



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF ROCKHAMPTON

# Diocesan Pastoral Plan

2023-2028



*Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ*

*As I celebrate nine years among you as your bishop, I am delighted to offer you a document that has been in formation. It began when I visited each community and listened to your hopes and dreams for the Diocese which culminated in the Diocesan Assembly in 2019. The Synodal and Plenary processes have intersected with our diocese and over 3500 parishioners have contributed to the shaping of the future mission for this diocese.*

*I present this Pastoral Plan as a distillation of the thoughts and hope for the Mission of Christ and his disciples in this Diocese, co-responsible for the Mission.*

*This Diocesan Pastoral Plan captures our diocesan family moving into the future with joy ready to do the work of Jesus Christ as the People of God on Mission.*

*May God bless our work and St Joseph, our Patron, pray for us.*

*+ Michael McGearty*

## Introduction

This Diocesan Pastoral Plan (DPP) is an overarching document that focuses on the priorities of pastoral ministry in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. It will provide a common language and path moving forward.

The DPP has evolved primarily from the listening process, initiated by Bishop Michael, culminating in the Diocesan Assembly in 2019. Following the Assembly, task groups consisting of a variety of parishioners from around the diocese were formed to research, develop and prepare reports on the nine focus areas identified to assist the working party in the development of the DPP.

### The task groups and their topics were:

- Co-responsibility for the Mission
- Governance and Leadership Formation
- Mission to Those on the Edge
- Education for Mission
- Governance Structures and Roles
- Youth and Family
- Multicultural Welcome
- Technology and Communications
- Evangelisation

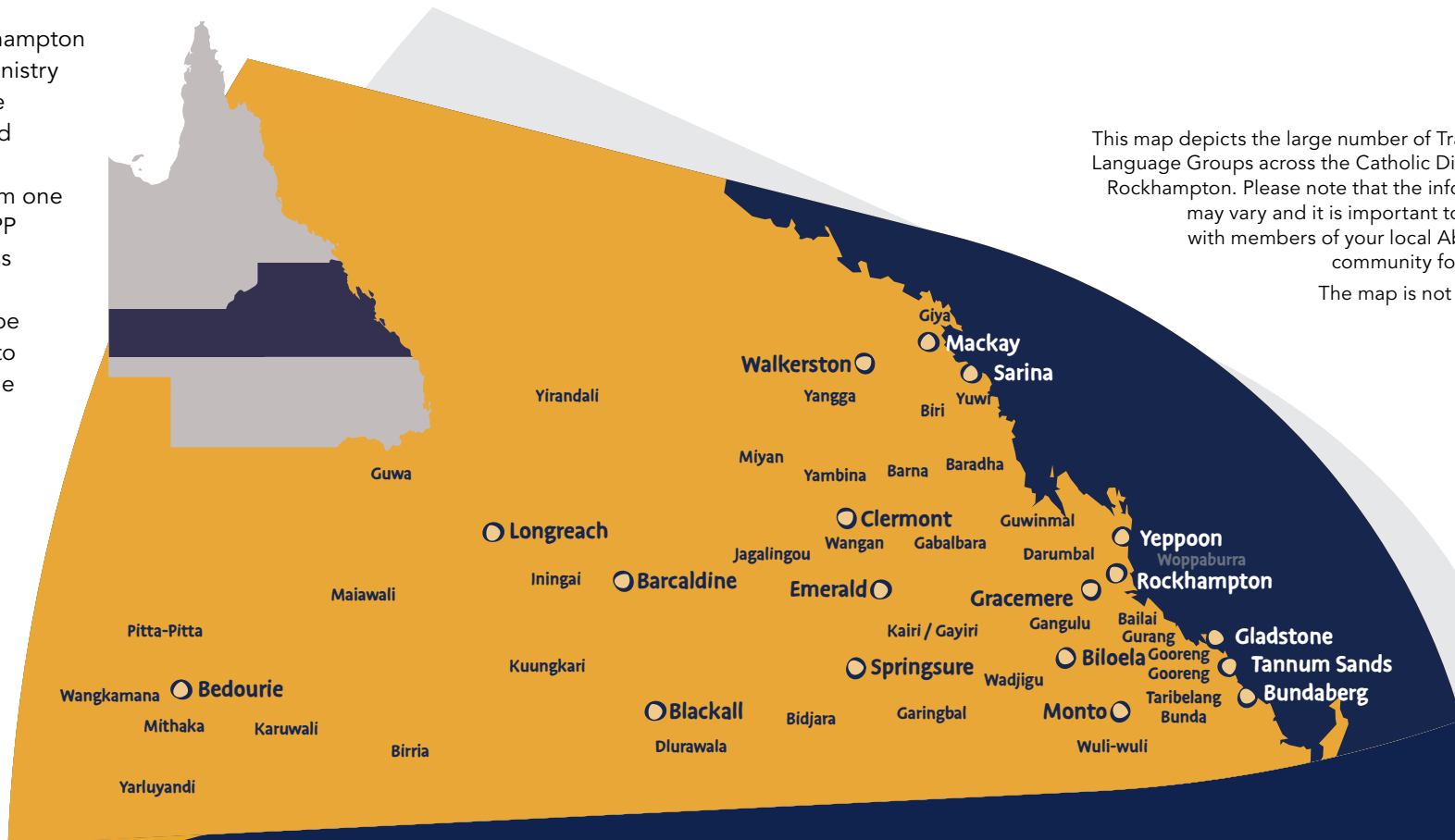
Inspired by the lived example of Christ, the DPP calls for action, planning and accountability from all areas of the diocese. Even though a five-year plan, it is hoped that it will be a living document that will change and grow over a longer period of time, accounting for the inevitable and ongoing challenges and changes in Church life. Through its implementation, it is hoped that the DPP will give direction and fullness of life across the diocese through sharing co-responsibility for the mission and vision of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Rockhampton.

# The Diocese Now

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton stretches from the Northern Territory border in the west, to the east coast of Australia, from Midge Point, north of Mackay to Bundaberg in the south.

It covers over 414,000km<sup>2</sup> and is blessed with the richness of God's gifts in every corner. The diocese encompasses five regions, Southern, Central, Northern, Central Highlands and Central West. Within each region there are a number of parishes and worshipping communities with a variety of Mass, prayer and community gathering opportunities. Some of these parishes are hundreds of kilometres apart as opposed to others clustered in the coastal areas. These communities are unique in their history, traditions and stories and the implementation of the DPP should reflect this difference.

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton is supported by a variety of ministry teams and groups meeting the needs of individual regions and communities. There are many challenges, and these vary from one community to another. The DPP encourages parishioners across the diocese to be involved in their Church communities, to be responsive to the challenges, to seize opportunities, to continue to celebrate together and to strive to be co-responsible for the life of the Church in their community.



This map depicts the large number of Traditional Language Groups across the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. Please note that the information may vary and it is important to consult with members of your local Aboriginal community for advice. The map is not to scale.

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton acknowledges the original Custodians of the lands upon which we live, work and pray. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have enriched our lives by sharing their knowledge, their customs, their cultures and their connection to the lands and waterways of Australia. We recognise and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have their own lores, customs and spirituality both in the dreamtime and in the present.

*Adapted from the Reconciliation Action Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton*

# Priorities



## Evangelisation and Mission

- **Active welcome:** Actively welcome every person in the church and wider community and promote opportunities for engagement.
- **Geographical needs:** Advocate for and support communities across the diocese with unique geographical needs and those living in remote, rural and mining communities.
- **Pastoral outreach:** Strengthen support for outreach and parish ministries.
- **Reconciliation:** Promote and implement the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan.
- **Initiation:** Guided by the Diocesan Policy 'Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton', implement the process and programs used for the Sacraments of Initiation.
- **Invitation:** Explore strategies to encourage fuller participation in the life of the Church with those who connect for special events.
- **Faith formation:** Provide intentional and ongoing faith formation for all.



## Co-responsibility and Mission

- **Co-responsibility:** Form a Parish/Pastoral Leadership Group/Council to facilitate co-responsibility for the mission of the Church, among all the people of God.
- **Parish councils:** Support the pastoral planning process to ensure its implementation.
- **Stewardship:** Invite all parishioners to discover their unique God-given gifts and to develop and use these gifts to serve in parish ministries.
- **Social justice:** Consider developing strategies for the formation of a parish/regional Social Justice group.
- **New ministries:** Discern, promote and facilitate new ministries to serve members of the Catholic and wider community.
- **Care for our common home:** Promote and facilitate sustainable use of resources.



## Celebration and Mission

- **Safeguarding:** Continue to support the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, the Safeguarding Representatives, the celebration of Safeguarding Sunday and practical initiatives that ensure the safety of all.
- **Respect for life:** Provide ongoing education about the Catholic view of the sanctity of life and the importance of protecting life from conception to natural death.
- **Technology:** Continue to use technology as a means of building community and explore new ways of using technology.
- **Liturgy:** Provide liturgies that enrich and celebrate the faith life of parish communities and that encourage and enable the participation of all.
- **Connecting and reconnecting to faith:** Offer events, activities and programs for all age groups to connect and reconnect to celebrate faith.
- **Distinctive spiritualities:** Provide opportunities and resources for people to participate in the diversity and richness of the Church's distinctive Catholic spiritualities and charisms.
- **Publicity:** Promote the good works and news of the Catholic Church publicly using a variety of means to witness in the wider community.

# Call to Action

Each of the priorities identified in this plan reflects not only the outcomes of the 2019 Diocesan Assembly, but also some of the essential elements of what it is to be the disciples of Jesus.

To **evangelise**, we continue the great commission given by Jesus to his disciples before he ascended to the Father: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19)

To be **co-responsible**, we take ownership of the Church's mission, affirming that the Catholic Church is first and foremost the community of Christ's disciples, and not simply a service provider with which individuals transact business. Rather, all Catholics are called together into the Church, by their grace, and have a part to play in it.

And to **celebrate**, we give expression to the deepest truths of our faith, and we drink from the well of grace that God provides us especially through the Church's liturgy.

As a community of disciples of the risen Christ, we live out the call of baptism through personal faith in Jesus, witnessing together to the Good News of the Kingdom, co-responsible for the Mission.

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton Vision Statement



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For further resources and information visit  
[www.rok.catholic.net.au](http://www.rok.catholic.net.au) or scan the QR code

