

# PORT MACQUARIE

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**Better Together**

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## CHURCH & COMMUNITY PROFILE

**PREPARED BY**  
KINGDOMWORKS

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## Preamble

*Heavenly Father, we acknowledge you as Lord of Heaven and on earth. We thank you for sending Your Son Jesus Christ that the world might find forgiveness of sins and salvation in His Name. We commit the words of this report to you and pray that Your Kingdom come, Your will be done in the Port Macquarie Region. Amen.*

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these areas, extending our respect to Elders – past and present. We acknowledge the work and prayers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Leaders.*

**This report has been compiled by Kingdomworks as a service to the Church.** It provides Christian leaders with a snapshot of 2021 Census data for their region.

Mark McCrindle from *McCrindle Research Services* advocates that in response to current cultural and generational change, *"It is essential that leaders are equipped with an understanding of how to spot the trends, and what those trends are."*

### **Mark McCrindle, The Top Trends of 2022**

It is hoped that this report will help equip Christian leaders to better serve their communities.

Data in this report is readily accessed via the **Port Macquarie Hastings Council REMPLAN** or the Australian Bureau of Statistic's Census Data.

The 2021 Australian Census (ABS) 'Religious Affiliation' Christian categories that have been included in the report are;

- Anglican
- Assyrian
- Apostolic
- Baptist
- Brethren
- Catholic
- Churches of Christ
- Eastern Orthodox
- Lutheran
- Oriental Orthodox
- Other Protestant
- Pentecostal
- Presbyterian and Reformed
- Salvation Army
- Seventh-day Adventist
- Uniting Church
- Christianity, nfd (not fully defined)
- Other Christian

In addition to census data the report includes observations from the *NCLS's Australian Community Survey*, *McCrindle Reports* and leading Christian authors /commentators.

*Together, local Ministers, local Christian leaders, local churches and local organisations are uniquely positioned to bring social, cultural and spiritual change in their city, for their city.*

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your region as together we seek to answer the last prayer of Jesus in John 17: 21 - 23.

"that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us *so that the world may believe that you have sent me*. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. *Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*"

Blessings,



**RICK PROSSER**

Kingdomworks Chairman

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Our 2030 Plan

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# PORT MACQUARIE POPULATION

The population of the 'Port Macquarie - Hastings' region on Census Night in 2021 was **86,762**.

The population of 'Port Macquarie' was **47,793**. This represented 55% of the 'Port Macquarie - Hastings' region.

The median age of persons in the Port Macquarie - Hastings region was 49 years compared to 53 years in 2016.

The medium age in 'Port Macquarie' (UCL112017) was **48 years**, an older population when compared to that of NSW (39 years) and Australia (38 years).

## 2021 CENSUS POPULATION DATA

**8, 072,163 people**

**39 yrs** median age  
**\$1,829** median wkly income.  
**\$ 2,167** monthly mortgage  
**2.6** Av Household

**NSW**

**86,585 people**

**49 yrs** median age  
**\$1,263** median wkly income.  
**\$1,733** monthly mortgage  
**2.3** Av Household

**Port Mac - Hastings**

**47,793 people**

**Port Mac UCL112017**

**48yrs** median age  
**\$1,283** median wkly income.  
**\$1,752** monthly mortgage  
**2.3** Av Household

**7,982 people**

**Wauchope UCL114034**

**42yrs** median age  
**\$1,175** median wkly income.  
**\$1,600** monthly mortgage  
**2.4** Av Household

**47,793**

*Port Macquarie: Urban Centres and Localities  
Area code UCL112017*

**86,762**

*Port Macquarie - Hastings Population*

**8,072,163**

*NSW Population*

**25,422,788**

*Australian Population*

## Port Macquarie - Hastings

Geography type [Local Government Areas](#)  
Area code LGA16380



## Port Macquarie

Geography type [Urban Centres and Localities](#)  
Area code UCL112017



Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

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If the Port Macquarie - Hastings was a street of 100 households.

PORT MACQUARIE STREET

Pop. 230 people  
*2021 ABS Data*

Religious Affiliation



122  
(53%)  
People  
Christian  
Affiliation



87  
(38%)  
People  
No  
Religion



4  
(1.9%)  
People  
Other  
Religions

*The remaining persons  
affiliation not stated.*

Aboriginal & or  
Torres Strait  
Islander

13 people  
would identify  
Aboriginal &/or Torres  
Strait Islander people



Country of  
Birth



190 people  
Born in Australia



40 people  
Born elsewhere

Generations

*If the Port Macquarie - Hastings was a street of 100 households...*



23  
Alpha  
0-9



37  
Gen Z  
10 - 24



32  
Millenials  
25 - 39



39  
Gen X  
40 - 54



67  
Boomers  
55 - 74



32  
Interwar  
75 & over

Families



50

Couple families  
without children



1

Other  
families



16

One parent  
families



33

Couple families  
with children

# RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AUSTRALIA

In the 2021 Census Religious Affiliation decreased in Australia by more than 1 million people, but is still Australia's most common religion. The largest decrease was in the 18-25 years age group. 10 million Australians report having no religion.

## CHRISTIAN AFFILIATION AS A % OF POPULATION

	2011	2016	2021
AUSTRALIA	61%	52%	44%
NSW	64%	55%	48%
PORT MACQUARIE - HASTINGS	72%	63%	53%

### A DECREASE OF NEARLY ONE IN FIVE ANGLICANS.

*Key Findings Religious  
Affiliation - ABS Article  
released 04/07/2022*

Anglican and Catholicism in Australia have been, and are, the largest Christian denominations. In 2021, these denominations make up most, 78%, of the decrease in Christian affiliation. The Australian Anglican affiliation had the largest drop from 3.1 million to 2.5 million people, **a decrease of nearly one in five Anglicans.**

In 2021, Catholicism in Australia decreased to 20% (from 22.6% in 2016). While this number has been falling over time, the decrease has been slowed by immigration from regions with high numbers of followers of Catholicism, such as Southeast Asia and South America.

### MIGRATION IMPACTS CATHOLIC AFFILIATION.

*ABS 2021 Key Findings*

Of all migrants who came to Australia between 2016 and 2021, almost 200 thousand (191,000) reported an affiliation with Catholicism in the 2021 Census, over one-quarter of which were born in the Philippines.



# UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

OBSERVATIONS BY CHRISTIAN RESEARCHERS, AUTHORS & COMMENTATORS.

“People are becoming Christians all over the country – but it is currently obscured by the large cohort of (declining) nominal Christians... the percentage of Australians who hold “heartfelt trust in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ” is about 25 per cent, which indicated that the percentage of Christians in the census may decline further.

IN A FEW MORE CENSUSES – SAY, 2037, THE DECLINE WOULD PROBABLY BOTTOM OUT,

as nominal Christians dropped away, and the number of Christians would once again increase.”

*John Dickson, Eternity News 'Aussies may be losing their religion but not their need for Hope and Love, June 29, 2022.*

"AUSTRALIANS MAY BE LOSING THEIR RELIGIOUS TRIBAL IDENTITY, BUT THEY HAVE NOT LOST THEIR CURIOSITY ABOUT THE FAITH OF THEIR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

or their need for the gospel truths of hope and love. Results from the 2021 Australian Community Survey (ACS), run by NCLS Research a few months after the 2021 national census, found that more than half of Australians believed in God or a higher power (55 per cent), six in ten prayed or meditated, and two in ten (21 per cent) attended religious services at least monthly."



*No Religion part of ongoing trend but not the whole Story, Ruth Powell, Director of NCLS Research.*

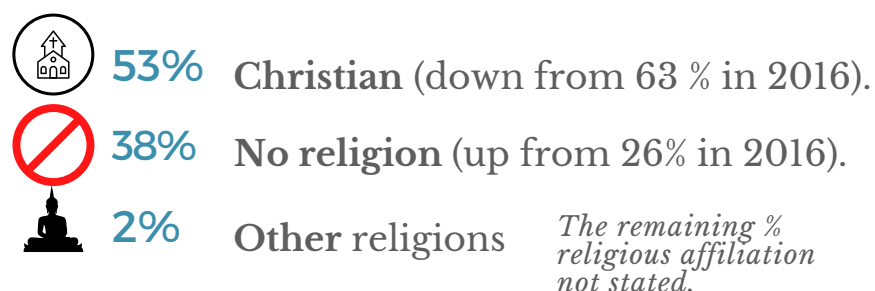
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# PORT MACQUARIE - HASTINGS REGION

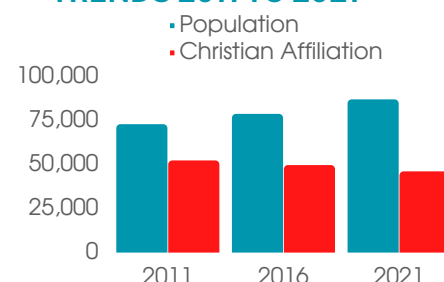
## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



Population in 2021.

# 86,565

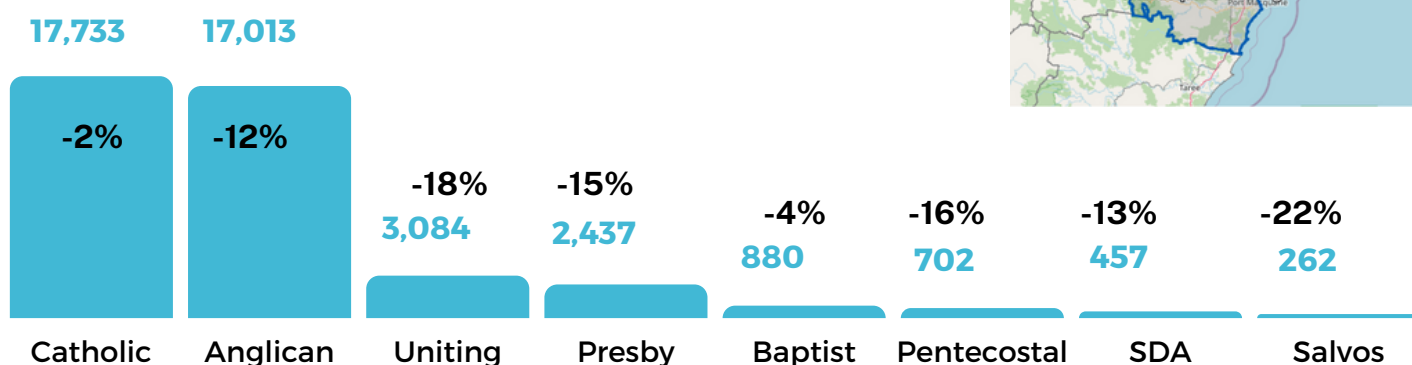
### TRENDS 2011 TO 2021



The % increase in the population from 2011 to 2021 was **19%**. The % decrease in Christian affiliation from 2011 to 2021 was **-12%**.

## DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN 2021 AND % CHANGE 2016 - 2021



### Port Macquarie-Hastings

2021 Census Community Profiles

Geography type Local Government Areas  
Area code LGA16380



In 2021 Anglicans & Catholics make up 75% of Christian Affiliation in Port Macquarie - Hastings.

## DECLINE OF DENOMINATIONS

**"A GROWING TREND OF PEOPLE AFFILIATING MORE BROADLY WITH CHRISTIANITY RATHER THAN SPECIFIC CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS."**

[www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia#key-findings-](http://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia#key-findings-)

In Port Macquarie - Hastings from 2016 to 2021 there was a 7% increase in persons that described their religious affiliation as "Christianity, nfd\*". This reflected a nation wide trend that the ABS called the 'Decline of Denominations'.

*\*'Christianity nfd' are responses where people answered "Christian" or "Christianity" rather than affiliating with a denomination.'*



# PORT MACQUARIE

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



**53%** Christian (down from 63% in 2016).



**37%** No religion (up from 26% in 2016).



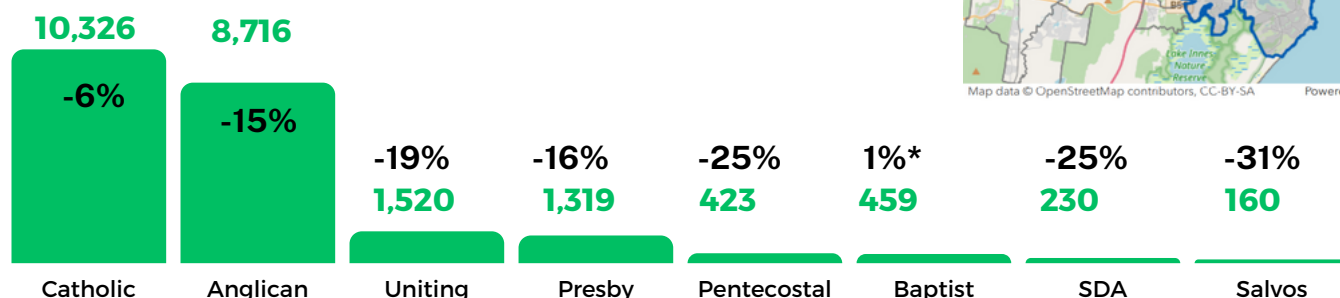
**2%** Other religions *The remaining % not stated.*

The percentage increase in the population of Port Macquarie from 2011 to 2021 was **7%**. This rate was less than the growth rate of the whole Port Macquarie - Hastings region.

The percentage decrease in Christian affiliation of Port Macquarie from 2011 to 2021 was **greater** than that of the whole Port Macquarie - Hastings region at **-16%**.

## DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN 2021 AND % CHANGE 2016 - 2021



*\*Baptist 1% increase was 3 persons.*

## INCREASING SECULARISATION

"In 1981, three in four Australians (76%) identified their religion as Christianity. Today, that proportion has decreased to 44%. In 1981, just 10% of Australians identified as having no religion, while today that has increased to 39%. That's almost a fourfold increase in no religion over the past four decades."

McCrindle- 40 years of Change.

*Population in 2021.*

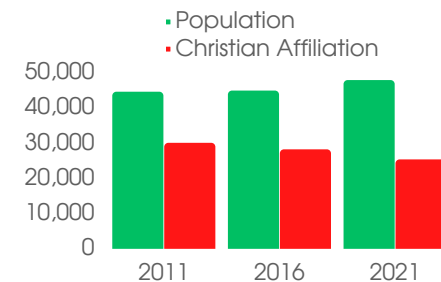
**47,793**

*Port Macquarie: UCL112017*

**55%**

*of the 'Port Macquarie - Hastings' region.*

### TRENDS 2011 TO 2021

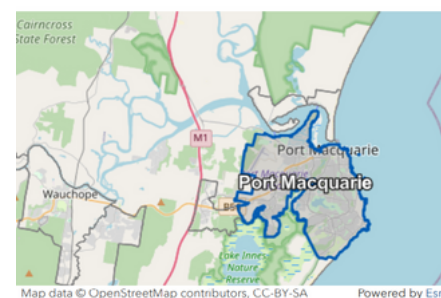


### Port Macquarie

2021 Census All persons QuickStats

Geography type [Urban Centres and Localities](#)

Area code UCL112017



Denominations are shedding people, how can the **Church** be more strategic and collaborative in church planting and revitalization?

# THRUMSTER & LAURIETON

## A TALE OF TWO TOWNS

Thrumster (13.1 sq Kms) and Laurieton (4.3 sq Kms) in the Port Macquarie - Hastings region are similar sized populations however the community profile of each is an example of how populations can vary greatly across towns within one region.

A standout difference between the two areas is the average age of persons. Thrumster is the youngest locality in the region with a median age of 32 years and Laurieton with a median age of 67 years, is the oldest. Below is a snapshot of this and other demographic differences between the two locations.

### 2021 CENSUS POPULATION DATA

**2,382 people**

*471% increase pop.  
from 2016 to 2021.*

**Thrumster SAL13869**

**2,012 people**

*1.3% increase pop.  
from 2016 to 2021.*

**Laurieton SAL12292**

**32yrs** median age

**\$1,988** median wkly income.

**\$2,080** monthly mortgage

**2.9** Av Household

**46%** Couple family with Children

**7.5%** Indigenous

**82%** Born in Australia

**42%** No Religion

**70%** In the labour force

**22%** Professionals

**11.5%** Mental Health Condition

**67yrs** median age

**\$755** median wkly income.

**\$1,365** monthly mortgage

**1.7** Av Household

**14%** Couple family with Children

**3.1%** Indigenous

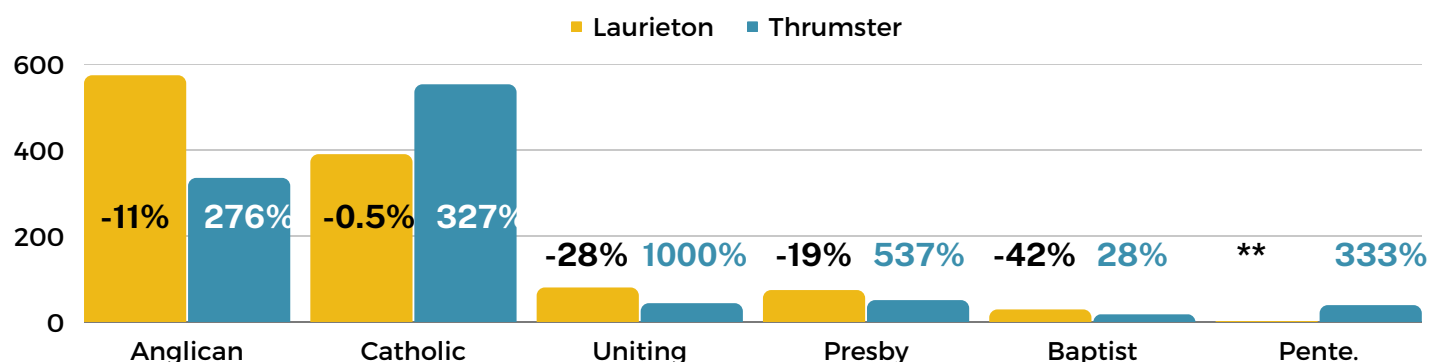
**83%** Born in Australia

**33%** No Religion

**27%** In the labour force

**14%** Professionals

**13.5%** Mental Health Condition



*\*\*Laurieton Pentecostal, changed  
by 3 persons 2016 - 2021*

## THRUMSTER

"Historically known as the entrance to Port Macquarie, Thrumster was a quiet community with a limited number of residents. Over the years the population in Thrumster experienced limited and very slow growth, this is until Feb 2009, when the St Joseph's Regional College, was opened in the location. The arrival of the Regional College sparked a flurry of development with a number of residential homes being constructed."

*Thrumster, Area Profile 2023.*

The impact of population growth in Thrumster driven by the establishment of Christian schooling has been growth in Christian Affiliation across the denominations.

## CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS BUCK CENSUS TREND.

"In contrast to figures released by the ABS showing those who identify as Christians are declining, enrolments in Christian schools continue to grow. 'Parents are continuing to flock to schools providing a faith-based education', said Christian Schools Australia Director of Public Policy, Mark Spencer, 'with many Christian schools experiencing growth in complete contrast to the ABS Census data'"

*Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy Christian Schools Australia, Media Release 28 June, 2022.*

## LAURIETON

In contrast Laurieton's population growth was 1.3% from 2016 to 2021. It is an ageing population. Laurieton and the suburbs of the surrounding Camden Haven have 2x the national average for people over the age of 60 and 3x the national average for people over 80 years.

*Laurieton Town Centre Plan 2021.*

Christian affiliation in Laurieton from 2016 to 2021 declined across the denominations. The Anglican denomination had a -11% decrease in affiliation (71 persons). This was 46% of all persons in Laurieton no longer affiliating with a denomination.

How can the **Church** partner with Christian Education to *connect and engage future generations* not only to faith but to build the Church?

## RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE PATTERNS DIFFER BY AGE.



"While around two in ten Australians (22%) say they attend religious services at least monthly, would it surprise you to know that greater proportions of younger people say they attend frequently, compared to older age groups? In fact, one in 3 young adults aged 18 to 34 (32%) say they attend religious services at least once a month, according to 2021 Australian Community Survey (2021 ACS), by NCLS Research. This makes young people the most frequent attenders at religious services. Older age groups have a lower proportion attending monthly, with those aged 65 and over, and those aged 35 to 49, both at 19%. The lowest rate of attendance is in the 50 to 64 age bracket with only 11%, or around one in ten, attending services at least monthly."

*Religious Service Attendance 2021, Australian Community Survey - NCLS*

<https://vimeo.com/725460488>

How does the **Church** respond in the context of an ageing population?

## UNITY CREATES A BASIS FOR DIVERSITY

"We need to recognise that unity creates a basis for diversity. We need each others difference to be ourselves. It is critical that we learn to accept diversity, as a legitimate expression of what Jesus is on about."

*Alan Hirsch, Feb 12, 2021, Activating APEST*

"If church planting is just planting a Sunday service then the model is flawed. We need to be Jesus focused. A coalition of churches centered on Jesus, covenanting to bring Jesus to their location... God has designed the church for movement, like the body. If you treat it well it flourishes."

*Alan Hirsch, Building Momentum Conference, March 12, 2022, Melbourne.*

"The church of today has had an over reliance on the Sunday Service."

*Alan Hirsch, Relaunching the Decentralized Church, June 23, 2020.*

# INDIGENOUS POPULATION

In the Australian 2021 census 812,728 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is an increase of over 25% since 2016. This important community is now almost twice the size of Canberra's population."

McCrindle- 40 years of Change.

## 4,730

*Port Macquarie- Hastings  
Indigenous Pop.*

## 5.5%

*of Port Macquarie-  
Hastings Population.*

## 3.4%

*of NSW Population*

## 3.2%

*of Australian Population*

The Indigenous population varies greatly across the Port Macquarie - Hastings region from 9.8% in Wauchope to just 3.4% in Laurieton. An example of population diversity that exists in the region.

### 22 yrs

*Indigenous Pop.  
Median Age.*

### 3.1

*Indigenous Av. Per  
Household.*

### \$1,519

*Indigenous Weekly  
Income.*

### 49 yrs

*Port- Hastings Pop.  
Median Age.*

### 2.3 persons

*Port - Hasting Av. per  
Household*

### \$1,263

*Port - Hasting Household  
Weekly Income.*

**2,469 people  
(5.2% of the  
population)**

## 2021 INDIGENOUS POPULATION

**785 people  
(9.8%)**

**179 people  
(7.5%)**

**69 people  
(3.4%)**

Port Mac UCL112017

Wauchope UCL114034

Thrumster SAL13869

Laurieton SAL12292

How does the **Church** embrace and elevate Indigenous and culturally diverse Christian leaders, churches and communities?

## APPENDIX: 'CONTEXT' IS IMPORTANT!

The findings of different studies can be confusing. When interpreting research or the comments of authors it is important to consider the 'context' of the source. The purpose, methodology and questions asked by a body of research varies and should be considered when looking at those outcomes especially when comparing across studies. The *Australian Census* and the *Australian Community Survey* have different methodologies however both contribute valuable insights.



The *Australian Census* is a comprehensive snapshot of the country and tells the story of how Australia is changing. Census data tells us about the economic, social, religious and cultural make-up of the country. In 2021 more than 96% of Australian households participated in the census.



The *NCLS's Australian Community Survey* aims to provide a picture of social attitudes, spirituality, religion and well-being in Australian communities. The *Australian Community Survey* is an online survey of 60 questions. The Australian sample of around 1,200 persons is representative of the adult population on age, gender and location.

It is also important to consider the context that the data is being applied too. *Is the information being quoted applicable to the location?* For example quoting national data is useful but should be balanced by local data and trends.



Perhaps you have been looking at the census denominational data and have thought... 'there are more people in your church than that????'

Understand that these numbers are taken from what people filled out on their census form. If they did not select a denominational category and perhaps wrote the name of a church, then it is classified as 'Other Protestant' and unable to be assigned. This is where it is helpful to educate your congregation in how census categories work and what will best reflect your churches affiliation to the wider community.



NOTES

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