKINEVILLE NSW 2043

Mrs F Fletcher
ALBURY NSW 2640

Mr Noel Flower
FORREST ACT 2603

Ms Catherine Flynn
PORT MACQUARIE VIC 3207

Ms Mary E Flynn
UPPER MT GRAVATT
QLD 4122

Mr Michael Foagrouple
MOUNT CROSBY QLD 4306

Mrs Rita Fogarty
BATEAU BAY NSW 2261

Colleen Foley
CROYDON PARK NSW 2133

Marie Foley
MOSMAN NSW 2088

Sr Elizabeth Foley
MULGOA NSW 2745

Ms Pina Ford
NORTH PERTH WA 6006

Dianne Forgione
SALISBURY HEIGHTS SA 5109

Helen Formentin
FREMANTLE WA 6154

Mrs Siobhan Foster
GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150

Judy Foster
HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110

Christine Foster
OAKLEIGH VIC 3166

Mary-Louise Fowler
MONTEAGLE NSW 2594

Ms Ruth Fowler
THORNBURY VIC 3071

Mrs Patricia Fox
EPPING NSW 2121

P Fox
SHELLHARBOUR NSW 2529

Frances
ST LUCIA QLD 4067

Mrs Babette Francis
TOORAK VIC 3142

Ms Dianne Franks
GRENFELL NSW 2810

Ian Fraser
ELTHAM NORTH VIC 3095

Mrs Svea Fraser
TOORAK VIC 3142

Ms Margaret Frawley
KINGARROY QLD 4610

Brigid Frawley
ROBINA QLD 4226

Ms Alva French
MURRAY BRIDGE SA 5253

Sr Ursula Freney
SADLER NSW 2168

Mrs Patricia Frewen
EUROA VIC 3666

Anne Friedlieb
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Mr Felix Furlong
NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104

Teresa N. Furst
SPALDING SA 5454

Dr Carmel Gaffney
DARWIN NT 0800

Miss Rose Gallagher
FIVE DOCK NSW 2046

Mrs Stephanie Gallagher
URUNGA NSW 2455

Ms Michelle Gallichio
NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104

Jeanne-Marie Ganne
NETHERBY SA 5062

Elizabeth Gannon
ST PAULS NSW 2031

Sr Gwen Garland
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Paula Geraghty
MT COLAH NSW 2079

Judge C Geraghty
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Mrs Sheila Gibson
EASTWOOD NSW 2122

Miss Violet Gibson
HERBERTON QLD 4872

Ms Rhonda Gibson
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ms Teresa Gildea
KANIMBLA HEIGHTS
QLD 4870

Margaret Gill
KEW VIC 3101

Mrs Judith Gill
SPALDING SA 5454

Ms Christine Giller
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Fr Theodore Gillian
WAVERLEY NSW 2024

Sr Jenny Gilligan
CONCORD NSW 2137

Estelle Gillin
DENISTONE NSW 2114

Stella Gleeson
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Rosemary Gleeson
EAST BRIGHTON VIC 3187

Mrs Catherine Gleeson
KLEMZIG SA 5087

Mr John Glover
LONG JETTY NSW 2261

Marguerita Goggin
SPRING GULLY VIC 3550

Fr Maurice Goldspink
GILGANDRA NSW 2827

Mrs Sheelagh Good
CROYDON PARK NSW 2133

Mrs A Good
PORT MACQUARIE
NSW 2444

Mrs L Goodall
EUROA VIC 3666

B Goode
CULCAIRN NSW 2660

Mr Rhys Goodey
TOORAK VIC 3142

Mrs Karen Gooding
BATEAU BAY NSW 2261

Mr Robert Goodyer
INVERELL NSW 2360

Mrs Cath Gooley
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

Mr Keith Gordyn
HAMPTON VIC 3188

Sr Maria Goretti
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Alana Gough
THE ENTRANCE NSW 2261

Sheila Gould
MURRAY BRIDGE SA 5253

Mrs C Gowland
ELIZABETH SA 5112

Mrs Nolene Goyen
KERGUNYAH VIC 3691

Fr Andrew Granc
BOX HILL NORTH VIC 3129

Mrs E Grandelis
MALANDA QLD 4885

Anne Marie Grasso
BIGGERA WATERS QLD 4216

Angela Grasso
MARGATE QLD 4020

Mr Michael Gravener
GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150

Mr John Gray
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Helen Gray
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Myra Grech
COOK NSW 2614

Mrs Mary Green
CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

Sr Veronica Green
CROWS NEST NSW 2065

Leonie Green
HELENSBURGH NSW 2508

Frances Greenslade
STRATHALBYN NSW 5255

Mrs Gabriella Gresz
CARLINGFORD NSW 2118

Freda Grey
CARNEGIE VIC 3163

Margherita Griffin
ASHBURTON VIC 3147

Miss Betty Griffin
ASHBURTON VIC 3147

John Griffin
THIRROUL NSW 2515

Lenore Griffith
WARANA QLD 4575

Kerry Griffiths
EASTLAKES NSW 2018

Sr Lorraine Groves
ELLEDALE TAS 7140

P Grundy
BOWEN QLD 4805

Mr Luis Gutierrez
GAITHERSBURG USA

Bernadette Haagen
FOREST HILL VIC 3131

Mrs Jean Habich
KINGSWOOD SA 5062

Margaret Hair
No address recorded

Mrs J Hales
FLOREY ACT 2615

Bridget Halge
DONVALE VIC 3111

Mrs Elizabeth Hall
GRIFFITH ACT 2603

Mrs Mary Hall
ROSE BAY NSW 2029

Sr Marcia Hall
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Mrs Joan Hallett
BRIDGETOWN WA 6255

Mrs Patricia Halligan
MANDURAH WA 6210

Mr Bernard Hallinan
WANGARATTA VIC 3677

Heidi Hammerle
CEDAR GROVE QLD 4285

M. J. Hammond
NETHERBY SA 5062

Jennifer Hanks
QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

Joan Hanley
INGHAM QLD 4850

Ms Rosemary Hanley
LALOR VIC 3075

Irene Hann
LOCKLEYS SA 5032

Ms Margaret Hanna
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Christine Hannan
ROSE BAY NSW 2029

Elizabeth Hannan
WEETANGERA ACT 2614

Kathleen Hansen
SARINA QLD 4737

Gary Hansford
BURWOOD VIC 3125

Anne Harries
DARWIN NT 0801

Bernadette Harrigan
BARRACK HEIGHTS
NSW 2528

Margaret Harris
BALLADRAN NSW 2831

Nicole Harrison
EVATT ACT 2617

Mr Albert Harrison
KINGSWOOD SA 5062

Mrs Kathryn Harrison
LILYDALE VIC 3140

Ms Irene Harrison
MANUNDA QLD 4870

Mrs L. R. Hart
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Mrs Joan Patricia Hart
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Karen Hartas
MORTDALE NSW 2223

Mrs Maureen Harty
BRADBURY NSW 2560

Sr Kay Haseler
MOSMAN NSW 2080

Fr Joe Hassen
GEORGETOWN SA 5472

Sr Annuetiata Haussener
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Mr Tony Hawke
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Ms Chris Hawke
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Ms Sheila Hawthorn
CURRAJONG QLD 4812

Mr Douglas Hawthorne
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Georgina Hay
ARANDA ACT 2614

Mrs R Hayes
CURTIN ACT 2605

Mary Hayes
CURTIN ACT 2605

Ms Madeleine Hayes
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Mrs Kathleen Haylock
TOORAWEEAH NSW 2831

Ms Barbara Hays
GLASSHOUSE MOUNTAINS
QLD 4518

Rev Adrian Head
BURRA SA 5417

Ms Philomena Headen
WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280

Maree Healey
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200

Sr Patricia Heenan
KANGAROO POINT QLD 4169

Elisabeth Heenan
KYNETON VIC 3444

Frances Hegarty
WOODY POINT QLD 4019

Jeanie Heininger
MANUKA ACT 2603

Mrs Elizabeth Helman
HAMILTON QLD 4007

Mr John Hendrie
KILSYTH VIC 3137

Daphne Hennelly
MENTONE VIC 3194

Louise Hennessy
DUBBO NSW 2830

Sr Anne Henson
TOORMINA NSW 2452

S Herft
KENSINGTON VIC 3031

Colleen Herft
ST CLAIRE NSW 2759

Ms Fleur Herscovitch
DUBBO NSW 2830

Margaret Hetherington
LAKE CAMM WA 6355

Mrs Mollie Hewitt
MOE VIC 3825

Nolene Hickey
BATHURST NSW 2795

Dorothea Hickey
CHELMER QLD 4068

Joyce Higgins
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Anne Higgins
DACEYVILLE NSW 2032

Sheila Hill
KYNETON VIC 3444

Mary Hill
OAKDALE NSW 2570

Monica Hill
TALLANGATTA VIC 3700

K Hiller
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200

Joan Hillier
BIGGERA WATERS QLD 4216

Ms Maureen Hinchey
WAVELL HEIGHTS QLD 4012

Bev Hincks SWANSEA NSW 2281	Mrs Kathleen Houghton TARRAWANNA NSW 2518	Mrs Margaret Jarden RUNAWAY BAY QLD 4216
Mrs Peg Hines QUIRINDI NSW 2343	Mrs Joan Housego GLENALTA SA 5052	Jen Jaworski TOORAK GARDENS SA 5065
Melissa Hitchman KAMBAH ACT 2902	Mrs Barbara Howard SPRINGWOOD QLD 4127	Sr Josephine Jeffery TOORAK VIC 3142
Mrs Flora Hodge ROBINA QLD 2066	Mr Jim Howard PALM BEACH QLD 4221	Sue Jennings BRAUNSTONE NSW 2460
Christine Hodgkinson COLLINGWOOD PARK QLD 4301	Mr Peter Howes HAWTHORN SA 5062	Judy Johnson AINSLIE ACT 2602
Mrs Honor Hogan YOUNG NSW 2594	Anne Hubbard BENDIGO VIC 3550	Mary Johnson CURTIN ACT 2605
Marlene Hogan FULHAM SA 5024	Margaret Hubery MOUNT LAWLEY WA 6060	Mr Richard Johnson CURTIN ACT 2605
Phyllis Hogan BURRA SA 5417	Ms Anne Hughes ALSTONVILLE NSW 2477	Bridget Johnson DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047
Mr Tom Hogan GLENELG SA 5045	Sr Catherine Hughes GOULBURN NSW 2558	Mrs Chris Johnson ROMA QLD 4455
Mrs Monica Howard BOWRAL NSW 2576	Patricia Hughes MORANBAH QLD 4744	Mrs Angela Johnston GREENS BEACH TAS 7270
Mrs E Hogg WARAMANGA ACT 2611	Mrs Carmel Humphreys SANDRINGHAM VIC 3191	Noreen Jolly McLAREN VALE SA 5171
Anne Holberton WILLAWARRIN NSW 2440	Susan Hunt SALE VIC 3850	Carmel Jolley MOUNT WAVERLEY VIC 3149
Catherine Holling TELOPEA NSW 2117	Mrs Shirley Hurley QUEENSLIFF VIC 3225	G Jones BACCHUS MARSH VIC 3340
Ms Margaret Hollis PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444	Mrs Mary Hynes ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700	Mrs Mary Jones BALLARAT VIC 3350
Ms Leonie Holmes MT PLEASANT SA 5235	Bernadette Ibell DEVONPORT TAS 7310	Sr Margaret Jones BRIGHTON VIC 3186
Mrs Judith Holznagel INDOOROOPILLY QLD 4068	Sr Margaret Illingworth MITCHELL PARK SA 5043	Doreen Jones BUDDINA QLD 4575
Mrs Dorothy Honner BINALONG NSW 2584	Margaret Imberger MOSS VALE NSW 2577	Sue Jones BULLCREEK WA 6149
Mrs Mary Hookway PARADISE SA 5075	Mrs G Instance PEAKHURST NSW 2210	Ms Pauline Jones CLOVERDALE WA 6105
Mrs Margaret Hooper CRANBROOK NSW 4814	Jane Instance PEAKHURST NSW 2210	Veronica Jones ERSKINEVILLE NSW 2043
Alison Hope O'CONNOR ACT 2612	Maureen Isa MACQUARIE FIELDS NSW 2564	Catherine Jones MT MAGNET WA 6638
Mr Noel Hopkins NYNGAN NSW 2825	Ms Christina Jack MENORA WA 6050	Mrs Catherine Jones RIVERVIEW NSW 2066
Mrs Mary Hor LINDFIELD NSW 2070	Mrs Anne Jackson CANAIABA NSW 2480	Sr Eileen Jones WINDSOR VIC 3181
Terry Horan PARKES NSW 2870	Sr C Jackson KAMBAH ACT 2902	Joanne Joordens CRESWICK VIC 3363
Mrs Jenny Horder KYLE BAY NSW 2221	Carmel Jackson LOXTON SA 5333	Mrs Jeanette Joseph DALBY QLD 4405
Patricia Horner CLEAR ISLAND WATERS QLD 4226	Ms Anne Jackson PALMERSTON ACT 2913	Mrs Rita Joseph HACKETT ACT 2602
Mrs Kathleen Horsfall GUNDAGAI NSW 2722	Arnold Jago MILDURA VIC 3500	Ms Barry Joyce ARARAT VIC 3377
Patricia Horsley ROSE BAY NSW 2029	Helen Jagoe BATHURST NSW 2795	Mrs M Joyce CLAYFIELD QLD 4001
	Ms Esther James NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104	Brian Junck SAN ISIDERE NSW 2650

Mrs Noreen Junck
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Mrs Colleen Kajewski
REDCLIFFE QLD 4020

Mary Kavanagh
MITCHAM VIC 3132

Mrs Margaret Kay
LINDISFARNE TAS 7015

C. Keady
HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110

Sr Margaret Keane
TECOMA VIC 3160

Sr Margaret Keane
WEE WAA NSW 2388

Patricia Kearney
GRACEMERE QLD 4702

Mrs Mary Keating
BINGARA NSW 2404

Miss Judith Kedge
CHIFLEY ACT 2606

Mary Keeley
PORT HEDLAND WA 6721

Dale Keenan
KANGAROO POINT QLD 4169

Rosemary Keenan
SORRENTO WA 6020

Edna Keith
YOUNG NSW 2594

Annette Kelderman
WISHART QLD 4122

Mrs Pam Kelloway
LYONS ACT 2606

Ms Noline Kelly
BURWOOD NSW 2134

Dr Martin Kelly
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047

Mrs Elizabeth Kelly
GLENROY VIC 3046

Rev Tony Kelly CSsR
KEW VIC 3101

Mrs Joyce Kena
GOOLMANGAR NSW 2480

Jane Keneally
GLADESVILLE NSW 2111

Mrs Merle Kenna
KINGSGROVE NSW 2208

Mrs Bernice M Kenna
TREVALLYN TAS 7250

Ms Patricia Kennedy
ARNCLIFFE NSW 2205

Margaret Kennedy
DACEYVILLE NSW 2032

Anne Kennedy
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047

Mrs A Kennedy
GOULBURN NSW 2580

S Kennedy
ORANGE NSW 2800

Ms Judy Kenny
MELBA ACT 2615

Mrs Ann Kenny
TERRIGAL NSW 2260

Sr Margaret Kenny
WHYALLA STUART SA 5608

Mrs Stephanie Kent
HAMILTON VIC 3300

Mrs Patricia Keogh
ALLAMBIE NSW 2100

Margot Kerby
LAKES ENTRANCE VIC 3909

Sr Berenice Kerr
GOONELLABAH NSW 2480

G Kettle
CAPELLA QLD 4702

Mrs Carmel Keys
MANLY NSW 2095

W Kiess
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Lorraine Kijurina
CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

Lynette Killen
TYABB VIC 3913

Tom Kingston
BALLARAT VIC 3353

A.M Kinnane
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Ms Jewel Kirkwood
COLEDALE NSW 2515

Mrs C Kleeven
DROUIN VIC 3818

Rosalie Klein
BEECHWORTH VIC 3747

Mary-Ann Knoblanche
Santa Sabina College
GLADESVILLE NSW 2111

Ellen Knoblanche
Santa Sabina College
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Margaret Knowlden
ST IVES NSW 2078

Mr Antony Knowles
CLAYTON VIC 3168

Ms Ewa Komorowska
POTTS POINT NSW 2011

Mrs Janet Kovesi Watt
CLAREMONT WA 6010

Sr Elsie Krelle
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Joy L'Huillier
CLEAR ISLAND WATERS
QLD 4226

Ms Leanne La-Verty
IPSWICH QLD 4305

Dr Roderic Lacey
BALLARAT VIC 3350

Kathleen Laffan
MIRRAMBOOKA WA 6061

Judy Lalor
BEGA NSW 2550

Mr Ted Lambert
ELIZABETH DOWNS SA 5113

Dr Patrick Laming
FORSTER NSW 2428

Mr Chris Laming
MOE VIC 3825

Catherine Lane
ARARAT VIC 3377

Maureen Lane
SUNSHINE VIC 3020

Joan Last
BUNBURY WA 6230

Mrs Jean Latham
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Mrs Monica Lauder
TUMBARUMBA NSW 2653

Marie Lavis
CARLINGFORD NSW 2118

Mrs E Laws
MORDIALLOC VIC 3195

Sophie Lawson
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

Mrs June Lawson
SHELLY BEACH NSW 2261

Helen Le Cordier
GOOMALLING WA 6460

Mrs Joan Leach
BALLINA NSW 2478

Jeannette Leach
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Margaret Leahy
NORTHCOTE VIC 3070

Mrs Anne-Marie Lean
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Ellen Leary
SAWTELL NSW 2452

Sr Carmel Leavey
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Mrs Joan Ledbrook
RABY NSW 2566

Elizabeth Lee
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Yolanda K. S. Lee
ROSEVILLE NSW 2069

Mrs Betty Legge
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ms Gloria Leigh
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Mrs Caroline Leuenberger
BURRADOO NSW 2576

Sr Marie Levey BONDI NSW 2026	Mr William Lucas BALNARRING VIC 3926	M Maher ST KILDA VIC 3182
Mr Bernard Lewis PROSERPINE QLD 4800	Mrs Marjory Lum HOLBROOK NSW 2644	Mrs Therese Maher SWAN HILL VIC 3585
Ruth Lewis SANDY BAY TAS 7005	Christine Lunn SOUTHPORT QLD 4215	K Maher TAMWORTH NSW 2340
Mrs J Lewis SCORESBY VIC 3179	Maria Luppino ATHELSTONE SA 5076	Mr Brian Maher WEST RYDE NSW 2114
Mrs Barbara Lewis WAHROONGA NSW 2076	Marsha Luscombe FREEBURGH VIC 3741	Mrs Katherine Mahne KINGSFORD NSW 2032
Mrs Catherine Ley WODONGA VIC 3690	Susan Luscombe TRARALGON VIC 3844	Mrs Maree Majoor LANE COVE NSW 2066
Mrs Pat Liddiard VINCENTIA NSW 2540	Br John Luttrell KENSINGTON NSW 2033	Mr Gregory Malcher DAYLESFORD VIC 3460
Dr On Lien ASCOT VALE VIC 3032	Julie Lynch BURPENGARY QLD 4505	Ms Margaret Mallay WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650
Mary Liesch BATHURST NSW 2795	Margaret Lynch KYNETON VIC 3444	Leone Mallory CRANBROOK QLD 4814
Martha Liesch EASTWOOD NSW 2122	Ms Carla Lynx PERTH WA 6001	Colleen Malone PICNIC POINT NSW 2213
Mrs Delores Lightbody BEENLEIGH QLD 4207	Ms Jennifer Lysiuk REGENTS PARK QLD 4118	Mrs Fiona Maloney YOUNG NSW 2594
Kathleen Lillis EAST BENTLEIGH VIC 3165	Mrs Dorothy-Anne MacDonald WAIKERIE SA 5330	Ella Mangan BRISBANE QLD 4000
Mrs Alma Limbrick KYABRAM VIC 3620	Joan MacGinley WEWAK PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Jenni Manna LANE COVE NSW 2066
Mrs P Lindorff ANAKIE VIC 3221	Dr Rosa MacGinley STRATHFIELD NSW 2135	Bev Mannes STRATHFIELDSAYE VIC 3551
Sr Pat Linnane BATHURST NSW 2795	Sr Patricia MacGinley WOOLLOOWIN QLD 4030	Marlene Marburg DONCASTER VIC 3108
Pamela Lipscombe WHEELERS HILL VIC 3150	Amanda Mackenzie FRASER ACT 2615	Anna March WEST HOBART TAS 7000
Dr Deirdre Little BELLINGEN NSW 2454	Nola Mackenzie TAIGUM QLD 4018	Jennifer Mardel GORDON ACT 2906
Julia Lloyd HALLETT LOVE SA 5158	Stephen Mackrell RIVERSIDE TAS 7250	Maureen Mardel-Ferreira BLACK ROCK VIC 3193
Sr Bernice Loch ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700	Mrs Liz Madden NIGHTCLIFF NT 0814	Mrs A Marffy HORNSBY NSW 2077
Jan Logan FINDON SA 5023	Mrs Kathy Madden SANDY BAY TAS 7005	Zena Marie PROSERPINE QLD 4800
Margo Logan NUMURKAH VIC 3636	Jenny Madden URANQUINTY NSW 2652	Mrs Audrey Marsh ARMIDALE NSW 2350
Kathleen Logan TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Katherine Madden URANQUINTY NSW 2652	Mrs Marsh CHERRYBROOK NSW 2126
Elizabeth Lonergan WARRIMOO NSW 2774	Br M Madden YOUNG NSW 2594	Paulette Marsh LINDFIELD NSW 2070
Agnes Long BLAKEHURST NSW 2221	Ms Mary Mageau White ENOGGERA QLD 4051	Sonya Marsh MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553
Mrs Rhonda Loret ESSENDON VIC 3040	Marie Therese Magee CLIFTON HILL VIC 3068	Mr Bernard Marsh MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553
Mrs Patricia Lovecek ORANGE NSW 2800	Miss Brenda Maher CLOVELLY NSW 2031	Mrs M. H. Marsh MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553
Joy Lovegrove PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444	Ms M Maher GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150	Louise Ann Marsh MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553
Mrs Anne Lowden LISMORE NSW 2480	Ms Julie Maher HOLT ACT 2615	Daniela Martignago GRAFTON NSW 2460

Sr Emma Martinuzzi KILLARA NSW 2071	Mr Terry McDevitt GLANDORE SA 5037	Mrs J McKercher HOBART TAS 7018
Mrs Kay Mason TAMWORTH NSW 2340	Mr Francis McDonald CARDIFF NSW 2285	T McKinnon FALLS CREEK NSW 2541
Sr Mary Matthew ASHFORD SA 5035	Noreen McDonald STUARTS POINT NSW 2441	Mrs Pauline McKinnon KEW EAST VIC 3102
Ms Joan Matthews INGLEBURN NSW 2565	Mrs Margot McDonnell STIRLING ACT 2611	Mrs S McLaren BEECROFT NSW 2119
Pauline Matthys MYAREE WA 6154	Mrs A McDonnell WARWICK QLD 4370	Maryellen McLeay HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110
Sr Margaret Mazzer LISMORE NSW 2480	Ms Teresa McEntee NETHERBY SA 5062	Janine McLeod No address recorded
Doreen McArole COLBINABBIN VIC 3559	Bernadette McEvoy GUNNEDAH NSW 2380	Mrs Maria McMahon BATEMAN WA 6150
Elizabeth McCabe RED HILL QLD 4059	Rosemary McEwan MANLY VALE NSW 2093	Mrs Ruth McMahon SUTHERLAND NSW 2232
Fr Paul McCabe INVERELL NSW 2360	Margaret McGarry WOONONA NSW 2517	Mary McMahon Slater No address recorded
Lawre McCaffrey ARMADALE VIC 3143	Margaret McGee BUNBURY WA 6230	Mr Kevin McManus ASHFIELD NSW 2131
Catherine McCallum BOOLEROO CENTRE SA 5482	Mrs Evelyn McGeough ORANGE GROVE WA 6109	Mrs Claire McManus EAST HAWTHORN VIC 3123
Ann McCallum CAMMERAY NSW 2062	Mr John McGill ALSTONVILLE NSW 2477	Ms Margaret McMillan ESSENDON VIC 3040
C McCarthy BORDERTOWN SA 5268	Christine McGilvray TAMWORTH NSW 2340	Norma McNally LEUMEAH NSW 2560
Katherine McCarthy DEAKIN ACT 2600	Mrs Prue McGoldrick PAYNESVILLE VIC 3880	Mary McNamara ALBERT PARK VIC 3206
Margaret McCarthy EPPING NSW 2121	Mr P McGowan BARNAWARTHA VIC 3688	Jane McNamara EDWARDSTOWN SA 5039
Roma McCarthy JAMESTOWN SA 5491	Sr Sophie McGrath EPPING NSW 2121	Mrs M McNamara MOSMAN NSW 2088
Angela McCarthy KARDINYA WA 6163	Sr Eugenie McGrath LINDFIELD NSW 2070	Robyn McNamara rsj MOLONG NSW 2866
Mr Kevin McCarthy NORTH RYDE NSW 2113	Kathleen McGrath SURREY HILLS NSW 2010	M McParrson MORLEY WA 6062
Ms Denise McCarthy NORTH RYDE NSW 2113	Francoise McGregor NERANG QLD 4211	Mary-Ann McQuestin KAYENA TAS 7270
Catherine McCarthy ROSE BAY NSW 2025	Ms Denise McHugh RINGWOOD EAST VIC 3135	Mrs Dorothy McRae GLENQUARRY NSW 2576
Helen McCarthy STRATHFIELDSAYE VIC 3551	Frances McHugh SPEARWOOD WA 6163	Ms Genevieve McRae YOUNG NSW 2594
Sr Marian McClelland MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204	Mrs Helen McHugh TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810	Sr Veronica McSweeney NUNDAH QLD 4012
Mrs Elizabeth McCloskey ARTARMON NSW 2064	Shirley McHugh KOOTINGAL NSW 2352	Mrs Jillian McTeigue NORTHBRIDGE NSW 2063
Mrs Noela McConville ECHUCA VIC 3564	Ms Rita McIvor YANGAN QLD 4371	Ettie Mead BOYUP BROOKE WA 6244
Helen McConville CAPELLA QLD 4702	Mrs McKendry CANIABA NSW 2480	Mrs Mary Mealey BEENLEIGH QLD 4207
Mrs McCurdie No address recorded	Amanda McKenna MT PLEASANT NSW 2749	Mary Medley KEIRAVILTE NSW 2500
Mrs Isabel McDermid LINDFIELD NSW 2070	Margaret McKenzie BEECHWORTH VIC 3747	Mrs Anne Meineke LISMORE NSW 2480
Clare McDermott KINGSVILLE VIC 3012	Pauline McKenzie DRYSDALE VIC 3222	Mrs Barbara Melican DONALD VIC 3480

Mrs Maureen Mellare TERRIGAL NSW 2260	Mrs Jane Moran GLENUNGA SA 5064	Mary Mulvahil BENDIGO VIC 3550
Ms Moya Merrick NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060	Annette Morellini DARDANUP WA 6236	Jane Munro BEECHWORTH VIC 3747
Cheryl Meta PARKWOOD WA 6154	Mrs Ruth Morgan LINDFIELD NSW 2070	Kathy Munro RINGWOOD VIC 3134
Pauline Mewes ALGESTER QLD 4115	Sr Elizabeth Moriarty BARRADOO NSW 2576	Mr Ronald Munro BEECHWORTH VIC 3747
Shannon Mewton WILLIAMSTOWN VIC 3016	Mrs Ellen Morris BAYSWATER WA 6053	Mr Kevin Murphy BALLARAT VIC 3352
Mrs F Meyer TATHRA NSW 2550	Mr Martin Morris JAMISON CENTRE ACT 2614	Mr James Murphy BEROWRA HEIGHTS NSW 2082
Ms F Mezenberg YARROWEYAH VIC 3644	Mrs Merle Morris HAZELWOOD SA 5066	Deirdre Murphy EPPING NSW 2121
Mr Ivan Mihaljevic WENTWORTHVILLE NSW 2145	Ms Wendy Morris BUNBURY WA 6230	Marie Murphy HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110
Ms A Milikins PARAP NT 0820	Mrs Marie Morrissey CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560	Karen Murphy MINORE NSW 2830
Mrs Nance Millar DOUBLE BAY NSW 2028	Sr Ann Morrison SOUTH WINDSOR NSW 2756	Sr Marie Murphy NAREMBURN NSW 2065
Mrs Rosemary Miller DINGLEY VIC 3172	Ms Beverly Morrison SUTHERLAND NSW 2232	Mrs F Murphy RUTHERGLEN VIC 3685
Jenny Miller FORSTER NSW 2428	Ms Janet Morrissey WEST WOLLONGONG NSW 2500	Miss Cecilia Murray COORPAROO QLD 4151
Mrs Miriam Millgate GORDON ACT 2906	Kath Morton BALLARAT VIC 3350	Kristen Murray DIMBOOLA VIC 3414
Helen Mills KATAMATITE VIC 3649	Mrs Tania Mousely CASTLE HILL NSW 2154	Ms Gloria Murray ORANGE NSW 2800
Mrs Val Mills PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444	Br John Moylan ADELAIDE SA 5000	Mrs Berenice Murrie CORRIMAL NSW 2518
Suzanne Milsom PEARCE ACT 2607	Mrs Janet Moyle SCULLIN ACT 2614	Grace Musumsci ALLAWAH NSW 2218
Cate Minear LOCKLEYS SA 5032	Mrs Maureen Moynahan BALLARAT VIC 3350	Sr Mary Mutlow CARINGBAH NSW 2229
Miss Colette Mitchell BEECROFT NSW 2119	Helen Mudra OTTOWAY SA 5013	Judith R Myers KOOLEWONG NSW 2256
Mrs Cettina Moarish ST MARYS SA 5042	Mrs Kathy Muir BUNBURY WA 6230	Mrs Julianne Naggar LIVERPOOL NSW 2170
Ms Pat Mohen LEEDERVILLE WA 6007	Marie Muir PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444	Mrs M Nagle BALLINA NSW 2478
Sr M Mohen WEMBLY WA 6014	Mr Peter Mulholland STRATHFIELD NSW 2135	Ms Angela Naisbitt WHYALLA SA 5600
Mr Stephen Mollison CARINA QLD 4152	Miss Joan Mulligan EPPING NSW 2121	Edna Nash GILGANDRA NSW 2827
Mr John Molloy BALLINA NSW 2478	Mrs D. M. Mulligan MANGERTON NSW 2500	Louisa Natoli Santa Sabina College STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
Ms Merna Moloney ESSENDON VIC 3040	Mrs Pat Mullins COORPAROO QLD 4151	Marcia Nestor MANDURANG SOUTH VIC 3539
Mrs Virginia Monagle GLADESVILLE NSW 2111	Rosemary Mullins KILLARA NSW 2071	Mrs Nevin BOGGABRI NSW 2382
Mrs Patricia Monsour GRANGE QLD 4051	Mrs T Mullins MERMAID BEACH QLD 4218	Mrs Joan New DUNEDOO NSW 2844
Anna Montague SADLIER NSW 2168	Patricia Mullins SUNSHINE BEACH QLD 4567	L Newman KAIRI QLD 4870
Rosa Martha Montoya ARNCLIFFE NSW 2205	Ms E Mullins WAVELL HEIGHTS QLD 4012	

Chris Neylon
HOLLAND PARK QLD 4121

Mrs C Nickle
BEGA NSW 2550

Ms Anne Nicoll
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Anne-Marie Nihill
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Ms Margaret Nolan
KEW VIC 3101

Marie Nolan
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Mrs M Noonan
BRIGHTON VIC 3186

Ms Penny Noonan
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C Noonan
MARYKNOLL VIC 3812

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NSW 2260

Mrs Esther Nott
WAHROONGA NSW 2076

Ms Ann Nugent
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Mrs S Nugent
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Christine O'Brien
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Ms Pam O'Connor
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Mrs Margaret O'Hagan
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Mrs Noelle O'Hara
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Carmel O'Kane
KATAMATITE VIC 3649

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Ms Bridget O'Keefe
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Mrs Jenifer O'Malley
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Mrs M O'Neill
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BURWOOD VIC 3125

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HACKETT ACT 2602

Mr Gregory O'Neill
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Ms Kathy O'Sullivan
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Mrs Jill Oakley
DONCASTER EAST VIC 3109

Sarah Ogilvie
SURREY HILLS NSW 2010

Mrs Prue Oldham
BEAUMARIS VIC 3193

Mrs Elizabeth Olesnicki
BLACK FOREST SA 5035

Ms Anne Oltalloran
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Ms Sue Olsen
WUDINNA SA 5652

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P Oppy
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P Page
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Margaret Palmer
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GRENFELL NSW 2810

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Rose Path
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Ms Ursula Paul
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Mrs Judith Payne
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Mrs C Pearson
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Mrs Winifred Peirce
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Geraldine Perriam EDINBURGH UK	Lany Popovic INALA QLD 4077	Mrs Colette Rayment BELLEVUE HILL NSW 2023
Mrs Rose Marie Perry WARREN NSW 2824	Ms Lorraine Poppler AUKLAND NEW ZEALAND	P Raynor Santa Sabina STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
Br Peter Patrician Brothers' College BLACKTOWN NSW 2148	Mrs Carmel Porter PORT LINCOLN SA 5606	Mrs Anne Redden JAMESTOWN SA 5491
Sr Helen Peters AYR QLD 4807	June Porteus BATEAU BAY NSW 2261	Elizabeth Reddoch ESSENDON VIC 3040
Monica Phelan CAMPBELL ACT 2612	Virginia Potter OATLEY NSW 2223	Ms Merle Redmond LONGUEVILLE NSW 2066
Linda Phelps WEE WAA NSW 2388	Mrs Mary Powell LEUMEAH NSW 2560	Ms Helen Reed DARLING POINT NSW 2027
Mrs P Phemister GOULBURN NSW 2580	Ms Annette Power ALBURY NSW 2640	Barbara Reen WAVERLEY NSW 2024
Bernadette Phillips EAST MALVERN VIC 3145	Margaret Power ALBURY NSW 2640	Mrs Denise Reeves BEAUMARIS VIC 3193
Mrs Patricia Phillips SARINA QLD 4737	Francis Power SANDRINGHAM VIC 3191	Rachel Reeves KIAMA DOWNS NSW 2533
Diane Phillips ST GEORGE QLD 4487	Sr Margaret Press STRATHFIELD NSW 2135	Mrs Elizabeth Reeves KIAMA DOWNS NSW 2533
Mrs Carol Phillips WULAGI NT 0812	Ms Daphne Preston BOX HILL NORTH VIC 3129	Verdi Reid CAIRNS QLD 4870
Mrs Grace Phung CHERRYBROOK NSW 2126	Lurline Price DARLING POINT NSW 2027	Lyndall Reid HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110
Ms Liz Picker SOUTH WEST ROCKS NSW 2431	Mrs Marie Price LINDISFARNE TAS 7015	Rita Reilly CALWELL ACT 2905
Dr T. E. Pickford NEWNHAM TAS 7248	Jennifer Price TOOWONG QLD 4066	Barbara Z. Reilly CLIFTON GARDENS NSW 2088
Pauline E Pierce HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110	Rose Marie Prosser BOX HILL VIC 3128	Kasey Reilly SPRING HILL QLD 4000
Monica Mary Pigott EPPING NSW 2121	Gai Puglisi PUNCHBOWL NSW 2196	Mrs K Reimert PARKENHAM VIC 3810
A Pigram GOWRIE ACT 2904	Mrs Donna Purcell TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Judy Reitano BLACKROCK QLD 4850
Sr Carmel Pilcher BANKSTOWN NSW 2200	Sr Noelene Quinane NTH GOULBURN NSW 2580	Rev John Relihan TWEED HEADS NSW 2486
Valda M Pinder BENDIGO VIC 3550	Mrs Jo Quinn COBRAM VIC 3644	Fr G Remie PALMERSTON
Ruth Pinkerton DONCASTER EAST VIC 3109	Mrs Catherine Quinn EAST KEMPSEY NSW 2440	Mr Michael Renehan CAMBERWELL VIC 3124
Denise Pintado CASTLE HILL NSW 2154	Mrs Rosemary Quinn MOUNT BRYAN SA 5418	Ms Margaret Reynolds MURWILLUMBAH NSW 2484
Mr Kevin Pitt TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810	Mrs Amy Quinn STRATHPINE QLD 4500	Garry Reynolds SYDNEY NSW 2000
Mrs Ann Planck KEW VIC 3101	Norma Quinn TANUNDA SA 5352	Catherine Reynolds WENTWORTHVILLE NSW 2145
Jo Platt BOWRAL NSW 2576	Bridget Rafferty GLENHUNTLY VIC 3163	Mrs M Rheinberger BEGA NSW 2550
Ms Denise Playoust MOSMAN NSW 2088	Ms Carmel Randle PRESTON QLD 4352	Patricia Richardson BALGOWLAH NSW 2093
Leonie Plunkett AVENEL VIC 3661	Elizabeth Ransom TYABB VIC 3913	M Richardson GARFIELD VIC 3814
	Mr Stephen Raskovy CROYDON VIC 3136	Kaye Richardt ST ALBANS VIC 3021

Mrs Terri Rick
 COOMA NSW 2630
 Sr C Riley
 COONAMBLE NSW 2829
 Mr George Ringer
 POORAKA SA 5009
 Maureen Ritchie
 BOWRAL NSW 2576
 Mrs Anne Roach
 HOBART TAS 7005
 Maureen Roast
 OURIMBAH NSW 2258
 Ms Fay Roberts
 GIRRAWEE NSW 2145
 Mrs P Roberts
 REYNELLA SA 5161
 Deborah Robertson
 BUNBURY WA 6230
 Mrs Aileen Robertson
 MOLONG NSW 2866
 Mrs Mary Robins
 GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088
 Ms Shirley Robinson
 MOLLYBROOK NSW 2539
 Mrs Ann Rochford
 BOX HILL NORTH VIC 3129
 Mr Michael Rodriguez
 MORDIALLOC VIC 3195
 Patricia Rodwell
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 Carmez Rogers
 KINGSVILLE VIC 3012
 Patricia Rogers
 RUMCORN QLD 4113
 A Rolfe
 PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444
 Ms Hilarie Roseman
 SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141
 Mrs M. A. Ross
 ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700
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 NEUTRAL BAY NSW 2089
 Fr Tom Rouse
 NORTH TURRAMURRA
 NSW 2074
 Mrs Marcia Rush
 BALGOWLAH NSW 2093
 Ms Frances Rush
 FAIRLIGHT NSW 2094
 Hazel Rushworth
 CARSELDINE QLD 4034
 Joanne Russel
 CLOVELLY NSW 2031
 Mrs Monica Russell
 ALBANY WA 6330
 Miss Sue Russell
 BONDI NSW 2026

Jo Russell
 CHARLTON VIC 3525
 Anne Russell
 KLEMIZIG SA 5087
 Mr Paul Russell
 KLEMIZIG SA 5087
 William Russell
 NORMANHURST NSW 2076
 Pamela Russell
 NORMANHURST NSW 2076
 Rosemary Ryall
 CLEAR ISLAND WATERS
 QLD 4226
 Mr Laurence Ryan
 BALGOWLAH NSW 2093
 Mrs M Ryan
 BARMEDMAN NSW 2668
 Mrs Cheryl Ryan
 BONDI BEACH NSW 2026
 Sr Agnes Ryan
 CALOUNDRA QLD 4551
 Fr William Ryan
 CORRYONG VIC 3707
 Janice Ryan
 FIGTREE NSW 2525
 Ms Geraldine Ryan
 INGLESIDE QLD 4228
 Ms Margaret Ryan
 KAMBAH ACT 2902
 Miss Agnes Ryan
 KOGARAH NSW 2217
 Ellen Ryan
 LOCHINVAR NSW 2321
 Sr Carmel Ryan
 MOSMAN PARK WA 6012
 Mr Des Ryan
 NUMURKAH VIC 3636
 Mr Ged Ryan
 NUNAWADING VIC 3131
 Mr Hilary Ryan
 ROSSMOYNE WA 6148
 Mrs Judith Ryan
 YARRAWARRAH NSW 2233
 Fr Denis Ryan
 SEA LAKE VIC 3533
 Sr Therese Ryan
 SEA LAKE VIC 3533
 Ms Dianne Sackelarich
 POINT PIPER NSW 2027
 Mary-Louise Sainty
 PYMBLE NSW 2073
 Mrs Pat Salem
 KATOOMBA NSW 2780
 Sr N Salisbury
 KILLARA NSW 2071
 Mrs Carmen Salmon
 BALLINA NSW 2478

Mrs Dawn Sandilands
 MOOROOPNA VIC 3629
 Miss Carol Sattler
 LAVINGTON NSW 2641
 Mrs Marjorie Saunders
 OATLEY NSW 2223
 Mrs Kathleen Savage
 MALVERN VIC 3144
 Mrs Mary Sawyer
 MOLLYMOOK BEACH
 NSW 2539
 Peter Scanlan
 PORTLAND NSW 2847
 Ms Noreen Scanlan
 SOUTHPORT QLD 4215
 Mary Scarfe
 MITCHAM VIC 3132
 Sr Maureen Schiemer
 MOLONG NSW 2866
 Irene Schlitz
 PAKENHAM VIC 3810
 Susanne Schmidt
 KINGSTON ACT 2604
 Ms Kate Scholl
 LALOR PARK NSW 2147
 Lady Mary Scholtens
 TURNER ACT 2612
 Kathy Scholters
 FLEMINGTON VIC 3031
 Robyn Schrama
 ELIZABETH PARK SA 5113
 Ms Carolyn Schuch
 ARAKOON NSW 2431
 Mrs Alice Scibiorski
 SEATEN SA 5023
 Susan Scott
 EPPING NSW 2121
 Ms Sandra Scott
 GORDON NSW 2072
 Ellen Scrivens
 CLEAR ISLAND WATERS
 QLD 4226
 V Sea
 LYONS ACT 2606
 Helen Searle
 MACKAY QLD 4741
 Mrs June See
 BRONTE NSW 2024
 Mr Richard See
 BRONTE NSW 2024
 Janet Sefton
 DURAL NSW 2158
 Marie Lise Selvon
 BRADBURY NSW 2560
 Marian Selwyn
 LINDFIELD NSW 2070

Mrs Heather Sertori NELSON BAY NSW 2315	Eunice Simmons HOLLAND PARK QLD 4121	Frances Spora GULARGAMBONE NSW 2828
Ms Bridget Seuren COBDEN VIC 3266	Doreen Simms UPPER MT GRAVATT QLD 4122	Clare Spratt FORRESTERS BEACH NSW 2260
Penelope Seuren NAROGHID VIC 3266	Mrs Julia Simons CHERRYBROOK NSW 2126	Mr Philip Spry-Bailey KEW VIC 3101
Mrs Mary Sexton BENDIGO VIC 3550	Glenda Simpson CANTERBURY VIC 3126	Ellan Stack DULWICH HILL NSW 2203
Shelly Sexton WEST LAUNCESTON TAS 7250	Wanda Skowronska MAROUBRA NSW 2035	Lynda Stanes LEEDERVILLE WA 6007
Sr Margaret Shakeshaft WEWAK PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Marie Therese Slattery BATHURST NSW 2795	Sr Barbara Stead ASCOT VALE VIC 3032
Mary Shanahan WOLLSTONECRAFT NSW 2065	J Slee ONGERUP WA 6336	P Steffens ROCKDALE QLD 4123
Mrs Eve Shannon GILBERTON SA 5081	Mrs Sundai Sloane BERKELEY VALE NSW 2261	Beate Steller MORTDALE NSW 2223
Christine Shannon STRATHMERTON VIC 3641	Helen Sloane CHATSWOOD NSW 2067	Mary Stephen DALBY QLD 4405
Mr Adrian Sharp BANYO QLD 4014	Ann Smith No address recorded	Mrs May Stephen SOUTHBANK VIC 3006
A M Sharp DICKSON ACT 2602	Mrs Gabrielle Smith BLAXLAND NSW 2774	Patricia Stevenson GRENFELL NSW 2810
Mrs Marie Shaw CARINA QLD 4152	Mrs Kath Smith CLEARVIEW SA 5085	Maureen Stewart BATEAU BAY NSW 2261
Carmel Shaw HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110	Mr Paul Smith DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047	Christine Stewart EVATT ACT 2617
F. J. Shaw LEONGATHA VIC 3953	Nelle Smith EDGEWORTH NSW 2285	L. T. Stewart HOLT ACT 2615
Geraldine Shea WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Mrs Loraine Smith MILLER NSW 2168	A Stewart HOLT ACT 2615
Sr Maureen Sheehan BOX HILL VIC 3129	Sr Ursula Smith NIMMITABEL NSW 2631	E Stewart STANWELL PARK NSW 2508
M. F. Sheehan EAST PERTH WA 6004	Sr Paula Smith ORANGE NSW 2800	Sr Francis Stibi PERTH WA 6000
Teresa Sheehan THE ENTRANCE NSW 2261	Valerie Smith POINT LONSDALE VIC 3225	Helen Stirling CREMORNE NSW 2096
Ms Patsy Sheil HAY NSW 2711	Mrs Bridget Smith SALISBURY SA 5108	Mrs M Stocks COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
Clare Shelton CANTERBURY VIC 3126	Ms Bev Smith WAITARA NSW 2077	Jay Margaret Stoddart THORN LIE WA 6108
Ms Jacinta Sheridan EAST PRAHRAN VIC 3181	Mrs Elizabeth Smith WATSON ACT 2602	Mrs Doreen Streckfuss CRESWICK VIC 3363
Fr Maurice Shinnick KILBURN SA 5084	Patricia Speer CROOKWELL NSW 2583	Mrs Elizabeth Stretch BUSSELTON WA 6280
Jill Shirvington op STRATHFIELD NSW 2135	Anne Spence CAMBERWELL VIC 3124	Mrs Ruth Stretton RUNAWAY BAY QLD 4216
Sr Mary Thomas Short op GANMAIN NSW 2702	Ms Teree Spencer BROOME WA 6725	Marie Grace Stuart ARARAT VIC 3377
Michael Sibert HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110	Mrs Patricia Spencer LESMURDIE WA 6076	Mrs Ellen Stuart KEW VIC 3101
Mrs V Siegert KOORAWATHER NSW 2807	Mrs Eva Spiess DONVALE VIC 3111	Mrs Janice Stubbs DONDINGALONG NSW 2440
Mrs Beverley Silk MILLER NSW 2168	Mary Spiteri DIGGERS REST VIC 3427	Mrs Annette Sturt HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110
Anna Silvas ARMIDALE NSW 2350	Mrs Bernada Spitzer SANDY BAY TAS 7005	Mrs P Styman EPPING NSW 2121

Mrs Felicity Suckling
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Ms Anne Sullivan
BAULKHAM HILLS NSW 2153

Sr Helen Sullivan
BURWOOD NSW 2134

Aileen Sullivan
HEATHMONT VIC 3135

Ms Terry Sullivan
ROSEVEARS TAS 7277

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Ms Marianne Templeton
MARYKNOLL VIC 3812

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Mrs Marjorie Ternovy
ARCADIA VALE NSW 2283

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Mrs L Thomas
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Ms Joan Thomas
TATHRA NSW 2550

Mrs J Thompson
BEVERLEY HILLS NSW 2209

Heather Thompson
HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110

Sr Judith Thompson
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Mrs Elin Thomson
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Mr Allen Thomson
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Sheila Thomson
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Ms Mary Thornely
MACLEOD VIC 3085

Helen Thornton
VERMONT VIC 3133

Fr David Thoroughgood
HAMLEY BRIDGE SA 5401

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Mrs Eileen Thorpe
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Ms Joanne Thyer
DARLINGHURST NSW 2100

Ms Amy Tidbold
ASHGROVE QLD 4060

Kevin Tighe
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Maria Rosa Toscano
LALOR VIC 3075

Helen Towler
ROWES BAY QLD 4810

Sr Mary Trainor
ORANGE NSW 2800

Margaret Tranter
INGHAM QLD 4850

Sr Janice Tranter
LOCHINVAR NSW 2321

Mr Henry Tranter
MILLAA MILLAA QLD 4886

Ms Tranter
MILLAA MILLAA QLD 4886

Cath Travers
JAMESTOWN SA 5491

Ms Patricia Traynor
FAIRY MEADOW NSW 2519

Ms Mylee Trevitt
CRIB POINT VIC 3919

Mrs Maureen Trezise
SAWTELL NSW 2452

Mr Dan Trimboli
DUBBO NSW 2830

Margaret Trotter
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Mrs Joan Tucker
SANDY BAY TAS 7005

Mrs Joan Tucker
SANDY BAY TAS 7005

Mrs Mary Tuite
STIRLING ACT 2611

Mrs Beryl Tunzi
EMU CREEK VIC 3539

Ms Thais Turner
INGLEBURN NSW 2565

Miss Carmel Turner
PASCOE VALLEY VIC 3044

Mrs Thais Turner
YANCO NSW 2703

Miss Alice Turner
YANCO NSW 2703

Philippa Turner Nolan
SORRENTO VIC 3943

Janet Uhr
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Marie Louise Uhr
COOK ACT 1614

W J Uren SJ
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Mrs E Uziallo
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Judith van Dalen BUNDABERG QLD 4670	Lyn von der Borch KINGSWOOD SA 5062	Mrs Bernice Watson ST GEORGE QLD 4487
Alana van Danzig ANNANDALE NSW 2038	Sr Elizabeth Von Leven KEW VIC 3101	Mrs Ursula Watson TOOWOOMBA WEST QLD 4350
Ms Maureen van der Linden SULKY VIC 3352	Ms Alice von Veenendaal ARMADALE VIC 3143	Jane Watson TURRAMURRA NSW 2074
Br Abel van der Veer MANLY VALE NSW 2093	O Wadling TORQUAY VIC 3228	Sr Carmel Wauchope MOUNT MAGNET WA 6638
Ms Helen Van Doorn TOONGABIE NSW 2146	Dr Elaine Wainwright BANYO QLD 4014	Freda Webb HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110
Mr R van Herk EAST LINDFIELD NSW 2070	Len Wakeman ROCKINGHAM WA 6168	Mrs Fiona Webb TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350
Ms Jacqueline Van Lith LEONGATHA SOUTH VIC 3953	Mr R Walker GUNNEDAH NSW 2380	Connie Webber REDCLIFFE QLD 4020
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Jos Vandersman RICHMOND VIC 3121	Gail Wallace ENGADINE NSW 2233	Moya Weissenfeld FORREST LODGE NSW 2037
Ms Jan Vanderwert GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150	Miss Genevieve Walles NORTH PLYMPTON SA 5037	Val Wells BLACKBURN SOUTH VIC 3130
Ms Karan Varker CONCORD WEST NSW 2138	Jacqui Walls WYOMING NSW 2250	Christine Wells MACGREGOR ACT 2615
Ms Jane Vasjuta COLBINABBIN VIC 3559	Mrs Marie Walsh GLENUNGA SA 5064	Mr Bill Welsh ORMISTON QLD 4160
Monica Vaughan CROYDON PARK NSW 2133	Ms Brigid Walsh TENNANT CREEK NT 0861	Sr Grace Wensley BALLARAT VIC 3354
Mrs J Vautin LAUNCESTON TAS 7250	Grace Walsh WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Mrs Magda Westeinde DEVON MEADOWS VIC 3977
Lynette Vecchio NUDGEE QLD 4014	Sr Margaret Walsh WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	J Wetherall TAMWORTH NSW 2340
Dr Theo Verbeek WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Anne Walters TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350	Mrs Joan White WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152
Genevieve Verdonck PORT FAIRY VIC 3284	Mrs Maree Walz LANE COVE NSW 2066	Esther Whitelum TANUNDA SA 5352
Marguerite – Marie Victor ALTONA NORTH VIC 3025	Mr Charles Ward WARBURTON VIC 3799	Ms Leanne Whittall MT KEIRA NSW 2500
Mrs Samantha Vieira WAHROONGA NSW 2076	Anne Wardle BUNBURY WA 6230	Hazel Whittle HOPE ISLAND QLD 4212
J Vigh INGHAM QLD 4850	Prof. John Warhurst REID ACT 2612	J Whitty LINDISFARNE TAS 7015
Mrs M Villani HEATHMONT VIC 3135	Mrs Mary Wark YOUNG NSW 2594	Mr Max Wieden NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104
Sr J Vincent LAVERTON VIC 3028	Zoe Warland MOOLOOLAH QLD 4553	Fr Paul Wienke ST CLAIR NSW 2759
Sr M Virgilius MOSS VALE NSW 2577	Ms Margaret Warner CROYDON VIC 3136	Ms Jennifer Wightman SOMERTON PARK SA 5044
Vera Visevic LIDCOMBE NSW 2141	Jo Warre KOOTINGAL NSW 2352	Mr Jeremias Wijeyeratne NOBLE PARK VIC 3174
Mrs Mary Kathleen Viot CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560	Susan Wason CLEAR ISLAND WATERS QLD 4226	Mrs Joan Wilkinson LINDFIELD NSW 2070
Mrs I E Voeseener BROOKVALE NSW 2100	Mrs Anne Waterford ROBERTSON QLD 4109	Patricia Wilkinson PORTLAND NSW 2847

Ms Lynda Williams
COONAMBLE NSW 2829

Ms Vivien Williams
ELWOOD VIC 3184

Mary Williams
LUGARNO NSW 2210

Sr Patricia Williams
MT ELIZA NSW 3930

Janette Willson
PORT PIRIE SA 5540

Deirdre Wilmot
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Anne Wilson
ASHWOOD VIC 3147

Mrs Mary Wilson
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Imelda Wilson
NUMURKAH VIC 3636

Sr Therese Wilson
SCARBOROUGH QLD 4020

Mr Ian Windsor
EVATT ACT 2617

Mrs Therese Winspear
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Sr Joan Winter op
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

Ms Tracey Wonganeen
EAST MOUNT GAMBIER
SA 5290

Mrs Kathleen Wood
DUNSBOROUGH WA 6281

Mr Geoffrey Wood
ST PETERS NSW 2044

Mrs Barbara Woodland
SEAFORTH NSW 2092

Ms Ann Woodruff
EAST HAWTHORN VIC 3123

Ms Catherine Woods
NILDOTTIE SA 5238

Rose-Mary Woodward
TENTERDEN WA 6322

Ms Joan Worth
BLACKWALL TAS 7275

Kathy Wright
GEELONG VIC 3213

Helen Wright
KEW VIC 3101

Mrs Denise Wright
WEST MACKAY QLD 4740

Ms Susan Wright
WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025

Ms Bernadette Wurlod
TERANG VIC 3264

Mrs Sherrin Xerri
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

Ms Carmen Xuereb
SEVEN HILLS NSW 2147

Evelyn Yates
MT NELSON TAS 7007

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RYDE NSW 2112

Sr Glenys Yeoman
BUNBURY WA 6230

Mrs A Young
KINGSGROVE NSW 2208

Mrs Mary Young
SOUTH PLYMPTON SA 5038

Ms Christina Zammit
BARDON QLD 4065

Mrs Anne Zevis
NORTH FREMANTLE WA 6159

Jessica Zwartz
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the list of participants presented above. The authors and publisher would be pleased to rectify any inaccuracy.

APPENDIX 4

Written Submissions from Groups

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Adult Education Group LISMORE NSW 2480	Catholic Women's League BELL QLD 4408	Catholic Women's League - Camperdown VIA CAMPERDOWN VIC 3260
Ann Lynch et al The Sophies of St Madeleine Sophie Barat Parish KENTHURST NSW 2156	Catholic Women's League - Asquith ASQUITH NSW 2077	Catholic Women's League - Darlington/Coleambally WHITTON NSW 2705
Armadale Majellan ARMADALE WA 6112	Catholic Women's League - Ayr AYR QLD 4807	Catholic Women's League - Drouin Branch DROUIN VIC 3818
Bacchus Marsh Catholic Parish BACCHUS MARSH VIC 3340	Catholic Women's League - Ballarat North BALLARAT VIC 3350	Catholic Women's League - Gwynneville WOLLONGONG EAST NSW 2520
Bible Study Group, St Anne's EAST KEW VIC 3102	Catholic Women's League - Bunbury MANJIMUP WA 6258	Catholic Women's League - Inglewood/Bedford BEDFORD WA 6052
Broome Parishioners Group BROOME WA 6725	Catholic Women's League - Cranbrook AITKENVALE QLD 4814	Catholic Women's League - Kingswood KINGSWOOD NSW 2747
Sr Mary Bryan et al CARLTON VIC 3053	Catholic Women's League - Daylesford Branch DAYLESFORD VIC 3460	Catholic Women's League - Narrabri NARRABRI NSW 2390
Canossian Sisters PARALOWIE SA 5108	Catholic Women's League - Dumbleyung DUMBLEYUNG WA 6350	Catholic Women's League - Osborne Park OSBORNE PARK WA 6017
Catholic Education Office - Sale WARRAGUL VIC 3820	Catholic Women's League - Eastern Sydney RANDWICK NSW 2031	Catholic Women's League - St Anthony's Branch DRAYTON NORTH QLD 4350
Catholic Education Office of WA, Kimberley Region BROOME WA 6725	Catholic Women's League - Holy Trinity CURTIN ACT 2605	Catholic Women's League - St Joachim's Branch LATHLAIN WA 6100
Catholic Ladies' Social Group QUEENSLIFF VIC 3225	Catholic Women's League - Inverell INVERELL NSW 2360	Catholic Women's League - Stirling STIRLING SA 5121
Catholic Women's League BRISBANE QLD 4001	Catholic Women's League - Mona Vale MONA VALE NSW 2103	Catholic Women's League - Terrigal/Erina FORRESTERS BEACH NSW 2260
Catholic Women's League MURWILLUMBAH NSW 2484	Catholic Women's League - NSW EAST MAITLAND NSW 2323	Catholic Women's League - Tumby Bay TUMBY BAY SA 5605
Catholic Women's League MURRAY BRIDGE SA 5253	Catholic Women's League - North Parramatta NSW 2151	Catholic Women's League - West Cairns EDGE HILL QLD 4870
Catholic Women's League MARIAN QLD 4753	Catholic Women's League - St Benedicts TUGGERANONG ACT 2901	Catholic Women's League - Wollongong WOLLONGONG EAST NSW 2520
Catholic Women's League EDWARDSTOWN SA 5039	Catholic Women's League - St John Kippax FLOREY ACT 2615	Catholic Women's League, St Thomas More CAMPBELL ACT 2601
Catholic Women's League - Applecross MT LAWLEY WA 6050	Catholic Women's League - Tea Tree Gully TEA TREE GULLY SA 5091	
Catholic Women's League - Ballarat BLAMPIED VIC 3364		
Catholic Women's League SWAN HILL VIC 3585		
Catholic Women's League TUGGERANONG ACT 2901		
Catholic Women's League KILLARA NSW 2071		
Catholic Women's League MANJIMUP WA 6258		

Catholic Women's League –
Wollongong
WOLLONGONG NSW 2500

Catholic Women's League of
Victoria
WARRAGUL VIC 3820

Catholics in Coalition for
Justice and Peace
ENFIELD SOUTH NSW 2133

Christian Life Community –
Ballarat
MINERS REST VIC 3352

Christian Life Movement
TORRENS PARK SA 5062

CLC Group "Wellsprings"
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

CLC Manning
MANNING WA 6152

CLC Pymble
GORDON NSW 2072

Cluster of Parishes Social Justice
Group
WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280

Coolum Christian Feminist
Group
COOLUM BEACH QLD 4573

Covent of Mercy Bible Study
Group
INGHAM QLD 4850

Cursillo Movement, Group
Reunion
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Darwin Women Moving On
From Beijing
DARWIN NT 0800

Daughters of Charity of St
Vincent de Paul
FITZROY VIC 3065

Deanery Resource Coordinators
– Archdiocese of Melbourne
GEELONG VIC 3220

Dominican Associates
CAMPSIE NSW 2194

Diocesan Pastoral Council
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

Dominican Sisters
BEVERLEY HILLS NSW 2209

Dominican Associates
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Dominican Sisters of North
Adelaide
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006

Education Portfolio Group, St
Brigid's Parish
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

Emily Wallace et al
Santa Sabina College
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Employees of the Adelaide
Diocesan Agencies
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Erika, Jessica and Jessica
Santa Sabina
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Families of Australia Foundation
ST PAUL's NSW 2031

Fitzgerald Hall Group
GERALDTON WA 6531

Forster/Tuncurry Parish
FORSTER NSW 2428

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Aust. Province
DOUBLE BAY NSW 2028

Franciscan Sisters
KEILOR DOWNS VIC 3038

Galen Catholic College
WANGARATTA NSW 3676

Golden Chain of Friendship, St
Brigid's Parish
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

A Group of Good Shepherd
Sisters
No address recorded

Group of Sisters of Mercy –
Parramatta
NORTH PARRAMATTA
NSW 2151

Group of Six Catholic Women
COOKTOWN QLD 4871

Holy Family Parish
MADDINGTON WA 6109

Holy Trinity Parish
MUNDINGBURRA QLD 4812

Italian Community
SALISBURY SA 5108

Italian Women's Group
THOMASTOWN VIC 3074

Karlaminde Community
KENSINGTON NSW 2033

Kingswood Catholic Parish
KINGSWOOD NSW 2747

Ladies from Parish
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Liturgy Group & Catholic
Women's League
COLLINSWOOD SA 5081

Loreto Sisters
ALBERT PARK VIC 3206

Loreto Sisters
PORTLAND VIC 3305

Mackay Parish Women
MACKAY QLD 4740

Marian Residence
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Mariana Community
EAST MALVERN VIC 3145

Martha's Coffee Shop Group
BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

Members of a Sub-group, Sacred
Heart Associates
ROSE BAY NSW 2029

Mercy Associates Group, Sisters
of Mercy
BALLARAT VIC 3354

Mercy Respite Care Community
BALLARAT VIC 3354

Merici College Staff
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Missionary Franciscan Sisters
KEDRON QLD 4031

Ministry to Sole Parents &
Families
NORTH PARRAMATTA
NSW 2151

Missionary Sisters of Service
NEW TOWN TAS 7008

Moss Vale Dominican Tertiaries
MOSS VALE NSW 2577

New Norcia Parish Council
NEW NORCIA WA 6509

Ordination of Catholic Women
SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Our Lady Help of Christians
Parish
NARRE WARREN VIC 3805

Our Lady of Good Council
Parish
DEEPDENE VIC 3103

Our Lady of Lourdes Church
SUNNYBANK QLD 4109

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish
KENMORE QLD 4069

Our Lady of Fatima School
KINGSGROVE NSW 2208

Our Lady of Lourdes Armadale
EAST PRAHRAN VIC 3181

Our Lady of the Rosary
KENSINGTON NSW 2033

Our Lady of Victories Parish
WALLSEND NSW 2287

Parish Group (Tuesday Ladies)
GERALDTON WA 6531

Parish Group, St Elizabeth's
Parish
NORTH NOBLE PARK VIC 3174

Parish Ladies' Group
WEST PYMBLE NSW 2073

Parish Ministry Team
NOARLUNGA CENTRE SA 5168

Parish of St Thomas More
MT ELIZA VIC 3930

Parramatta Diocesan
Commission for Justice & Peace
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Parish Council
BRIDGEWATER SA 5152

Parish Group, Notre Dame
Parish
CLOVERDALE WA 6104

Parish Group, St Michael's
Church
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

Parish Liturgy Team,
OLHC Parish
WENDOUREE VIC 3355

Parish of St Peter & Paul's
GEELONG VIC 3220

Parishioners – St Brigid's
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

Participation of Women in the
Church Group
MILPERRA NSW 1891

Pastoral Care Team Cabrini
MALVERN VIC 3144

Paulian Association
CROYDON PARK NSW 2133

People for Peace
WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152

Paulian Group, St Bernadette's
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Presentation Sisters Community
Group
RIVERVALE WA 6103

Presentation Sisters Lismore
LISMORE HEIGHTS
NSW 2480

Presentation Sisters
Congregation
ANNERLEY QLD 4103

Province Leadership Team of
Sisters of St Joseph
HAWTHORN EAST VIC 3123

Rockonia Parish
NORTH ROCKHAMPTON
QLD 4701

Rockhampton Social Justice
Action
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Rosary Group – St Brigid's
Parish
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

Sacred Heart Parish
MILDURA VIC 3502

Sacred Heart Parish Group
COOLAH NSW 2843

Santa Sabina
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

A Group of Students
Santa Sabina College
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Sacred Heart Parish Council
No address recorded

Scripture Study Group,
St Dominic's
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

Semaphore Parish Rosary
Group
SEMAPHORE SA 5019

Sisters of Mercy
CUNNAMULLA QLD 4490

Sisters of Mercy – Canberra
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Srs Grace, Ursula and Angela
Sisters of Mercy – Southern
Region Group

Sisters of Mercy
KOGARAH NSW 2217

Sisters of Mercy – North Sydney
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Sisters of Mercy – West Perth
NORTH PERTH WA 6006

Sisters of Mercy –
Wilcannia/Forbes
PARKES NSW 2870

Sisters of St Joseph
NORTH GOULBURN
NSW 2580

Sisters of St Joseph
FLEMINGTON VIC 3031

Sisters of St John of God
EAST BENTLEIGH VIC 3165

Sisters of St Joseph
BATEHAVEN NSW 2536

Sisters of the Good Samaritan
GLEBE POINT NSW 2037

Society of St Vincent de Paul
BENALLA VIC 3672

Society of St Vincent de Paul
DROUIN VIC 3818

Society of St Vincent de Paul
INVERELL NSW 2360

Society of St Vincent de Paul
PORTLAND VIC 3305

Society of St Vincent de Paul
WALLERAWANG NSW 2845

Society of St Vincent de Paul –
Malvern
MALVERN VIC 3144

Society of St Vincent de Paul
GERALDTON WA 6530

Sr Mary Magdalene's School
ELIZABETH GROVE SA 5112

St Anne's Parish
EAST KEW VIC 3102

St Augustine's Parish
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

St Bernadette's Castle Hill
Catholic Women
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

St Bernadette's Parish
DUNDAS VALLEY NSW 2117

St Bernadette's Primary School
DUNDAS NSW 2117

St Brendan's Parish Group
LAKES ENTRANCE VIC 3909

St Brigid's Catholic Parish
MT MAGNET WA 6638

St Columba's Parish Council
BALLARAT VIC 3350

St Dominic's Parish
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

St Dymphna's Parish
BALRANALD NSW 2715

St Francis' Church Group
RIVERSIDE WEST TAS 7250

St John's Parish
HEIDELBERG VIC 3084

St Joseph's Parish
CONDOBOLIN NSW 2877

St Joseph's Parish
SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141

St Joseph's Parish
WONTHAGGI VIC 3995

St Joseph's Primary School
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

St Mary's Cathedral
SALE VIC 3850

St Marys Parish Ladies Group,
Warren
WARREN NSW 2824

St Nicholas Catechists
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

St Patrick's Parish
CAMPERDOWN VIC 3260

St Paul's Catholic Parish
KARATHA WA 6714

St Scholastica's Parish
BURWOOD VIC 3125

St Thomas's Parish Terang
TERANG VIC 3264

St Vincent Palotti Parish
KUNUNURRA WA 6743

St Joseph's Primary School
LEETON NSW 2705

St Mary's Parish
HAMPTON VIC 3188

St Matthew's Catholic Social
Club
WINDSOR NSW 2756

St Patrick's
PORT FAIRY VIC 3284

St Patrick's School
PORT FAIRY VIC 3284

St Peter's Parish
ROCHEDALE QLD 4123

St Thomas' Parish
CAMP HILL QLD 4152

St Vincent de Paul Conference
HORSHAM VIC 3400

St Vincent de Paul Women's
Conference
MOUNT GAMBIER SA 5290

St. Patrick's Primary School
BEGA NSW 2550

Teams of Our Lady
WODONGA VIC 3690

Teams of Our Lady (Team 1)
WODONGA VIC 3690

Staff Group, Catholic Schools
Office
WAITARA NSW 2077

The Sestan Family
CARLINGFORD NSW 2118

The Women of the Stanley River
Catholic Church
WOODFORD QLD 4514

The Franciscan Sisters
EVANS HEAD NSW 2473

The Women of St Fergal's Parish
HAY NSW 2711

Tuesdays Faith Group
NORMANHURST NSW 2076

Ursuline Community
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Ursuline Community
WELLINGTON POINT
QLD 4160

WATAC
KINGSWOOD SA 5062

WATAC
CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

WATAC
ST IVES CHASE NSW 2078

WATAC - Parramatta
HARRIS PARK NSW 2150

WATAC Nth Sydney Region
LONGUEVILLE NSW 2066

Women from East Maitland
Parish
EAST MAITLAND NSW 2323

Women of the New Testament
MOUNT ISA QLD 4825

Women of the Outer Western
Sydney Parishes
SOUTH PENRITH NSW 2750

Women's Discussion Group
KYABRAM VIC 3620

Women's Group
KARAMA NT 0812

Women's Spiritual Group
SALISBURY HEIGHTS SA 5109

Women's Theology Group
MT LAWLEY WA 6050

Wongan Hills Catholic Ladies
Group
WONGAN HILLS WA 6603

Yarra Glen Scripture Group
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

Yeronga Parish
YERONGA QLD 4104

Mr and Mrs Michael and Julia
Abrahams
EASTWOOD NSW 2122

Sr Jean Adams
Sisters of St Joseph
GOULBURN NSW 2580

Mrs L Adams
St Andrews Parent Group
CHIFLEY NSW 2036

Marita Adeney
Ballarat Diocesan Pastoral
Council
BALLARAT VIC 3350

Sr Barbara Amott
Presentation Sisters
Congregation
HOBART TAS 7001

R.C. and M.M. Anderson
No address recorded

Conchita Anderson
Catholic Women's League -
Nelson Bay
NELSON BAY NSW 2315

Ms D Andrew
Catholic Women's League
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

Mr John Andrews
The Cursillo Movement
CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290

Robin Apps
NTH NARRABEEN
NSW 2101

Mrs Carmel Ardern and friends
CHILTERN VIC 3683

Sr Josephine Armour
Cabra Chapel Community
CUMBERLAND PARK
SA 5041

Ms Lisa Armstrong
Australian Young Christian
Workers
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Clare Arundell
St Mary's Presbytery
COLAC VIC 3250

Mrs Margaret Bampton
Catholic Women's League -
Kingswood
HYDE PARK SA 5061

Sr Jan Barrett
Sisters of St Joseph,
Congregation Leadership Team
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Rosalie Barry
St Patrick's Leadership Team
BALLARAT VIC 3350

Mr Paul Bateman
St Brigid's Rosary Group
HEALESVILLE VIC 3777

Mary Anne Beck
M McPhee and J Tehan
LEETON NSW 2705

Marion Beech
Catholic Women's League -
Mt Barker
TENTERDEN WA 6322

Ms Beverly-Ann Beneke
Parish of The Good Shepherd
Clearview
CLEARVIEW SA 5085

Mrs Fay Biddle
Catholic Women's League
GLEN INNES NSW 2370

Marie Bignall
Catholic Women's League -
Lower Macleay
SOUTH WEST ROCKS
NSW 2431

Mrs Irene Bingham
Catholic Women's League -
Tasmania
BEAUTY POINT TAS 7270

Mrs Elsie Black
Catholic Women's League -
Bowral
BOWRAL NSW 2576

Deborah Black
St Brigid's Bible Study Group
NERANG QLD 4211

L Bloom
Moombaki CLC Group
WILLETTON WA 6955

Jo Boehme and S Murray
Holy Family Gowrie Parish
GOWRIE ACT 2904

A Bojkowski
St Kevin's Parish Cardiff
CARDIFF NSW 2285

Ms Margaret Bolton
Parish of John XXIII Catholic
Community
MODBURY SA 5092

Mrs K Boniface
Catholic Women's League
TOLGA QLD 4882

Ms Leigh Bowden
Action for World Development
SURREY HILLS NSW 2010

Roslyn Boyce et al
No address recorded

Mrs Alisa Bray
Parish Craft Group Good Sheherd
Catholic Parish
MOUNT ISA QLD 4825

Sr Mary Brennan
Group of Parishioners from the
Parish of Esk
ESK QLD 4312

Carmel Brennan
Parish Leadership Team
NULLAWARRE VIC 3268

Mrs J Bright
Pastoral Associates of Diamond
Valley Deanery
ROSANNA VIC 3084

Catherine Brindle et al
Group of Women Parishioners,
Sacred Heart Croydon
NTH CROYDON VIC 3136

Janene Brown
Social Justice and Peace
Committee
NAMBOUR QLD 4560

Judy Browne et al
Diocesan Chancery
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Joan Brownlee and 21 others
BALLARAT VIC 3350

Isabel Brustolin
Catholic Women's League –
Port Pirie
PORT PIRIE SA 5540

Ms Kaye Bryan et al
MANUKA ACT 2603

P Buchanan
D Watts, N Pinnuck & A
McQueen-Thompson
FINLEY NSW 2713

Mary Buck
St Kevin's Parish Committee
CRANBOURNE NORTH
VIC 3977

Mrs E Burgess
St Michael's Parish Support
Group
SARINA QLD 4737

Gemma Burke
Association of Pastoral
Associates
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

Sr Maureen Burke
Coordinator Quambatook
Submission
BALLARAT VIC 3350

M and M Burke
Teams of Our Lady
BALLARAT VIC 3350

Yvonne Burke
WATAC – Nord's Wharf Group
NORDS WHARF NSW 2281

Mary Burkitt
Shelia Hawthorn, Roberta
Michna, Veronica Ross
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4811

Judy Burn
St Gregory's Parish Council
DONCASTER VIC 3108

Jo and Bill Burns
MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149

Beth Burt
Staff Group, Mater Misericordiae
Hospitals
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

Geraldine Butler
St Joseph's Parish
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

Mr Mike Byrne
Catholic Education Office
Townsville
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Marcia Byrne
Catholic Women's League –
Bowral
BOWRAL NSW 2576

Desmond Cahill
St Brendan's Parish Council
FLEMINGTON VIC 3031

Sr Jean Cain
The Assumption School
BATHURST NSW 2795

Ms Mary Campbell
Catholic Women's League –
National Executive
HOBART TAS 7000

Mrs Catherine Carey
Catholic Women's League –
Horsham
HORSHAM VIC 3400

Ms Christine Cargill
Uniting Church in Australia –
National Commission on
Women and Men
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 2000

Philippa and Bart Carney
SMITHFIELD HEIGHTS
QLD 4878

Mr G P Carroll et al
Members of Flowers
EPPING NSW 2121

Kath Carroll et al
WENDOUREE VIC 3355

Margaret Carroll et al
Rosehaven
CLIFTON HILL VIC 3068

Ms Judy Carter
and 2 others from St Joseph's
Parish
CHELSEA VIC 3196

Philomena Carvalho
Catholic Women's League –
GWYNNEVILLE NSW 2500

Jenny Cash
Women of the Sacred Heart
Parish
ALBURY NSW 2640

Jan Chivers
St Raphaels Parish Group
COWRA NSW 2794

Josie Ciroclo and Friends
SALISBURY SA 5107

Ann D. Clark
Catholic Education Office –
Parramatta
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Sr Helen Clarke RSC
Sisters of Charity of Australia
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

Srs Pauline Clayton and
Teresa Peebles
KINGAROY QLD 4610

Cecily Clayton
Petrie Catholic Community
PETRIE QLD 4503

Mr Tim Cobham
Our Lady of Mercy Parish
DICKSON ACT 2602

Margaret Cody et al
GLEBE NSW 2037

Jonlyn Coffey
Thomas More College
SALISBURY SA 5108

J Coffey et al
BLACK FOREST SA 5035

Wyn Coghlan (family and
friends)
Cursillo Group Redcliffe
WOODY POINT QLD 4019

Carmel Coleman
Catholic Women's League –
Maffra
via MAFFRA NSW 3860

Mrs M Collins
Catholic Women's League
CRYSTAL BROOK SA 5523

Sr Leone Collins
Group of Parishioners, St John of
God Centre
BROOME WA 6725

Congregational Leader and
Councillors
Sisters of Mercy
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

J Connolly
Narabundah Parish
NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604

Elizabeth Conroy
J Brown, D Lewis, R Conroy
FLAXTON QLD 4560

Sr Mary Constable et al
Sisters of the Good Samaritan
BALMAIN NSW 2041

Mr John Conway
St Paul's Presbytery
WOODRIDGE QLD 4114

Kay Cook et al
Group from Our Lady of Fatima
Catholic Church
CARINGBAH NSW 2229

Janet Coombs
Canon Law Society of Australia
and New Zealand
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Ms Rita Cooper
Catholic Women's League –
Chatswood
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

Sr Anne Cougle
Group of Women, Holy Spirit
Parish
NICHOLLS ACT 2913

Kath Cowan
Catholic Women's League –
North Cairns
EDGE HILL QLD 4870

Kevin Cox et al
Holy Spirit School
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Sr Mary Cresp
targeted discussion group of
professional women
ANNANDALE NSW 2038

Ms Geraldine Croagh et al
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146

Sr Paula Cronin
Little Company of Mary
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Mr Stephen Crotty
Christian Life Community
Group
RICHMOND VIC 3121

Mrs Mary Curotta
St Andrew's Parish
MALABAR NSW 2036

Anne Curtis
and Marie Constable
FAIRY MEADOW NSW 2519

Irene D'Alessandro
St Luke's Parish
Pastoral Council
LALOR VIC 3075

Mrs Esme Daley
Catholic Cursillo Movement
WOLLONGBAR NSW 2477

Dominique Dalla-Pozza et al
Santa Sabina
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Beryl Damicker and others
UNGARIE NSW 2669

Christine de Groot
Beaconsfield and Glengarry
Women
GLENGARRY TAS 7275

Mara De Jongh et al
MITTAGONG NSW 2575

Mr and Mrs Noel and Carole
Dennis
HUGHES ACT 2605

Mary Densley et al
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Sr Anne Derwin rsj
Sisters of S Joseph NSW
BURWOOD NORTH NSW 2134

Ms Jean di Benedetto et al
CLEAR ISLAND WATERS
QLD 4226

J Dickson
Catholic Women's League –
Baulkham Hills
BAULKHAM HILLS NSW 2153

Srs Patricia Dillon and
Margaret Kelly
Good Samaritan Sisters
NORTH WOLLONGONG
NSW 2500

Sr Pat Dimeck
St Francis Xavier Parish
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Ms Karen Dimmock
WATAC – Glebe Group
GLEBE NSW 2037

Ms E Diviny
Our Lady Help of Christians
Parish
KAMARAH NSW 2665

Pauline and Neville Dodd
BLUE BAY NSW 2261

Carole Donnell
Holy Family Parish
MOUNT WAVERLEY VIC 3149

Mrs and Mr Pat and Keith
Donovan
St Mary's Dandenong Parish
DANDENONG VIC 3175

Mrs Joan Dore
St Patrick's Parish
PORT FAIRY VIC 3284

Mrs Esther Doyle
Catholic Women's League –
Archdiocese of Sydney
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Srs Marie-Rose Droulers and
Alene Doherty
Religious of the Sacred Heart
BRAYBROOK VIC 3019

Mrs Margaret Duffy
Catholic Women's League –
North Sydney
CASTLECRAG NSW 2068

Sr Barbara Duggan
CRITAS
NEW TOWN TAS 7008

Sr Barbara Duggan
Sisters of St Joseph
NEW TOWN TAS 7008

Ms Rebecca Dunn et al
COCONUT GROVE
NT 0810

Sr Caterine Duxbury et al
Ursuline Sisters
CROYDON PARK
NSW 2133

L Dwyer
Catholic Women's League
KATTANING WA 6317

Joy Eastwood
Catholic Women's League
NAMBUCCA HEADS
NSW 2448

Ms M Eather, J Sutherland and
C Strohfeld
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Joan Ebzery
Holy Family Parish,
Indooroopilly
JINDALEE QLD 4074

Sr Beth Egan
Dominican Sisters
HASSALL GROVE
NSW 2761

K Englebrecht
Catalyst for Renewal
HUNTERS HILL NSW 2110

B Entwisle
St Finbar's Parish
EAST BRIGHTON VIC 3187

M Fahy
Catholic Women's League –
Burwood
BURWOOD VIC 3125

Mrs J Fairbridge
Catholic Women's League –
Wagga Wagga
ALBURY NSW 2640

Mrs Marueen Federico
FRANSTON VIC 3199

Mrs Marguerite Fennell et al
BENTLEIGH VIC 3204

Janice Ferguson
Riverina Pregnancy Support
Service
HOLBROOK NSW 2644

P Fisher
Good Shepherd Prayer Group
MULGRAVE VIC 3170

Sr Wendy Flannery
Sisters of Mercy of Australia
LEWISHAM NSW 2049

Elizabeth Fletcher
targeted discussion group of
professional women
GLEBE NSW 2037

Sr Frances Flint
Catholic Media Office
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Gabrielle Foley
St Joseph's Parish Social
Justice Group
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

George Frances
Teams of Our Lady
HIGHTON VIC 3216

Mrs Helen Gadrielli
Diocesan Finance and Property
Council
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Mary Gallagher
PICNIC POINT NSW 2213

Monica Gallagher
Group of Catholic Women
WILLOUGHBY NSW 2068

Margaret Gallagher
Group of Women
No address recorded

Mrs Corrie Gannon
Parish Justice Group
WENDOUREE VIC 3355

Ms Virginia Gawler
WATAC – Randwick
RANDWICK NSW 2031

Ms Maria George
St Peter's Parish
EAST BENTLEIGH
VIC 3165

Sr Jenny Gerathy
Weekly Prayer Group
WALLSEND NSW 2287

Miss Merle Gilbo
Group of Parishioners –
Mary Immaculate Parish
IVANHOE VIC 3079

Ms Jenny Gilmour
St Joseph's Parish Pastoral
Council
GILGANDRA NSW 2827

Girgenti Family
MACKNADE QLD 4850

Therese Glass
Yackandandah/Osbornes Flat
Prayer Group
YACKANDANAH VIC 3749

Mrs R Goldie
Catholic Women's League -
Campbelltown
CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

Mrs Gillian Gonzalez
St Michael's Group
WILLETTON WA 6155

Margaret Goss
Catholic Women's League – Sale
SALE VIC 3850

Ms Kate Graham
Small Christian Group,
St Michael's Sarina
SARINA QLD 4737

Meg Grant
Catholic Women's League
GRENELL NSW 2810

Lisa Gray et al
Santa Sabina
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Anne Gray et al
5 Women from Rose Bay Parish
WATSON's BAY NSW 2030

Sr Rosemary Grundy
Leadership Team – Presentation
Sisters, Queensland
CLAYFIELD QLD 4011

Maureen Hager and friends
OATLEY VIC 2223

Carly Halliday et al
Santa Sabina
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Bridget Halge
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ROSNY PARK TAS 7018

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WAVERLY NSW 2024

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Windale
CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290

Mrs Mary Harkin
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COWWARR VIC 3857

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ROSSGLEN NSW 2439

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Maree Harris on behalf of the
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BALLARAT VIC 3350

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BALLARAT VIC 3354

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CHELTENHAM VIC 3192

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GLADSTONE PARK VIC 3043

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Ave Maria College
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MILDURA VIC 3502

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Presentation Sisters
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Women Religious of APREL
MULGRAVE NORTH VIC 3170

Sr Helen-Mary Langlands
Srs Faithful Companions of Jesus
RICHMOND VIC 3121

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Mission
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HADFIELD VIC 3046

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EASTWOOD NSW 2122

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Focolare Movement, Women's
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Pamela Lipscombe
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Sr Mary Lowcock
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Ministry Office
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ST ALBANS WEST
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MELBOURNE VIC 3000

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group
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Josephine Ramsay
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ESSENDON VIC 3040

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BEECHWORTH VIC 3747

Marlene McGrath
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Community
VERMONT VIC 3133

Chris McGuigan
and Christine Hanningan
BEXLEY NSW 2207

Ms Judy McIntyre
'Stepping Stones'– Christian Life
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CLARE SA 5453

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National Council of Society of St
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WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

June McNamara et al
WOOLLOOWIN QLD 4030

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DICKSON ACT 2602

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NURIOOTPA SA 5355

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Catholic Women's League
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St John the Baptist Parish
FERNTREE GULLY
VIC 3156

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BUNDABERG QLD 4670

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Faithful Companion of Jesus
RICHMOND VIC 3121

Mrs Maisie Miller
Catholic Women's League
LEETON NSW 2705

Adele Miller on behalf of
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Parish Council
BOX HILL VIC 3128

G D and A Mills
CURTIN ACT 2605

P Molony and others
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GOODNA QLD 4300

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DONALD VIC 3480

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Brazendale
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Loraine Naro and Patricia
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ARMIDALE NSW 2350

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Maryknoll
BUNYIP VIC 3815

Sr Mary O'Dea rsj
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GOULBURN NSW 2580

Sr Maureen O'Kelly et al
MORWELL VIC 3840

Sr Kay O'Neill
Centacare Alice Springs Group
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Moira O'Sullivan
targeted discussion group of
professional women
EDGECLIFF NSW 2027

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Parishioners
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Camille Paul
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MOSMAN NSW 2088

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Vincent de Paul
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Ms Katrina Porter
Koroit Group
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St Joseph's Convent
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Mr and Mrs Van de Laar
MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149

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Friends
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SCARBOROUGH WA 6019

M Ward et al
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HOBART TAS 7001

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LAVERTON VIC 3028

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MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

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Council
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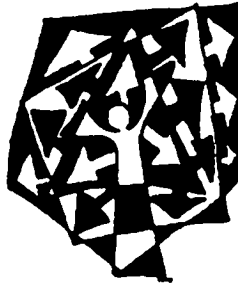
Sr M Zita
Sisters of the Good Samaritan
NORTH FITZROY VIC 3068

*Sixty submissions from individuals
and groups requested that their
submission not be reported in the
list of submissions received.*

Every effort has been made to
ensure the accuracy of the list of
participants presented above.
The authors and publisher
would be pleased to rectify any
inaccuracy.

APPENDIX 5

Instructions for Coders and Coding Frame



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

- Instructions for Coders
 - Coding Sheets



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

A research project undertaken for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

Analysis of Written Submissions: Instructions for Coders

The Research Management Group thanks for you volunteering to be involved in the coding of the 2,500 written submissions which have been submitted. Your generosity and skills are much appreciated. Approximately thirty people have offered to assist us with this large task. Each coder will receive about eighty submissions to process. It is hoped that the task for each coder will not involve more than sixty hours work.

Set out below are specific instructions for the coding of written submissions. At the outset, we wish to emphasise the importance of the confidentiality of the submissions. The coders have been selected because of both their appropriate background and the sense of confidentiality they would bring to this sensitive task. This issue is a prime concern to us. No photocopying of the written submissions has occurred or should occur. This original material is the property of those who commissioned the research, and must be used only for the purposes of the research. We have received legal advice that any other copying, use or distribution of this material by the Research Management Group or those assisting in the research could give rise to action under copyright and privacy legislation. Please keep the submissions in a private and safe place at all times so that confidentiality is maintained throughout the coding process. Special instructions will be given to coders about the return of the submissions to the BCJDP Secretariat. It would be most unfortunate if any submissions were lost or fell into unauthorised hands.

The coding frame for the written submissions has been developed around the four questions which have guided the research:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? These ways could be described in areas such as the home, parish, diocese, educational and healing ministries of the Church or women's groups.
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

The members of the Research Management Group, in conjunction with outside specialists, have designed and tested the coding frame over a long period. This instrument is intended to identify and record the great majority of responses to each question in considerable detail. However, a few submissions may be so unusual that there is little or no correspondence with the coding frame. If this occurs, please attach a note to the submission stating that it requires separate analysis.

To verify the accuracy of the coding process, at the end of the briefing session all coders will be asked to code the same submission. A record will be kept of the degree of accuracy in the coding of each response. Included in the eighty submissions received by each coder will be one common submission which coders will not be able to identify. Once more, the response to this submission from all coders will be analysed and the accuracy of response will be documented as part of the project's final report.

Specific Instructions:

1. Spend time becoming familiar with the coding frame. A sound knowledge of the codes will assist you greatly with both your accuracy and the time spent on the task.
2. Enter the submission number at the top of the column on each page.
3. Use a separate column for each submission.
4. Record the response to each question by placing a tick in the appropriate box in line with the specific description of response. To facilitate the coding process, the descriptions of responses have been grouped under general headings.
5. When you use a descriptor which refers to "other ...", simply tick the box. You do not need to provide additional information.
6. At the end of each question there is a category, "Overall Response to Question", which includes a description "includes passages suitable for quotation". Provided that the submission did not seek confidentiality in this regard (see code 1003 and 1004), tick the box and highlight the passages which you believe are suitable for quotation in a yellow highlighter.
7. In the written submission itself, write the code number you have selected in the margin next to the written response.
8. You may find it beneficial to discuss the way you are coding some of your submissions with another coder. However, such sharing is a suggestion rather than a requirement of the process.
9. If you have queries about any aspect of the coding, please do not hesitate to contact either:

Dr Marie Macdonald
Australian Catholic University, Christ Campus
Phone: (03) 9563 3654
Fax: (03) 9563 3605
email: M.Macdonald@christ.acu.edu.au

OR

Mr Bob Dixon, Pastoral Research Officer,
Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference
Phone: (03) 9543 5111
Fax: (03) 9543 5221
email: bdixon@survey.catholic.org.au

We ask that the coding be completed by 30 January 1998. If you have any difficulties in completing the task by this date, please contact Marie as soon as possible.

All submissions and coding sheets are to be returned by certified mail (the cost of which will be reimbursed to senders) to:

Research Management Group
Attention: Dr Marie Macdonald
Women's Participation In the Catholic Church in Australia
Leo XIII House
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney NSW 2060

Once again, the Research Management Group would like to thank you for your valuable contribution to this important research project.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1001	not requested
1002	do not list this submission
1003	do not refer to this submission
1004	do not refer to parts circled in red

COMMENTS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

1005	concern that the research on women's participation neglects other groups
1006	concern that the views expressed apply also to lay men
1007	concern that the research on women's participation panders to a feminist agenda
1008	concern that the term 'participation' is not defined
1009	concern that the term 'participation in' implies that women are not an integral part of the Church
1010	other concerns about the research
1011	appreciation that the Bishops have undertaken this project
1012	appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the project

1. WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

CODE

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSES VOLUNTARY ROLES

HOME

1101	home
1102	wife
1103	mother
1104	faith educator in the home
1105	provider of hospitality at home
1106	other roles in the home

PARISH

1107	voluntary pastoral associate
1108	voluntary parish staff roles
1109	parish (pastoral) council
1110	other volunteer leadership & ministry roles
1111	leaders of prayer and communion services
1112	general participation
1113	ministers of the Eucharist
1114	readers
1115	altar girls
1116	other liturgical preparation and involvement
1117	sacramental preparation groups
1118	catechetical roles with children
1119	government school catechist
1120	catechetical roles with adults (incl RCIA)
1121	cleaning and maintenance roles
1123	catering roles
1124	financial contribution
1125	small Christian communities
1126	prayer groups
1127	discussion groups

1. WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

1128	service group (eg St. Vincent de Paul)
1129	ecumenical groups
1130	social justice groups
1131	mothers' and children's groups (incl. play groups)
1132	family groups
1133	social and sporting groups
1134	women's groups
1135	other group participation
1136	taking communion to the sick and elderly
1137	visitation
1138	other caring roles
1139	other voluntary parish roles

WIDER COMMUNITY

1140	contribution to the wider society
1141	visitation
1142	women's groups and organisations
1143	community organisations
1144	community service
1145	work with ethnic communities
1146	work with rural communities
1147	workplace

HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

1148	social welfare roles
1149	health care roles
1150	counselling roles
1151	other healing ministries

EDUCATION

1152	education
1153	parent involvement in schools
1154	adult education roles
1155	other voluntary education roles
1156	theological student

WIDER CHURCH

1157	pastoral formation student
1158	tertiary Catholic student groups
1159	diocesan pastoral councils
1160	other diocesan agencies or commissions
1161	national agencies or commissions
1162	chaplaincy roles
1163	Catholic Women's League
1164	Marriage Encounter
1165	Teams of Our Lady
1166	other Catholic organisations
1167	overseas missions

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN

1168	membership of religious congregations
1169	education
1170	health care
1171	rural communities

1. WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

SUBMISSION NUMBER:

RELIGIONS CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN

- 1172 overseas missions
- 1173 other ministries of religious congregations

OTHER VOLUNTARY ROLES

- 1174 other voluntary roles

PROFESSIONAL ROLES IN CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS

PARISH

- 1201 pastoral associate (parish pastoral worker)
- 1202 other parish staff roles

CATHOLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE

- 1203 social welfare
- 1204 health care
- 1205 counselling

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- 1206 school teachers
- 1207 Religious Education teaching
- 1208 school principals
- 1209 other school administrators
- 1210 Catholic Education Office
- 1211 tertiary education
- 1212 theology lecturer
- 1213 pastoral formation educator
- 1214 adult education
- 1215 other educational roles

WIDER CHURCH

- 1216 diocesan agencies or commissions
- 1217 national agencies or commissions
- 1218 Catholic organisations
- 1219 other professional roles

VOLUNTARY/PROFESSIONAL NOT SPECIFIED

- 1301 education
- 1302 wider church
- 1303 health and service welfare

OTHER

- 1401 no response
- 1402 don't know
- 1403 don't understand question
- 1404 other

OVERALL RESPONSE TO QUESTION ONE

- 1501 satisfied with current ways of participating
- 1502 seeks greater participation
- 1503 historical background noted
- 1504 limitations of women's participation noted
- 1505 participation limited because women can't be ordained
- 1506 includes passages suitable for quotation
- 1507 provides an example of a significant submission

2. WHAT ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT ARE CURRENTLY OFFERED TO WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHURCH?

QUANTITY OF ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

2101	no support or assistance needed
2102	not aware of any specifically for women
2103	no support or assistance offered
2104	hardly any assistance or support offered
2105	spasmodic assistance and support offered
2106	some assistance and support
2107	adequate assistance and support
2108	a lot of assistance and support
2109	more support and assistance than previously offered
2110	more support and assistance than necessary
2111	very little support or assistance offered to lay women
2112	as much support and assistance as offered to lay men
2113	no support for women who do things informally
2114	no support for separated or divorced women
2115	no support for mothers of disabled children
2116	varies depending on priest/parish/diocese
2117	difficulties with access to support and assistance due to location
2118	difficulties with access to support and assistance due to lack of childcare provisions
2119	other factors relating to the quantity of assistance and support

NATURE OF ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

2201	support for motherhood and caring roles
2202	support to undertake faith education roles in the home, school or with adults
2203	help with childcare provided
2204	work arrangements offered by Church employers that help people harmonise their work and family responsibilities
2205	support to participate in parish lay ministries
2206	sacramental programs
2207	education and training undertaken at women's own expense
2208	funded training offered
2209	adult faith education available
2210	pastoral training available
2211	theological training available
2212	promotion of collaborative ministry
2213	assistance, support and encouragement to undertake leadership roles
2214	assistance, support and encouragement to share in decision-making roles
2215	assistance, support and encouragement to undertake further study
2216	assistance and support to undertake ancillary roles or menial tasks
2217	support and assistance to participate in diocesan Church committees or groups
2218	publications/conferences/seminars
2219	other ways of providing assistance or support

2. WHAT ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT ARE CURRENTLY OFFERED TO WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHURCH?

SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

2301	support from husband/family
2302	support from other women
2303	support from women's groups
2304	support from own religious congregation
2305	support from women religious
2306	support from groups and movements
2307	support from parish priest
2308	support from parish pastoral workers (pastoral associates)
2309	some priests/bishops supportive and encouraging
2310	support from spiritual directors, chaplains, retreat directors
2311	other sources of assistance and support

OTHER

2401	no response
2402	don't know
2403	don't understand question
2404	other

OVERALL RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2

2501	satisfied with current assistance and support for women
2502	seeks greater assistance and support for women
2503	includes passages suitable for quotation
2504	provides an example of a significant submission

3. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

NO BARRIERS

3001	There are no barriers to women's participation in the Church
------	--

SOCIETY & CULTURE

3101	a tradition of social, professional and religious inferiority concerning women
3102	the current attitude of the superiority of men in our society
3103	a culture that is controlled by male-dominant ideas
3104	entrenched ideas which are resistant to change
3105	lack of inclusive language
3106	women's attitude concerning traditional expectations of their role
3107	radical/aggressive feminism
3108	family responsibilities
3109	work responsibilities
3110	lack of time
3111	other social and cultural barriers
3112	women in migrant and refugee communities
3113	English language difficulties
3114	personal difficulties eg. illness, shyness, age

3. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

CHURCH STRUCTURES & PRACTICES

- 3201 a particular priest's attitude to women
- 3202 the negative attitude of some priests to women
- 3203 the negative attitude of some bishops to women
- 3204 the negative attitude of some lay men to women
- 3205 the negative attitude of some lay women to women
- 3206 the negative attitude of the Vatican to women
- 3207 the negative attitude of the Pope to women
- 3208 apathy among women in the Church
- 3209 lack of encouragement by men for women to participate in Church matters
- 3210 women's contribution undervalued
- 3211 the tendency on the part of the clerics to deny the existence of conflict or difference
- 3212 men's fear of women's participation
- 3213 clergy's fear of women's participation
- 3214 lack of recognition of the laity
- 3215 patriarchal system of the Church
- 3216 the hierarchical structure of the Church
- 3217 the authoritarian nature of the Church
- 3218 fear of speaking out
- 3219 concern of Church leaders with wealth and power
- 3220 decision-making reserved to clerics
- 3221 lack of women in the Vatican
- 3222 lack of participation in decision-making processes of the Church
- 3223 few opportunities to participate in leadership of the Church
- 3224 lack of consultation on the appointments of bishops
- 3225 systems and structures in the Church which are not in touch with the contemporary needs and experiences of people
- 3226 canon law
- 3227 lack of inclusive religious imagery and language
- 3228 lack of inclusive social language in the church
- 3229 use of inclusive language in the Church
- 3230 lack of awareness of women's history and experiences in the Church
- 3231 discrimination in the Church on the basis of gender
- 3232 lack of gender equity on Church committees at parish level
- 3233 lack of gender equity on Church committees at diocesan level
- 3234 lack of gender equity on Church committees at national level
- 3235 girls not being able to act as altar servers
- 3236 exclusion of women as Eucharist ministers
- 3237 women who seek to play too much of a role in the Church
- 3238 breakdown in communications in various levels in the Church
- 3239 lack of information about opportunities for participation
- 3240 unfortunate past experiences within the Church
- 3241 lack of adult faith education
- 3242 lack of education for ministry in the Church
- 3243 cost of theological and ministry courses
- 3244 other barriers associated with Church structures and practices

3. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA?

CHURCH TEACHINGS

- 3301 the Church's traditional teaching concerning women
- 3302 the Church's traditional teaching on abortion
- 3303 the Church's traditional teaching on contraception
- 3304 the Church's traditional teaching on divorce and remarriage
- 3305 the Church's traditional teaching on the compulsory celibacy of priests
- 3306 the Church's teaching on the ordination of women
- 3307 the Pope's ban on the discussion of the possibility of women's ordination
- 3308 the only barriers to the participation of women seem to be those duties exclusive to the priesthood
- 3309 women not being able to marry clergy and fulfil the special ministry of a clergyman's wife
- 3310 other factors relating to Church teachings

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & EMPLOYMENT

- 3401 lack of perceived career path that opens up positions which are available only to ordained ministers
- 3402 lack of appropriate remuneration levels
- 3403 lack of status as a paid minister
- 3404 lack of professional structures eg. role descriptions, duty statements, tenure, contracts, appraisal procedures
- 3405 lack of finance can be a barrier to women being formed for leadership levels eg. university degree
- 3406 other professional factors

OTHER

- 3501 no response
- 3502 don't know
- 3503 don't understand the question
- 3504 other

OVERALL RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3

- 3601 supports the current participation of women
- 3602 seeks greater participation of women
- 3603 includes passages suitable for quotation
- 3604 provides an example of a significant submission

4. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH CAN BE INCREASED?

SOCIETY & CULTURE

- 4101 promote gender equality and opportunities
- 4102 foster respect for women's unique contribution
- 4103 promote the recognition of the central importance of women's work in the home
- 4107 other social and cultural ways to increase participation

CHURCH STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

HOME

- 4201 support the role of women as wives/mothers
- 4202 support the role of women as full-time mothers
- 4203 strengthen family faith formation and prayer life
- 4204 provide education programs for women which foster the faith education of young children

4. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH CAN BE INCREASED?

PARISH & LITURGICAL PRACTICES

- 4205 increase women's involvement in the parish
- 4206 encourage men to be more involved in the parish
- 4207 allow girls to act as altar servers
- 4208 allow women to preach
- 4209 foster women's participation by encouraging men to participate more
- 4210 make the Eucharist more available
- 4211 make greater use of women religious
- 4212 enlist the help of retired priests

WIDER CHURCH

- 4213 recognise alienation of women from the Church
- 4214 recognise conflict with the Church regarding the participation of women
- 4215 recognise women's great contribution to the Church
- 4216 bishops to apologise for the Church's failure to adequately recognise the place of women
- 4217 ensure women are offered more than menial tasks
- 4218 encourage women to join women's groups in the Church
- 4219 encourage women to take on group leadership in the Church
- 4220 involve young people in all aspects of the Church's life
- 4221 involve married women in marriage preparation
- 4222 train women as canon lawyers
- 4223 train women as marriage celebrants
- 4224 increase women's involvement in social welfare and ministry roles
- 4225 establish support groups for women
- 4226 establish support groups for women who are abused or raped
- 4227 establish support groups for infertile couples
- 4228 establish support groups for needy women
- 4229 appoint women to Vatican congregations and councils
- 4230 appoint women as cardinals

PRAYER

- 4231 prayer
- 4232 pray for more vocation

SPIRITUALITY

- 4233 women must deepen their personal spiritual growth
- 4234 development of a feminine spirituality
- 4235 emphasise dedication to the Word of God
- 4236 women should be used as spiritual guides for seminarians

LANGUAGE

- 4237 use inclusive religious imagery and language
- 4238 use inclusive social language

GENDER EQUALITY

- 4239 reform Church structures to remove gender inequalities and establish a balance of men and women on all Church advisory groups
- 4240 allow women's talents to be fully utilised
- 4241 challenge priests who are prejudiced in their attitudes to women

4. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH CAN BE INCREASED?

COMMUNICATION & CONSULTATION

- 4242 establish women's advisory bodies to advise the bishops
- 4243 set up communications processes within the Church with broad consultation
- 4244 seek opinion on key issues within the Church
- 4245 encourage women to have a voice in the Church
- 4246 publicise women's achievements in the Church
- 4247 allow ongoing discussion about the ordination of women

DECISION-MAKING

- 4248 increase women's involvement in decision-making at all levels
- 4249 increase women's involvement in decision-making at parish level
- 4250 increase women's involvement in decision-making at diocesan level
- 4251 increase women's involvement in decision-making in Vatican congregations
- 4252 remove the connection between decision-making and ordination
- 4253 leave decision-making in the hands of the priests

LEADERSHIP

- 4254 educate women and men in the vision of shared leadership
- 4255 appoint women as spokespersons for the Church where appropriate
- 4256 promote opportunities for women to participate in leadership in the Church
- 4257 appoint women to major diocesan leadership groups
- 4258 appoint women as parish pastoral coordinators
- 4259 appoint women as the leaders of basic ecclesial communities

EDUCATION

- 4260 promote a knowledge of women's history to gain a sense of their identity in the church
- 4261 educate Catholics on gender equality and justice
- 4262 re-educate bishops and priests on women's issues and women's theology
- 4263 encourage women in catechetical work in government schools
- 4264 place religious education in the hands of priests and religious
- 4265 establish more coeducational Catholic schools

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- 4266 re-examine the portrayal of men and women in moral theology
- 4267 provide access for women to pastoral, religious and/or theological education
- 4268 women's theological work to be seen as valid and important in the Church
- 4269 encourage theologically qualified women to become professors in the seminary
- 4270 training for the priesthood to involve personal development and counselling, women's issues and women's theology

OTHER

- 4271 other ways to increase women's participation regarding Church structures and practices

4. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH CAN BE INCREASED?

CHURCH TEACHINGS

GENDER EQUALITY

- 4301 reform beliefs and associated practices that do not promote equality of men and women

PRIESTHOOD & MINISTRY

- 4302 examine the position of women in the early Church as deacons, Eucharist leaders and their presence at the Last Supper
- 4303 permit women to marry the clergy and fulfil the special ministry of a clergyman's wife
- 4304 permit women to be ordained as deacons
- 4305 permit women to be ordained as priests
- 4306 give women who work in ministries to the sick the power to heal and absolve

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

- 4307 explain the Church's teaching on birth control
- 4308 support the Church's teaching on family planning
- 4309 clergy to support the Church's pro-life stance
- 4310 revise the Church's teaching on artificial contraception
- 4311 reconsider the Church's teaching on divorce and remarriage

OTHER

- 4312 other ways to increase women's participation associated with Church teachings

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & EMPLOYMENT

- 4401 foster opportunities for using the academic and theological qualifications and experiences of women in the service of the Church
- 4402 encourage women to assume professional leadership roles in the church where appropriate
- 4403 provide appropriate status and remuneration for women in the professional service and employment of the Church
- 4404 develop adequate structures and procedures for professional roles: eg role descriptions, duty statements, tenure, contracts, appraisal procedures
- 4405 other professional service and employment factors concerned with increasing women's participation

OTHER

- 4501 no response
- 4502 don't know
- 4503 don't understand the question
- 4504 other

OVERALL RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4

- 4601 supports the current participation of women
- 4602 seeks greater participation of women
- 4603 believes women have too much involvement in the Church
- 4604 includes passages suitable for quotation
- 4605 provides an example of a significant submission

APPENDIX 6

Coders of Written Submissions

Sr Carmel Bambridge sgs
BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

Sr Christopher Burrows sgs
CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

Sr Mary Byrne rsc
BONDI NSW 2026

Sr Pauline Coll sgs
BALMORAL QLD 4171

Sr Margaret Costigan rsc
MOONEE PONDS VIC 3099

Sr Mary Duffy sgs
EAST PRESTON VIC 3072

Dr Kathleen Engebretson
Australian Catholic University
ASCOT VALE VIC 3032

Sr Judith Foster sgs
BLACKTOWN NSW 2148

Mr George Frances
HIGHTON VIC 3216

Sr Annette Giltrow sgs
PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120

Sr Kim Maree Goodwin op
Australian Catholic University
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2058

Sr Angela Grant rsj
LAKEMBA NSW 2195

Sr Jennifer Hartley rsm
Australian Catholic University
BALLARAT VIC 3353

Sr Marie Kelly sgs
WINDSOR NSW 2756

Br Tom Kingston cfs
Australian Catholic University
BALLARAT VIC 3353

Dr Sally Liddy
Australian Catholic University
DICKSON ACT 2602

Dr Christine Manning sgs
GLEBE NSW 2037

Mr Pat McArdle
Australian Catholic University
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Sr Bernice McDonnell sgs
BLACKTOWN NSW 2148

Sr Julian McKenna sgs
NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104

Sr Maureen Minehan csb
MALVERN VIC 3144

Sr Mary O'Neill sgs
COORPAROO QLD 4151

Dr Rose Marie Prosser
BOX HILL NSW 3128

Sr Mary Ronayne sgs
NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104

Miss Linda Salpietro
Australian Catholic University
ASCOT VALE VIC 3032

Sr Mary Shanahan rsj
KENSINGTON NSW 2033

Dr David Sim
Australian Catholic University
EVERTON PARK QLD 4053

Sr Elizabeth Smith op
Australian Catholic University
DICKSON ACT 2602

Dr Barabara Stead rsm
Australian Catholic University
ASCOT VALE VIC 3032

Sr Catherine Thom rsj
Australian Catholic University
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Sr Margaret Toohey rsj
GLEBE NSW 2037

Sr Lorraine Victorsen sgs
MARSFIELD NSW 2122

Dr Louise Welbourne op
Australian Catholic University
DICKSON ACT 2602

Mrs Margaret Zucker
LINDFIELD NSW 2070

APPENDIX 7 – Catholic Church Life Survey: Sample Design

number	Total	Catholic	Total parishes			Catholic	Sample parishes			Sampling	Sampling	Sampling	National
Diocese	population (1991 Census)	population (1991 Census)	Urban	Rural	Total	population per parish	Urban	Rural	Total	fraction (urban) (%)	fraction (rural) (%)	fraction (%)	of attenders aged 15+
Province of Sydney													
Sydney	1 826 745	589 555	136	0	136	4 335	21	0	21	15	–	15	15 112
Armidale	185 769	45 777	4	21	25	1 831	4	4	8	100	19	32	2 432
Bathurst	203 166	62 636	8	16	24	2 610	4	4	8	50	25	33	3 466
Broken Bay	728 220	180 148	39	0	39	4 619	7	0	7	18	–	18	5 367
Lismore	380 064	90 517	11	19	30	3 017	4	4	8	36	21	27	4 007
Maitland– Newcastle	553 423	134 647	42	11	53	2 541	5	4	9	12	36	17	3 796
Parramatta*	790 867	268 293	25	20	45	5 962	8	0	8	16	20	18	7 918
Wagga Wagga	180 960	59 553	8	22	30	1 985	4	4	8	50	18	27	2 636
Wilcannia–Forbes	125 958	37 699	1	19	20	1 885	1	5	6	100	26	30	1 877
Wollongong	531 967	157 232	16	15	31	5 072	4	4	8	25	27	26	6 736
Canberra & Goulburn	503 924	153 639	25	34	59	2 604	6	4	10	24	12	17	4 323
Province of Melbourne													
Melbourne	3 240 140	979 959	216	16	232	4 224	31	4	35	14	25	15	24 541
Ballarat	383 873	97 933	10	44	54	1 814	4	4	8	40	11	17	2 709
Sale	308 811	74 852	10	18	28	2 673	4	4	8	40	22	29	3 550
Sandhurst	311 779	84 619	13	27	40	2 115	4	4	8	31	15	20	2 809
Hobart	453 082	89 496	20	21	41	2 183	6	4	10	30	19	24	3 623
Province of Adelaide													
Adelaide	1 228 268	265 216	54	24	78	3 400	8	4	12	15	17	15	6 773
Darwin	175 651	40 515	5	11	16	2 532	4	4	8	80	36	50	3 363
Port Pirie	172 419	29 384	5	18	23	1 278	4	4	8	80	22	35	1 697
Province of Perth													
Perth	1 234 404	329 557	85	17	102	3 231	12	4	16	14	24	16	8 416
Broome	30 781	8 982	3	8	11	817	3	4	7	100	50	64	949
Bunbury	206 629	41 780	4	22	26	1 607	4	4	8	100	18	31	2 134
Geraldton	116 089	28 456	6	12	18	1 581	4	4	8	67	33	44	2 099
Province of Brisbane													
Brisbane	1 978 397	486 273	100	13	113	4 303	13	4	17	13	31	15	12 144
Cairns	206 646	54 039	6	19	25	2 162	4	4	8	67	21	32	2 871
Rockhampton	339 393	87 498	16	20	36	2 431	4	4	8	25	20	22	3 228
Toowoomba	218 009	58 831	7	28	35	1 681	4	4	8	57	14	23	2 232
Townsville	235 140	69 637	17	14	31	2 246	4	4	8	24	29	26	2 983
Australia	16 850 574	4 606 723	892	509	1 401	3 288	185	101	286	21	20	20	156 655

Sampling rules: 15% of parishes per diocese (minimum of 6); Ten percent or minimum 4 parishes per stratum (all parishes in stratum included if there are 4 or fewer parishes.)

Notional number of attenders in sample is approximate and based on set proportions of Catholics aged 15+ in 1991 Census.

*In Parramatta diocese, the sampling strata were the Eastern and Western halves of the diocese, rather than Urban/Rural.

APPENDIX 8

Catholic Church Life Survey: Outline of Questionnaires

Questionnaires completed by Mass attenders

Questionnaire	Distribution	Principal Focus
A	67% of attenders in each parish	Personal faith, involvement in parish life
B	3%	Religious experience
C	2%	Personal beliefs
D	1.3%	Financial contribution to the Church
E	1.3%	Caritas; Overseas aid
F	2%	Church issues
G	1.3%	Moral issues; social justice
H	5%	Participation of women in the Church
I	1.3%	Religious orientation; bible; charismatic spirituality
J	1.3%	Personality; burnout
K	1.3%	Marriage and family; media
L	2.0%	Liturgy
M	1.3%	Well-being; self-esteem; Church in society
N	5%	Catholic education
O	RCIA 'graduates'	The experience of RCIA and subsequent experiences as a Catholic
P	1%	National Church Life Survey questions
Q	1%	National Church Life Survey questions
R	1%	National Church Life Survey questions
S	1%	National Church Life Survey questions
T	1%	National Church Life Survey questions

In addition to the questionnaires completed by Mass attenders, there were also the following:

U	Parents of children in Catholic schools*	Personal faith; Catholic education
V	Parish survey co-ordinators	Details of parish administration
W	Parish and assistant priests	Parish life and the experience of priesthood
X	Parish pastoral associates/pastoral workers	The ministerial and industrial experience of pastoral associates
Y	RCIA co-ordinators	The experience of leading an RCIA program

* Survey U was distributed to school parents via schools and Catholic Education Offices. Schools in seventeen dioceses took part.

APPENDIX 9

Catholic Church Life Survey: Survey H

CATHOLIC CHURCH LIFE SURVEY 1996

A project sponsored by the
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
in association with the
National Church Life Survey

The Questions

The statements in the questionnaire on which your opinion is asked do not necessarily represent the views of the Bishops' Conference or of the National Church Life Survey.

A number of questions were designed to be answered by people of all denominations, and were used in the survey of non-Catholic churches held in August.

To make allowance for different kinds of people, many of the answer options allow for the possibility that the person answering may not share the Catholic faith fully, or at all.

Not everybody will answer the same questions. There are several different questionnaires, each covering different topics.

Confidentiality

Your identity is completely confidential. No names are asked or recorded.

The parish will receive a report based on responses to the questionnaire, but it will not be possible to identify any individual attendee's response, nor will any sensitive data on this parish be released except to the parish.

Instructions

Circle the number beside the option that comes closest to what you want to say.

Example: Do you eat fruit?

① Often 2. Sometimes 3. Never

Circle ONE ANSWER ONLY per question unless asked to do otherwise.

Some questions ask you to show where your opinion lies on a scale of 1 to 7.

Example: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Fruit is a very important part of my diet

Strongly
disagree

Strongly
agree

1 2 3 4 5 ⑥ 7

The response shows fairly strong agreement with the statement.

A page explaining the survey and its objectives is available after Mass today.

Thank you for your time. It is a valuable gift to the whole Church.

This is not the general questionnaire that most people are filling out. It is a special one designed to ask you in more detail about some particular issues.

About you

1. In what year were you born? Please complete the year.

1	9		
---	---	--	--

2. Gender:

1. Female 2. Male

3. What is your present marital status?

1. Never married
2. In first marriage
3. In a de facto relationship
4. Separated but not divorced
5. Divorced and not remarried
6. Divorced and remarried
7. Widowed and not remarried
8. Widowed and remarried

4. Where were you born?

If born in Australia, please go to Section A.

If born overseas, please go to Section B.

Section A: BORN IN AUSTRALIA

I was born in Australia and:

(Please circle a number between 01 and 05)

01. I am of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin
02. Both my parents were born in Australia
03. Both born in English speaking countries
04. One parent born in non-English speaking country
05. Both parents born in non-English speaking country

Section B: BORN OVERSEAS

I was born in: (Please circle one number)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 06. New Zealand | 17. Philippines |
| 07. Britain | 18. Vietnam |
| 08. Ireland (incl. N Ireland) | 19. India/Sri Lanka |
| 09. Italy | 20. Other Asia |
| 10. Croatia | 21. Lebanon |
| 11. Poland | 22. Chile |
| 12. Malta | 23. Other South America |
| 13. Netherlands | 24. Central America |
| 14. Germany (East or West) | 25. North America |
| 15. Former USSR | 26. Africa/Middle East |
| 16. Other Europe | 27. Pacific Islands |

5. What is the highest educational qualification you have completed?

1. Primary school
2. Some years of secondary school
3. Completed secondary school
4. Trade certificate
5. Diploma or associate diploma
6. Bachelor degree from a university or equivalent
7. Post graduate degree or diploma

- What type of school did you (or do you now) mainly attend?

(Circle ONE number in each row)

	Catholic	Government	Other
--	----------	------------	-------

6. Primary school 1 2 3

7. Secondary school 1 2 3

8. Taking into consideration the house you live in, your income, the property or investments you own, the car you drive and so on, would you say that your standard of living is above or below average?

1. Much below average
2. Quite a bit below average
3. Slightly below average
4. Average
5. Slightly above average
6. Quite a bit above average
7. Much above average

9. What is your current occupation?

(Please choose the ONE category which lists occupations most like your own. Answer for your main job if you have more than one.)

01. Senior manager or administrator
02. Farm owner, small business owner
03. Doctor, lawyer, scientist, engineer, lecturer
04. Schoolteacher, artist
05. Technician, registered nurse, police officer
06. Tradesperson, skilled craftsperson, hairdresser
07. Salesperson, enrolled nurse, waiter
08. Clerical worker, secretary, teacher's aide
09. Truck driver, machine operator
10. Labourer, factory hand, farm hand
11. Retired
12. Home duties/family responsibilities
13. Student
14. Currently unemployed

10. What is your religious denomination? And that of your spouse?

(Please circle ONE number in each column, if applicable)

	Yours	Your spouse's
Catholic	0	0
Anglican (C of E)	1	1
Uniting Church (incl. Methodist and Congregational)	2	2
Presbyterian	3	3
Orthodox	4	4
Baptist	5	5
Pentecostal (eg. Assemblies of God)	6	6
Another Christian Church	7	7
A non-Christian religion	8	8
No religion	9	9

11. Which statement best describes your household?

1. I live alone
2. A couple with no children living at home
3. Two parents with child(ren) living at home
4. One parent with child(ren) living at home
5. Some adults living in the same household

12. How do you feel about your life as a whole?

Delighted Terrible

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

You and your parish

13. How often do you go to Mass?

1. Hardly ever/special occasions only
2. Less than once a month
3. Once a month
4. Two or three times a month
5. Usually every week
6. More than once a week

14. Do you regularly take part in any parish activities reaching out to people outside the parish community (e.g. community service, welfare, social justice, evangelisation)? (Circle ONE only)

1. Yes, in community service/welfare/social justice activities
2. Yes, in evangelisation activities
3. Yes, in both 1 and 2 above
4. No, I am not regularly involved
5. No, we don't have any such activities

15. Do you perform any of the following roles in this parish? (Circle ONE only)

1. Member of the parish council or similar leadership group, or other committee
2. Catechist, sacrament preparation team, RCIA team or group leadership role
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. A ministry or leadership role not mentioned above
5. I do not have any particular ministry or leadership role

16. Are you currently involved here in any of these ways? (Circle ONE only)

1. Special minister of communion, reader, or member of a music group or liturgy group
2. In groups which help parishioners; e.g. bereavement support, family support and visiting the sick
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. No, I am not currently involved in these ways

17. Do you regularly take part in any group activities in this parish? (Circle ONE only)

1. Yes, in groups meeting for prayer, scripture or faith discussion, or adult faith education
2. Yes, in social or youth groups or clubs
3. Yes, in both 1 and 2 above
4. No, I am not regularly involved
5. No, we have no such groups

18. Do you have a strong sense of 'belonging' to this parish?

1. Yes, a strong sense of 'belonging' which is growing
2. Yes, about the same as last year
3. Yes, although perhaps not as strongly as in the past
4. No, but I am new here
5. No, and I wish I did by now
6. No, but I am happy to stay on the fringe
7. Don't know/not applicable

19. My spiritual needs are being adequately met in this parish.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

About faith

20. The most significant people to show me what faith was about were: (Circle up to THREE options)

1. Mother
2. Father
3. Spouse/other family members
4. Workmates, friends
5. Visiting priests who gave a parish mission
6. Schoolteachers
7. Religious education teachers
8. A priest, (or minister of another church)
9. Other people from my parish or congregation
0. Other

21. How often do you spend some time in private devotional activities (eg, prayer, meditation or reading the Bible alone)?

1. Every day/most days
2. A few times a week
3. Once a week
4. Occasionally
5. Hardly ever
6. Never

22. Which of the following comes closest to what you believe about the virginity of Mary?

1. Mary gave birth to Jesus without having had sexual intercourse
2. The virginity of Mary is not meant to be taken literally; it is a way of saying that Jesus is both human and divine
3. Jesus' conception was no different from any other human conception
9. Don't know

23. Which of the following comes closest to expressing your belief about the Church? (Circle UP TO TWO options)

1. The Church is established by God as the way of salvation for all humankind
2. The Church is the People God calls together, yet they remain humanly weak and sinful
3. The Church has been weakened by numerous failures, but can and must be reformed
4. The Church is old and decrepit, and no longer shows the way to God
5. The Church is of little importance to me
6. None of the above
9. Don't know

24. Do you accept the authority of the Church to teach that certain doctrines of faith and morals are essential to faith, and are true, and to be believed by all Catholics?

1. Yes, with no difficulty
2. Yes, with some difficulty
3. Yes, with great difficulty
4. No
9. Don't know

25. Do you accept the Catholic teaching that women cannot be ordained priests?

1. Yes, with no difficulty
2. Yes, with some difficulty
3. Yes, with great difficulty
4. No
9. Don't know

26. What would be your attitude if one of your sons showed an interest in becoming a priest?

1. I'd encourage him
2. Encourage with reservations
3. Neither encourage nor discourage
4. Try to discourage
5. Strongly discourage
6. I have no sons at an appropriate age

27. What would be your attitude if one of your daughters showed an interest in becoming a religious sister?

1. I'd encourage her
2. Encourage with reservations
3. Neither encourage nor discourage
4. Try to discourage
5. Strongly discourage
6. No daughters at an appropriate age

28. Do you approve of the Australian bishops making statements on public policy issues they see as involving principles of social justice, such as economic policy, immigration policy or land-rights for Aboriginal people?

Strongly disapprove								Strongly approve
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

Your involvement in the Church

29. Are you involved as a VOLUNTEER in any of the following Catholic organisations?
(Circle all that apply)

1. A Catholic school
2. A local parish (not the school)
3. Catholic health or social welfare organisations
4. Diocesan or national Church organisations or committees
5. Joint projects with other Christian Churches
6. Other Catholic organisations not mentioned above
7. I am not involved in any of these organisations

30. Are you EMPLOYED in any of the following Catholic organisations? (Circle UP TO TWO):

1. A Catholic school
2. A local parish (not the school)
3. Catholic health or social welfare organisations
4. Diocesan or national Church organisations or committees
5. Joint projects with other Christian Churches
6. Other Catholic organisations not mentioned above
7. I am not employed in any of these organisations

31. When you have accepted responsibility for doing something in the parish or the wider Church, have you been given sufficient practical assistance and encouragement?

1. Yes, all that I needed
2. I received it from the leaders but not from the people
3. I received it from the people but not from the leaders
4. I received too little to be able to carry out my responsibility properly
5. I have not accepted any responsibility like this

32. In the last five years, have there been occasions when you felt unwelcome in the Church?
(Circle all that apply)

0. Yes, because of my gender
1. Yes, because I was divorced or separated
2. Yes, because I had re-married without an annulment
3. Yes, because I had married outside the Church
4. Yes, because I was in a de-facto relationship
5. Yes, because of my appearance
6. Yes, because I don't speak English well
7. Yes because I'm not part of the 'in-group'
8. Yes, for some other reason
9. No, I have never felt unwelcome in the Church

33. If you felt unwelcome in the Church, what was the effect on your level of participation?

1. It had no effect on my level of participation in Church life
2. As a result I now participate less fully in church life
3. It made me more determined to participate fully in Church life
4. I have not felt unwelcome in the Church

34. Is there any activity or role that you would like to undertake in the Church which is made difficult or impossible for you by Church teachings or policies? (Circle UP TO TWO)

1. The ordained priesthood
2. A more prominent role in the Mass
3. A greater say in decision-making
4. Some other activity or role not mentioned above
5. None of the above

H3

What practical assistance and encouragement have you been given by the Church to participate in the following areas of Church life?
(Circle ONE number on each line)

	I don't participate in this way	Hardly any assistance	Some assistance	A lot of assistance
35. In care-giving roles in the community or workplace	1	2	3	4
36. In parish lay ministries	1	2	3	4
37. In educating children or adults in faith	1	2	3	4
38. In educating yourself in theology	1	2	3	4
39. In social action/justice activities	1	2	3	4
40. In sharing in decision-making	1	2	3	4
41. In undertaking leadership roles	1	2	3	4

Some people say that various Church teachings affect their active participation in the Church. How do the following affect your participation? (Circle ONE number in each line)

The Church's teaching on ...	strongly encourages me to participate	encourages me to participate	no effect	discourages me from participating	strongly discourages me from participating
42. Abortion	1	2	3	4	5
43. Artificial contraception	1	2	3	4	5
44. Compulsory priestly celibacy	1	2	3	4	5
45. Divorce and re-marriage	1	2	3	4	5
46. Pre-marital sex	1	2	3	4	5
47. Ordination of women to the priesthood	1	2	3	4	5

48. Some say there are barriers preventing women from taking on leadership roles in the Church. During the last few years, have you ever experienced such a barrier, or known a woman who has?

1. No, I have never in the last few years experienced or observed a barrier preventing a woman's participation in the Church because of her being a woman
Yes, I have observed such a barrier as a result of: (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)
2. Opposition or lack of support from a priest or priests
3. Opposition or lack of support from men in the Church
4. Opposition or lack of support from women in the Church
5. Opposition or lack of support from older people in the church
6. Church practices that favour men for certain positions
7. The exercise of authority in the Church
8. Other factors

49. Do you personally know any men who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic Church?

1. Yes, a member or members of my family
2. Yes, one or more of my close friends
3. Yes, both of the above
4. No
9. Don't know

50. Do you personally know any women who say they have felt excluded from participating in the Catholic Church?

1. Yes, a member or members of my family
2. Yes, one or more of my close friends
3. Yes, both of the above
4. No
9. Don't know

51. If you believe women are being discouraged from fully participating in the Catholic Church, what would you see as the best way of increasing their participation?
(Circle UP TO TWO)

1. Prayer
2. Confrontation of prejudiced individuals, especially those in positions of authority
3. Education of Catholics on sexual equality and justice
4. Making greater use of gender-inclusive language
5. Creating opportunities for using the academic and theological qualifications and experience of women in the service of the Church
6. Appointing women as spokespersons for the Church where appropriate
7. Increasing women's involvement in decision-making and Church administration
8. Establishing women's advisory bodies to advise the bishops
9. Reforming beliefs and practices in the Church that do not promote equality of men and women
0. I don't believe women are discouraged to any significant extent

Thank you for your help today

H4

APPENDIX 10

Public Hearings: Procedures and Application Forms



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Hearings Procedures Guide:

a step-by-step guide to how the hearings will be conducted

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference's research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia** involves a variety of means of collecting data. Interested individuals and groups – whether female or male, young or old, actively involved in Church structures or not – are now being invited to apply to make a presentation at a hearing. You do not need to have made a written submission to be eligible to make a presentation at a hearing. Hearings are being held in all State and Territory capitals and in a number of regional centres. This hearing process has been adapted from Senate Committee procedures. A full list of the times and locations of hearings is available from the BCJDP Secretariat.

Step One: Applying to Make a Presentation

- Fill in the application form and return it to the BCJDP Secretariat. All applications will be acknowledged. If the number of applications is too large for everyone to be invited to make a presentation, the Research Management Group will make a selection so that a wide range of groups and individuals have a chance to be heard. If you are invited to make a presentation, you will be contacted by telephone to discuss a suitable time for your presentation. Secretariat staff will accommodate your needs and preferences as far as possible. The time and place of your appointment will be confirmed in writing.
- It is worthwhile setting out in some detail in your application the points which you would like to make in a presentation because all of this material will be read by the Research management Group and will form part of the data collected. In this way, even if you are not selected to make a presentation, you still have a chance to put forward your views and contribute to the information gathered.

Step Two: At the Hearing

- Ushers will indicate where the presenters are to sit. This will make it easier for presenters to be called on by the Chairperson at the appropriate moment.
- You will be provided with a program for the hearing indicating who will be making presentations, the time at which each presentation will be made, and when breaks will take place.
- Observers may come and go during the hearing. They will be encouraged to make their entrances and exits at the beginnings and ends of sessions as far as possible rather than during presentations.
- At most hearings there will be an early morning session ending at morning tea, a mid morning session ending at lunch and an afternoon session. Some hearings may have an early evening session.

19 MacKenzie Street • North Sydney • NSW • 2060 • Tel: 02 9956 5800 • Fax: 02 9956 5782

A research project conducted for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development & Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

Decisions about the timing of sessions will be worked out in dialogue with the host diocese and with regard to the availability of Panel Members.

- At the beginning of each session the Chairperson for the hearing will make an opening statement welcoming everyone, introducing the members of the panel (the panel will be made up of members of the Research Management Group, and the local Bishop or his representative), briefly presenting information on the research project to date, setting out what will happen at the hearing, and declaring the hearing open.
- At the beginning of each new session the chair will repeat the opening statement.
- Presentations will be tape-recorded as a backup to detailed notes taken by panel members.

Step Three: Making Your Presentation

- The Chairperson will introduce you and invite you to make your presentation.
- You will have up to twenty minutes to make your presentation and there will be about ten minutes for questions from the panel.
- At the end of your presentation the Chairperson will call for questions from panel members. At the end of the session the Chair will thank you and you may leave if you wish or join the observers to listen to other presenters.
- Only the chairperson and the Panel Members have the right to question presenters. The Panel Members will ask questions aimed at understanding as clearly as possible the views and experiences being presented. Journalists may be present among the observers and they may wish to question you afterwards. You are free to decide whether or not you wish to speak with journalists.
- Your questions to the Panel Members or Chairperson should be limited to procedural matters or clarifying the object of a question. These hearings are not an opportunity for debate. They are a chance for you to put your views and be heard.

Step Four: Accessing the Research Findings

- A research report bringing together all that was learnt from the written submissions, the survey conducted as part of the Church Life Survey, the hearings and other ways of collecting information will be presented to the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1998. Information from the research findings will be made available to the public by the Bishops. The ways in which the information will be made available have not yet been decided.

Thank you for your interest in the hearings being held as part of this research project. We hope that the project will help the Catholic community in Australia to find practical ways of renewing and expressing our commitment to the Gospel vision of the dignity of women and to the service of the mission of the Church. For further information on this project please contact:

Sandie Cornish
BCJDP Secretariat
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Tel: 02 9956 5800 Fax: 02 9956 5782
Email: caritas@mpx.com.au

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The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Application to Make a Presentation at a Hearing

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference's research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia** involves a variety of means of collecting data. Interested individuals and groups – whether female or male, young or old, actively involved in Church structures or not – are now being invited to apply to make a presentation at a hearing. You do not need to have made a written submission to be eligible to make a presentation at a hearing. Hearings are being held in all State and Territory capitals and in a number of regional centres. A full list of the times and locations of hearings is available from the BCJDP Secretariat.

Name:

My presentation will be made:

☐ as an individual

Address:

☐ on behalf of the following organisation

Daytime Telephone:

.....
(Please attach background information on this organisation.)

After Hours Telephone:

Email:

My preferred presentation time would be:

Fax:

☐ early morning

☐ mid morning

Hearing Location:

☐ early afternoon

☐ mid afternoon

Hearing Date:

☐ early evening

Summary of Main Points to be Made

In the time available at hearings the Research Management Group wishes to hear from the widest possible range of views and experiences. In order to make this possible, please provide a summary of the main points which your presentation will make. It will be helpful if you can relate these points to the research project's four key questions (listed below). Alternatively, you may indicate that you wish to speak to your written submission (if applicable). Please add extra pages if necessary.

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Confidentiality

The Research Management Group will include in its final report on this project a list of presentations made at hearings. It may also refer to presentations in the text of the report and other publications. **If you do not want your presentation or any part of it to be used in any one of these ways please indicate this clearly.**

- ☐ Please do not include my/our presentation in the list of presentations in the research report or any other publication.
- ☐ Please do not refer to my/our presentation in any way that identifies me/us in the research report or any other publication.

I/we have read the Hearing Procedures Guide and agree to follow these procedures if my/our application is successful and I/we are invited to make a presentation.

.....
(signature) (date)

**If you have any queries please contact Sandie Cornish at:
BCJDP Secretariat, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney NSW 2060
Tel: 02 9956 5800 Fax: 02 9956 5782 Email: caritas@mpx.com.au**

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APPENDIX 11

Public Hearings

	Canberra	13 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Sharon McManus	
Chair:	Ms Anne Cummins	
Panel:	Auxiliary Bishop P Power (for Archbishop F Carroll), Sr Margaret Malone sgs, Dr Michael Costigan and Ms Sandie Cornish	
Speakers:	Ann Nugent Andrea de Carvalho Dionne Smith Sr Barbara Murray rsm for the Sisters of Mercy, Goulburn Marie Louise Uhr for the OCW Judith Kedge Jenny Kanaley, Kaye Ryan, Allison Byrne and Trish Skinner Fr Theodore Gillian ofm Paul and Pam Kelloway Miss Louise Donohue Gabrielle Jarvis Rita Joseph Alma Armstrong	
Papers:	Julie Maher Prof. John Warhurst Patricia O'Leary	
	Newcastle	14 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Pauline Boyce	
Chair:	Margo Nancarrow, Helen Hemphill and Helen Belcher (standby Pat Bannister)	
Panel:	Bishop K Manning, Sandie Cornish, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs, Sr Patricia Egan and Fr Bill Burston (for Bishop M Malone)	
Speakers:	Mrs Christine Cavenagh Josie O'Donnell Jeanne McPherson Mrs Mary Smith Geraldine O'Connor Dr Deirdre Little Mrs Joan Hart Cath Anderton for WATAC Mrs Margaret Young, Mrs Pat Teszke and Miss Chris Szumila Sr Ellen Royan Judith Massey	
Papers:	Francis X McDonald	
	Sydney	15 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Mary Robinson	
Chair:	Catherine Harris	
Panel:	Cardinal Clancy, Bishop K Manning, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs, Prof. Peter Carpenter and Ms Sandie Cornish	
Speakers:	Veronica Apap Adrienne Serle Elizabeth Ellesmere Joanne Thye Joan Carolan, Pat Morrissey and Esther Doyle for the Catholic Women's League Jan Punch for a Neutral Bay Prayer Group Lucy O'Connell Elizabeth Loneragan Mrs F Fisher	

Papers: Colleen O'Sullivan, Elizabeth and Stephen for St Columba's Parish
 Vicki Usherwood for the Parramatta Commission for Justice and Peace
 Prof. and Mrs Adeloju
 Rev. Christopher Toohey and Sr Caroline Ryan rsm for the Catholic
 Adult Education Centre
 Sr M Elizabeth Foley for the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt
 Sisters of Mary

Sydney

16 May 1997

Local Organiser: Mary Robinson
Chair: Catherine Harris
Panel: Cardinal Clancy, Bishop Manning, Sr Philomena Tiernan, Prof. Peter
 Carpenter and Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Gail Wallace for a group
 Margaret Hinchey
 Sister Jemma Pearson and Fr John Jago for St Patrick's Pastoral Team
 Rosemary Kinne
 Mrs Patricia Charter
 Ms Maureen Isa
 Ms Mary Chicherio
 Elizabeth Sheppard for the Solo Parents' Ministry

Sydney

17 May 1997

Local Organiser: Mary Robinson
Chair: Catherine Harris
Panel: Auxiliary Bishop D Cremin (for Cardinal Clancy), Ms Sandie
 Cornish, Dr Michael Costigan and Sr Sonia Wagner sgs
Speakers: Bernice Moore and Trish Hindmarsh for WATAC
 Philippa O'Dowd
 Helen Blayney
 Paulette Marsh
 Barbara Campbell
 Dr Sophie McGrath and Dr Anne O'Brien
 Mary Williams
 Irene O'Connell
 Catherine Jones and Josefina Brockman for an informal group
 Richard See for the Secular Franciscan Order

Wollongong

20 May 1997

Local Organiser: Annmarie de Battista
Chair: Ms Kathleen McCormack
Panel: Bishop P Wilson, Sr Philomena Tiernan, Dr Michael Costigan
 and Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Prof. Jennifer Seberry
 Suzanne Vernon
 Mary Medley
 Mrs Elizabeth Reeves
 Mrs Anne Barrow
 Mrs Marie Morrissey
 Mrs Margaret Nicholson
 Bernadette Harrigan
 Mrs Roslind Lambert
 Jo Platt
 Anne Curtis, Di Burke, Anne McGrath rscs, Elizabeth Cain, Mary
 Wyatt and Jan Ryan for the Adult Faith Development Support Group
 Janet Morrissey
 Mrs Margaret Bartley for CWL
 Sheila Pike

Wagga Wagga

21 May 1997

Local Organiser: Ann Dewar
Chair: Mary Helen Martens

Panel: Bishop W Brennan, Dr Michael Costigan, Sr Philomena Tiernan and Ms Sandie Cornish

Speakers: Miss Katherine Madden
Margaret Houen
Mrs Anne O'Shea
Ms Jean Mulholland and Mrs Bernadette Dore
Dr Theo Verbeek
Mrs Effie Ray and Sr Frances Browne ibvm
Nanette Tehan and Mary McPhee
Mrs Ellen Falk
Mrs Jenny Madden
Sr Mary Augustine Lane
Mrs Barbara Chigwidden for the Australian Family Association
Miss Annette Power
Mrs Mary Crimmins
Sheila Quonoey for a group of 6
Helen Gray
Mrs Robin Nugent for the Legion of Mary

Papers: Clare Power
Sheila Hill

Bathurst

22 May 1997

Local Organiser: Fr Paul Devitt

Chair: Sr Kath Luchetti rsj

Panel: Bishop P Dougherty, Sr Patricia Powell, Dr Marie Macdonald and Dr Michael Costigan

Speakers: Sr Paula Smith rsm
Sr Therese Patterson and Joan New for St Michael's Parish
Sr Mary Trainor rsm
Sr Pat Linnane rsm
Mrs Barbara Steain
Pat Spear
Margaret Jones
Mary Liesch for Bathurst Justice Group
Colleen Toole

Shepparton

23 May 1997

Local Organiser: Anna Tuck

Chair: Anna Tuck

Panel: Prof. Gabrielle McMullen, Prof. Peter Carpenter, Sr Patricia Davis op and Fr Peter Jeffrey (for Bishop N Daly)

Speakers: Denise Frederick
Des Ryan
Mrs Marie Manning
Selina Quilty for Christian Life Communities
Jane Munro
Mary-Jo Fortuna
Maragaret McKenzie
Mrs Beryl Tunzi
Mrs Patricia Frewen
Carmel Fitzgerald for Kennington Catholic Parish
Keiran and Beryl Klemm
Mary Halpin
Glen Avard
Mary Mulvahil
Bernie Hallinan
Maria M Bourne and Jane Brannigan
Loretta Schneider for St Michael's Parish

Papers: Audrey Ratcliffe

Ballarat		26 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Sr Rosemary Joyce	
Chair:	Prof. Gabrielle McMullen	
Panel:	Bishop R Mulkearns, Sr Rose Marie Glennon, Dr Marie Macdonald and Prof. Peter Carpenter	
Speakers:	Mrs Jo Russell Fr Kevin Murphy Sr Helen Forbes for Pastoral Associates Mrs Mary Jones Mrs Pat Albion for St Aloysius' Parish Mrs Maureen van der Linden Sheila Hill Sr Rita Hayes rsm and Sr Ann Forbes rsm for Sisters of Mercy Mrs Elsie Cunningham Mrs Brenda Finlayson for CWL Kevin Lenehan and Marita Adeney for the Diocesan Pastoral Council	
Hobart		27 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Mr Ray Tarvydas	
Chair:	Mrs Eris Smith	
Panel:	Archbishop E D'Arcy, Dr Marie Macdonald, Sr Barbara Duggan and Dr Michael Costigan	
Speakers:	Mrs Mary Campbell for CWL Mrs Joyce Cumming for CWL Mrs Anne Roach, Mrs Carmel Mulcahy and Mrs Carmel Cooper Dr Tim Pickford Dr Marianne Stevenson for the Come and See Network Frances Jackson Mrs Judy Redeker for Kettering Post-Renewal Group Mrs Kathleen Madden for OCW Clemencia Barnes Bernadette Hughes Ms Penny Edman for the Social Justice Commission, Archdiocese of Hobart Betty Roberts Mrs Bernarda Spitzer	
Sale		28 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Mrs Lorel Donnelly	
Chair:	Sr Bernadette Lynch	
Panel:	Bishop J Coffey, Sr Barbara Duggan, Ms Sandie Cornish and Mr Bob Dixon	
Speakers:	Ann Neville Hilarie Roseman Mrs Marie Barrett Sr Rose Duffy csb and Sr Margaret Blampeid for CEO Carmel Pittari Helena Phillips and Paul Denning for the Tanjarra Group Denise Cervasio Francis J Shaw	
Melbourne		29 May 1997
Local Organiser:	Maureen Glazebrook	
Chair:	Ms Liz Curran	
Panel:	Archbishop G Pell, Auxiliary Bishop P Connors, Mr Bob Dixon, Dr Marie Macdonald and Ms Sandie Cornish	
Speakers:	Ann McPhee for the Women's Issues Forum Mrs Phyllis Boyd for Endeavour Forum Mrs Norma Marot for the Western Plains Deanery	

Julie Douglas and Clare O'Callahan for Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish
 Eileen Stuart
 Mary Byrne rsc and Margaret Costigan rsc for the Sisters of
 Charity Justice Group
 Margaret Cassidy csb for the Leaders of Religious Congregations –
 Victoria
 Yvonne Harte rsj
 Mrs Frances Paroissien for the Women of St Francis Xavier Parish
 Melissa Brickell for Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Papers: Mrs Babette Francis for Endeavour Forum
 Pamela Lipscombe and Cynthia Hancke for the Bethany Group

Melbourne

30 May 1997

Local Organiser: Maureen Glazebrook
Chair: Mrs Marianne Crowe
Panel: Auxiliary Bishop P Connors, Ms Sandie Cornish, Mr Bob Dixon,
 Dr Marie Macdonald and Prof. Peter Carpenter
Speakers: Marie Tauro and Jan Coleman for Sacred Heart Church Women's Group
 Alice von Veenendaal-Wijffols
 Geraldine Croagh and Mary Helen Woods
 W C (Bill) Lucas
 Daphne Preston
 Joanne Richards for St Carthage's Parish
 Mary A Cameron for Pastoral Associates of Melbourne Archdiocese
 Srs Brenda Lynch and Catherine Kelly csb for the Justice
 in Ministry Group
 Rose Marie Prosser
 Ms Helen Campbell
 Catherine Bearsly for Holy Family Parish Women

Melbourne

31 May Saturday

Local Organiser: Maureen Glazebrook
Chair: Mrs Marianne Crowe
Panel: Auxiliary Bishop P Connors, Dr Marie Macdonald, Ms Sandie Cornish
 and Dr Michael Costigan
Speakers: Joan McDonald Kerr and Mary O'Conner for The Silenced Mothers
 Bernadette Doyle for Women of St Paul Apostle Parish
 Mary Ann Dooley for Marianna Community
 Sr Denise Desmarchelier IBVM for the Loreto Sisters Women's
 Committee
 Sr Margaret Brown
 Mrs Patricia McDonald for the Focolare Movement
 Pat McBurney for the CPFC Group and Tr Group – Noble Park
 Johanna Hoare van Berkel
 Mrs Anne Brolly
 Mary Williams for WATAC
 Christine Kennedy
 Sr Margaret Brown

Brisbane

5 June 1997

Local Organiser: Annette Arnold
Chair: Ms Maria Wagner
Panel: Archbishop J Bathersby, Prof. Gabrielle McMullen, Ms Sandie Cornish
 and Sr Margaret Malone sgs
Speakers: Helen Colegrove for a Circle of Queensland Women and Men
 Pam Edmonds
 Veronica Box for CWL
 Chris Christensen
 Douglas Hawthorne
 Mrs Pat Mullins
 Mother Kerry Burns

Papers:	Joyce M Bostock Kari Hatherell for a Group of Women from Several Parishes Ms Elizabeth Waltham
	Elaine Wainwright and Coralie Kingston for a Circle of Queensland Women
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Brisbane 6 June 1997	
Local Organiser:	Annette Arnold
Chair:	Mrs Jill Gowdie
Panel:	Archbishop J Bathersby, Prof. Gabrielle McMullen, Ms Sandie Cornish and Sr Margaret Malone sgs
Speakers:	M & M Kehoe Barbara Hays Karin Chai and Mary Farmer for Our Lady of the Rosary Parish Mrs Kathleen Gordon Mrs Rosemary Murray Judy Anderson Mrs Nola McKenzie Mrs Patti Smith and Miss Cecelia Murray for the Australian Family Association Miss Leanne La-Verty, Mrs Pam Foale, Mrs Carol McCormick and Mrs Joan Hearn Steve Mollison Angela Carden Jennifer Lysiuk and Heidi Hammersworth for Women of Spirit – St Bernardine's Parish
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Brisbane 7 June 1997	
Local Organiser:	Annette Arnold
Chair:	Prof. Mary Sheehan
Panel:	Archbishop J Bathersby, Ms Sandie Cornish, Sr Margaret Malone and Sr Jill McCorquerdale sgs
Speakers:	Ellen Holdsworth Bernice Kerr rsm Margaret Mazzer for WATAC Mrs Monica Hartley Ms Cecily Clayton and John Blacow for OCW Patricia Cannard Mike and Pam Foale for the Passionist Family Group Movement Suzanne Wynard Margaret Moore Mrs Stephanie McClarty for the Legion of Mary Marlette Black and Liz Jordan for a Circle of Queensland Women
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Toowoomba 11 June 1997	
Local Organiser:	Sr Frances Flint
Chair:	Mrs Bernice Watson
Panel:	Bishop W Morris, Sr Philomena Tiernan, Ms Sandie Cornish and Dr Marie Macdonald
Speakers:	Jennifer Goodwin Donna Purcell Miss Maureen Gilmartin Monica Cavanagh for Women in Leadership Roles in Diocesan Agencies Maria Farrell for Suzanne Stephen Mrs Jeanette Joseph Elizabeth Flamsteed Maragaret Nolan and Sr Francis Flint for CWL Mrs Esther Condon Marlene Watson in Consultation with other Aboriginal Women Bernadette McLennon

Mrs Marion Bernier
 Eileen Luthi
 Alan Birchley
 Chris Johnson
 Corrie van den Bosch
 Mrs Iris Morris for Care and Concern – Holy Name Parish
 Mrs M Power for a Local Prayer Group
 Marie Lossberg

Rockhampton

12 June 1997

Local Organiser: Jan Mussig
Chair: Mrs Carmel Duffy
Panel: Bishop B Heenan, Ms Sandie Cornish and Dr Marie Macdonald
Speakers: Julianne Webb
 Diane Shore and Kate Graham for a Small Christian Group
 Corinnie Driscoll
 Carmel Byrne
 Helen McConville
 Patricia Rose Hughes
 Janette Dobson for a Group of Women
 Therese McCabe for the Rockhampton Social Justice Action Group
 Mrs Merle Ross
 Michelle Welsh and Teresa Anderson for Concerned Catholics
 Toni Waters, Jacinta Cain, Carolyn Ost, Leonie Baldock, Geraldine
 Dyer, Fiona Baker and Annette Rowe
 Heather Toby and Margaret for AICC

Townsville

14 June 1997

Local Organiser: Mrs Kathy Day
Chair: Mrs Kathy Day
Panel: Bishop R Benjamin, Sr Maree Geddes, Mrs Kathy Day and
 Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Mrs Liz Ryan and Mrs Joan Neal for CEO
 Mrs Monica M Terry
 Jean Tanzer for CWL
 Mary Lowcock for the Pastoral Planning Commission
 Theresa Toomey
 Joanne Connor for Ryan Catholic Community School
 Suzie Dormer for the Women's Wisdom Spirituality Group
 Mrs Jennifer O'Malley
 Theresa Bidgood
 Sharon Lovin
 Sheila Hawthorne and friends

Adelaide

18 June 1997

Local Organiser: Chris Keating
Chair: Jennifer Harvey and Joan Brewer
Panel: Archbishop L Faulkner, Dr Marie Macdonald, Dr Michael Costigan
 and Sr Patricia Davis op
Speakers: Moira Deslandes
 Anne Rhodes and Karen Edwards for BECs of Southern Adelaide
 Kate Conley and Fr Tiernan Doherty for Prison Chaplains
 Fr Maurice Shinnick for Acceptance Adelaide
 Suzanne O'Dwyer
 Mrs Rosemary Farnden
 Barbara Garnaut
 Catherine Grant and Veronica O'Connell for the Association of
 Catholic Women Doctors
 Patsy Ferrier
 Pauline Schooling
 Dr Louise Howell

Mrs Sylvia Pope
Miss J Slattery
Peter Gaffney
Michael Joll
Maria Pellizzari
Miss Betty Thomlinson
Mrs K Gaffney

Adelaide

19 June 1997

Local Organiser: Chris Keating
Chair: Jennifer Harvey (am) and Pauline Verity (pm)
Panel: Archbishop L Faulkner, Dr Marie Macdonald, Sr Patricia Davis op
and Dr Michael Costigan
Speakers: Bryan Fernandez
Miriam Howe and friends for the Rosary Playgroup
Dr Margaret O'Toole, Lyn Vonderboch and Sr Bernadette Kiley op
for WATAC
Mr and Mrs Al and Moira Migliore
Mrs Rosemary Quinn
Sue Olsen
Madeline Regan, Helen O'Brien and Jennifer Callanan for
Women in the CEO
Sr Jan Barnett and Kateri Duke for the Sisters of St Joseph
Susan Sullivan and Angela Molony op for Sophia
Marguerite Wills
Frances Greenslade
Mrs D M Christine Wills
Margaret Dickson and Sr Liz Murphy for Australian Catholic
Hospital Chaplains Association
Jane McNamara

Adelaide

20 June 1997

Local Organiser: Chris Keating
Chair: Joan Brewer
Panel: Fr David Cappel (for Archbishop Faulkner), Dr Marie Macdonald,
Sr Patricia Davis op and Dr Michael Costigan
Speakers: Rosemary Canavan
Sr Roberta Hackendorf
Ms Anne-Marie Coughlin
Mrs Dorothy A Pierce for Endeavour Forum
Mrs Cathy Taggart
Eva Cooper and Betty Back for CWL
Catherine Seward
Sr Maureen O'Connell op and Sr Alice Foley for the Conference
of Congregational Leaders
Angela Conway
Beverley Willason
Megan Hughes and Sharon Doyle for a Small Community Group
Vicki White and Josephine Armour for the Cabra Chapel Community
Mary Ann Bugeja
Sr Candida De Angelis
Mrs Christine McCabe
Dawn Sullivan, Pat Hehir, Debbie Ripley and Robin Malone for a
Group of Pastoral Associates
Sr Maureen O'Connell op for the Dominican Sisters
Sue Williams
Sr Sheila McCreanor rsj for Sr Josephine Huppertz rsj for the Sisters of
St Joseph of Port Pirie
Mr Terry McDevitt
Mrs Mary Hookway

Papers: Marie Welsh
Mrs Irena Nagy for Families For The Faith
Joan Van der Sman

Alice Springs 11 July 1997

Local Organiser: Fr Brian Healey
Chair: Mrs Mary Miles
Panel: Bishop E Collins, Sr Maureen Davis fmm and Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Ms Michele Castagna, Mrs Patricia Sheil and Mrs Sandy O'Donohue
for a Group of Parishioners
Dr John Boffa
Ms Catherine Mary Dooley
Margaret Gaff for WATAC
Joyce Scott
Mary Prunte
Papers: Br Maurice Bambridge

Darwin 12 July 1997

Local Organiser: Ms Chris Glass
Chair: Ms Patricia Davies
Panel: Bishop E Collins, Fr Leary, Ms Sandie Cornish and Sr Sonia Wagner sgs
Speakers: Chris Fox and Sr Jan Niall ibvm for WATAC
Rae Quigley for OCW
Ms Maggie Travers for some Women in the Nhulunbuy Parish
Noel & Carol Muller for Neo-Catechumenal Way
Margaret Palmer for Sophia
Rebecca Dunn
Srs Mary Meade rsm and Trudy Kerr rsm (read by Rae Quigley)
Catherine Patterson and friends
Papers: Leah Crockford

Broome 14 July 1997

Local Organiser: Sr Leonie Collins
Panel: Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Colleen Dunn
Sr Anne Boland rsj
Rosemary Breen
Sr Clare Ahern rsj for the Sisters of St Joseph

Geraldton 16 July 1997

Local Organiser: Sr Therese Denny
Chair: Sr Leonie Mayne
Panel: Fr Michael Morrissey (for Bishop J Bianchini), Sr Sonia Wagner sgs,
Ms Sandie Cornish and Dr Michael Costigan
Speakers: Sr Therese Denny sgs for the Centre for Parish Mission and Life
Catherine Jones for Mt Magnet Parish
Sr Robyn Brady
Mrs Anne Taylor for Seven Geraldton Women
Sr Mary Ryan op

Perth 18 July 1997

Local Organiser: Jane Pilkington
Chair: Catherine Kovesi-Killerry (University of Notre Dame)
Panel: Archbishop B Hickey, Bishop R Healy, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs,
Ms Sandie Cornish and Dr Michael Costigan
Speakers: Sr Helen Lombard sgs
Mary Therese Fancote
Patricia Halligan
Carla Lynx and friends for Young Christian Students
Mrs Rita Ryan

Johanna Bowen
 Sharon Balsarini
 Mrs Georgie Bruce-Smith for CWL
 Mrs Janet Wallace for Ave International
 Mandy Connor for a Kalgoorlie Group
 Gertrude Aquilina
 Christina Jack
 Sandra Waters for the Voice of the Harvest Prayer Group
 Mrs Jenny Worthy
 Marie Srdaren and Denise Den Bahler
 Michael Ryan for the Neocatechumenal Communities of St Gerard's
 Mrs Yolanda Nardizzi for the Marian Movement
 Margaret Bruce (for WATAC)
 Fr Pat Cunningham for the Acolyte Ministry
 Gabrielle Whiteley and Clare O'Leary for the Women's
 Theology Group
Papers: Mrs Margaret O'Hagan
 Helen Keogh and Kath Davey for St Francis Xavier Parish
 Mrs Janet Kovesi-Watt
 Mrs Lisa Brick for the Billings Ovulation Method Centres of Perth
 Mrs Bronwyn Martin
 Mrs Pat Meek

	Perth	19 July 1997
Local Organiser:	Jane Pilkington	
Chair:	Liz Crowe	
Panel:	Archbishop B Hickey, Bishop R Healy, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs, Ms Sandie Cornish and Dr Michael Costigan	
Speakers:	Pauline Matthys Megan Roberts Cheryl Vernon for University of Notre Dame Margaret McCabe Goodacre Sharon Bunter Fr Gerald Brennan SJ, Catherine Stokes and Monique Condon for the UWA Catholic Society Elizabeth Jones Jenny Knight Deborah Talbot for the Schoenstatt Movement Catherine Kehoe Mrs P Freedman Mrs Janet Torrens Anne Marie Langden for the Catholic Crisis Pregnancy Service Miss M Pat Ryan Mrs Thea Hackett Bradley J Prentis for Knights of the Southern Cross Oscar Mate Anne Tormey for the Sisters of Mercy Ms Agnes Misztal Marilana Scarfe Ms Monique Clarke Dionne Mattys	

	Bunbury	22 July 1997
Local Organiser:	Fr Ewan Pemberthy	
Chair:	Mrs Patricia Good	
Panel:	Bishop P Quinn, Sr Sonia Wagner sgs, Dr Michael Costigan and Ms Sandie Cornish	
Speakers:	Mrs Elly Moir Evelyn Brand Jo Camilleri, Jan Shugg and Maggie Kennedy-Piper for St Joseph's Parish Mrs Kathleen Wood	

Sr Mary Scanlon
 Mrs Josephine Maguire and Helen Ewars
 Sr Glenys Yeoman for the Monday Women's Group
 Libby Marshall for a Group from St Mary's Parish
 Marjorie Holmes and Mrs Joan Downes for CWL
 Srs Frances Maguire and Kathleen Hitchcock rsj for the Sisters
 of St Joseph
 Claire Walsh and Catherine Twaddle
 Deborah Robertson
 Roger Liebmann
Papers: Nancye Perkins and Jeanne Allen

Armiddle

24 July 1997

Local Organiser: Rosemary Pittman and Ann Fittler
Chair: Shirley Burke
Panel: Bishop K Manning, Sr Mary Britt op, Dr Michael Costigan and
 Ms Sandie Cornish
Speakers: Sr Judith Carney for the Congregational Councillors of the
 Sisters of Mercy
 Mrs Wendy McCarthy
 Mrs Margaret Parkinson for CWL
 Sr Veronica Shinnick and Pauline Cain for Aboriginal Catholic
 Women and Pius X Catholic Aboriginal Committee
 Mrs Jean Latham for CWL
 Maureen Armitage for CWL
 Mrs Audrey Marsh CWL
 Mrs B Legge for St Nicholas' Catechists
 Sr Annette Dooley
 Mrs B Mackie for CWL
 Janette Gall
 Mrs Colleen Mercovich
 Margaret Wales for CWL
 Sr Gemma Burke for the Association of Pastoral Associates
 Mrs Antonia Feitz
 Margaret Hanna
 Anna Silvas
 Carol McHugh
Papers: Mrs Lydia Scott

Nine participants requested that their presentations not be included in this list of presentations in the research report or any other publication.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the list of participants presented above. The authors and publisher would be pleased to rectify any inaccuracy.

APPENDIX 12

National Board of Catholic Women: Consultative Body to Bishops Conference of England and Wales

The following report is based on a meeting with Mrs Celia Capstick, Immediate Past President, National Board of Catholic Women: Consultative Body to Bishops Conference of England and Wales, held on 21 August 1998, as part of an unofficial visit to Australia.

Present: Bishop Manning, Dr Michael Costigan, Dr Marie Macdonald

1. Introduction

As part of the data collection from the Public Hearings and the Written Submissions, the Research Management Group noted that there were frequent suggestions about the establishment of a National Board of Catholic Women to advise the Australian Bishops' Conference similar to the National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales. In order to learn more about the nature and purpose of the Board, three members of the Research Management Group met with Mrs Celia Capstick, Immediate Past President of the Board, on 21 August 1998, during an unofficial visit to Australia.

2. Background to and composition of the National Board of Catholic Women

The National Board of Catholic Women dates back to 1938, when three founder members, Catholic Women's League, Union of Catholic Mothers and the now defunct Catholic Association of Girls' Organisations, met to co-ordinate their activities at the request of the Bishops of England and Wales. Over the years, 31 women's organisations (and some mixed) have joined the Board together with 22 diocesan links* making it a fully representative body for Catholic women. In 1983 the newly-structured Bishops' Conference of England and Wales appointed the National Board of Catholic Women as a consultative body to the Bishops' Conference. In 1998 the NBCW celebrates 60 years of its existence. The Executive Committee of the Board is made up of 22 members. Bishop Malone currently holds the position of Episcopal Liaison. There is a part-time Development Officer who is also funded by the National Catholic fund.

* Each diocesan bishop supports a woman who networks with the women in the diocese, especially with those not in organisations.

3. Purpose

The main purpose of the Board is to provide a representative voice for women in the Catholic Church of England and Wales. The following are the official terms of reference:

It is a FORUM for discussing the views and concerns of Catholic women. It does this by inviting its constituent members from national Catholic organisations and from dioceses to send representatives to:

- attend meetings three times a year
- attend the study day and the AGM
- participate in standing committees to address specific issues
- contribute to and publicise 'Catholic Woman' (the NBCW newspaper).

It is a CO-ORDINATING BODY disseminating information to its members about:

- the activities of other members
- the other bodies on which the National Board of Catholic Women is represented
- World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO).

It is a CONSULTATIVE BODY to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (BC), informing it of the views and concerns of Catholic women by means of:

- reporting to the Low Week meeting of the Bishops' Conference
- discussing the main activities with the President of the Bishops' Conference during the Low Week meeting
- providing information to the Bishops' Conference and its standing committees.

It is a REPRESENTATIVE BODY providing a voice for Catholic women on other bodies:

- Women's National Commission
- National Council of Women
- Women's Inter-Church Council
- Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

4. Activities of the Board

The Board meets four times each year and the Executive also meets four times annually. In relation to the Terms of Reference, the Board has produced a number of publications, a six-monthly newspaper, *Catholic Woman*, which started in 1992 with a current circulation of approximately 12,000, and has organised two National Conferences of Catholic Women in 1995 and 1997 besides many other study days and initiatives. The Bishops consult the Board on a range of issues. The Board is assisted by a Development Officer, who works in a part-time capacity. Activities of the Board are conducted through the following standing committees:

- Marriage and Family Committee
- Social Responsibility Committee
- International Committee
- Women in the Church Committee
- Education Committee
- Ecumenical Committee
- Communications Committee
- Bio-ethics Committee (new)

5. Particular challenges

As a forum for the exchange of views and the sharing of concerns, the need for respectful listening to the diversity of views has been a constant challenge. The importance of discussing common views and concerns of Catholic women without being single issue-oriented was noted as one aspect of this challenge.

6. Reporting procedures

Once annually, a meeting is held with the Cardinal, with Bishop Malone, the President of the Board and three or four Board members. Reporting to the Bishops' Conference is conducted through Bishop Malone who attends all full Board meetings. The Annual Report is circulated to all Bishops.

7. Representation on other bodies

Governmental/non-denominational

- a. National Council of Women on both the Council and Special Committees
- b. Women's National Commission
- c. National Alliance Women's Organisations
- d. Credit Action

Catholic

- a. National Council of Lay Associations
- b. CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)
- c. Catholic Union
- d. Bishops' Conference round table on Urban Poverty

Ecumenical

- a. Council of Churches of Britain & Ireland
- b. Churches together in England
- c. Consortium of Christian Organisations
- d. Mothers' Union Media Awareness Project
- e. Women's Inter-Church Council
- f. Women's World Day of Prayer

International links are developed through bodies such as:

- a. World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations
- b. Accredited Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) status at two UN Conferences: Beijing Conference on Women 1995 and Istanbul Conference on Cities (Habitat 11) 1996
- c. Second European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz, Austria 1997
- d. Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, Madrid 1998

8. Future directions

A review of the structure of the Bishops' Conference, including the role of the consultative Bodies and other agencies, is currently being undertaken (1998) by a Bishops' committee for submission to the Bishops' Conference.

APPENDIX 13

Archdiocese of Brisbane Women's Participation in the Life of the Archdiocese: Present Roles and Future Directions

The following report is based on interviews conducted by the Project Coordinator on Tuesday 21 July 1998 with:

- Professor Mary Sheehan, Chair, and Mrs Barbara Hays, Executive Secretary/Project Officer of the Women's Taskgroup, at the School of Social Science, Queensland University of Technology, Carseldine from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
- Most Rev. J. A. Bathersby, Archbishop of Brisbane, at 'Wynberg', New Farm from 1.30 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

1. Introduction

In the Australian Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Brisbane has undertaken unique initiatives to recognise and promote the role of women. The current Archbishop of Brisbane, Most Rev. J. A. Bathersby, explains that these initiatives are an attempt to recognise and include women as part of the decision-making processes at the various levels of parish, vicariate and the archdiocesan management structure. As a result, the Archbishop believes that the Church as a whole will be enriched.

2. Background to the Archbishop's Women's Taskgroup

Initiatives concerning the promotion of the participation of women originate from the following proposal and action from Archdiocesan Assembly of August 1989:

Proposal No. 15 – Equal Ministry Opportunities for Women

This Assembly recommends to the Archbishop that at every level in the Archdiocese there be promotion and education concerning full partnership in ministry, ensuring that women have equal opportunity to be represented in Parish and Diocesan programmes, structures and ministries, including decision-making and pastoral formation.

Action:

This proposal has been recognised as requiring special attention and the Archbishop is considering the appointment of a woman to head up a task force to investigate how the promotion and education called for in the proposal might be achieved.

In order to further the proposal and recommended action, the Archbishop appointed a woman's adviser, Mrs Agnes Whiten, to offer a woman's perspective, to attend the Bishops' weekly meeting and be present for most decisions. This position was held from 1993 to 1996 in a full-time capacity. Archbishop Bathersby reported that the appointment was most successful in that Mrs Whiten promoted the Archbishop's desire to recognise and promote the role of women. However, by the end of the term of appointment, the limitations of the role became clear. The concept was seen to be inadequate to achieve the purpose of women's involvement at the various levels where decisions were made. As it became evident that decision-making did not simply occur at the meeting of Bishops but at various levels in the Archdiocesan structure, it was considered more effective to establish a taskforce to recommend processes for decision-making in the overall life of the Archdiocese. Such a taskforce might try to draw on women not normally involved and yet who are highly talented people with a range of qualities, skills and backgrounds to contribute to the Archdiocese. To achieve this goal, a Taskgroup was established which commenced formally in April 1997, chaired by Professor Mary Sheehan with Barbara Hayes as the Executive Secretary/Project Officer. Funding is provided for the Executive Secretary and administrative costs.

3. Purpose of Taskgroup

The overall purpose of this information-gathering group is to speak with as many women as possible concerning the involvement of women in decision-making in the life of the Archdiocese of Brisbane as set out in the following terms of reference:

Terms of Reference

The Taskgroup has been established in order to examine and promote the participation of women in all levels of archdiocesan administration and church life. The Taskgroup will consider critically and report interalia to the Archbishop within a two year period on:

- i. The current roles of women in the Brisbane Archdiocese at both parish and vicariate levels of structure including:
 - identifying and publicising the current positions held by women;
 - examining the current structures of decision-making;
 - indicating the extent to which current structures are formalised to take into account the particular demands placed on women's time;
 - the systems and styles used in formal and informal decision-making.
- ii. The involvement of women in decision-making within parish life management structure, and areas in which women could be involved more fully.
- iii. The involvement of women in decision-making within the archdiocesan management structure, and areas in which women could be involved more fully.
- iv. The existence of any barriers to the participation of women in the decision-making processes in the archdiocese and strategies which could be developed or extended to overcome these.
- v. The extent to which there are women qualified in the wide variety of areas involved in church management who could be called upon to participate in and contribute to decision-making processes at the parish and vicariate levels.
- vi. Emerging opportunities for women's involvement in decision-making with particular reference to:
 - the Year of Great Jubilee;
 - any future gathering of the Archdiocese in synod or assembly;
 - collaboration with National Study of the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia;
 - emerging pastoral and organisational developments in the Archdiocese.
- vii. The roles women take in liturgical activities in the archdiocese with particular reference to:
 - the use of inclusive language;
 - women's participation in liturgical celebrations.

4. Composition of Taskgroup

In accordance with its nature as a professional investigative group, ten female members were selected according to the desired range of investigative skills. The group includes women involved in areas such as law; business administration; theology; administration of Catholic secondary girls' school; communications; tertiary education; ecumenism; indigenous issues and reconciliation; social science and social work. The experience of the Taskgroup is that this is a good composition for the committee to achieve its purpose to inquire and report in a non-partisan manner.

5. Activities of Taskgroup

The Taskgroup meets at least monthly. By July 1998, the three following activities had been undertaken:

- a. A survey of Catholic parishes and Church communities in the Brisbane Archdiocese. A questionnaire was designed which provided statistics relating to the activities in which women participated at parish level.
- b. Gathering of Women from a majority of parishes in the Archdiocese where women could discuss their views in relation to questions drawn from the terms of reference.
- c. Register of Women in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The purpose is to provide a list of women who will be considered for appointment to Boards, Panels, Committees and other groups to assist the Archbishop, Priests and Parishes to fulfil their administrative and pastoral tasks throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

6. Particular challenges

In the opportunities provided for women to share their views on the role of women in the Church, it was found that there was a spectrum of views ranging from women who wanted a

return to a pre-Vatican II Church to those who sought greater opportunity for women to be involved in various aspects of ministry. However, all groups wanted greater involvement in decision-making and were concerned when women were not represented on Parish Councils. It was noted that many conservative groups are the most vocal and passionate in their expression. The need to appreciate the diversity of views which exist among women concerning the role of women was identified as a particular pastoral challenge. To ensure opportunities for most women to express their views, respectful listening was seen to be critical.

7. Reporting procedures

Minutes of the meetings of the Taskgroup and results of the activities are distributed to Archbishop Bathersby; Bishop Putney, the Vicar of Church Life and Mission and Mr Geoff Gowdie, Chief Executive Officer of Church Life and Mission.

8. Relationship to national research project conducted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

With its specific focus on the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the work of this Taskgroup is independent but parallel to the Nation Project conducted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

9. Future directions

The Taskgroup intends to make recommendations based on their findings and suggest ways to monitor the particular targets. It is intended that recommendations will include budgetary implications. Within Archdiocesan structures, the Archbishop sees that the current number of women members on Parish Councils in the Archdiocese is most encouraging, as he believes the Parish Council provides a great vehicle for them to express their point of view. Concerning future directions, Archbishop Bathersby hopes that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council would be not just a forum for education, but also a Council for the debating of ideas and for decision-making. He hopes that such a Pastoral Council would include representatives from lay, clerical and religious groups.

APPENDIX 14

Archdiocese of Adelaide: Diocesan Pastoral Team

The following report is based on interviews conducted by the Project Coordinator on Friday 22 January 1999 with:

- Most Rev. Leonard Faulkner, Archbishop of Adelaide, and
 - Sr Meredith Evans rsm, member of the Diocesan Pastoral Team
- at the Diocesan Catholic Church Office from 8.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

1. Introduction

In the Australian Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Adelaide has undertaken a unique initiative to recognise and promote the role of women through the inclusion of women in their Diocesan Pastoral Team. The current Archbishop of Adelaide, Most Rev. Leonard Faulkner, explains that this initiative is an attempt to reflect both the vision and spirit of the Second Vatican Council in the Archdiocesan management structure. The Archbishop believes that the Church has benefited significantly from using the talents of both women and men in the leadership of the Archdiocese.

2. Background to the Diocesan Pastoral Team

The development of the Diocesan Pastoral Team is based on the theological vision of Church of the Second Vatican Council, in particular, *Lumen Gentium*, where the Church is presented as "a communion of life, love and truth" directed to the world. (L.G. 9) Within this vision of Church, each person has his/her part to play. It was felt that any effort to reflect this teaching in the structure of the Church required the involvement of both women and men in the governance of the Church. It was seen as theologically important to note that the ultimate responsibility for the local Church is with the Archbishop as shepherd of the Church.

The formation of the Diocesan Pastoral Team was also a response to the personal need of the Archbishop to have a Team with whom the Archbishop could work and share. The Team was also seen as a most effective way "to get the job done" in the administration and day-to-day work of implementing diocesan policy.

The Diocesan Pastoral Team arose as a result of a formal consultation process initiated by Archbishop Faulkner in the year of his installation in 1985. A diverse group of approximately forty people (ten priests, ten religious and twenty lay) made the following recommendation concerning its preferred option for leadership in the Archdiocese:

That the Archbishop appoint a small group or team of people including a Vicar General to work with him in the governance aspect of his pastoral care of the people of the Archdiocese.

That the membership of this group or team be open to Religious, Laymen, Laywomen and Priests.

This recommendation was widely distributed and discussed throughout the Archdiocese. Both the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council gave their support to this concept. Archbishop Faulkner explained that the positive response of these consultative groups was vitally important to him in the development of the Diocesan Pastoral Team. It was also emphasised that the formation of the Team would not have been possible but for the support for lay participation which had developed over the previous forty years in the Archdiocese by the two previous Archbishops.

3. Purpose of the Diocesan Pastoral Team

The Diocesan Pastoral Team defined its primary task and overall objectives in the following way:

The Diocesan Pastoral Team is responsible for the Governance of the Archdiocese of Adelaide. This means the pastoral care of the people and the administration of the Archdiocese.

The Diocesan Pastoral Team exercises its leadership by developing and holding the Diocesan Vision. The Team:

- *is attentive* to the voice of the people, their hopes and concerns as we face together the challenge of our world in all its complexity and chaos;
- *fosters conversations* which enhance each person's call to contribute to the shaping of our Church and our world – 'making a difference';
- *encourages and empowers* each person to accept responsibility at all levels;
- *invites* a fresh reading of the 'Signs of the Times' in the light of the Gospel;
- *enables* development and implementation of policy.

The life of the Diocesan Pastoral Team reflects the Vatican Council vision of the Church as the people of God and models partnership and collaborative ministry in the Archdiocese.

The implications of the objectives stated above mean that the Team is involved in and responsible for parishes, cultural communities and agencies in the provision of pastoral care. Examples of such agencies include: The Catholic Education Office; Centre Care – Catholic Family Services; Finance and Property; Liturgy, Justice and Peace; Pastoral Planning; Catholic Youth Services and ecumenical endeavours. Visitation of parishes by all members of the Team is given a high priority.

The Diocesan Pastoral Team is concerned with both the implementation of policies and providing visionary leadership. These two dimensions of the work are seen as interconnected.

4. Composition of the Team

As referred to in "Background to the Diocesan Pastoral Team", the formal consultation resulted in the recommendation that the preferred model of leadership was the appointment by the Archbishop of a small group or team of people including the Vicar General and that the membership of this group or team be open to religious, lay men, lay women and priests. In accordance with this recommendation, Archbishop Faulkner constituted the Diocesan Pastoral Team comprising a Team of four people: the Archbishop himself, the Vicar General, a Religious Sister and a lay woman. The appointments are for a five-year period and are full-time.

All members of the Team, both lay and religious, women and men, are seen as the senior executives of the Church and accepted as such by the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches. For example, the lay woman member of the Team has responsibility for ecumenical initiatives in the Archdiocese.

The formation of the Team is seen as critically important. For the effective functioning of the Team it was considered important that the Team members have an ability to relate to one another in a free and open manner and become friends through working together.

5. Activities of the Team

In order to achieve its purpose, the Team meets twice a week where members pray together, plan, review work and monitor the progress of the various responsibilities which each has undertaken. Twice a year, the Team meets for a more intensive and extended time to reflect upon the pastoral care of the Archdiocese and plan appropriate action, and to work out the particular areas of responsibility of individual team members. Pastoral planning for the future is an important priority and a prominent place is given to the development of Basic Ecclesial Communities.

The Team frequently calls upon expert help in different areas, such as management and planning, group process skills and theology. The Team meets regularly with Heads of Agencies and others who are involved in pastoral care and leadership in the Archdiocese. A major evaluation of the Diocesan Pastoral Team held in 1989 was most affirming and helpful. In order to avoid being totally concerned with administration, each Team member has some personal ministry to the poor.

6. Particular challenges

One of the challenges that has faced the Team over the years has been the development of appropriate processes for the appointment of new members to the Team such as advertising the position and interviewing prospective members. Another challenge concerns the need to attend to the inner life of the team through time given to reflection, prayer and reading together.

The form of governance associated with team ministry involves a particular culture which requires an openness to change. The Team encounters a variety of response to change including resistance. It is clear that a definite commitment to this form of governance was required by the Archbishop and priests. As women's participation was facilitated and their effectiveness recognised, a new working relationship emerged between members of the Team which required taking into account the ideas and experiences of others.

7. Reporting procedures

Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Team report to the Diocesan Pastoral Council bi-monthly on their activities and seek feedback about the effectiveness of their work. The Team also reports to the Council of Priests on a monthly basis.

It was noted that there is no national forum for people in diocesan leadership other than the Australian Bishops' Conference. While there are specialised forums for people involved in areas such as pastoral planning, adult education, justice and peace, liturgy and finance, there is no such forum for those involved in more wide ranging governance matters to come together.

8. Future directions

The major future directions for the Archdiocese have been developed over some time. These include a focus on the Visitation of parishes, cultural communities and Diocesan Offices by the Team, ongoing support for Basic Ecclesial Communities and Pastoral Planning for the future of Parishes.

APPENDIX 15

Targeted Discussion Groups Materials Sent To Potential Contacts



BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Leo XIII House
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney, NSW 2060

Telephone: (02) 9956 5800
Fax: (02) 9956 5782

27 February 1998

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>
<Company>
<Address>
<City> <State> <Postal Code>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>

In 1996 the Australian Catholic Bishops launched a research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia**. The information collected will serve as a basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning, and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues. In other words, it will help Church bodies to reflect on and promote the Gospel vision of the equal dignity of women and men, to discuss the issues in a constructive way, and to plan for the future. The Bishops are the main sponsors of the research and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes is also funding it. The Australian Catholic University is supporting the project by donating the time and expertise of some of its key staff.

Some background information about how the research is being conducted, and who is on the Research Management Group is enclosed.

After the public hearings concluded in July, the Research Management Group identified a number of groups whose voices had not been heard to a significant extent. They are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; refugee women; NESB/migrant communities; solo parents; women from lower socio-economic status groups; young women; clergy; lay men. For some of these groups techniques like written submissions and public hearings may have been too formal, intimidating or culturally inappropriate. We want to hear the views of all sectors of the Church. And so it was decided that some form of focus groups or group discussions be undertaken to collect information on the experiences, perceptions, beliefs and opinions of these groups in relation to the key research questions:

1. What are the various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Your help with group discussions or focus groups would be greatly appreciated.

A paper setting out the kind of group process the Research Management Group has in mind is enclosed. As you will see, there are several different kinds of roles, some of which may be combined. For instance, the community contact person could also be the person to lead the group discussion. Note takers might come from the group itself, or others might be asked to attend specifically to take notes. The note takers need not be from the Research Management Group.

The Research Management Group would be grateful if you could advise us if you would be willing, and available in the next few months, to volunteer to assist as the community contact and/or group leader for one of these groups. It would help in the planning of group work if you could also let us know what kind of support you would need from the Research Management Group, eg whether or not you would wish to have someone from the Research Management Group present to give some background on the project and/or to be note taker. In some cases the presence of members of the Research Management Group might inhibit group

members whereas in others it might be taken as a sign of the importance of the event – you will be in a better position to judge this than us.

If you would like more information about the research or what is being asked of you, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Marie Macdonald (Tel: 02 9956 5800), or Sr Sonia Wagner (Tel: 02 9566 2188).

Your sincerely

Dr Marie Macdonald
for the Research Management Group

Quick Response: Women's Research Group Work

Please post or fax to BCJDP Secretariat, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060
Fax: 02 9956 5782

Name:

Target Group: *(please circle)*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; refugee women;
NESB/migrant communities; solo parents; women from lower socio-economic status groups; young women; clergy; lay men

I am unable to help

yes/no

I will act as a community contact

yes/no

I will lead a group discussion and send in a report on the meeting

yes/no

I can find an appropriate group leader for the group discussion

yes/no

We can arrange for our own note taker

yes/no

We need someone to act as note taker

yes/no

We would like someone from the Research Management Group to be present

yes/no

I need more information, please call me on the following number:

Forums with Targeted Groups

Process Notes

The basic group process involves: (1) the gathering of a group; (2) an opening statement explaining how the discussion will be conducted and how it will be part of the research on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia; (3) the actual group discussion; and (4) sending a report on the meeting to the BCJDP Secretariat.

Volunteers will be needed to undertake several tasks. Some of these tasks can be combined and undertaken by the same person. The main tasks are: acting as the community contact person to gather a group and help find other people to take on different tasks; being the group leader who will lead the discussion and take responsibility for sending in a report on the meeting; and note takers who will take notes at the meeting.

The notes that follow set out the various elements of the group process and the details of each task.

GROUP PROCESS

1. Gather Group

- use a community contact person
- seek participants with a range of life experiences and views
- group size should be between 6 and 10 people
- make personal invitations to participants to take part
- specify a convenient time and choose a familiar/comfortable place

2. Opening Statement

- explanation of the project and how the group discussion will contribute to it, what will happen with the materials produced ie the notes taken will not be released
- explain role of each person – group leader, note takers, observers
- forum exercise not about making decisions or reaching consensus

- want to hear and understand the range of views and experiences present in the group
 - invite each participant to introduce themselves
- 3. Group Discussion**
- group leader(s) lead participants through semi-structured schedule of questions to focus the discussion (use secondary questions to flesh out the four key questions of the research project)
 - use prompts to probe for further information or the interaction between different views where necessary
 - close discussion with thanks
- 4. Report on the Meeting**
- review the notes taken by the note taker(s)
 - use the synthesis sheet provided to note the main points made by the group under each of the research questions
 - attach the raw notes taken during the meeting along with any other reflections that seem relevant
 - send the report to the BCJDP Secretariat

Tasks

- 1. Community Contact Person**
- identify potential participants within the target group, taking care to cover a range of experiences and views
 - invite people to take part in the forum
 - set the time and place for the forum taking into account the needs of participants
 - help group leader to ensure that the schedule of questions is expressed appropriately for use with the group (community contact may also be asked to be a group leader)
- 2. Group Leaders**
- set people at their ease
 - make opening statement (a draft statement which can be customised will be provided)
 - ensure that participants understand their task
 - use semi-structured schedule of questions to initiate discussion
 - keep the discussion focused on matters relevant to the research questions
 - ensure that the questions are expressed appropriately for the group concerned (liaise with community contact on this if the community contact is not the group leader)
 - prompt for further information
 - probe differing views and the interaction between them
 - bring discussion to a close at the agreed time
 - make sure that a report on the meeting is sent to the BCJDP Secretariat. Use the synthesis sheet provided, attach the note taker's notes and any other relevant material.
 - reiterate how the information will contribute to the wider project
 - thank people for their contribution
- 3. Note Takers**
- allocate each participant a letter or number
 - as far as possible, record verbatim what each one says noting the identifying letter/number of the speaker
 - supply notes to the group leader and assist in the preparation of a report on the meeting
- 4. Observers**
- members of the Research Management Group may be available to be present at the forums as observers if this is considered appropriate by the community contact and group leader
 - other appropriate Church personnel may also wish to observe particular forums if this is appropriate

Draft Opening Statement for Forums with Targeted Groups

Forums for the Bishops' Research on The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

This is an example of the kind of statement that the Group Leader could make at the commencement of a forum or group discussion.

Thank you for coming today to take part in this forum. I'm [name] and I'll be leading the discussion.

Forums such as this one are being held with different groups around Australia as part of a larger research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia**.

This research was commissioned by the Australian Catholic Bishops to collect information on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. This information will serve as a basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues. In other words, it will help Church bodies to reflect on and promote the Gospel vision of the equal dignity of women and men, to discuss the issues in a constructive way, and to plan for the future. The Bishops are the main sponsors of the research and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes is also funding it. The Australian Catholic University is supporting the project by donating the time and expertise of some of its key staff.

This research is being undertaken for the Bishops by the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, the Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. These groups are represented on the Research Management Group established to oversee the project.

The research itself centres around four key questions:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Our questions for discussion today will be based on these four questions.

Information is being collected in a number of ways.

Written submissions were invited last year and over 2500 submissions from all around the country were received. A detailed analysis of these submissions is now underway.

A questionnaire was included in the larger Church Life Survey which took place late last year and a statistically representative sample of some 8,000 people received the questionnaire on women in the Church. The data from this questionnaire is currently being processed.

Information on the proportion of people performing various roles and tasks in Catholic organisations who are women is being collected.

Hearings were recently held in 23 centres all around Australia.

These forums are targeting groups from whom the researchers haven't heard much through the other research instruments and inviting them to discuss the issues. We want to hear the views of all sectors of the Church.

Let me explain what we'll be doing today. In a minute I'll invite each of you to introduce yourself to the group and then I'll lead you through a series of questions for discussion. We want to hear and understand the different experiences and points of view on these questions that exist within the group. We want to see how these views interact – where they differ, where they are similar – but we aren't trying to have a debate or reach an agreement.

While we are having our discussion [names] will be taking notes. Try to ignore them. These notes will be used by the Research Management Group when they are writing up their report. Your names will not be linked with your opinions as the notes will use letters to identify speakers for example the record will show that "A" said such and such and "B" responded with this view. The notes will only be used for research purposes and will not be distributed. So please relax and feel free to speak honestly and openly. It is not helpful for the research for you to say what you think we want to hear or what you think the Bishops want to hear. We need your honest responses.

[Name(s)] is/are here today as observer(s). [Reason eg because Bishop S. would like to know more about what women in his diocese think about these matters; Michael is part of the Research Management Group which will eventually make a report to the Bishops]

The findings of this research will be reported to the Bishops and will be made available to the public after they have been presented to the Bishops. It is normal research practice to give the results to the body which commissioned the research before making them available to anyone else.

So, we're part of a big and exciting piece of research addressing matters that are of great concern to us as women. Let's introduce ourselves and then we'll move on to the questions for discussion.

Group Discussion Synthesis Sheet

Group: **Group Leader:**

Contact Address:

Question One: What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?

Question Two: What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?

Main Points

Main Points

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Question Three: What are barriers to women’s participation in the Church?

Question Four: What are some ways in which women’s participation in the Church can be increased?

Main Points

Main Points

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The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Background Information

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference's research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia** involves a variety of means of collecting data. Interested individuals and groups – whether female or male, young or old, actively involved in Church structures or not – are now being invited to apply to make a presentation at a hearing. You do not need to have made a written submission to be eligible to make a presentation at a hearing. Hearings are being held in all State and Territory capitals and in a number of regional centres. A full list of the times and locations of hearings is available from the BCJDP Secretariat.

1. Origins

Issues relating to women in the Catholic Church have been raised with the Bishops for some time. In 1993 the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP) agreed to explore the most appropriate way of responding to the different but related proposals before it at that time. Bishops Brennan and Manning were asked to undertake this work for the BCJDP. Bishop Manning carried this task after Bishop Brennan left the BCJDP in 1994 (Bishop Brennan has subsequently returned to the BCJDP as Chair, filling a casual vacancy).

Towards the end of 1993 the BCJDP Secretariat was asked to look at the possibility of a national survey on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, and the Australian Catholic University (ACU) was contacted regarding the possibility of collaboration on the project.

During 1994 a working group comprising representatives of the ACU, the Research Department of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC), and the BCJDP met with a view to providing the BCJDP with a detailed research proposal for consideration.

In November 1994 the ACBC received a report on the working group's progress. The general objective of the project was endorsed and the ACBC awaited a final research proposal with costing.

In April 1995 the ACBC received the working group's research proposal and approved funding for the project. The BCJDP was also to approach the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI) to back the project. The ACLRI agreed to provide a contribution towards the cost of the project.

The BCJDP subsequently asked the working group which had prepared the researching proposal to take on the role of Research Management Group (RMG). The ACLRI was also invited to nominate a representative on the RMG.

2. Members of the Research Management Group

The Research Management Group is comprised of: Bishop Kevin Manning (Convenor); Ms Sandie Cornish (BCJDP Secretariat and Secretary to the RMG); Dr Michael Costigan (BCJDP Executive Secretary); Professor Peter Carpenter (ACU); Dr Marie Macdonald (ACU); Sr Margaret Malone (ACU); Sr Sonia Wagner (ACLRI); Mr Bob Dixon (Project Officer, Church Life Survey).

19 MacKenzie Street • North Sydney • NSW • 2060 • Tel: 02 9956 5800 • Fax: 02 9956 5782

A research project conducted for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development & Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

3. General Objective

The general objective of the research project is to gather data on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. The information obtained is intended to provide a solid basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues.

The research project addresses four key questions:

1. What are various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia.
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

4. Research Instruments

Written Submissions

Written submissions addressing the project's key questions were invited from groups or individuals at the project's launch in August 1996, through Catholic and secular media, and through direct mailings. The invitation has been extended widely through parishes, women's groups, Church organisations and movements. Many thousands of sets of project materials have also been distributed by the BCJDP in response to requests. Over two thousand five hundred submissions from all over Australia were received by the end of December 1996. A wide range of views and experiences were reflected in the submissions.

Surveys

Five percent of the Church attenders in the Church Life Survey's statistical sample of parishes have received a questionnaire relating to the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. This will provide a statistically representative sample of approximately 8,000 church attenders. The Church Life Survey's survey of parish coordinators will also provide significant data about the roles of women in parishes.

A simple survey of Catholic organisations in the health, education and welfare areas, together with information from the Affirmative Action Agency, will provide background information on the proportion of people in various kinds of roles in Church organisations who are women. This survey has also been distributed to dioceses to respond to as organisations. The Catholic organisations' survey has yielded a modest return rate.

Hearings

Hearings are now being held in all State and Territory capital cities and several regional centres. The dates and locations of the hearings can be obtained from the BCJDP Secretariat.

Those wishing to make presentations to hearings need to apply to do so through the BCJDP Secretariat and will be required to submit a brief overview of the points to be covered. Appearances are by appointment only. The Research Management Group is selecting presenters to cover the widest possible range of views at each hearing.

Presentations are being heard by a panel comprising members of the Research Management Group and the local Bishop. The role of the panel is hear the presentations and to ask questions of clarification rather than cross examining presenters.

The hearings are open to members of the public to observe.

5. Research Report

It is expected that the Research Management Group will submit a research report to the ACBC by the end of 1998.

19 MacKenzie Street • North Sydney • NSW • 2060 • Tel: 02 9956 5800 • Fax: 02 9956 5782

A research project conducted for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference by: the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development & Peace; the Australian Catholic University; and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

APPENDIX 16

Contacts and Group Leaders of Targeted Discussion Groups

Solo Parents

Pat Tomlinson and Therese Fox
GROVEDALE VIC 3216

Sr Pat Dillon sgs
WEST DAPTO NSW 2530

Ms Anne-Maree Coughlin
GLENGOWRIE SA 5044

Young Women

Bishop K Manning
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Ms Lisa Armstrong and
Ms Esther McDonnell
Young Christian Workers
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Sr Maureen Minehan csb
Kildara Centre
MALVERN VIC 3144

Sr Mary Cresp rsj
ANNANDALE NSW 2038

Ms Melissa Phillips
Catholic Institute of Sydney
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Ukrainian Rite Women

Bishop Peter Stasiuk
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC
3051

Mrs Anna Parasyn
CHESTER HILL NSW 2162

Rev. Zdan and Mrs Olga
Kolomyjec
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Clergy

Fr Brian Gallagher msc
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
COOGEE NSW 2034

Mgr Ian Dempsey
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Fr Kevin Dance cp
The Passionists
ST IVES NSW 2075

Mr Robert Dixon
CLAYTON VIC 3196

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

Ms Joan Hendricks
Churches Together Aboriginal
Partnership
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Ms Melissa Brickell
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
THORNBURY VIC 3071

Bishop E Collins
DARWIN NT 0800

Fr Bryan Tiernan and
Ms Rose Narkle
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
PERTH WA 6840

Sr Clare Ahern rsj
BROOME WA 6724

Ms Barbra Aspelt
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
ERSKINEVILLE NSW 2041

Ms Maisie Cavanagh
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Sr Daphne McKeough rsm
ACLRI
ANNANDALE NSW 2038

Refugee Women

Sr Pat Dillon sgs
WEST DAPTO NSW 2350

Sr Judith Sippel rsj
Mary MacKillop College
WETHERILL PARK NSW 2164

Migrant Women and Women from Non English Speaking Backgrounds

Sr Gwen Bade sgs and
Mrs Jenny Hanks
St Gregory's Parish
QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

Sr Marietta Rae csb
CLAYTON VIC 3168

Sr Marie O'Kelly csb
CLAYTON VIC 3168

Women from Lower Socio- Economic Backgrounds

Sr Rita Hassett
Mamre
ST MARYS NSW 2760

Ms Bernice Moore
WATAC
SURREY HILLS NSW 2010

Ms Anne Dowling
GLENROY VIC 3046

Sr Mary Gregory sgs
CLAYMORE VIC 2559

Sr Mary Duffy sgs
PRESTON VIC 3072

Sr Frances Sheahan sgs
WOODRIDGE QLD 4114

Lay Men

Knights of the Southern Cross
AUSTRALIA

Bishop K Manning and
Ms Lucy O'Connell
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Mr Josh Puls
Marist Young Adult Ministry
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

Mr Edgar Trejo
NORTH FITZROY VIC 3068

Serra Club – Mr Ernie Mullens
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Mr Tony Neylan
RYDE NSW 2112

Fr Paul Devitt
ORANGE NSW 2800

Disabled Women and Their Carers

Sr Pat Kelly mss
Catholic Care
PIMLICO QLD 4812

Ms Margo Gibson
Ephpheta Centre
FLEMINGTON NSW 2140

Sr Mary Silk pbvm
Ephpheta Centre
FLEMINGTON NSW 2140

Mr Leonie Reid
Personal Advocacy Centre
MORLEY WA 6062

Mr Pat Higgins
SOUTH PERTH WA 6951

APPENDIX 17

Materials Sent to Catholic Organisations



BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Leo XIII House
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney, NSW 2060

Telephone: (02) 9956 5800
Fax: (02) 9956 5782

Dear

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) has requested that the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP) organise a research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia**. Bishop Kevin Manning, Secretary of the BCJDP and Chair of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, has oversight of the project. The research is being conducted for the ACBC by the BCJDP, the Australian Catholic University, and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

The general objective of the research is to gather information about the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. This information is intended to provide a solid basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues. The project will gather responses from both women and men, and will involve both those who are and those who are not actively involved in official Church structures. It will explore four key questions:

1. What are the various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church?
3. What are barriers to women's participation in the Church?
4. What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased?

Your organisation is invited to participate in the project in the following ways:

1. Women in Your Organisation

Please fill in the enclosed form, which requests information about the proportion of women performing various kinds of roles in your organisation, and return it to the BCJDP Secretariat (19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060) by 1 November 1996.

2. Written Submissions

A call for written submissions from groups or individuals will be made at the project's launch on 21 August 1996. Submissions should address one or more of the key research questions and be mailed to the BCJDP Secretariat by 1 December 1996.

A set of guidelines, including key questions to respond to, and the form in which material may be submitted, is available to any interested parties from Sandie Cornish at the BCJDP Secretariat.

You can assist the project by making a submission as an organisation and/or encouraging your staff to make submissions. We hope to advertise the call for submissions broadly in the community rather than simply through parish structures. Responses are sought from women and men, young and old, those who are and those who are not attached to parish or other Church structures.

3. Hearings

Hearings will be held in a number of capital cities and regional centres across all Australian States and Territories during 1997. When notice of the times and places of these hearings is given, your organisation can make an appointment to make a presentation. Individual staff members or groups of staff members could also be encouraged to do this. Presentations should address one or more of the key research questions. Those wishing to make presentations at hearings will need to arrange an appointment through the BCJDP Secretariat. Again, details of these hearings will be broadly publicised and information on the processes to be used will be available from the BCJDP Secretariat.

The project's Research Management Group (RMG), appointed by the BCJDP, includes representatives of the BCJDP Secretariat, the Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. Its members are: Bishop Kevin Manning (Convenor); Ms Sandie Cornish (BCJDP Secretariat and Secretary to the RMG); Dr Michael Costigan (BCJDP Executive Secretary); Professor Peter Carpenter (ACU); Dr Marie Macdonald (ACU); Sr Margaret Malone (ACU); Sr Sonia Wagner (ACLRI); and Mr Bob Dixon (Project Officer, National Church Life Survey).

This research project may not answer all possible questions about gender relationships within the Church in Australia, but it will be a pioneering piece of research which will help to open up the research agenda. As Pope John Paul II indicated in his letter to women, we have to examine the past with courage if we are to acknowledge the contributions of women and to remove injustice, exploitation and domination from gender relations within the Church. This research project should help us to find practical ways of renewing and expressing our commitment to the Gospel vision of the dignity of women and the mission of the Church. We welcome your interest in this research and urge you to take part in it and to pray for its success.

Your sincerely,

(Ms) Sandie Cornish

Assistant to (Dr) Michael Costigan, the Executive Secretary, BCJDP

Member of the Research Management Group for the research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia.**



The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia

Instructions for Catholic Organisations

This survey is part of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference's research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia.**

- Please answer the following questions in the space provided. You may continue your answers overleaf if necessary. Please attach additional information as appropriate.
- You may respond in point form or in complete sentences.
- Please send the completed form to: BCJDP Secretariat, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060 by 1 November 1996.

1. What proportion of people participating in your organisation in the following ways are women?

Please indicate below what proportion of people performing each kind of task are women eg 10% of those performing leadership or management roles in this organisation are women. If accurate figures are not available please provide an estimate. Any relevant attachments would be appreciated.

Roles & Tasks	% of people Performing these Roles and Tasks Who are women
leadership, management	
middle-management, professions, supervision, coordination	
para-professional, secretarial, administration,	
clerical/support, technical, trades eg horticulture,	
voluntary work, fundraising, 'caring'	
other categories	

2. What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in your organisation?

.....

.....
please continue overleaf if necessary

3. What are barriers, if any, to women's participation in your organisation?

.....

.....
please continue overleaf if necessary

4. What are some ways in which women's participation in your organisation could be increased?

.....

.....
please continue overleaf if necessary

APPENDIX 18

Letter Sent to Theological Institutes



BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Leo XIII House
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney, NSW 2060

Telephone: (02) 9956 5800
Fax: (02) 9956 5782

29 April 1998

Name and address of institution

As you may be aware, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) has requested the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP) to undertake a research project on **The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia**. Bishop Kevin Manning, Secretary of the BCJDP and Chair of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, has oversight of the project. The research is being conducted for the ACBC by the BCJDP, the Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. The Research Management Group aims to present the report of the project to the first plenary meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1999.

The general objective of the research project is to gather information about the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. This information is intended to provide a solid basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues. As part of the data for this project, the Research Management Group wishes to include accurate statistics about the number of men and women undertaking theological studies in Australian Catholic tertiary institutions.

Over the last twenty years, the number of women studying theology has greatly increased. In order to present an accurate picture, we would greatly appreciate your assistance in providing statistics concerning the number of men and women currently enrolled in Semester One 1998 in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses at your institution. We would be grateful if you would complete the attached form and return it to the address set out below by **June 1 1998**.

**BCJDP Secretariat
19 MacKenzie Street,
North Sydney
NSW 2060**

On behalf of the Research Management Group, I welcome your assistance in this important work. If you have any queries or concerns about this request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your sincerely,

Dr Marie Macdonald
Project Coordinator
'The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia'

APPENDIX 19

Survey of Women undertaking Theological Studies in Catholic Institutions 1998

There was 100% return rate from the Catholic institutions offering undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses in theology in 1998 as set out in *The Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools: Fact Book 1997-8-9*, pp. 1-23.

St. Francis Xavier Seminary
Adelaide College of Divinity Campus
34 Lipsett Terrace
Brooklyn Park
SA 5032
Rector: Rev. Dr Gregory Cooney CM

Catholic Institute of Sydney
99 Albert Road
Strathfield
NSW 2135
President: Rev. Dr. Neil Brown

Catholic Theological College
Bayview Ave
PO Box 301
Clayton
Vic 3168
Master: Rev. Dr Austin Cooper OMI

Catholic Theological Union
1 Mary Street
Hunter's Hill
NSW 2110
Principal: Rev. Terry Kelly SM

Jesuit Theological College
175 Royal Parade
Parkville
Vic 3052
Principal: Rev. Brendan Byrne SJ

Pius XII Seminary
(Catholic Regional Seminary)
Approach Road
Banyo
Queensland 4014
Principal: Rev. Dr John Chalmers

St Paul's National Seminary
1 Roma Avenue
Kensington
NSW 2033
Rector: Fr Paul Cashen msc

Yarra Theological Union
90 Albion Road
Box Hill
Vic 3128
President: Rev Dr Campion Murray OFM

Catholic Universities

Australian Catholic University
McAuley Campus
PO Box 247
Everton Park
Queensland 4053
Academic Registrar: Mr V J Bourke
The University of Notre Dame Australia
College of Theology
PO Box 1225
Fremantle
Western Australia 6959
Dean: Dr Michael Jackson

Catholic Institute

Catholic Institute of Western Australia
Suite 1
16 Main Street
Osborne Park
Western Australia 6017
Director: Sr Eleanor Carter csb
(In conjunction with Edith Cowan & Curtin Universities)

In addition to the Theological Schools listed in *The Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools: Fact Book 1997-8-9*, pp. 1-23, the following College was consulted:

Vianney College
PO Box 172
Wagga Wagga
NSW 2650
Rector: Fr Warren Mossfield

APPENDIX 20

Australian Social Trends in the Nineties

Each year the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes a volume entitled AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL TRENDS (Catalogue No. 4102.0) Set out below are brief summaries of key articles in these volumes 1995–1998 dealing with the following topics:

- Gender differences in educational achievement
- Trends in marriage and divorce
- Trends in de facto partnering
- Trends in fertility
- One-parent families
- The value of unpaid work
- Women's contribution to couple earnings
- Families and work
- Trends in women's employment

Taken together these summaries provide a snapshot of Australian society in the nineties in several key dimensions, education, marriage and family, income and employment.

Gender differences in educational achievement

Before the 1980s boys had more favourable outcomes than girls from Australia's schools, colleges and universities. Boys enjoyed superior Year 12 results and great participation in, and graduation from, post-compulsory education.

In the past decade girls have extended their lead in the subjects they have previously dominated, and have begun to perform better than boys in some of the areas of mathematics and science.

In 1986 the apparent retention rates to year 12 in school (ie. not TAFE) were 46 percent for boys and 52 percent for girls, a gap of 6 percentage points. By 1996 these rates had risen to 66 percent for boys and 77 percent for girls, the gap in favour of girls widening to 11 percent. Even when the choice after Year 10 of TAFE by students is considered, a choice made more by boys than girls, and the school/TAFE retention rates are combined girls are still more likely to finish Year 12 than are boys.

Students' successful completion of Year 12, as measured by their TE score, is crucial to their chances of gaining entry to the course of their choice at university. Changes in the TE scores of boys and girls over time from the early 1980s to the 1990s have been assessed in a NSW study of TE Scores. In 1981 the average TE score for girls was 0.6 marks higher than was the average TE score for boys. By 1991 this difference in favour of girls had increased to 4.4 marks and by 1996 to 19.4 marks.

Trends in marriage and divorce

The ABS has noted that the marriage rate in Australia is at its lowest since the great depression. However, up to 60 percent of married people can expect to stay married to the same person until one partner dies. The Bureau notes that Australian marriage rates have followed the pattern of prevailing economic and social conditions. Since 1970 the marriage rate has declined, partly as a result of economic downturn, but partly due to changes in divorce laws attitudes to marriage and to living together arrangements. The overall ageing of the Australian population has also been partly responsible for the decrease in marriage rates.

By the early 1990s it was found that over the previous thirty year period, 40 percent of all marriages end in divorce in Australia. The divorce rates in this country was consistently higher in the 1980s and early 1990s than at any time in our history before 1975.

The Bureau notes that the proportion of divorces involving children has decreased steadily from 62 percent in the early 1980s to 53 percent in the early 1990s. Along with the rise in the median age of mothers at the birth of their first child in a marriage, these changes suggest that divorce is becoming more likely to occur before any children are born.

Trends in de facto partnering

A gradual change in social attitudes in Australia over the past sixty years has seen an increase in de facto partnering. The ABS first collected data specifically on de facto relationships in the 1982 Family Survey and at that time 5 percent of all couples were found to be de facto. By 1992 this had risen to 8 percent of all couples.

The most striking change in this matter is that while in 1975 only 16 percent of couples had lived together before marriage (ie. roughly 1 in 6) by 1992 56 percent of couples marrying in that year had already lived together (ie. over half). This 40 percent change represents a quite fundamental social shift.

In 1963 births outside marriage made up 6 percent of all births. This had increased to 10 percent by 1975 and to 25 percent by 1993. The Bureau also shows that births outside marriage to older women are increasingly common and paternity of births outside marriage is increasingly acknowledged. These three indicators taken together are indicative for the Bureau of the increasing prevalence of de facto relationships.

Trends in fertility

In the hundred years 1894–1994 the birth rate has more than halved, from 31 births per 1,000 mean population to just 14 births per 1,000 mean population. Declining fertility, notes the Bureau, leads to an ageing population with policy implications for income support and health services.

In 1924 the current family size in Australia for all married women who gave birth was 3.1 children. But for married women aged 45 or over who gave birth in 1924 the family size was 7.7 children. By 1997 current family size had declined to 2.0 children and for women over 45 it had declined to 3.2 children from 7.7 children some 70 years earlier.

The Bureau also notes that the past 30 years have seen women increasingly delaying child rearing until much later in their lives, having fewer children, as we have noted, and concentrating child rearing over a shorter span of years.

One-parent families

In the ten year period 1986–1996 the ABS labour Force Survey shows the number of one-parent families grew from 311,800 to 467,200. Particularly telling, however, is the fact that in the 1986–1996 period one-parent families as a proportion of all families with dependent children rose from 14 percent (roughly 1 in 7) to 19 percent (roughly 1 in 5).

Increasingly factors other than widowhood and divorce from registered marriages are becoming much more significant in the incidence of one-parent families. By 1992 the number of lone parents who had never married (123,000) was double the number of such parents (53,500) a decade earlier.

The Bureau notes one-parent families are over-represented among low income families and at greater risk of poverty than couple families. Even on the basis of equivalent income, ie. incomes adjusted for differences in family size/composition, 32 percent of

one-parent families compared to 16 percent of couple families with children fall in the lowest one-fifth of the national income distribution.

Value of unpaid work

In 1992 the Bureau estimated the value of unpaid work to be \$228 billion dollars, or 58 percent of 1992 GDP. Women contributed 65 percent of all unpaid work.

However, an important social trend is being uncovered. Between 1984 and 1994 the proportion of women participating in the labour force has increased from 45 percent to 52 percent. Over the same period the proportion of couples with dependent children and both partners in paid work has risen dramatically from 42 percent of couples to 53 percent of couples. In these latter households – couples working who have dependent children – the Bureau suggests that tasks in the household previously done as unpaid work are being performed increasingly with paid market replacements.

Women's contributions to couple earnings

We have noted that the proportion of couples with dependent children with both partners employed increased from 42 percent in 1984 to 53 percent in 1994. The Bureau suggests several reasons for this change:

- a move away from traditional views of women's roles;
- legislation for equal employment opportunity;
- the availability/acceptability of child care;
- high inflation periods and high housing interest cycles;
- the desire for a better standard of living.

In 1994 the Bureau recorded that women in couples with dependent children in which both partners were full-time employees contributed 43 percent of the couple's earnings. The earnings of couples are directly related to their working arrangements and the Bureau's data indicates that, when married women are working, their incomes tend to increase in proportion to their husband's incomes.

Families and work

In Australia in 1996 8 percent of couple families with children aged 0 – 14 years had both partners *not* in employment. In 1981 the corresponding figure was 5 percent. In this same period of time 1981–1996 the proportion of families with children aged 0 – 14 years in which both parents worked increased by 13 percentage points from 41 percent to 54 percent.

In short, in Australia at the present time families with children are more likely to have two incomes. Conversely, at the other end of the scale, the proportion of families with neither parent working has also increased. These changes, the Bureau notes have occurred because of the interaction between changing social moves and changes in the economy and the labour force. Labour force restructuring, which has favoured those with post-secondary education qualifications, together with rising unemployment levels among the unskilled and the uneducated have influenced these trends.

Trends in women's employment

The Bureau in March 1998 reported 3.7 million women employed, which represented 43 percent of total employment, men and women. In 1954 women represented 23 percent of those employed. Over these 44 years in Australia changes in work processes, meaning far fewer manual jobs, the growth of service industries plus changes to human resource management practices have expanded opportunities for women to work and to combine work with family responsibilities.

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Interestingly there has been a very large growth in the numbers of women working in part-time jobs.

The most notable change over the past thirty years has been among married women. The labour force participation rate for married women aged 15–64 years increased from 34 percent in 1968 to 63 percent in 1998, while that for other women rose by just 2 percent to 67 percent.

Women, notes the Bureau must fit their careers around family responsibilities. This makes them more likely to work part-time than men. Women may also have lengthy career breaks which affect their employment continuity and hence the level they will attain within a particular occupation.

The articles dealing with the issues above are set out in the Table below.

Issue	Article Title	Volume of Australian Social Trends
Educational achievement	Gender differences in educational achievement	1998: Pages 81–85
Family Formation and living Arrangements	Trends in marriage and divorce	1995: Pages 33–37
	Trends in de facto partnering	1995: Pages 38–40
	Trends in fertility	1996: 36–40
	One-parent families	1997: 34–38
Income distribution and paid work	The value of unpaid work	1995: 118–119
	Women's contribution to couple earnings	1995: 115–117
	Families and work	1997: 30–33
	Trends in women's employment	1998: 111–114



CANCELLED



In August 1996, a key project, 'The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia', was launched, beginning an exhaustive research process. The response to this project was overwhelming, and the report of this crucial and controversial project is contained in this volume, *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*.

The research project was undertaken for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference by the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. The results identify key issues concerning women's participation in the Church. This is the largest research project on a single issue undertaken by the Catholic Church in Australia.

The members of the Research Management Group who were responsible for the conduct of the research and the preparation of the report were:

Bishop Kevin Manning, Convenor

Professor Peter Carpenter, Chairperson

Dr Marie Macdonald, Project Coordinator and Principal Author

Ms Sandie Cornish

Dr Michael Costigan

Mr Robert Dixon

Sr Margaret Malone sgs

Sr Sonia Wagner sgs



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