



22nd February 2011

**2011 National Church Life Survey
An Opportunity for Denominations to Customise**

During 2011 and beyond, the NCLS Research team is pleased to be serving Australian churches through the 2011 National Church Life Survey (2011 NCLS). One of the new features in this fifth National Church Life Survey is the opportunity for denominations to customise the Attender Survey, including denominational-specific questions for their churches, as part of the 2011 NCLS.

The purpose of this letter is to further outline this customised opportunity for denominations as part of the 2011 NCLS and seek a final firm commitment by 11th March. The design of survey questions will need to take place during the next two months (March-April). NCLS researchers are ready to support you with this, if you wish to proceed.

Features of this offer are:

- Space in the main Attender Survey to fit denominational-specific questions
- Attenders in churches of your denomination complete these questions
- Design assistance provided by NCLS Research (eg Sample Question Catalogue)
- \$1000 per question
- Results provided to local churches compared to denominational results
- Denominational leaders receive summary report of results with charts showing variations by age, gender, education, etc

If you do not take up this option of additional questions, your attenders will complete the standard Attender survey, which is shorter than in 2006. Care has been taken not to compromise the evaluation of health, vitality and mission.

Timeline

2009-2010	NCLS Research invites denominations to consider opportunity
2010	Denominations made expressions of interest
2011	
By 11 th March	Denomination to provide final confirmation re adopting this option. Denomination to nominate 'Research Working Group' and 'Research Liaison'
Mid April	Denominational Survey questions drafted
End April	Surveys designed
May	Surveys printed
Jun – Aug	Surveys packed and posted to churches
Sep – Nov	Surveys completed by churches
2012 - First half	Profiles returned to churches including denominational results.

More detailed information is provided in the following pages.

The Opportunity: in more detail

One of the innovations for the 2011 National Church Life Survey (2011 NCLS) is to offer the opportunity to denominations to create their own customised survey for attenders in their local churches.

You (or someone who attended a 2011 NCLS briefing session during 2009 or 2010) expressed an interest in this option.

The purpose of this letter is to follow up this particular aspect of the 2011 NCLS – denominational customisation. We are seeking your final confirmation regarding whether this is an option you wish to take up.

How will it work?

The standard NCLS Attender Survey is 4 x A4 pages. NCLS Research has reduced this standard set of questions – called the ‘Core Survey’. There is some room in a column on the ‘back page’ of the survey form for your own questions.

If you are interested in using this space for questions for your own denomination, then we ask that you arrange a ‘Research working group’ and nominate a liaison person. NCLS Research will work with you, through the liaison person, to develop valid survey items.

How are the survey questions decided upon?

The issues to be addressed are up to you. We assume you will consult with others in your denomination as appropriate.

To give you ideas, NCLS Research will provide a sample Question Catalogue, which is a selection of questions from previous NCLS surveys that might spark interest.

The questions need to have closed-ended response options, rather than open-ended or free text. That is, respondents need to choose from a list of options, or they need to record their position on a range (such as ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’). They cannot write in any answers.

The number of questions depends on the length and design of questions. It is likely to be somewhere between 5 to 10 questions.

NCLS Research reserves the right to:

- design the final wording of the commissioned survey item
- refuse any survey item

How much?

This offer to denominations is for \$1000 per question. (Other groups commissioning questions in the 2011 NCLS will be charged \$1500 per question).

Denominations and Regional customisation

Our strong preference is to work with denominations at a national level. (Eg a 'Survey for Baptist Attenders'). The advantages are that:

- it provides a broader and stronger foundation for any future research
- it promotes collaboration: questions relevant to one region are often useful to another
- it is more cost-effective for all
- it is more straightforward from a logistics perspective.

However, we will take expressions of interest from regions (eg dioceses or states). Once we have confirmed interest from various groups, we will review what is viable and discuss with relevant parties. It will be important to ensure that a sufficient sample of local churches is taking part in a region or diocese for this process to work. In some cases there will need to be a negotiation between a national approach and regional preferences.

What are the outcomes?

Denominations receive:

1) Feedback to every participating local church in their Church Life Profile

A unique feature of this offer is that it is not simply a sample of attenders. Virtually all church attenders in your denomination's local churches will complete these questions. This means that results can be produced for each local church.

In the 2011 Church Life Profile, there will be new pages included that show the local church results compared to the whole denomination.

See Appendix A for a sample of what one of these pages may look like.

2) Commissioned Question Reports for Denominational Leaders

Denominational leaders will receive a summary report showing the overall results for each question and the variations by age, gender, education, etc. An initial 4 page sample of a Commissioned Question Report is attached in Appendix B. The final report is likely to be more extensive – perhaps 8 pages.

3) Options for further research

If further analysis and reports are desired, then the following options are available

- a) *Researchers*. It is possible to approach NCLS researchers and commission them to conduct further analysis. Alternatively, a research licence can be applied for by the commissioning body so that data can be made available to other researchers.
- b) *Research Licence*: A licence will be granted by the NCLS Research Steering Committee upon receipt and approval of a research project proposal from the commissioning body. The commissioned dataset would not be released to any external researchers without the written permission of the commissioning body or representative.
- c) *Fees*: There will be no further charge to the commissioning body for access to the items in the relevant denominational survey dataset. Fees for researcher time would depend on the arrangements with NCLS researchers or external researchers.

Timeline

The timeline is as follows:

2010 NCLS Research invites denominations to consider opportunity
Denominations made expressions of interest

2011

By 11th March Denomination to provide final confirmation re adopting this option.

Denomination to nominate 'Research Working Group' and 'Research Liaison' person for NCLS researchers to work with

By mid April Denominational Survey questions drafted

By end April Surveys laid out

May Surveys printed

Jun – Aug Surveys packed and posted to churches

Sep – Nov Surveys completed by churches

First half 2012 Profiles returned to churches including denominational results.

While you (or someone in your denomination) previously provided an expression of interest in this option of denominational customisation, we will need a firm and final commitment at this time. Timing is now critical. The NCLS Research team is working very hard on the survey design of multiple surveys. Most of the design work will need to be completed by the end of March in order to be ready for printing and distribution to churches later this year.

If we have not heard from you, an NCLS team member will call you in the week starting 7th March to confirm your position. If you choose to proceed with this option in the 2011 NCLS, then we would appreciate knowing who the 'Research Liaison' person will be for us to work with.

We have offered denominational customisation as one of the new options for 2011, with the hope that it is one more way that we can better serve leaders across the churches. Thank you for considering this option.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ruth Powell
Director, NCLS Research



2011 National Church Life Survey - www.2011ncls.org.au
Edward Clancy Building, ACU, 167 Albert Rd, Strathfield
PO Box A2178 Sydney South NSW 1235
p: + 61 2 8267 4394
f: + 61 2 9267 7316
w: www.ncls.org.au

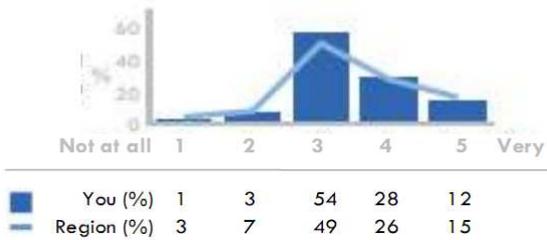
Appendix A: Sample of the 'Denominational Commissioned Question' page in a local Church Life Profile. (Attached)

Appendix B: Sample of the 'Denominational Commissioned Question' Reports. Each question will have its own report in an 8 page format showing overall results as well as a series of cross-tabulations. (In Separate document)

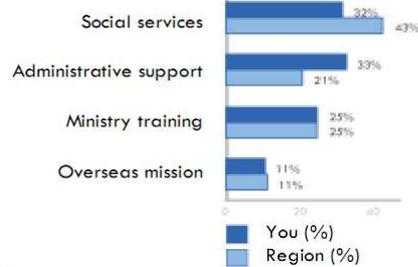
Denominational Commissioned Questions

DETAILED REVIEW

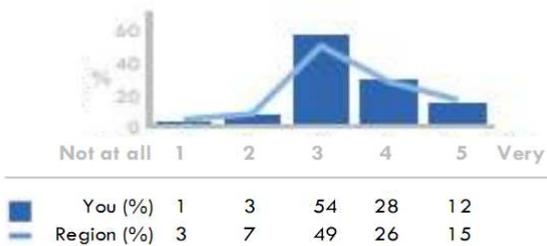
[Question title 1: How important is
lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur?]



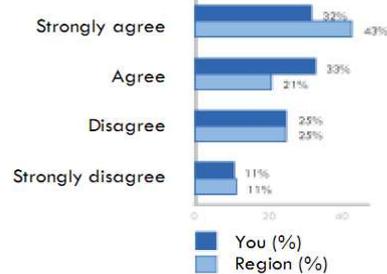
[Question title 2: What would you consider....
lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur?]



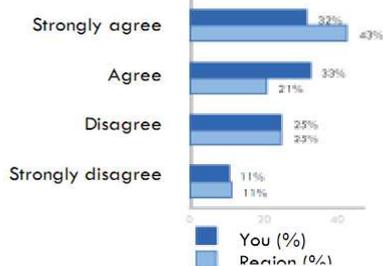
[Question title 3: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam?]



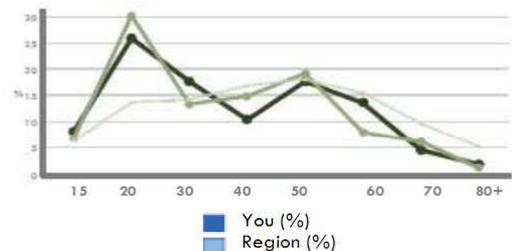
[Question title 4: Agree or disagree: Lorem
ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing.]



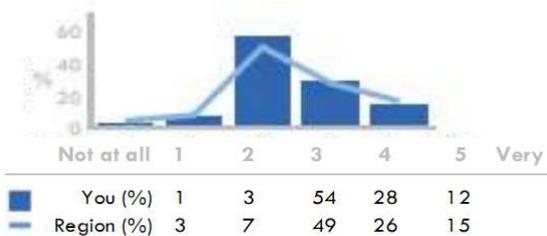
[Question title 5: I have a strong sense of
in my denomination.]



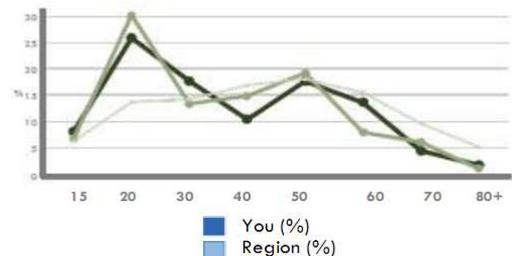
[Question title 6: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam?]



[Question title 7: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam?]



[Question title 8: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam?]



You in 2011 Community Church, Churchville (ZZ100007, 99 forms)
Region in 2011 Christian Denomination (ZZ000000, 14 389 forms)

NCLS Research P. 02 8267 4394
PO Box A2178, Sydney South NSW, 1235
www.ncls.org.au E. info@ncls.org.au