



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

New report confirms the vastness of the Catholic workforce

Media Release

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More than 220,000 people work in Catholic organisations across the country, a new report has found, confirming the Catholic Church's place as one of the largest employers in Australia.

Bunbury Bishop Gerard Holohan, Bishops' Delegate for Employment Relations, said those working in Catholic ministries – small and large – are carrying on the work of Jesus.

"The Catholic Church in Australia today continues the mission of Christ to humanity. This includes its organisations which minister to the poor and the sick; to the elderly and those struggling to find work; to Indigenous people and the homeless," he said.

"There are organisations ministering to immigrants and refugees; those needing school and tertiary education; those addicted to drugs, and their families; those preparing for marriage and those needing marriage counselling; those needing the range of pastoral care services and those needing 'time out' from the stresses of today's pressures."

The new report, *Our Work Matters*, was launched on November 29 at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney. The document, produced by the Pastoral Research Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, is the most comprehensive report of its kind.

Bishop Holohan wrote in the publication's foreword that the new research confirms the Church's vast contribution to Australian society.

"We now have a clearer understanding of when and where Church organisations operate and what impact they have on systems and services, communities and individuals," Bishop Holohan said.

"The survey findings help us see how notions of the common good, human dignity, solidarity and a preferential option for the poor can be made real through our people and organisations."

Bishop Holohan said lay people are now overwhelmingly leading the way in Catholic health and aged care, education, social services and other organisations are carrying on the work of religious women and men and clergy.

The report found that 77 per cent of those who work for the Catholic Church are women, and that education, health and aged care account for 84 per cent of those working on behalf of the Church.

"As we face the challenges of this new millennium, the survey provides encouraging data about thriving Catholic organisations that work at both the centre and margins of a rapidly changing society," Bishop Holohan said.

"Knowing who we are and what we do is essential to growing and renewing Catholic organisations."

Our Work Matters is available for download at www.accer.asn.au