



Pastoral Research Online

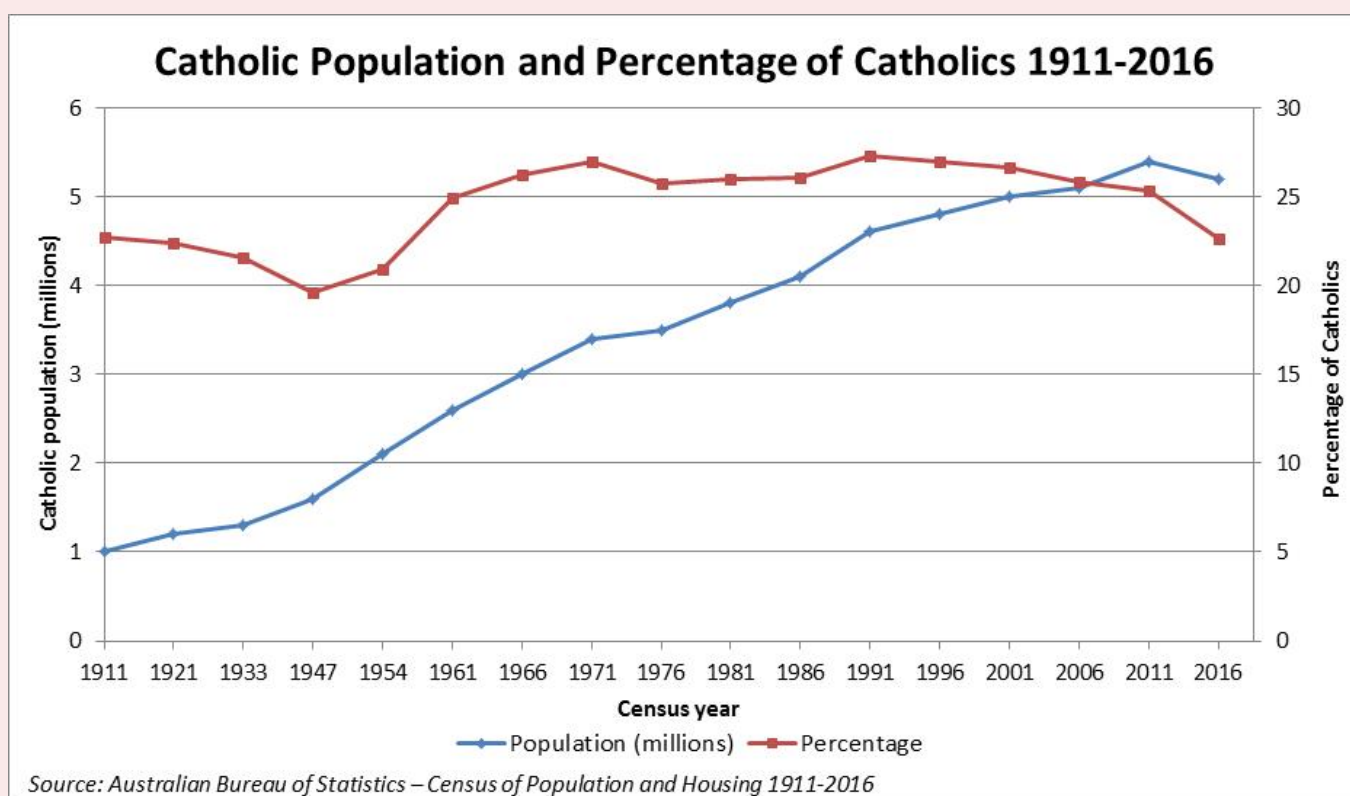
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2016 Census data reveals growth, diversity and change in population

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has just released data from the 2016 Census and the results reveal a growing, culturally diverse and changing population. On the night of the Census, there were 23.7 million people in Australia, with around 5.3 million people, or 22.6 per cent, identifying as Catholic. Anglicanism was the second largest religious group, with 13 per cent of the population identifying, while the Uniting Church comprised 3.7 per cent of the population. Not surprisingly, given the change to the Census form and previous Census trends, the number of people who identified with 'No religion' rose to 30 per cent of the population, while just under one in ten people chose not to answer the optional question.

The number of people identifying as Catholic between 2011 and 2016 decreased by a nett amount of around 147,000, a decrease of 2.7 per cent. It is noteworthy that the 2016 Census was the first time in Australia's 105 year Census history that Catholic identification decreased in number.



While some commentators point to the latest Census results as further proof of the decline in the importance of religion amongst Australians and an increasing secularisation, it is worth noting that well over half the population (52.1%) identified with a Christian denomination and a further eight per cent with a non-Christian religion.

Catholic and overall population ageing



Age Profile of the Catholic Population 2001-2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2016 Overall population
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
0-14 years	1,112,729	22.2	1,081,234	21.1	1,115,632	20.5	1,048,358	19.8	18.7
15-24 years	696,248	13.9	707,855	13.8	728,036	13.4	659,762	12.5	12.8
25-34 years	714,464	14.3	651,726	12.7	677,935	12.5	638,991	12.1	14.4
35-44 years	763,857	15.3	770,205	15.0	772,488	14.2	690,369	13.0	13.4
45-54 years	648,867	13.0	694,397	13.5	762,606	14.0	743,410	14.0	13.3
55-64 years	463,710	9.3	546,299	10.7	614,453	11.3	632,223	11.9	11.8
65-74 years	347,535	6.9	369,751	7.2	417,854	7.7	483,299	9.1	8.9
75-84 years	199,842	4.0	238,723	4.7	259,360	4.8	282,530	5.3	4.8
85 years & over	54,372	1.1	66,696	1.3	90,907	1.7	112,891	2.1	2.1
Total	5,001,624	100.0	5,126,885	100.0	5,439,267	100.0	5,291,834	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing 2001-2016

According to the 2016 Census, the Catholic population in Australia is getting older. In the 2001 Census, 12 per cent of Catholics were aged 65 years and over. By 2006 this had risen to 13.2 per cent and 14.1 per cent by 2011. In 2016, 16.6 per cent of Catholics were aged 65 and over. Inversely, the proportion of Catholics aged 0-14 years decreased from 22.2 per cent in 2001 to 19.8 per cent in 2016. However, the Catholic population actually reflected the general Australian population, which also experienced an increase in the proportion of people aged 65 and over. Around 15.7 per cent of Australians were aged 65 and over in 2016.

This first release of 2016 Census information included basic demographic data on the population for most ABS geographical areas. More detailed information, which will allow more comprehensive analysis, will be released over the coming weeks. Census data based on Catholic parish and diocesan boundaries will be available later this year.



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National Pastoral Leaders and Planners Conference

Monday 4 to Thursday 7 September 2017

The National Pastoral Leaders and Planners Conference will be held in Melbourne between Monday 4 September and Thursday 7 September 2017 at Rydges on Swanston, Carlton.

Keynote speakers include US Professor Richard Gaillardetz, author and social researcher, Hugh Mackay, and journalist Geraldine Doogue.

The Conference will be an opportunity for pastoral planners, pastoral associates and clergy to reflect upon the signs of the time and move forward with hope.

To view the full list of workshops on offer and to register for the conference, visit: <https://nplconference.wordpress.com>

