

**Plenary Submission from Women's Consultation in the
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn**

Church	
We believe:	
1	the church is graced by the Spirit, the pilgrim People of God, lay and ordained, women and men, called through their baptism to be “light of the world and salt of the earth”(LG 9). Each one is involved in the mission of living in the reign of God, by lives of justice, mercy, love and peace.
2	However, there is profound disappointment with the institutional church, and an urgent need for change and renewal.
We believe:	
3	that church renewal begins with inspired leadership and the transformation of each member as they encounter Jesus and are empowered to share the Gospel in the world.
4	the following are major areas where change and renewal must occur. There is an urgent need for a committed national plan of action within nominated timeframes supported by communication channels to reach all to Pilgrim People.
Governance	
We believe:	
5	Vatican II called for full participation of the People of God in the life of the church. It called for a collegial and servant style of governance and leadership throughout the church, in particular between the Pope, the Bishops, the priests and laity
6	There is a strong culture of clericalism in the church, and a lack of transparency and accountability at national, diocesan and parish levels.
We recommend:	
7	Governance structures and decision-making at national, diocesan and parish levels be reviewed and changed to: honour the principles of collegiality, transparency, accountability, equality and servant leadership.
8	Canon law to be revised and changed to support this renewal, and these new structures.
9	The selection process for the appointment of Bishops should include input from a variety of people across the local church.
10	A National Conference of the Laity be established with the power to make decisions in collaboration with the National Bishops Conference. Such a Conference to represent multi-cultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, men and women.
11	Elected and representative Diocesan Pastoral Councils be compulsory in every Diocese. These should establish training protocols, ethical and procedural standards of operation for all parishes.
12	Suitably qualified women and men be appointed to fulfil a wide range of parish roles to support and compliment the pastoral and sacramental role of the priest.
13	Parish Pastoral Councils, with a clear role, powers and responsibilities, be established in every Parish.
14	Promote and encourage women and young people in key liturgical roles such as deacons and acolytes.
15	Begin a serious, church-wide discernment working towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a change to the requirement for celibacy in ordination b) consideration for a more active role for former priests c) the full equality of women in the Church.

Inclusion	
We believe:	
16	<p>a) Our church is hierarchical and patriarchal. All roles and positions of governance and leadership should be open to qualified women and men equally.</p> <p>b) The church needs to be open to diversity in all areas of its life. The experience and knowledge of women and young people must be heard.</p>
We recommend:	
17	Practices of consultation, prayer, deep listening and respectful dialogue in order to develop a culture of collaboration and change.
18	All the baptised should be welcomed and supported to participate in the sacramental life of the church, including the aged, young people, divorced, remarried, LGBTQI, indigenous, disabled, those from minority cultures, refugees, and those who have experienced abuse.
19	All have the right to participate in the Third Rite of Reconciliation.
20	The use of inclusive and gender neutral language in public liturgy, prayer and other communications.
21	The church take clear steps to be enriched by the spirituality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Education and Faith Formation	
We believe:	
22	In light of the developments in Catholic theology since Vatican II, faith development and ongoing adult education need to be prioritised.
We recommend:	
23	<p>a) Adult faith formation and catechesis programmes needs to be funded, developed and implemented cooperatively in each diocese across Australia. These should reflect Gospel values, the principles of adult education and use the potential of current technology.</p> <p>b) Priority be given to revitalising the ongoing faith formation for teachers in Catholic schools</p>
We believe:	
24	The main focus of the work of the priest is pastoral and sacramental. Some priests lack relevant life experience and communication skills. There is a need for ongoing formation, mentoring, training and supervision for their role.
We recommend:	
25	Representative and inclusive Seminary Boards be established with oversight of Seminary formation and education programmes. Appropriate input should be sought from a broad range of church and academic institutions.
26	Priests should have appropriate on-going education, formation, spiritual direction and supervision available to them throughout their lives.