

Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal (ACCCR)

Current Structure and Procedures at July 2022

The key role of ACCCR is supporting its members in their work for renewal in the Catholic Church as envisioned in the founding *Our Call* statement. ACCCR fosters collaboration and support among its member groups, disseminates messages of hope and opportunity, and brings like-minded people together to interact on joint activities.

ACCCR was established in 2012 as a loose ‘coalition’ of groups, a network of like-minded organisations sharing a vision and seeking renewal of our Church through the strength of alliance. “Network weaving” describes both a shared awareness of the networks in a movement plus explicitly working to cultivate and strengthen them.¹ This occurs through strong connections with a common vision and purpose to achieve change: “helping people identify their interests and challenges, connecting people strategically where there’s potential for mutual benefit, and serving as a catalyst for self-organizing groups.”² Networks allow innovations to spread rapidly and change initiatives to progress quickly through connections between members without undue dependence on bureaucratic process by helping to create a shared understanding among stakeholders and a level of trust that is essential to the shared purpose.

The member organisations share similar priorities, confirmed by new members before joining by their endorsement of the Coalition’s *Our Call* statement and other key documents approved by the Coalition from time to time. Examples include correspondence to the Australian Bishops on matters including the Synod of Bishops on the Family 2014-15 and through Communiqués from the ACCCR’s 2018 and 2020 Gatherings, the ACCCR *‘Renewal Propositions for the Catholic Church’* published as Supplement 4 to *Getting Back on Mission* (Catholics for Renewal), and The Proposed Amendments to the Motions set out in the Framework for Motions of the Second session of the Plenary Council.

Member organisations continue to pursue their individual missions in their own right. They seek Coalition endorsement where they consider a renewal project would benefit from endorsement and ‘ownership’ by the Coalition and the benefit of collaboration with other members. All ACCCR projects are initiatives of one or more member groups that are adopted as Coalition projects; a consensus is sought and any differences are addressed in a positive manner with a focus on influencing Church renewal. The major current project is the Synodal Process Project Group under the chair of SACEC’s Convener and supported by CCCG, WATAC and WWITCH with involvement from the conveners. ACCCR does not initiate specific projects, rather it supports and adds value to projects initiated by its partner groups.

The role of the Coalition co-conveners is to facilitate the network’s efficacy through cooperation and continued alignment amongst the members, and to keep members informed of Coalition endorsed projects as well as relevant developments in Church renewal. The co-conveners provide support for projects however they do not manage or direct projects in their convener role. They seek the continued efficacy of the coalition according to the wishes of the group through a form of servant leadership – a means of effective and collaborative governance that ensures accountability, transparency and inclusion while minimising unnecessary process controls and associated bureaucracy. The main means of ensuring alignment and consensus is through the approved documents, regular email circulation, and meetings. Each convener is appointed through consensus

¹ cf. Fetzer Institute, *Sharing Spiritual Heritage - Convening, Dialogue, and Field Building A Report*, 2020, Fetzer Institute

² Beth Kanter citing June Holley, *The Network Weaver Handbook*, (Network Weaver: 2018), <https://networkweaver.com/network-weaving-handbook/>.

for a period, usually not longer than 5 years, based on a skill set relevant to the challenges and the work program. It is expected that there will be some overlap between appointment of convenors to allow for continuity of corporate history and skills.

The Coalition is dependent on the generosity and commitment of all its members. Members volunteer to undertake support work, e.g. the Planning Advisory Group formed to assist the convenors in identifying the wishes of member groups outside full meetings of the Coalition and assisting member groups in implementing coalition-endorsed projects. This group comprises volunteers from members and was supplemented recently to include others expressing interest. Any representative of a member group who wishes to be involved should advise the convenors noting the need for gender balance and manageable numbers for inclusive discussion. Members can bring any matters of interest or concern to the attention of the convenors or of the full group which is the body that determines coalition policy. Meetings of the full group will be arranged by the convenors as necessary to maintain the group's efficacy, alignment and relationships. A member group may request a full reps group meeting to resolve an issue.

The list of member groups, with a description of their background and activities is available on the *Our Call* statement and on our website: <http://www.acccr.com.au/>

Those outside the Coalition membership who wish to be more involved in our work are encouraged to become a member of one of our Coalition groups, or to form a new group which can seek membership. For further information, contact one of the Co-Convenors.

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Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform