

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Australia's Largest Church Life Survey Returns in 2026

21 May 2025

The Board and Staff of NCLS Research are pleased to announce that the **2026 National Church Life Survey (2026 NCLS)** will take place in late 2026.



This Australia-wide initiative, conducted by **NCLS Research**, is expected to once again engage **thousands of churches across more than 20 denominations**. Since its inception in 1991, the NCLS has been held every five years, with the 2026 survey marking **35 years of continuous research** into church and community life. It remains the **largest and longest running survey of its kind in the world**.

"The last NCLS was during COVID-19, which makes it so important to check across diverse contexts about what is actually happening in church life," said **Dr Ruth Powell**, Director of NCLS Research. "We will continue our mission to provide credible research, to identify signs of hope and nurture life. We are also keen to partner with others to try innovative approaches to this national project".

The 2026 NCLS will offer a comprehensive snapshot of:

- The role of faith in individual lives
- The place of local churches within their communities
- The vitality of churches at both local and denominational levels.

Church leaders across denominations **have voiced strong support** for the upcoming survey:

"I believe it's vital we continue with the 2026 survey, to listen to the voices of our congregations, understand where we are growing, and discern where we are being called to change," said **Rev Mark Wilson**, National Ministries Director, Australian Baptist Ministries. "The 2026 survey will give us a clear and honest picture of church life. The insights it offers are essential for shaping a healthy and mission-focused future for the church."

"The NCLS is an important tool for church communities to use. It provides an insight into the particular features relevant to each congregation," explained **Fr Brian Lucas**, National Director, Catholic Mission – Australia. "It gives important insights into the faith experience and attitudes of church attenders in Australia."

"The NCLS highlights the key elements driving a thriving church community. It is an invaluable tool for future mission planning," added **Ms Susan King**, Head of Advocacy & Research, Anglicare.

The NCLS encourages **active participation in a positive, inclusive review process**, helping churches discern their direction and establish a life-giving vision for the future.

For more information, visit **2026ncls.org.au**. For additional comment contact Dr Ruth Powell, Director, NCLS Research. p: +61 2 9139 2525 e: info@ncls.org.au