

Attendance Changes by Local Government Area

This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee. It presents changes in Anglican church attendance from 2013 to 2023, grouping parishes into somewhat-modified Local Government Areas (LGAs), as these were defined at the time of the 2021 census.

Notes:

- For the purposes of this report, some LGAs are combined – or in the case of Hornsby, split – to try to account for cases where a church is on the boundary of two LGAs, which makes it difficult to allocate an attendance figure to a particular LGA.
- The diocesan boundaries do not align with LGA boundaries, which explains, for example, the small additions to Wingecarribee and Shoalhaven.

LGA	2013 Adult Attendance	2023 Adult Attendance	Change	%	Adjusted for Population Change
Ryde and Hunters Hill	1224	1604	380	31%	19%
Canada Bay	560	661	101	18%	16%
Blue Mountains + Lithgow (part)	1375	1501	126	9%	7%
Camden	793	1274	481	61%	7%
Woollahra and Waverley	782	813	31	4%	3%
Wollondilly	437	493	56	13%	1%
Canterbury-Bankstown	1190	1291	101	8%	0%
Randwick	1466	1377	-89	-6%	-1%
Inner West	1523	1506	-17	-1%	-2%
Bayside	609	670	61	10%	-4%
Burwood + Strathfield	304	331	27	9%	-4%
North Sydney	1301	1213	-88	-7%	-8%
Blacktown	2000	2152	152	8%	-9%
Sydney	2769	2542	-227	-8%	-9%
The Hills Shire + Hornsby west of Berowra Creek	3497	3701	204	6%	-10%
Lane Cove	277	261	-16	-6%	-14%
Parramatta	2607	2516	-91	-3%	-15%
Georges River	1849	1627	-222	-12%	-16%
Wingecarribee (plus Tallong in Goulburn-Mulwaree)	858	801	-57	-7%	-18%
Shellharbour	573	531	-42	-7%	-18%
Fairfield	641	557	-84	-13%	-18%
Sutherland	3050	2633	-417	-14%	-19%
Kiama	435	383	-52	-12%	-19%
Liverpool	894	823	-71	-8%	-20%
Ku-ring-gai	3519	2945	-574	-16%	-22%
Hawkesbury	707	576	-131	-19%	-23%

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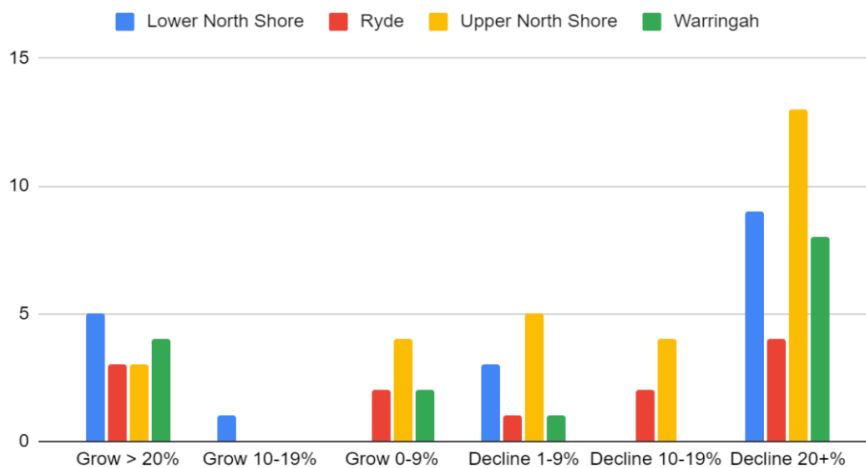
LGA	2013 Adult Attendance	2023 Adult Attendance	Change	%	Adjusted for Population Change
Shoalhaven (and Nerriga in Queanbeyan-Palerang, and Jervis Bay)	935	788	-147	-16%	-23%
Campbelltown	823	710	-113	-14%	-23%
Hornsby Shire east of Berowra Creek (Hornsby SA2)	1202	999	-203	-17%	-24%
Willoughby	1207	916	-291	-24%	-26%
Northern Beaches	2744	2120	-624	-23%	-27%
Cumberland	996	778	-218	-22%	-29%
Wollongong	2736	2077	-659	-24%	-28%
Penrith	1438	1116	-322	-22%	-30%
Mosman	389	214	-175	-45%	-45%
unincorporated	91	92	1	1%	-18%

Note: "unincorporated" refers to centres on Norfolk Island, and Lord Howe Island.

Centres by Mission Area Change 2013-2023 (>20 Adults in 2023)

This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee. It presents all centres with an average adult weekly attendance of more than 20 in 2023, that were in existence in 2013, showing how attendance has changed. All centres are classified into six categories, three of growth over 10 years (20%+, 10-19%, 0-9%), and three of decline over 10 years (20%+, 10-19%, 0-9%). The centres are then sorted by region and by mission area.

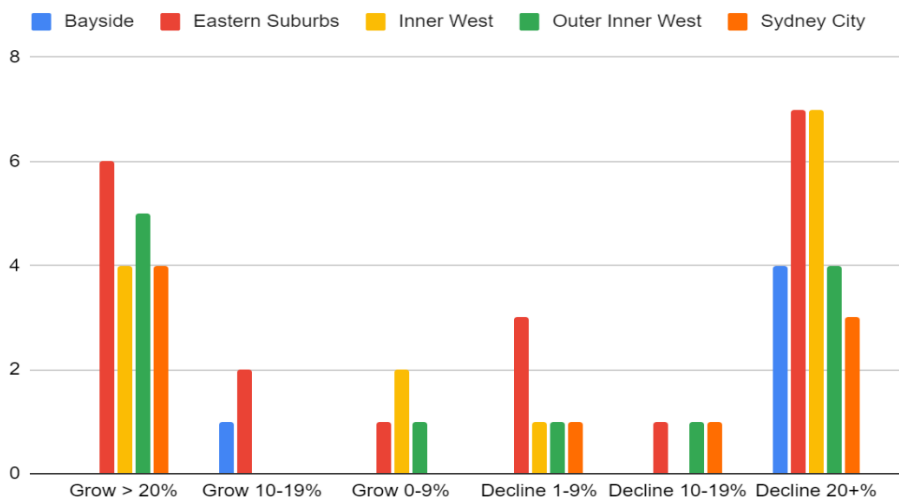
NORTHERN REGION



NORTHERN REGION

	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%
Lower North Shore	5	1	3	1	9	0
Ryde	3	0	2	1	2	4
Upper North Shore	3	0	4	5	4	13
Warringah	4	0	2	1	0	8
Northern Region	15	1	8	10	6	34

SOUTH SYDNEY

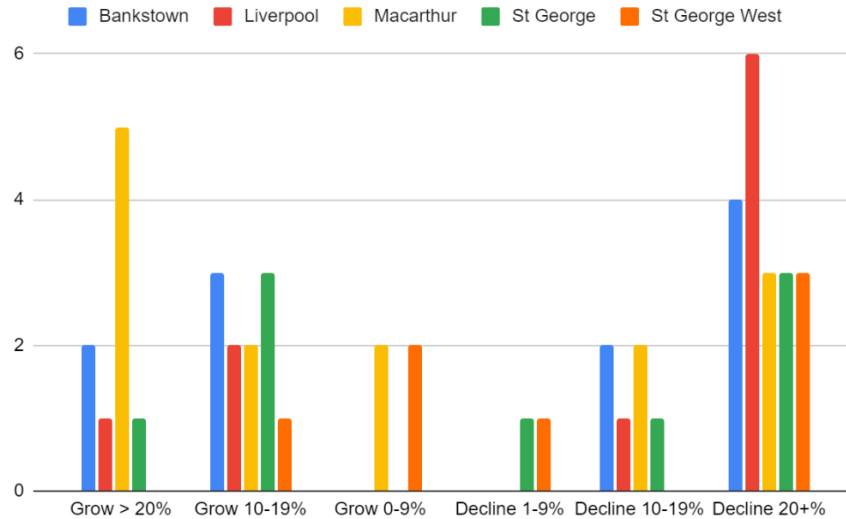


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SOUTH SYDNEY

	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%
Bayside	0	1	0	0	0	4
Eastern Suburbs	6	2	1	3	1	7
Inner West	4	0	2	1	0	7
Outer Inner West	5	0	1	1	1	4
Sydney City	4	0	0	1	1	3
South Sydney	19	3	4	6	3	25

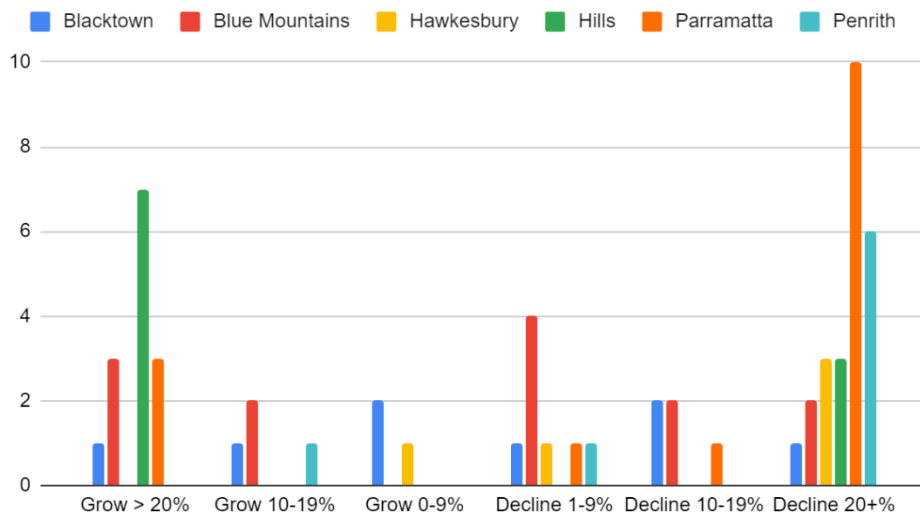
SOUTH WESTERN



SOUTH WESTERN

	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%
Bankstown	2	3	0	0	2	4
Liverpool	1	2	0	0	1	6
Macarthur	5	2	2	0	2	3
St George	1	3	0	1	1	3
St George West	0	1	2	1	0	3
South Western	9	11	4	2	6	19

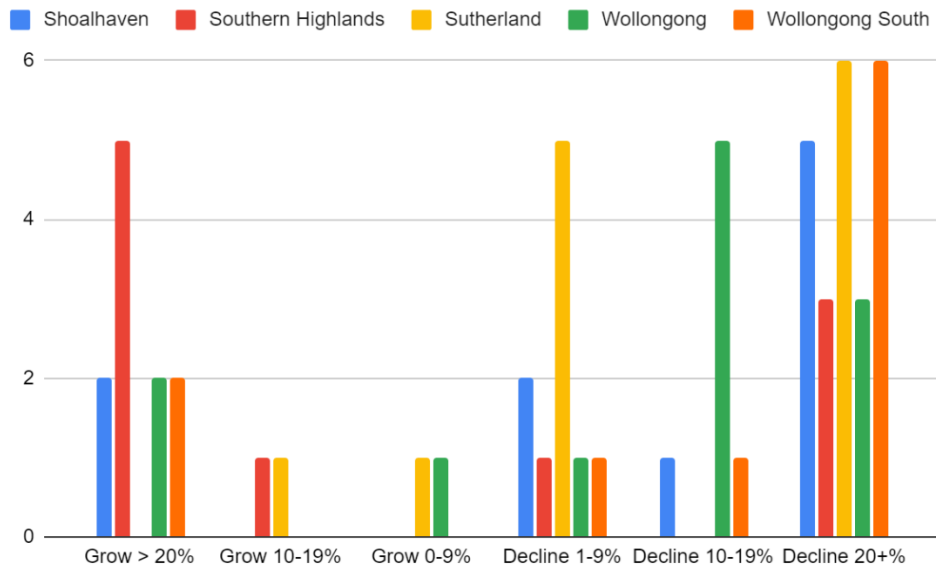
WESTERN SYDNEY



WESTERN SYDNEY

	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%
Blacktown	1	1	2	1	2	1
Blue Mountains	3	2		4	2	2
Hawkesbury			1	1		3
Hills	7					3
Parramatta	3			1	1	10
Penrith		1		1		6
Western Sydney	14	4	3	8	5	25

WOLLONGONG



WOLLONGONG

	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%
Shoalhaven	2			2	1	5
Southern Highlands	5	1		1		3
Sutherland		1	1	5		6
Wollongong	2		1	1	5	3
Wollongong South	2			1	1	6
Wollongong Region	11	2	2	10	7	23

Diocese

Diocese	Grow > 20%	Grow 10-19%	Grow 0-9%	Decline 1-9%	Decline 10-19%	Decline 20+%	Total
Northern	15	1	8	10	6	34	74
South Sydney	19	3	4	6	3	25	60
South Western	9	11	4	2	6	19	51
Western Sydney	14	4	3	8	5	25	59
Wollongong	11	2	2	10	7	23	55
Total	68	21	21	36	27	126	

Overall

110

189

Attendance Changes by Church Size: Further Analysis

This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee. It complements the analysis by church size in the report by using different methods to approach the same issue. The results below are consistent with the conclusion that, overall, the church centres at the extremes of size ('house' and 'large') experienced much more significant decline than small and medium-sized church centres. This document then probes the issue of the decline of large centres more closely.

1. Snapshot of church sizes and their total attendance in 2013 and 2023

The analysis presented in the report approaches the issue of church size categories by taking all the centres that were in a given category in 2013, and tracking how the size and adult attendance of those centres changed over the subsequent decade.

By way of contrast, the tables below present snapshots of the diocesan situation in 2013 and 2023. For example, the first table shows how many centres were in the "large" category in 2013 and how many were in the "large" category in 2023, understanding that these may be quite different groups of centres - some large centres in 2023 may have been medium-sized in 2013. Similarly, the second table shows how many total attendees were in the all "large" centres in 2013, and how many in all the "large" centres in 2023.

This shows how the "centre of gravity" of the diocese shifted from 2013 to 2023, in terms of the predominant church centre sizes, and the types of church centres more people were attending.

In terms of number of centres, by 2023, there were significantly fewer large centres compared to 2013 (8 fewer, or a drop of 38%). The next largest reduction was in house-size centres (30 fewer, or a drop of 28%), followed by medium centres (1 fewer, or a drop of 2%). Small centres have increased in number (13 more, or an increase of 6%).

Table: Number of centres by Church Size

Church Size	2013	2023	Raw Change	% Change
House (1-39)	107	77	-30	-28%
Small (40-199)	213	226	13	6%
Medium (200-399)	50	49	-1	-2%
Large (400+)	21	13	-8	-38%

In terms of attendance, the total attendance at house-size centres in 2013 was 2,216, and in 2023 was 1,277, which is a reduction of 945 adults, or 42%.

The total number of adults attending large churches dropped from 10,942 to 7,038 - a reduction of 3,904, or 36%.

The total number of people attending small and medium centres grew a little.

Table: Adult attendance in Diocese - by Church Size

Church Size	2013	% of Diocese	2023	% of Diocese	Raw Change	% Change
House (1-39)	2,216	5%	1,277	3%	-945	-42%
Small (40-199)	21,341	45%	21,827	49%	486	2%
Medium (200-399)	13,302	28%	14,450	32%	1,148	9%
Large (400+)	10,942	23%	7,038	16%	-3,904	-36%

This means that in 2023, only 16% of adults in the Diocese attended large centres (compared with 23% in 2013), and 84% of adults in the Diocese attended centres that were medium in size or smaller.

2. A closer look at the centres that were 'large' in 2013

The drop in adult numbers in our largest centres warrants closer investigation.

The average drop in adult attendance in large centres was 17%, more than 50% more than the 8% drop in both small and medium centres.

The table below shows the adult attendance data of the 21 largest centres in our diocese in 2013 (all those that were in the "large" range), and how their adult attendance changed over the subsequent 10 years.

Table: Large centres in our diocese in 2013 and their change in attendance over 10 years, sorted by size of centre in 2013.

Total for Diocese	47801	44592	-3209	-6.7%
Centre	2013	2023	Raw Change	% Change
1	841	867	26	3%
2	689	512	-177	-26%
3	685	724	39	6%
4	631	758	127	20%
5	617	332	-285	-46%
6	562	569	7	1%
7	552	420	-132	-24%
8	526	422	-104	-20%
9	508	349	-159	-31%
10	495	261	-234	-47%
11	489	384	-105	-21%
12	488	472	-16	-3%
13	472	499	27	6%
14	460	434	-26	-6%
15	450	344	-106	-24%
16	417	266	-151	-36%
17	416	238	-178	-43%
18	415	380	-35	-8%
19	412	385	-27	-7%
20	410	374	-36	-9%
21	407	261	-146	-36%
Total	10942	9251	-1691	-15.5%

Of these 21 centres, only 5 grew. 11 declined by 20% or more, 6 shrank by 30% or more and 3 shrank by 40% or more.

Because of both the size of these centres and their large percentage decrease, their decline in adult attendance has had a disproportionate impact on the overall decline of the diocese. The drop by 1,691 in these 21 centres represents 53% of the overall diocesan decline of 3,209.

However, this comparison is not entirely fair. It is perhaps better to compare these 21 centres to all the centres which declined in number. The total drop in the 189 centres that declined (excluding those with less than 20 adults) was 8,737 adult attendees; the largest 21 churches account for 19% of this drop.

A more striking result comes from considering, not the largest 21 centres in 2013, but the 20 centres whose adult attendance fell by the largest number between 2013 and 2023, most of which were large or medium. The total drop in adult attendance at these 20 centres was 2,996, which is 93% of the diocesan decline of 3,209,

or 34% of the drop taking into account only the 189 centres that declined.

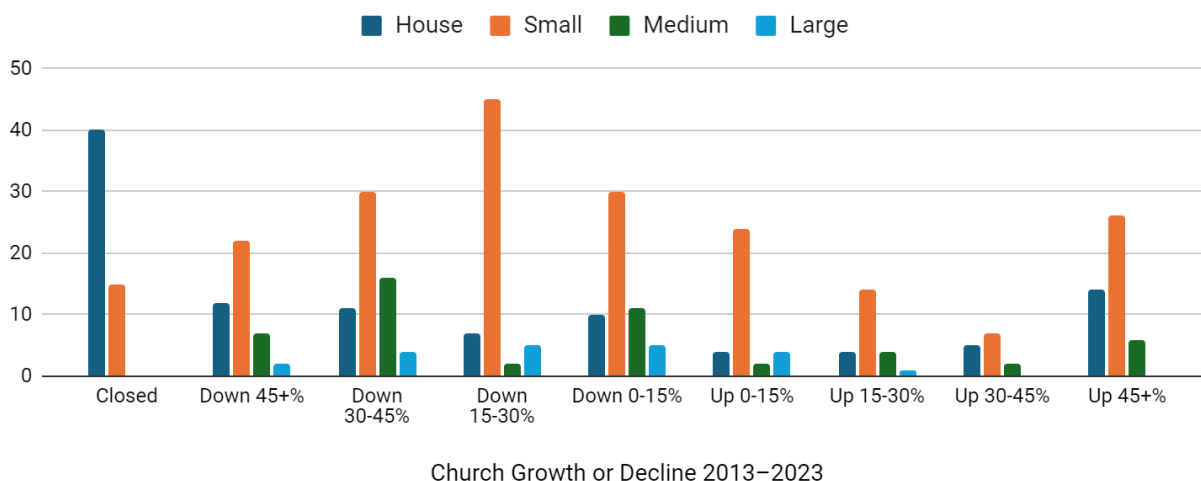
As a final way of considering the way in which centres of different sizes fared in the decade after 2013, the following table and chart group the centres of each size category into bands, depending on how much their adult attendance grew or fell.

**Table: Percentage of centres by church size category in each growth/decline band (2013-2023)
(Excludes centres that commenced after 2013)**

Church Size	Closed	Down 45+%	Down 30-45%	Down 15-30%	Down 0-15%	Up 0-15%	Up 15-30%	Up 30-45%	Up 45+%
House (1-39)	37%	11%	10%	6.5%	9%	4%	4%	5%	13%
Small (40-199)	7%	10%	14%	21%	14%	11%	7%	3%	12%
Medium (200-399)	0%	14%	32%	4%	22%	4%	8%	4%	12%
Large (400-799)	0%	9.5%	19%	24%	24%	19%	5%	0%	0%

Number of Churches by Size Categories in Growth/Decline Bands

Excludes churches that commenced after 2013



This shows that only 24% of large centres (5 centres) grew at all, as opposed to 28% of medium centres and 33% of small centres; and 4 of those 5 large centres grew only slightly, whereas there were some centres in the other categories that saw considerably more growth.

On the “decline” side of the graph, just under half of the large centres declined by up to 30%.

Church Attendance and Religious Affiliation

This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee.

Comparing trends in church attendance and broader population religious affiliation, considering all non-Christian religions together

The Religious Affiliation charts group census data into two Christian categories (“Protestant etc.” and “Catholic/Orthodox”), “Other Religions”, and “None.” Notes:

- The “Protestant etc.” category is effectively all non-Catholic/Orthodox adherents who ticked some Christian or pseudo-Christian option (like JWs and Mormons); but it is broadly Protestant.
- “None” includes both those who selected “Secular Beliefs” and those who did not state their religious affiliation.

The following charts show the change in church attendance (not population-adjusted) from 2013 to 2023 for each diocesan area, and alongside that show both *changes* in various demographic categories from the 2016 to 2021 censuses as well as *absolute figures or percentages in 2021* for the same areas.

The tables are sorted by severity of **decline in Protestant** affiliation.

Table: Change in Church Attendance (2013-2023) versus Census Religious Affiliation (2016- 2021), by Diocesan Region

Overall	CHANGE 2013 (2016) - 2023 (2021)					2021 Population Percentages			
	Church Attendance	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None
Overall	-6.7%	-4.0%	-2.0%	2.5%	3.5%	18.3%	27.4%	16.6%	37.4%
Region									
South Sydney	0.4%	-2.0%	-0.8%	0.9%	1.9%	11.5%	27.3%	12.8%	47.9%
South Western	-1.6%	-3.1%	-1.7%	3.0%	1.8%	15.0%	32.5%	25.9%	26.4%
Northern	-14.4%	-4.4%	-1.9%	1.4%	4.9%	21.9%	23.5%	9.1%	45.1%
Western Sydney	3.5%	-4.8%	-3.2%	4.5%	3.4%	19.2%	25.7%	23.3%	31.5%
Wollongong	-15.2%	-6.9%	-2.2%	0.5%	8.7%	26.2%	27.1%	3.3%	43.1%

- For the purposes of this report, some LGAs are combined – or in the case of Hornsby, split – to try to account for cases where a church is on the boundary of two LGAs, which makes it difficult to allocate an attendance figure to a particular LGA.
- The diocesan boundaries do not align with LGA boundaries, which explains, for example, the small additions to Wingecarribee and Shoalhaven.

Table: Change in Church Attendance (2013-2023) versus Census Religious Affiliation (2016- 2021), by Local Government Area (LGA)

<i>Overall</i>	CHANGE 2013 (2016) - 2023 (2021)					2021 Population Percentages			
	-6.7%	-4.0%	-2.0%	2.5%	3.5%	18.3%	27.4%	16.6%	37.4%
LGA	Church Attendance	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None
Sydney	-8%	-1.4%	0.1%	0.5%	1.8%	11%	19%	13%	67%
Randwick	-6%	-1.9%	1.2%	0.1%	1.7%	16%	40%	11%	55%
Woollahra and Waverley	4%	-2.5%	-0.8%	1.4%	1.5%	16%	27%	22%	58%
Fairfield	-13%	-2.6%	-0.2%	-1.3%	2.0%	14%	51%	36%	28%
Inner West	-1%	-2.7%	-2.5%	-0.7%	5.3%	13%	30%	9%	68%
Burwood + Strathfield	9%	-2.8%	-3.9%	5.2%	-0.5%	14%	30%	32%	43%
Canada Bay	18%	-2.9%	0.2%	1.7%	0.8%	17%	48%	12%	46%
North Sydney	-7%	-3.0%	-0.8%	0.6%	3.6%	21%	26%	9%	62%
Bayside	10%	-3.1%	-3.0%	0.6%	3.4%	15%	43%	23%	41%
Cumberland	-22%	-3.2%	-4.0%	4.4%	1.5%	14%	32%	54%	31%
Liverpool	-8%	-3.3%	-4.0%	5.5%	0.4%	20%	46%	41%	29%
Canterbury-Bankstown	8%	-3.7%	-3.5%	3.4%	2.5%	14%	40%	42%	34%
Georges River	-12%	-3.7%	-1.4%	3.4%	0.0%	20%	39%	21%	44%
Willoughby	-24%	-4.0%	-1.8%	1.5%	4.1%	22%	29%	14%	63%
Ryde and Hunters Hill	31%	-4.2%	-3.3%	1.5%	5.2%	22%	34%	15%	53%
Parramatta	-3%	-4.5%	-2.7%	3.4%	3.0%	23%	27%	31%	46%
Lane Cove	-6%	-4.7%	-3.1%	0.5%	6.4%	22%	34%	12%	59%
Mosman	-45%	-4.8%	-0.8%	0.3%	3.6%	30%	32%	5%	57%
Northern Beaches	-23%	-6.8%	-2.2%	0.2%	7.2%	30%	32%	5%	63%
Blacktown	8%	-7.1%	-6.7%	9.8%	3.2%	26%	37%	38%	34%
Hornsby Shire east of Berowra Creek (Hornsby SA2)	-17%	-7.2%	-3.7%	4.3%	5.0%	31%	26%	17%	57%
Ku-ring-gai	-16%	-7.5%	-3.5%	1.1%	7.9%	35%	24%	13%	60%
Blue Mountains + Lithgow (part)	9%	-7.8%	-3.6%	0.4%	9.5%	34%	24%	4%	65%
The Hills Shire + Hornsby west of Berowra Creek	6%	-7.9%	-4.0%	6.8%	4.6%	33%	35%	22%	43%
Campbelltown	-14%	-8.2%	-4.6%	9.0%	4.1%	30%	34%	31%	40%
Wollongong	-24%	-8.2%	-3.7%	0.8%	10.4%	29%	35%	7%	56%
Sutherland	-14%	-8.4%	-2.2%	0.4%	9.3%	33%	42%	4%	50%
Penrith	-22%	-8.7%	-4.5%	4.0%	9.1%	31%	41%	12%	49%
Kiama	-12%	-9.2%	-3.1%	0.1%	11.4%	35%	29%	2%	59%
Hawkesbury	-19%	-9.9%	-2.5%	1.4%	9.2%	39%	35%	3%	52%
Wingecarribee (plus Tallong in Goulburn-Mulwaree)	-7%	-10.2%	-2.8%	1.4%	9.3%	40%	27%	4%	55%

LGA	Church Attendance	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Orth	Other Rels	None
Shellharbour	-7%	-10.4%	-4.6%	0.4%	12.7%	33%	37%	3%	56%
Shoalhaven (and Nerriga in Queanbeyan-Palerang, and Jervis Bay)	-16%	-10.6%	-2.9%	0.4%	12.3%	36%	23%	3%	62%
Wollondilly	13%	-12.0%	-2.0%	0.7%	12.5%	40%	41%	3%	51%
Camden	61%	-12.0%	-1.4%	9.2%	6.3%	33%	50%	16%	42%
unincorporated	1%	-15.3%	-1.7%	-0.4%	16.6%	43%	13%	1%	65%

Church Attendance vs. Census Religious Affiliation

Change from 2013-2023 (LGAs) and 2016-2021 (census)

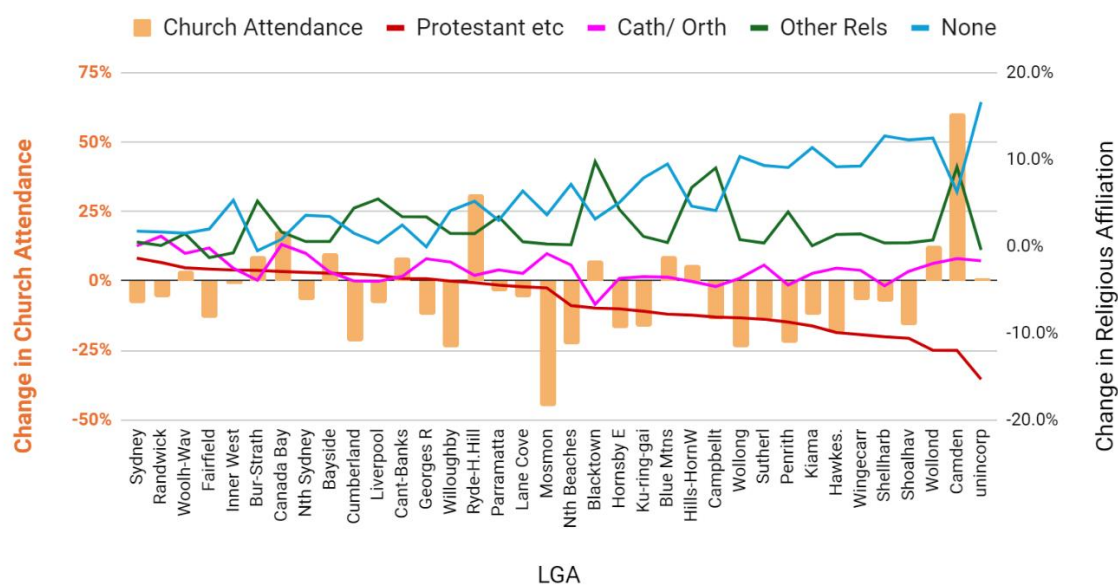


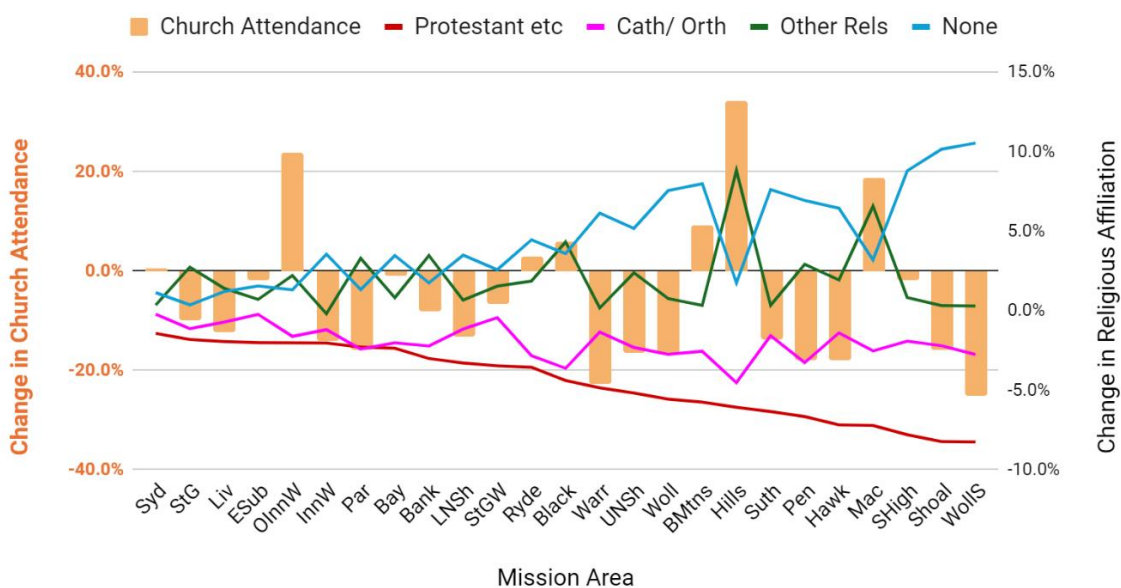
Table: Change in Church Attendance (2013-2023) versus Census Religious Affiliation (2016-2021), by Mission Area

Mission Area	CHANGE 2013 (2016) - 2023 (2021)					2021 Population Percentages			
	Church Attendance	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Ortho	Other Rels	None	Pro-testant etc	Cath/Ortho	Other Rels	None
Overall	-9%	-4.0%	-2.0%	2.5%	3.5%	18.3%	27.4%	16.6%	37.4%
Sydney City	0.6%	-1.4%	-0.2%	0.4%	1.1%	10.2%	17.5%	12.3%	59.4%
St George	-9.9%	-1.8%	-1.1%	2.7%	0.4%	11.1%	33.7%	22.0%	32.8%
Liverpool	-12.3%	-1.9%	-0.7%	1.4%	1.2%	12.7%	37.5%	28.2%	21.4%
Eastern Suburbs	-1.8%	-2.0%	-0.2%	0.7%	1.6%	12.7%	28.8%	13.4%	44.5%
Outer Inner West	23.9%	-2.0%	-1.6%	2.2%	1.3%	12.2%	32.0%	17.0%	38.4%
Inner West	-14.1%	-2.0%	-1.2%	-0.2%	3.6%	10.3%	22.8%	6.9%	59.4%
Parramatta	-15.8%	-2.3%	-2.4%	3.3%	1.3%	11.7%	22.3%	38.1%	27.6%
Bayside	-1.0%	-2.4%	-2.0%	0.8%	3.5%	10.8%	36.8%	16.3%	35.8%
Bankstown	-8.2%	-3.0%	-2.2%	3.5%	1.8%	11.3%	27.4%	37.0%	23.8%
Lower North Shore	-13.2%	-3.3%	-1.2%	0.7%	3.5%	18.0%	23.6%	8.5%	49.2%
St George West	-6.7%	-3.5%	-0.4%	1.5%	2.6%	18.7%	34.6%	11.8%	34.6%

Mission Area	Church Attendance	Protestant etc	Cath/Ortho	Other Rels	None	Protestant etc	Cath/Ortho	Other Rels	None
Ryde	2.8%	-3.6%	-2.8%	1.9%	4.5%	19.2%	25.2%	12.9%	42.3%
Blacktown	6.0%	-4.4%	-3.6%	4.3%	3.6%	19.9%	29.2%	24.2%	26.4%
Warringah	-22.7%	-4.8%	-1.3%	0.2%	6.1%	22.7%	24.7%	3.4%	48.7%
Upper North Shore	-16.5%	-5.2%	-2.3%	2.4%	5.2%	25.5%	21.2%	11.6%	41.3%
Wollongong	-16.7%	-5.6%	-2.7%	0.8%	7.6%	21.6%	27.7%	6.0%	44.4%
Blue Mountains	9.2%	-5.7%	-2.5%	0.3%	8.0%	26.9%	18.9%	2.7%	51.1%
Hills	34.2%	-6.1%	-4.5%	8.8%	1.8%	20.2%	25.2%	25.6%	28.8%
Sutherland	-13.7%	-6.3%	-1.6%	0.3%	7.6%	25.8%	32.0%	2.9%	39.0%
Penrith	-18.0%	-6.7%	-3.3%	2.9%	6.9%	23.2%	30.8%	9.0%	36.8%
Hawkesbury	-17.8%	-7.2%	-1.4%	1.9%	6.5%	29.2%	28.0%	3.4%	38.7%
Macarthur	18.9%	-7.2%	-2.5%	6.6%	3.2%	22.3%	29.8%	18.4%	29.3%
Southern Highlands	-1.8%	-7.8%	-1.9%	0.8%	8.8%	31.3%	23.8%	2.6%	42.1%
Shoalhaven	-15.7%	-8.2%	-2.2%	0.3%	10.2%	29.3%	18.6%	2.1%	49.8%
Wollongong South	-25.0%	-8.2%	-2.8%	0.3%	10.5%	26.5%	27.0%	2.2%	44.0%

Church Attendance vs. Census Religious Affiliation

Change from 2013-2023 (Mission Areas) and 2016-2021 (census)



Further Analysis of Attendance and Socioeconomic Disadvantage

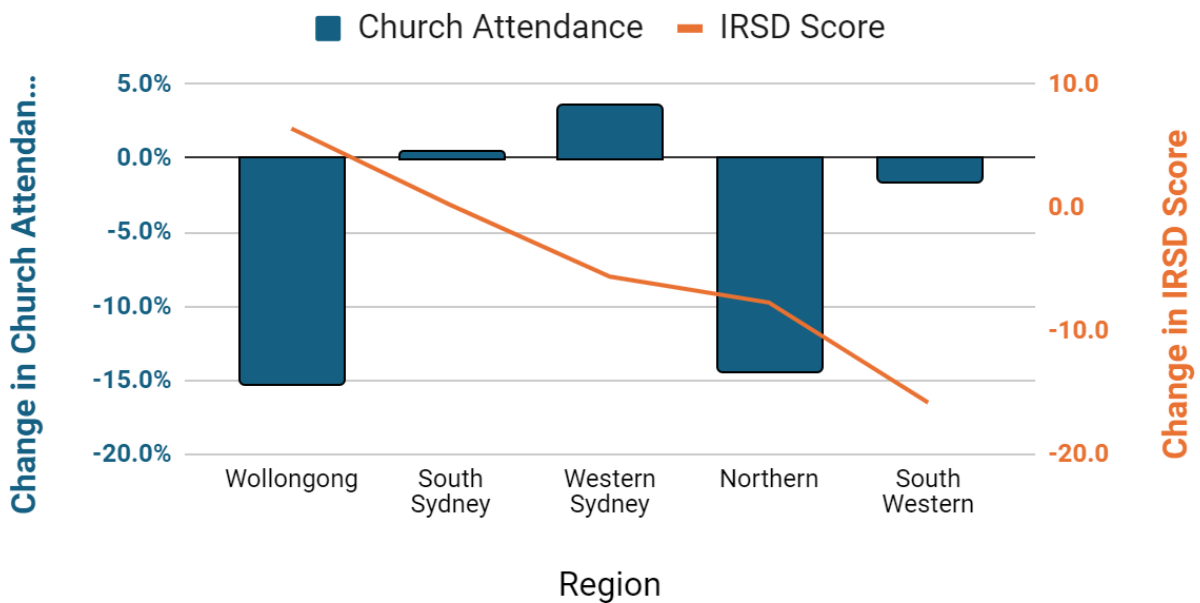
This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee.

The socioeconomic disadvantage charts show both change in the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (**IRSD**) score and each area's absolute score in 2021. They are sorted by change in IRSD, from positive (rising further out of disadvantage) to negative (falling into greater disadvantage).

Region	CHANGE 2013 (2016) - 2023 (2021)		
	Church Attendance	IRSD Score	2021 IRSD Score
Wollongong	-15.2%	6.4	1026
Northern	-14.4%	-7.7	1085
Western Sydney	3.5%	-5.6	995
South Sydney	0.4%	0.2	1046
South Western	-1.6%	-15.8	931

Regional Attendance vs. IRSD Score

Change from 2013-2023 (churches) and 2016-2021 (census)

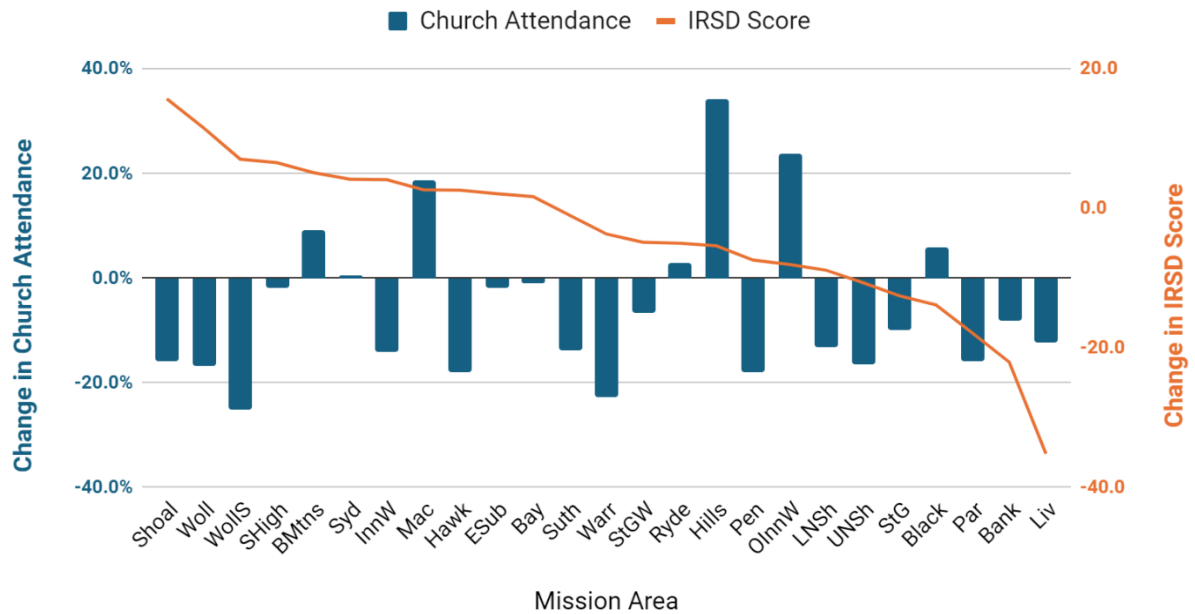


1.1. SEIFA Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD): By Mission Area

Mission Area	MA Abbrev	CHANGE 2013 (2016) - 2023 (2021)		2021 IRSD Score
		Church Attendance	IRSD Score	
Shoalhaven	Shoal	-15.7%	15.7	979
Wollongong	Woll	-16.7%	11.6	996
Wollongong South	WollS	-25.0%	7.1	1001
Southern Highlands	SHigh	-1.8%	6.6	1039
Blue Mountains	BMtns	9.2%	5.1	1025
Sydney City	Syd	0.6%	4.2	1024
Inner West	InnW	-14.1%	4.1	1059
Macarthur	Mac	18.9%	2.7	994
Hawkesbury	Hawk	-17.8%	2.6	1031
Eastern Suburbs	ESub	-1.8%	2.1	1066
Bayside	Bay	-1.0%	1.7	1015
Sutherland	Suth	-13.7%	-1.0	1079
Warringah	Warr	-22.7%	-3.7	1089
St George West	StGW	-6.7%	-4.9	1041
Ryde	Ryde	2.8%	-5.0	1059
Hills	Hills	34.2%	-5.4	1080
Penrith	Pen	-18.0%	-7.4	992
Outer Inner West	OInnW	23.9%	-8.0	1029
Lower North Shore	LNSh	-13.2%	-8.9	1092
Upper North Shore	UNSh	-16.5%	-10.6	1093
St George	StG	-9.9%	-12.5	968
Blacktown	Black	6.0%	-13.8	937
Parramatta	Par	-15.8%	-17.9	945
Bankstown	Bank	-8.2%	-22.0	895
Liverpool	Liv	-12.3%	-35.2	870

Mission Area Attendance vs. Census IRSD Score

Change from 2013-2023 (churches) and 2016-2021 (census)



Observations on SEIFA IRSD:

1. The top 4 mission areas for pulling themselves out of disadvantage are all in the Wollongong region. The other Wollongong mission area (Sutherland) has dropped marginally, though it is by far the least disadvantaged mission area in Wollongong region.
2. Overall, the most socioeconomically disadvantaged mission areas are in the South Western, Western, and Wollongong regions.
3. Combining these: The regions most affected by secularisation are Wollongong, followed by the Northern region. From the SEIFA Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage, in Wollongong this has been accompanied by an alleviation of disadvantage (life becoming "better" on average).



Diocesan Mission Indicators NCLS 2021 Update

5 March 2024

Prepared by Dr John Bellamy

Introduction

The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is undertaken every five years in Australia, involving over 250,000 churchgoers aged 15 years or more. The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has always had high levels of participation in this survey. Consequently, the survey is an important source of reliable statistics on church life and mission for the Diocese, and is useful both for evaluation and strategic planning, at the Diocesan, regional and parish levels.

Previous statistics from the 2011 and 2016 NCLS were used both to set measurable goals for the 2020 Diocesan Mission and to track progress towards those goals. A 2019 report found that it was unlikely most of the goals would be met by 2021 when the next NCLS was expected to take place.¹

The implementation of the 2021 NCLS survey was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2020 and 2021, many congregations across Australia had been unable to meet in person due to Government lockdowns. Even after these lockdowns had ended, it took many months for congregations to return to normal operation. Consequently, while the survey was first deployed in November 2021 in the Diocese, the survey remained open until July 2022 to maximise participation. In fact, most surveys were completed by Sydney Anglicans between February and June 2022. More than 25,000 Sydney Anglicans took part in the 2021 NCLS.

The following report:

- Provides updated 2021 NCLS results for Diocesan Mission indicators,
- Compares the 2021 NCLS results with both the 2020 Diocesan Mission goals and the 2016 NCLS results, and
- Provides breakdowns of the results for the five regions of the Diocese for both 2016 and 2021.

In relation to the regional breakdowns, care should be taken in comparing 2016 and 2021 results due to changes made to the regional boundaries in 2021.

2021 NCLS Results compared with Diocesan Mission Goals

Table 1 shows that results from the 2021 NCLS for the Diocese all fell short of the 2020 Diocesan Mission Goals. A 2019 report had projected the likely size of these shortfalls; however, Table 1 shows that the disruption following the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these predicted shortfalls. Other indicators, such as the percentage of people born in a non-English-speaking country, failed to achieve the Mission Goal even though this had been projected as likely to occur.

However, this does not mean to say that there has not been progress, despite the disruption caused by the pandemic. Table 1 shows that 4 of the 8 Diocesan Mission indicators improved or remained static between 2016 and 2021: namely, attenders talking intentionally about their faith with others (+1.4%); attenders spending time in devotions every day or nearly every day (+3.9%); attenders being encouraged to use their gifts and skills (+0.1%) and the retention of attenders' children aged over 15 years (+1%). The sharing of faith with others is in line with the long-term trend. The increase in devotional activity may reflect the increase in the average age of attenders over 15 years, from 49 years in 2016 to 52 years in 2021; the level of devotional activity increases with age, from 28% of 15-19-year-olds having daily devotions to 68% of attenders over 80 years.

¹ Bellamy, J. (2019) *Diocesan Mission – Data Projections to 2021*, Report to the Strategy and Research Group, April 2019, Anglicare Social Policy & Research Unit.

**Table 1: Anglican Sydney Results for 2021 NCLS
Compared with 2016 NCLS and 2020 Diocesan Mission
Goals**

DIOCESAN MISSION PRIORITY		DIOCESAN AVERAGE	DIOCESAN AVERAGE	CHANGE	MISSION GOAL	MISSION GOAL
Priority	Measure	2016 NCLS ¹	2021 NCLS ²	2016-21	2020 Goal	SHORT-FALL
Priority 1: Reach the lost	Members who talk intentionally about faith with others	19.1%	20.5%	+1.4%	22%	-1.5%
	Members who invite others to church	39.3%	32.1%	-7.2%	45%	-12.9%
	Newcomers	7.9%	5.4%	-2.5%	12%	-6.6%
Priority 2: Deepen Spiritual Maturity	Much growth in faith among members	46.4%	38.6%	-7.8%	60%	-21.4%
	Devotions every day/ most days among members	42.8%	46.7%	+3.9%	50%	-3.3%
Priority 3: Equip members to exercise gifts	Use of gifts and skills encouraged to a great extent among members	24.6%	24.7%	+0.1%	27%	-2.3%
Priority 4: Respond to the changing face of society	Level of Non-English Speaking Background attenders	18.0%	16.7%	-1.3%	20%	-3.3%
	Retention of member's children in church (pct aged 15 yrs+ and living at home)	63%	64%	+1%	70%	-6%

1. Powell, R., Pepper, M., Hancock, N., Sterland, S., & Bellamy, J. (2016). *2016 NCLS Attender Sample Survey Dataset AANS*. NCLS Research: Sydney, Australia.

2. Powell, R., Sterland, S., Gan, C., Pepper, M., & Hourihan, F. (2021). *2021 NCLS Attender Sample Survey Dataset AANS*. [Data file]. Sydney: NCLS Research.

Breakdown of Results by Region

Table 2 shows differences between Diocesan Regions in 2016 compared with 2021. A notable feature is that regional differences recorded in 2016 tended to persist in 2021. For instance, in relation to members intentionally talking about their faith with others, the highest levels recorded in 2016 were in the Georges River Region (22.4%) and the lowest in the Northern Region (17.1%). Similarly, in 2021, the highest levels were again recorded in the South Western Region (previously Georges River) (23.7%) and the lowest levels in the Northern Region (19.2%).

One of the most substantial regional changes has been the decrease in people born in non- English-speaking countries in the South Western region, from 32.4% in 2016 to 19.9% in 2021. A major explanatory factor for this change would be alterations to regional boundaries between the surveys,

with the reconfigured South Western region losing some multi-cultural, inner urban parishes to other regions while at the same time picking up large parts of south-western Sydney such as Campbelltown and Camden.

Table 2: Anglican Sydney Results for 2021 NCLS compared with 2016 NCLS By Region								
DIOCESAN MISSION PRIORITY		NCLS YEAR	DIOCESE	REGION				
Priority	Measure		Overall	Northern	South Sydney	South Western ¹	Western	W'gong
P1	Members who talk intentionally about faith with others	2016	19.1%	17.1%	19.1%	22.4%	20.3%	18.3%
		2021	20.5%	19.2%	21.9%	23.7%	20.4%	19.6%
	Members who invite others to church	2016	39.3%	37.4%	42.9%	41.6%	39.9%	37.6%
		2021	32.1%	30.8%	35.9%	33.4%	32.9%	28.8%
	Newcomers	2016	7.9%	6.7%	10.4%	8.8%	8.2%	7.0%
		2021	5.4%	4.9%	7.7%	5.1%	5.2%	4.5%
P2	Much growth in faith among members	2016	46.4%	42.8%	47.0%	51.0%	48.0%	46.4%
		2021	38.6%	36.1%	40.2%	40.8%	40.9%	37.0%
	Devotions every day/most days among members	2016	42.8%	42.2%	41.7%	44.4%	41.6%	44.9%
		2021	46.7%	46.6%	45.1%	49.0%	45.2%	48.6%
P3	Use of gifts and skills encouraged to a great extent among members	2016	24.6%	22.3%	25.1%	28.7%	26.1%	23.1%
		2021	24.7%	22.6%	27.3%	29.3%	25.1%	22.2%
P4	Level of Non-English Speaking Background attenders	2016	18.0%	17.3%	24.1%	32.4%	19.6%	6.6%
		2021	16.7%	15.7%	21.4%	19.9%	21.8%	5.2%
	Retention of member's children in church (pct aged 15 yrs+ and living at home)	2016	63%	63%	61%	62%	64%	64%
		2021	64%	63%	62%	63%	66%	64%

1. South Western Region was the Georges River Region in 2016

Attendance Change 2017-2022

This document accompanies the report of the Attendance Patterns Committee. The left column provides a range of indicators used in the National Church Life Survey (**NCLS**). There were 284 centres that participated in the NCLS in 2016 and 2022, and whose attendance data is available for 2017 and 2022. These centres have been sorted into five categories, one of growth, and four categories of decline (noting that in 2022 attendance was still significantly impacted by Covid). Each figure is the average for all centres in that category.

Note: “ns” indicates no significant correlation.

	Growth	Decline 0-13%	Decline 14-25%	Decline 26-40%	Decline 40%+	Correlation (r)
New Arrivals						
Newcomers (Mean %)	7.0%	7.4%	5.1%	4.7%	3.9%	ns
Transfers (Mean %)	23.7%	15.7%	13.5%	16.0%	15.1%	0.29
Switchers (Mean %)	12.2%	9.5%	9.8%	8.0%	8.0%	0.25
New Arrivals (all types)	42.9%	32.6%	28.4%	28.7%	27.1%	0.36
Age Profile						
Average Age (Mean years)	52.7	56.5	59.9	58.8	59.1	-0.18
Mission Indicators						
Sharing faith intentional (Mean%)	22.4%	18.6%	21.2%	20.5%	19.1%	ns
Inviting to church (Mean %)	36.0%	31.3%	30.9%	29.0%	26.7%	0.21
Much growth in faith (Mean %)	38.6%	38.9%	40.0%	37.7%	32.2%	0.12
Devotions daily/most days (Mean%)	48.7%	48.4%	53.4%	49.1%	52.4%	ns
Gifts and skills – great extent	29.8%	24.8%	23.7%	23.4%	22.0%	0.24
NESB Country of birth (Mean %)	17.1%	11.1%	15.4%	17.8%	10.5%	ns
Attender children 15yrs+ going to church (anywhere) (Mean %)	58.3%	54.3%	56.0%	51.8%	62.7%	ns
Other Indicators						
Preaching helpful to life (Mean %)	43.0%	41.5%	38.9%	34.7%	33.3%	0.18

	Growth	Decline 0-13%	Decline 14-25%	Decline 26-40%	Decline 40%+	Correlation (r)
Growth in understanding of God at church – Always (Mean %)	42.3%	39.8%	39.7%	34.8%	32.0%	0.18
Being challenged to take action through church – Always (Mean %)	30.7%	26.4%	25.3%	23.1%	22.2%	0.22
Strongly committed to church's vision/goals (Mean %)	54.9%	47.8%	49.4%	42.5%	38.1%	0.34
Confident vision/goals are achievable (Mean %)	51.0%	45.1%	41.3%	36.0%	32.8%	0.33
Church is always ready to try something new – Strongly agree (Mean %)	24.5%	18.0%	17.8%	19.3%	14.9%	0.21
Strong growing sense of belonging (Mean %)	50.1%	48.1%	47.0%	44.5%	39.3%	0.25