



# Multicultural Church and Society in Australia: Make up and Composition

## A Contemporary Snapshot of Diversity and Difference

**ACMRO Conference**

**Australian Catholic University**

**Stephen Reid**

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## The Pastoral Research Office: Our Mission

*. . . . to assist the Catholic Church in Australia at all levels in understanding the cultural, social and personal dimensions of religion in the changing contemporary context.*



# **A Snapshot from the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing**

# Overview: The Catholic Community in Australia

*“Snapshot” taken on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016*

*(with 2011 comparisons):*

Australian population	23,401,892	(21,507,719)
Catholic population	5,291,834	(5,439,267)
% Catholic	22.6	(25.3)
% born overseas	24.7	(23.6)
% born in NES <sup>C</sup> *	19.1	(17.9)
% speaking LOTE* at home	20.4	(19.0)

*Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing. All figures except ‘Australian population’ apply to Catholics only. \* NES<sup>C</sup>: Non-English speaking country. LOTE: Language other than English*

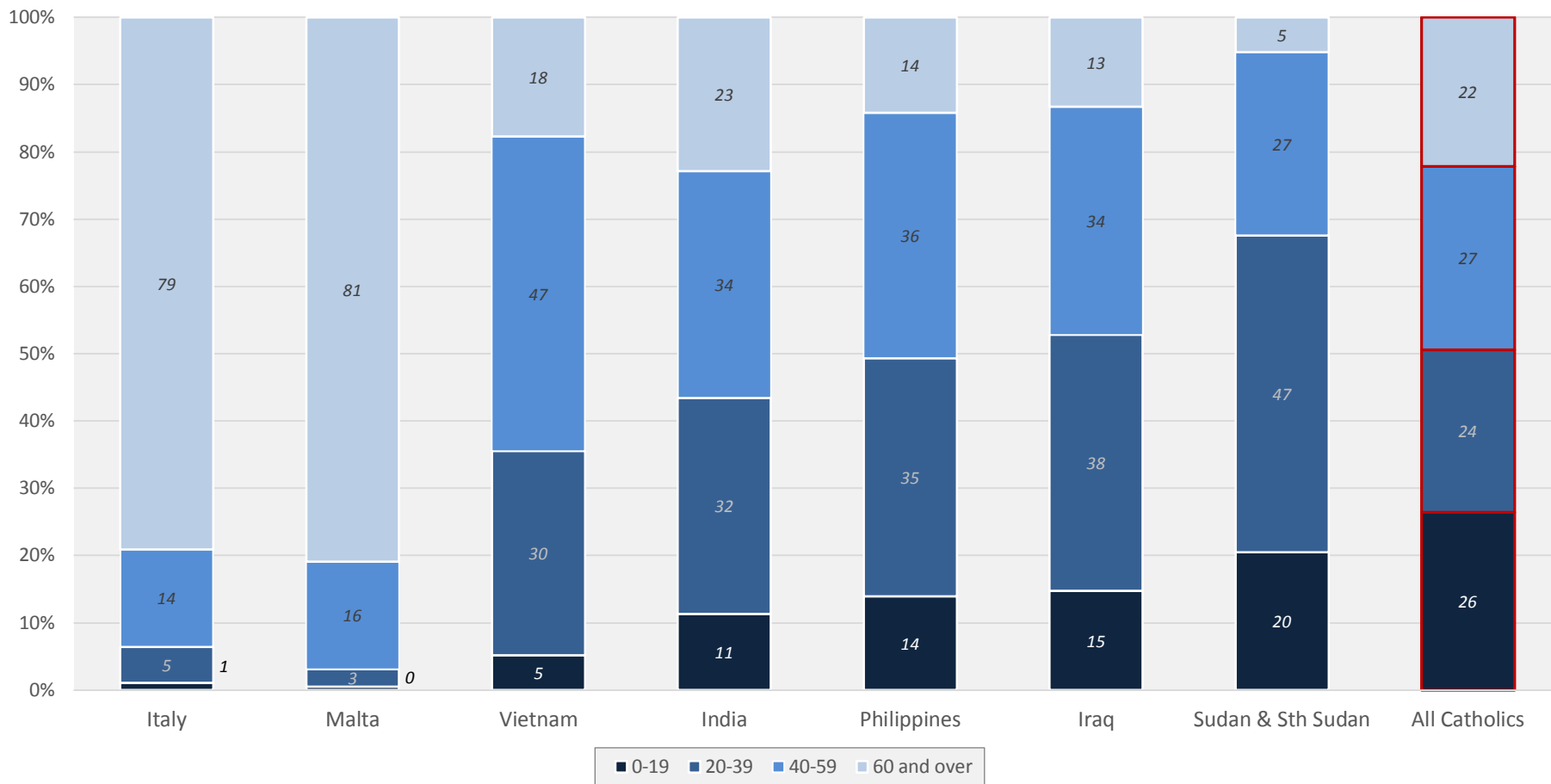
## Major countries of birth of Catholics, 2016 & 2011

Birthplace	2016	2011
1 Philippines	174,619	134,657
2 Italy	149,900	168,804
3 United Kingdom	126,595	137,221
4 New Zealand	68,837	73,154
5 India	59,702	48,216
6 Ireland & Northern Ireland	59,425	56,317
7 Vietnam	44,225	39,896
8 Croatia & other Former Yugoslavia	39,209	49,188
9 Malta	33,474	37,809
10 Poland	31,979	36,118

Source: ABS 2016 & 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

# Age profile of Catholics, 2016

(from selected countries of birth)



Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

## Major countries of birth of Catholics, 2016 by Year of arrival in Australia (selected birthplaces)

Birthplace	Total	% arrived since 2006
Brazil	13,349	73.0
Iraq	23,770	52.2
India	59,702	49.4
Philippines	174,619	49.3
Ireland & Northern Ireland	59,425	45.4
Sudan & South Sudan	7,496	29.7
Vietnam	44,225	24.1
.....	.....	.....
Italy	149,900	6.2
Malta	33,474	1.5

Source: ABS 2016 & 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

## Country of birth, 2016

Local Government Areas\* with high numbers of Catholics born in NESC

Local Government Area	Born in NESC	% born in NESC	Main Countries of birth
1 Brisbane (Qld)	45,424	17.4	Philippines, Italy, Vietnam
2 Blacktown (NSW)	34,400	35.0	Philippines, Malta, India
3 Fairfield (NSW)	31,133	50.7	Iraq, Vietnam, Italy
4 Canterbury-Bankstown (NSW)	29,479	36.4	Lebanon, Vietnam, Italy
5 Brimbank (Vic)	26,570	43.6	Philippines, Malta, Vietnam
6 Casey (Vic)	24,495	34.2	India, Philippines, Sri Lanka
7 Hume (Vic)	20,453	33.5	Iraq, Italy, Philippines
8 Cumberland (NSW)	20,250	39.1	Lebanon, Philippines, Malta

Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

\* Census data for parishes and dioceses will be available later this year.



## Major languages spoken at home by Catholics, 2016 (other than English)

Language	2016	2011
Italian	231,664	267,002
Filipino languages	145,635	112,128
Spanish	82,208	75,781
Arabic	68,952	72,204
Vietnamese	68,569	63,887
Croatian	49,546	55,148
Chinese languages	49,057	46,709
Polish	36,561	41,025
Portuguese	29,901	24,714
Maltese	29,828	32,803

Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

## Language: proficiency in spoken English, 2016

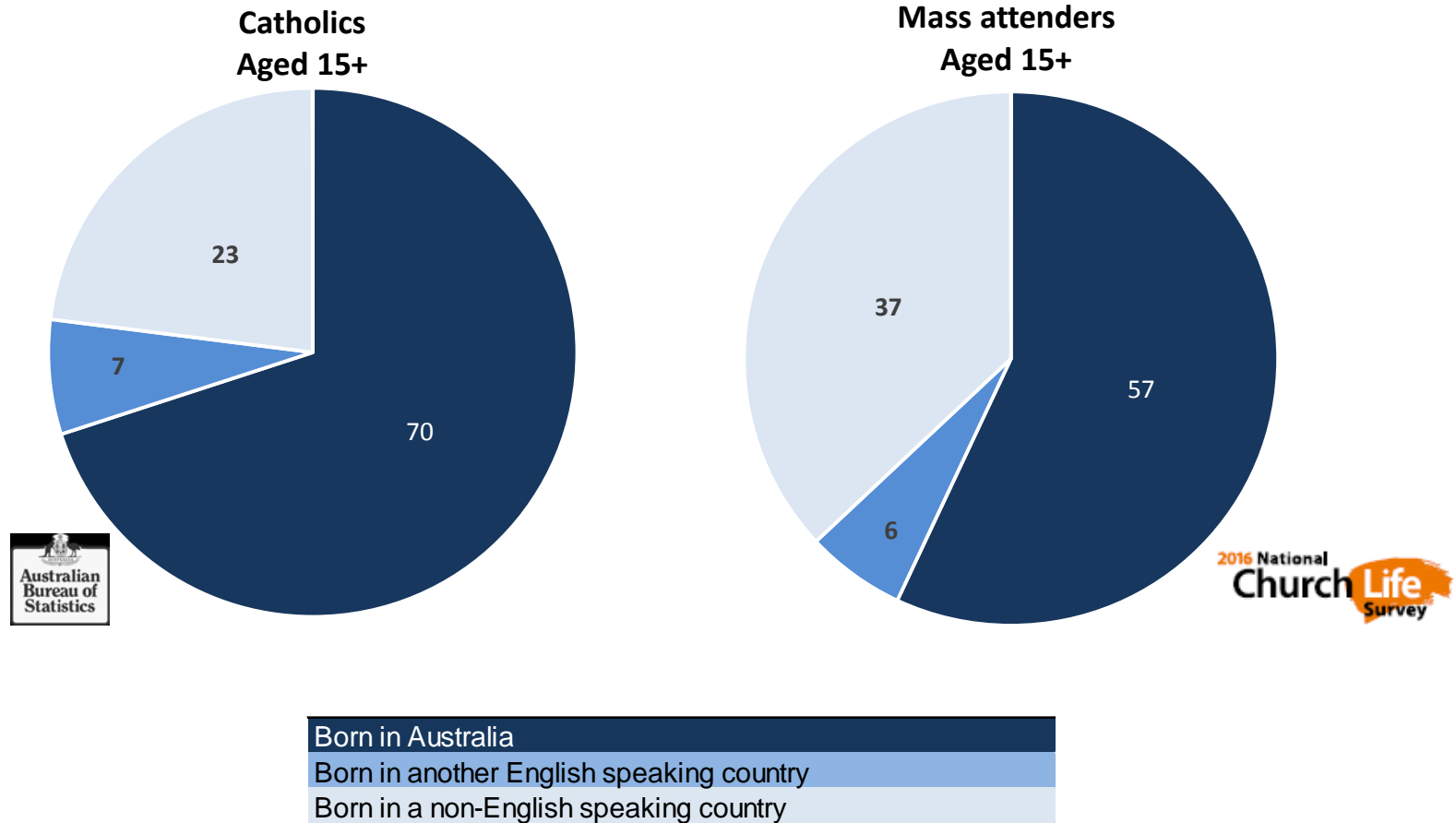
Language	Catholics	Do not speak English well	% who do not speak English well
Chaldean Neo-Aramaic	16,680	5,218	31.3
Korean	19,590	5,904	30.1
Vietnamese	68,564	18,897	27.6
Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	8,771	2,250	25.7
Mandarin	21,358	4,106	19.2
Dinka (African)	4,799	752	15.7
Portuguese	29,900	4,338	14.5
Italian	231,671	31,860	13.8
Arabic	68,948	9,308	13.5
Croatian	49,556	6,540	13.2

Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing.



**A (very brief) Snapshot from the  
2016 National Church Life Survey  
and the  
ACBC National Count of Attendance**

# Country of birth of Catholics and Mass attendance, 2016



Source: 2016 ABS Census & 2016 National Church Life Survey (Church Life Profile). 'Not stated' and 'Inadequately described' removed.

# Mass attendance languages, 2016

(preliminary results)



## Mass attendance, 2016 (preliminary results)



Attendance at Mass in languages other than English:

- *44+ different languages (including Aboriginal languages)*
- *Average of **64,000** people each weekend*
- *Masses in LOTE estimated to account for **10-12%** of national total*
- *Combined, more than **37,000** attend Mass each weekend in **Vietnamese, Arabic and Italian***
- *Likely to be considerably higher due to the complexity of obtaining figures from non-parish centres.*

Source: ACBC 2016 National Count of Attendance.

## A few observations

- Since 1996, the percentage of Mass attenders born in non-English speaking countries has risen from 18% to 37%.
- The arrival of large numbers of Catholics from particularly non-English speaking countries has up until now ‘masked’ the extent of decline of ‘Census Catholics’ and Mass attendance numbers.
- Anecdotally, identification and attendance patterns of second-generation Australians is more like that of third and later generations of Australians than that of their parents.
- *Further research is needed . . . .*

For further analysis of the 2011 National Count of Attendance see *Mass Attendance in Australia: A Critical Moment* (available from the PRO website: [pro.catholic.org.au](http://pro.catholic.org.au))

## For reflection . . .

- Any discussion of future trends in the church must include the context in which the church is placed – the wider society. *I.e. the Church does not take place in a vacuum.*
- What is happening in society which will affect what happens in the church?
- Where will future migrants and refugees come from?



## For further information . . .

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