



2021 National Church Life Survey

Arrangements with Denominations

2021

The purpose of this document is to outline the arrangements between denominational partners and NCLS Research for the 2021 National Church Life Survey project.

1 Definitions

Local church = any individual parish or congregation or regular gathering for Christian worship

Location = the local church at a specific physical street address

Cluster = a group of churches that are clustered together for governance, leadership or administrative purposes (e.g. parish, multi-centre, multi-campus).

Region = any collection of local churches (usually geographically based and of the same denomination) that are grouped together for administrative or leadership or denominational purposes – e.g. a Diocese, a Synod, a Presbytery, a State, a Region.

2 About the 2021 National Church Life Survey

- a. As in previous Surveys the 2021 Survey will be conducted at a local church level and will be comprised of a number of survey instruments including:
 - **Church Census** (previously Operations Survey) –an audit of the local church’s programs, groups, context, land, etc. which is filled out by one person (usually an administrator) in the local church.
 - **Leaders Survey** for those exercising leadership in the particular local church
 - **Attender Survey** for church attenders aged 15+
 - **Children Survey** for church attenders aged under 15 years of age (aimed at ages 8-14)
 - **Local Community Survey (aka Parish Community Survey)**. for those in the community who may not be regular churchgoers.
- b. Regions and Denominations may commission their own questions in a customised Attender Survey. NCLS Research will assist Regional Coordinators to shape these questions professionally.

3 Regional Coordinators

- a. Every Region with local churches participating in the Survey will appoint a Regional Coordinator that NCLS Research will work through. As a general rule, where possible, NCLS Research will not work with individual local churches, but only through the Regional Coordinator.
- b. NCLS Research will maintain contact with the Regional Coordinator and will generally channel local church information, resources and promotional material through them.
- c. Regional Coordinators will liaise with NCLS Research to ensure that NCLS Research’s list of local churches of the Region is accurate.
- d. Unless other arrangements are made with NCLS Research, Regional Coordinators will oversee and/or monitor the:
 - ordering of Survey packages by participating local churches of the Region
 - timing of the Survey for local churches within the Survey period
 - return of the Surveys to NCLS Research by participating local churches
 - payment to NCLS Research
 - processes that participating local churches use to integrate the survey findings into their life and planning when they receive the Church Life Packs from NCLS Research.
- e. NCLS Research will resource Regional Coordinators to assist participating local churches to use their Survey Profiles to best advantage, through the provision of ‘Train the Trainer’ workshops post Survey.

- f. NCLS Research will be an ongoing resource for Regional Coordinators for all things to do with the Survey and its findings.

4 Survey Results from the 2021 NCLS

- a. NCLS Research will provide a series of reports on local church leaders, being an amalgamation of selected results of the Leadership Surveys of participating local churches, to Regional leadership. Reports will provide a demographic and faith profile of leaders, as well as information about their training and development, effectiveness and sustainable practices to support wellbeing. All individual leader survey results remain confidential.
- b. Local church leadership will get a selection of initial results appropriate for individuals.
- c. NCLS Research will provide a series of reports, based on selected results of the Census Surveys of participating local churches, to Regional leadership. For example, reports will cover number and type of local churches, how they are organised and led, how they relate to their local communities, to social issues and global needs.
- d. As in previous National Church Life Surveys, NCLS Research will send to participating local churches results from their Survey in the form of a Church Life Profile, along with other resources to enable churches to get maximum benefit from the information in the Profile. Reports will cover attenders' age, gender, education, ethnicity, their church background, their experience of faith and church life, what they value, their commitment to the church's vision and openness to new possibilities.
- e. Local churches with less than 10 participants in the Attender Survey may receive a summary form of results in order to preserve the confidentiality of individual attenders. Their data will still be included in the regional, denominational and national results.
- f. All Church Life Profiles will also be made available online, with secure access.
- g. NCLS Research will supply the profile number that gives online access to individual Church Life Profiles to the leadership of the participating local church and to Approved Persons in regional leadership (unless instructed otherwise in writing).
- h. NCLS Research will provide a Regional Church Life Profile, being an amalgamation of the Church Life Profiles of participating local churches, to Regional leadership.
- i. NCLS Research will provide a Denominational Church Life Profile, being an amalgamation of the Church Life Profiles of participating local churches, to denominational leadership.
- j. NCLS Research will continue to investigate the collected data to produce Occasional Papers and Fact Sheets at a national, denominational and regional level, and to perform further research into church life issues.
- k. When providing research reports for denominations or regions, NCLS Research will evaluate the levels of participation in the 2021 NCLS and earlier surveys to determine which results can be considered valid and reliable. Reports will be produced when the size of the participating sample is sufficient, or upon request with appropriate caveats as to their representative quality.

5 Survey Costs for the 2021 NCLS

The 2021 NCLS is a series of interlinked surveys.

5.1 Church Census: About congregations/parishes (One survey per church)

- a. This census of church activities and initiatives is completed by a church administrative leader. This option provides denominational leaders with an overview of their congregations' activities, staff, numbers and more, with comparison to benchmarks in the Australian church as a whole.
- b. Census forms will be sent to all churches, even if they have not ordered Church Life Surveys for attenders. There is no cost for a local church representative to complete the Census form.
- c. The cost for Regional or Denominational questions to be included in the Census Survey for the Region's or Denomination's participating local churches will be \$500 per question (ex GST).
- d. The cost to receive a Church Census report at a denominational or regional level is \$25 per participating church.
- e. NCLS Research will advise as to whether the final sample size of participating churches is adequate for reliable reports.
- f. Integration of NCLS Church Census information into denominational systems is possible. Agreements may be negotiated separate to 2021 NCLS arrangements.

5.2 Leader Survey: About leadership (at least one survey per church)

- a. Local church leaders (ministers/pastors/priests) and lay leaders may complete the Leader Survey.
- b. Both denominations and participating local church leaders will learn about: effective leadership, leader spirituality, leadership development and training, teams, leader wellbeing, resilience, innovativeness and more.
- c. Leader Surveys will be sent to all churches, even if they have not ordered Church Life Surveys for attenders. There is no cost for local church leaders to complete the Leader Survey.
- d. The cost for additional unique Regional or Denominational questions to be included in the Leader Survey for the Region's or Denomination's participating local churches will be \$800 per question (ex GST).
- e. The cost to receive Leader Survey reports at a denominational or regional level is \$50 per participating church (for unlimited online leader surveys per church).
- f. Options for local church leaders to also receive personal feedback will also be made available at a fee to be determined.

5.3 Church Life Survey: About church health (for all church attenders)

- a. The full Church Life Survey offers a comprehensive profile of each local church. The Attender Survey gives attenders a voice to reflect on their experience of church life. Samples of topics are: qualities of church vitality including attenders' evaluation of private devotions, importance of God, growth in faith, nurturing worship, belonging, evangelism, service, advocacy, leadership roles, involvement of children etc. Surveys are translated to at least 10 languages. A Child Survey for church attenders aged 8 to 14 is also available.
- b. The cost for Church Life Surveys is \$250 Admin fee charged for local church or parish plus \$2 fee per each attender survey form ordered (adult or child) (ex GST). This provides a single profile and resource pack (Church Life Pack) for the local church entity that participates in the 2021 NCLS and is provided an 'NCLS Church Code'. This is determined at the time of ordering.
- c. Where a pack is ordered for a cluster of churches (e.g. a parish or other grouping) additional location profiles containing results for individual locations (such as congregations within a parish, campuses or preaching sites) can also be ordered. These extra profiles when ordered before the Survey will be provided for an additional cost of \$75 each (ex GST).
- d. A flat rate of \$250 (ex GST) will apply for churches with an estimated weekly attendance (adult and children) of less than 30 people.
- e. Regions that are primarily composed of small and very small local churches (e.g. some rural Regions) may apply to NCLS Research for a special pricing structure. The reduced cost would be a single base fee for a whole survey group or cluster of churches, plus a fee per survey form. Results in the Church Life Profile would be combined as an aggregate of the whole survey group of churches and provided in a single Pack. The survey will occur in each location, so more detailed breakdowns can be generated in the future, if needed.
- f. Should an entire region participate in the Survey, the total fee will be capped at 80% of the cost for the total number of churches in the region.
- g. The cost for additional unique Regional or Denominational questions to be included in the Attender Survey for the Region's or Denomination's participating local churches will be \$1,500 per question (ex GST).
- h. There is no extra charge for the following outputs:
 - Online access to Local Church Life Profiles and grouped Church Life Profiles
 - Regional Church Life Profiles
 - Denominational Church Life Profiles
 - Question Summary Profiles for extra Regional/Denominational questions

5.4 Local Community Survey (for members of the community beyond regular attenders)

- a. This new offering for the 2021 National Church Life Survey allows local churches to hear from those in their surrounding community who may not be regular churchgoers. It is designed to hear their views and

practices.

- b. Cost: \$200 per local church (unlimited online surveys).

6 Invoicing

- a. A series of 'ballpark quotes' were provided in late 2020 and early 2021 to each Region. These quotes were based on various participation models: each model made assumptions about the number of participating local churches and estimated number of Attender Surveys being ordered.
- b. As a general rule, NCLS Research will provide a consolidated invoice to the nominated Regional Co-ordinator, with detailed breakdowns of survey orders and costing per local church, unless other arrangements have been made.
- c. If applicable, Regional Coordinators will be responsible for recouping costs from their local churches and/or from their denomination as per arrangements that have been made internally.
- d. Based on the understanding of the participation model being adopted, NCLS Research may split a region's invoice into two parts: one invoice for 30% of the estimated final invoice and the second invoice for the reconciled balance after the ordering period.
- e. Once NCLS Research has dispatched the Survey packages of questionnaires for the participating local churches of the Region, NCLS Research will invoice the Region for the balance owing.
- f. NCLS Research will arrange invoices split across financial years upon request.

7 Timing

- a. The National Church Life Survey will be conducted over October and November 2021.
- b. Each participating denomination can recommend any date across these two months to conduct the survey.
- c. Participating local churches will conduct the Survey at times that they regard as most suitable in their circumstances.
- d. Local churches will return their completed surveys to NCLS Research as soon as possible after completion.
- e. NCLS Research will return Church Life Packs to participating local churches early in 2022.
- f. NCLS Research will return the findings from the Regional/Denominational questions by mid-2022.

8 Permissions

- a. NCLS Research is a joint venture between three primary sponsors (who work in partnership across church and community service arms):
 - a. Uniting Mission and Evangelism/Uniting, Uniting Church NSW/ACT Synod, (UME)
 - b. Anglicare, Anglican Diocese of Sydney (Anglicare)
 - c. BaptistCare and Baptist Association (NSW/ACT) (BaptistCare)
- b. All National Church Life Survey datasets remain the property of NCLS Research.

- c. NCLS Research primary sponsors (UME, Anglicare, BaptistCare) will receive copies of confidentialised datasets for research based on relevant denominational groups: Uniting Church, Anglican Diocese of Sydney and Baptist Church.
- d. NCLS Research gives permission for churches to use their own Profile data within their church (local data in the local church, regional data at the regional level of the church and denominational data at the denominational level).
- e. Further requests may be made to NCLS Research to access other parts of the National Church Life Survey datasets. This can be in the form of research requests or dataset requests. Approval will be given in line with the policies of NCLS Research and ethical considerations. However, NCLS Research will not withhold such permission for what it regards as reasonable requests that are aimed primarily at furthering the mission of the church.

9 Overview of NCLS Regional Coordinator role

The following duties offer a general guide towards the decision to appoint a denominational regional coordinator for the *2021 NCLS* project. Further information about the duties will be provided directly to the nominated *2021 NCLS* regional coordinator.

9.1 Before the Survey

- maintain a liaison between the NCLS Research team and the churches within their denomination or region.
- provide NCLS Research with updated church details, addresses, size estimates and survey orders for each church, usually via an online system.
- promote the value and importance of the Survey with the view to encouraging maximum participation.
- include information about the survey in any denominational mail-outs, on websites etc, as appropriate.
- establish which churches within their denomination will participate in the NCLS.
- encourage churches to complete the survey during the allotted time frame.
- ensure that payment for participation is made to NCLS Research.

9.2 After the Survey

- maintain a liaison between the *NCLS Research* team and the churches within their denomination or region.
- encourage churches to send back their completed surveys within the allotted time frame.
- follow up churches that are late in returning completed survey forms.
- inform consultants or facilitators about *NCLS Research* training events that equip them in assisting churches to make the most of their *NCLS Church Life Profile* material.
- organise workshops or training opportunities where possible at which church leaders can be helped to make the most of their *NCLS Church Life Profile* report and resources.
- distribute *NCLS Research* Regional/ Denominational Profile reports to the appropriate Denomination

10 NCLS Research Privacy Policy

NCLS Research has served the churches and wider community for around 30 years. We are committed to protecting the privacy of the people who make our research possible, and depend on their trust and goodwill to achieve our mission.

NCLS Research is required to handle, use and manage personal information in accordance with the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) included in the 1988 Federal Privacy Act.

Detailed information on the NCLS Research Privacy Policy is available (See attachment)

11 NCLS Research Churches Database

Since the early 1990s NCLS Research has held a database of around 12,000 local churches in some 23 Catholic, Anglican and Protestant denominations. While it is impossible to keep a fully up-to-date listing of churches, the NCLS Churches database is perhaps the most comprehensive list held in Australia maintained for 30 years. The NCLS Churches database is only used by NCLS Research and is not available to third parties.

Detailed information on the Churches Database is available (See attachment).

Date	NCLS RESEARCH ACTIVITY	DENOMINATIONAL/REGIONAL ACTIVITY	
		Standard Survey Activity	Optional Customisation
		Participation Logistics	Custom Survey Questions
2019 - 2020	Draft proposals and consultation. 'Ballpark quotes' provided	Consultation and Feedback. Review 'ballpark quote' and proposals.	
Aug 20 - Feb 21	Inform Provide ongoing promotional material for use with local churches.	1. 'Expression of interest' re participation Indicate likely involvement	2. 'Expression of interest' re extra Custom Denominational Survey Questions (optional)
Mar – April 2021	Survey Logistics site opened for 1. Church listing check 2. Survey ordering per church	Start to update church details and place survey orders Contact churches seeking interest. Denominations/churches to update church details and place orders.	Confirm by April 2021 Confirm custom survey questions by April 2021
Jan – May 2021	Design Design surveys	Place survey orders Denominations to contact local churches re participation. Denominations/churches place orders.	Design by May 2021 Design custom survey questions with NCLS staff by end May 2021
June 2016	Print Layout surveys, Deliver to printers	Place survey orders Denominations/churches place orders.	
Aug - Oct 2021	Dispatch Survey Kits packed and dispatched to local churches	Place survey orders and prepare to run survey Denominations/churches place orders and prepare to run the survey	
Oct - Nov 2021	2021 National Church Life Survey completed by local churches		
Oct 21 - Mar 2022	Process completed surveys	Churches return completed surveys by Dec 2016	
Mar 2022	Dispatch local <i>Church Life Packs</i> including <i>Church Life Profiles</i>	Local Churches receive Church Life Packs incl. <i>Church Life Profiles</i> Denominations help churches to engage results.	Local Churches receive results of custom denominational survey questions *
April - June 2022	Provide all <i>Denominational</i> and <i>Regional Church Life Profiles</i>	Denominations and Regions receive Church Life Profiles Denominations engage their results.	Denominations receive results of customised denominational survey questions*