



Western Deanery Forum

Round 2 Report

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Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

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Part 1: Summary of Table Discussions at Deanery Forum 2

Item 2: What Was Shared, Heard and Acted Upon from Deanery Forum 1

Stand Outs from Deanery Forum 1:

Rebuilding Parish Community

- A dominant concern was the perceived loss of parish community identity and connection.
- Participants expressed a desire to return to a stronger sense of belonging and community life, while recognising that parish engagement must be adapted to contemporary lifestyles and needs.
- There was a strong emphasis on understanding how parishes can better serve people at times and in ways that suit today's communities.

Missing Demographics and Youth Engagement

- The absence of key demographic groups, particularly young people, stood out to many participants.
- Challenges identified included competing commitments such as sport and employment for teenagers.
- Suggestions included building stronger connections through Catholic schools and more intentional engagement with parents.
- Concerns were also raised about volunteer sustainability and the need to attract younger generations, including children and families, into parish life.

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

- Participants highlighted the growing cultural diversity within parishes, including Filipino and Syro-Malabar communities.
- There was a recognised need for greater cultural education, understanding and mutual respect between different cultural groups.
- Participants stressed the importance of recognising diverse cultural practices and fostering more inclusive parish communities.

Parish Viability and Changing Demographics

- Concerns were raised about declining parish attendance and ageing congregations in some communities.

- St Joseph's Quarry Hill was viewed as facing significant challenges to its long-term viability, while St Monica's was noted as having an older demographic and declining attendance.
- Positive signs were also acknowledged, including strong RCIA participation at Easter and broader trends of young adults, particularly young men, exploring faith.

Communication and Engagement

- Participants identified communication as a significant weakness in some parishes, with limited efforts to engage people outside of Mass.
- Improved communication strategies were seen as essential for building stronger parish connections and participation.

Parish Infrastructure and Buildings

- The future use and management of parish buildings emerged as an important issue.
- Participants noted tensions around parish facilities increasingly being used by schools and questioned how buildings can best serve parish communities into the future.

Leadership, Clergy and Shared Responsibility

- There was a desire to broaden discussions about leadership beyond priests alone to include lay leadership and shared responsibility.
- Participants suggested re-examining leadership models to better meet contemporary parish needs.
- Greater collaboration between parishes and increased support from the Chancery were proposed as ways to share workloads and strengthen local communities.

Administrative Support and Automation

- Participants expressed interest in simplifying administrative processes through automation and technology.
- Suggested areas included bulletin production, volunteer management, Working With Children Check compliance, and other parish paperwork.
- There was a view that the Chancery could play a larger role in providing templates, systems and centralised support.

Scale of Challenges

- While participants appreciated the comprehensive identification of parish needs and issues, some felt overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of the challenges identified.

- There was a clear desire to prioritise key issues and develop practical, achievable responses.

Overall Insight

Participants recognised significant demographic, cultural, leadership, and sustainability challenges facing parish life. At the heart of many comments was a desire to rebuild vibrant parish communities through stronger relationships, greater inclusivity, improved communication, shared leadership, and practical support structures that enable parishes to adapt to changing circumstances.

Comments about Tablemat:

- **Communication and Collaboration:**
Participants valued the Deanery Forums for bringing parishes together, sharing resources, and increasing awareness of what is happening across the deanery. However, communication about the forums does not always reach everyone.
- **Community Engagement:**
There was a desire to better understand and respond to the needs of the wider community, not just active parish members, and to create more meaningful opportunities for people to be heard and involved.
- **Mission over Administration:**
Participants expressed concern that paperwork and administration can overshadow the Church's missionary and pastoral focus. Greater support from the Chancery and streamlined processes were suggested.
- **Parish Sustainability:**
Discussion included exploring broader fundraising opportunities, strengthening parish leadership structures, and ensuring appropriate financial representation.
- **Action and Follow-Through:**
There was strong support for ensuring forum discussions lead to ongoing action, collaboration, and measurable outcomes rather than remaining one-off events.

Items 3–5: Communication on Chancery Matters

- **Finance, GST and Procurement**

Participants sought greater clarity on GST arrangements, bulk purchasing benefits, financial reporting requirements, and whether new processes would create additional work for smaller parishes. Interest was expressed in diocesan purchasing agreements to reduce costs for fuel, insurance, utilities, liturgical supplies, and Catholic resources.

- **Parish Support and Resources**

Strong support was shown for updated parish guidelines, resources for Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs) and Parish Finance Committees (PFCs), fundraising guidance, grant information, and clearer access to Chancery support, including staff contact details.

- **Administration and Technology**

Some concerns were raised about the time required to learn and use systems such as PACEM. Participants requested more training, support, and streamlined administrative processes.

- **Communication and Engagement**

Better communication across parishes and with parishioners was identified as a priority, particularly for older parishioners. Participants highlighted successful initiatives involving RCIA, youth-led Masses, Eucharistic devotion, and social gatherings as ways to build community and participation.

- **Leadership and Sustainability**

Participants expressed concern about volunteer recruitment, committee participation, and maintaining parish activities during periods of clergy absence. Structured support and clear processes were seen as important for parish sustainability.

- **Mission and Spiritual Growth**

Several participants noted that PPCs can become overly focused on maintenance and administration, with a desire to place greater emphasis on spiritual development, evangelisation, and growing parish community life.

Overall Insight

Participants welcomed practical diocesan support, clearer communication, and cost-saving initiatives, while emphasising the need to balance administration with mission, faith formation, and community building.

Item 6: What's Working Exchange

- **Youth and Faith Formation**

Participants were highly positive about initiatives such as PRAISE and RCIA, seeing them as valuable pathways for engaging young people and encouraging ongoing faith development. There was interest in greater collaboration between parishes, including shared or rotating programs.

- **Building Community**

Social gatherings before and after Mass, shared meals, cuppas, family activities, and opportunities for fellowship were seen as important ways to strengthen parish life. Strong support for creating welcoming spaces where families and children feel comfortable.

- **Sustainability and Capacity**

Concerns raised about ageing volunteers, stretched clergy, limited leadership capacity, and the need to sustain ministries over time. Participants recognised the importance of developing new leaders and cultivating greater involvement from younger generations.

- **Parish-School Connections**

Several participants identified weak connections between parishes and schools and saw this as an area requiring greater attention and investment.

- **Cultural Diversity and Inclusion**

Participants discussed the growing diversity within parish communities and the need for culturally sensitive approaches that recognise and support different groups while fostering unity.

- **Mission and Engagement**

There was strong enthusiasm for initiatives that move beyond social activities to deepen faith, encourage participation, and integrate newcomers into parish life. Welcoming, outreach, and intentional community-building were recurring themes.

- **Youth Leadership**

Suggestions included creating leadership structures or councils specifically for young people, enabling them to have a voice and take an active role in parish life.

Overall Insight

Participants saw significant opportunities to strengthen parish life through youth engagement, community-building, collaboration between parishes, and the development of sustainable leadership and faith formation initiatives.

Item 7: Priority Discernment

Overall Summary of Priority Themes

Across all groups, several issues consistently emerged as the highest priorities for parishes across the Deanery.

1. Engaging Missing Generations

The most frequently identified concern was the absence of key demographic groups, particularly:

- Teenagers and young adults (20s)
- Adults aged 35–60

Participants recognised that long-term parish vitality depends on attracting, welcoming, and retaining these age groups.

2. Parish–School Connection

Strengthening relationships between parishes and Catholic schools was a recurring priority. Many groups saw schools as a critical pathway for engaging families, young people, and future parish leaders.

3. Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Formation

Participants highlighted both the opportunities and challenges presented by increasingly diverse parish communities. There was strong support for:

- Building stronger relationships between cultural groups
- Mutual intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners
- Greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures within parish life

4. Volunteer and Leadership Sustainability

Many groups expressed concern about volunteer fatigue, ageing volunteers, and limited leadership capacity. There was strong support for:

- Developing lay leadership
- Encouraging shared leadership models
- Ensuring sustainable ministry structures for the future

5. Clergy Capacity and Future Parish Models

The reality of fewer resident priests and increasing demands on clergy was recognised across the Deanery. Participants identified the need to explore:

- Multi-parish models
- Shared leadership arrangements

- New approaches to parish governance and ministry

6. Building Community Through Shared Activities

Joint social and faith gatherings were seen as effective ways to strengthen relationships, foster belonging, and create a stronger sense of common mission across parishes.

7. Common Mission Across the Deanery

Several groups expressed interest in identifying one or two shared priorities or mission initiatives that could be pursued collaboratively across the Deanery.

8. Administrative and Chancery Support

Participants welcomed the idea of greater Chancery assistance, particularly with:

- Parish administration
- Compliance requirements
- Governance support This was viewed as a way to reduce administrative burden and free parishes to focus more on mission and ministry.

9. Financial Sustainability

While not as prominent as the themes above, financial sustainability was identified as an emerging concern, particularly in the context of declining participation, volunteer capacity, and future parish viability.

Key Takeaway

The charts reveal a strong consensus that the future health of parishes depends on engaging younger generations, strengthening parish–school relationships, embracing cultural diversity, developing sustainable leadership models, and supporting parishes to adapt to reduced clergy capacity while maintaining a clear missionary focus.

Item 8: Complex Issues Presentations

- High interest in youth accompaniment and formation resources.
- Preference for small group engagement and accessible materials.

Item 9: Priority Focus Discussions in Self -selected Groups Gathering around Displayed Priority issues

Overall Insight

Confirmation that the Deanery's strongest concerns centre on:

1. **Sustainability of people** (volunteers, clergy, leadership).
2. **Missing generations** (young adults and the 35–60 age group).
3. **Building connections** (schools, cultures, community life).
4. **Preparing for future parish models** with fewer resident priests and greater lay leadership.

These themes align strongly with the broader conclusions drawn from the forum feedback, indicating a high level of consensus across parishes.

Individual Topic Discussion Summaries

Connection Between Parish and School

Summary: Participants saw schools as one of the most effective pathways for building parish engagement. Successful initiatives included parishioners reading in schools, student faith leaders, family Masses, school-based liturgies, and informal gatherings after Mass. The main challenge identified was compliance and volunteer paperwork. Strengthening relationships through visible parish presence in schools and family-focused activities was seen as key.

Parish Models and Leadership

Summary: There was strong recognition that future parish sustainability will require new leadership models, greater lay leadership, and adaptation to fewer resident priests. Concerns included clergy being overstretched, limited acceptance of lay-led Communion services, and the need for leadership that reflects the cultural diversity of parish communities. Participants desired stronger formation for lay leaders, broader community ownership of parish life, and greater support for clergy.

Key Missing Demographic (35–60)

Summary: Participants felt the 35–60 age group is often overlooked in favour of youth ministry, despite being critical to parish vitality. Many are busy with work and family responsibilities and may feel alienated by language perceived as judgmental or exclusive. The group highlighted the need for meaningful formation opportunities, welcoming environments, and community-building initiatives that connect parents, families, and adults in this life stage.

Intercultural Formation for Communication Between Clergy and Parishioners

Summary: Participants recognised growing cultural diversity as both an opportunity and a challenge. Greater mutual understanding, open communication, and respect between clergy and parishioners from different cultural backgrounds were seen as essential. Suggested approaches included informal conversations, question-and-answer sessions, welcoming practices for new priests, and intentional efforts to learn from one another's cultural experiences.

Volunteer Sustainability

Summary: Ageing volunteers and difficulties recruiting and mentoring new volunteers were major concerns. Many long-serving volunteers are finding it difficult to continue, while potential new volunteers can feel intimidated by established roles. Participants emphasised the importance of personal invitations, mentoring, gradual succession planning, volunteer development, and greater involvement of families, schools, and culturally diverse parishioners.

Minimal or No Presence of Teenagers and Young Adults (20s)

Summary: Participants identified youth engagement as a critical priority but expressed uncertainty about how to attract and retain younger people. Concerns included competition from other churches, limited resources, and weak connections between young people and parish life. Desired outcomes included stronger youth participation, practical ministry resources, closer collaboration with schools, support from diocesan youth ministry, and local leaders dedicated to youth engagement.

Overall Item 9 Insight

Across all priorities, participants consistently highlighted the need for stronger relationships, intentional leadership development, greater cultural inclusion, and more effective engagement of families, young adults, and working-age parishioners to ensure sustainable and vibrant parish communities into the future.

Item 10: Follow-Through and Feedback

Overall Reflections

Participants found the forum valuable, well organised, and hopeful, with clear evidence that actions from previous forums were being implemented. Many appreciated the practical focus and opportunities for connection, while also noting that the volume of information was sometimes overwhelming and required more time for parish-level reflection and planning.

What Worked Well

- Strong appreciation for bringing people together across parishes to share ideas, experiences, and successful initiatives.
- Positive feedback on the follow-up from previous forums and the practical nature of discussions.
- Participants valued the balance of information, discussion, movement between groups, and opportunities for networking.
- Resources such as fact sheets, Chancery updates, contact lists, and examples of successful parish initiatives were well received.
- Many left feeling encouraged, optimistic, and motivated about the future of parish life.

Key Concerns and Challenges

- Too much information was presented in a short timeframe, making it difficult to absorb and prioritise.
- Some felt the process was overly structured or Chancery-led, with insufficient parish involvement.
- Several participants noted a lack of focus on older parishioners (particularly those over 60), their gifts, wisdom, and ongoing contribution to parish life.
- Communication about forums could be improved, with earlier notice, more personal invitations, and better promotion.
- Some questioned the value of ranking priorities when many issues are interconnected.

Suggestions for Future Forums

- Allow more time for discussion, discernment, and parish planning.
- Include practical workshops and examples of successful initiatives from local parishes.
- Focus on priority areas such as youth engagement, multicultural ministry, volunteer sustainability, parish-school relationships, clergy capacity, and family ministry.
- Increase opportunities for open discussion, sharing between groups, and interaction with Chancery staff.
- Continue linking each forum to previous conversations and actions to maintain momentum.
- Provide clearer communication and preparation materials before the event.

Overall Insight

Participants strongly support the Deanery Forum process and see it as an important vehicle for collaboration, planning, and renewal. While they called for a slower pace, more parish ownership, and greater inclusion of older parishioners, the dominant sentiment was one of hope, positivity, and eagerness to continue the journey of parish renewal together.

Conclusion

The Deanery Shares a Common Set of Challenges

Despite representing different parishes, participants consistently identified the same concerns:

- Lack of teenagers, young adults, and the 35–60 age group in parish life.
- Ageing volunteers and leadership succession challenges.
- Increasing clergy workload and the reality of fewer resident priests.
- Weak parish-school connections.
- The need to better integrate culturally diverse communities.
- Administrative burdens consuming time and energy that could be spent on mission.

Conclusion: The challenges are not unique to individual parishes; they are systemic across the Deanery and Diocese.

Relationships Matter More Than Structures

Throughout the feedback, participants repeatedly returned to themes of:

- Community building, Belonging, Listening, Hospitality, Connection

Many successful examples involved simple relational activities:

- Cuppas after Mass, Family gatherings, Youth groups, Shared meals, School engagement, Prayer and faith-sharing opportunities

Conclusion: Renewal is likely to come more from strengthening relationships than creating new programs or structures alone.

Young People are the Greatest Concern

The absence of teenagers, young adults, and young families appeared in almost every discussion.

Participants wanted:

- practical strategies
- looked to schools as a key pathway
- admired initiatives such as PRAISE and RCIA
- noted that other Christian communities are often more successful at youth engagement.

Conclusion: Youth and young adult engagement is perceived as the Diocese's most urgent long-term challenge.

Parish-School Partnerships are the Greatest Opportunity

Across multiple groups, schools were seen as the strongest existing connection to families.

Examples included: School Masses, Student faith leaders, Parishioners in classrooms, Family Masses, Teacher involvement in liturgy.

Conclusion: Strengthening parish-school relationships may be the most practical and achievable pathway to renewing parish life.

Diversity Is Growing and Must Be Embraced

Participants consistently acknowledged increasing cultural diversity.

However, many stressed that:

- integration requires effort from everyone
- formation must be mutual, not one-directional
- cultural understanding cannot be assumed.

Conclusion: Future parish vitality will depend on parishes becoming genuinely intercultural communities rather than simply multicultural communities.

New Leadership Models Will Be Necessary

Comments repeatedly highlighted:

- Reduced clergy availability, Multi-parish arrangements, Lay leadership, Shared leadership models, Sustainability concerns.

Participants acknowledged that current models may not be sustainable.

Conclusion: There is growing acceptance that parish leadership will need to evolve, with greater responsibility shared between clergy and well-formed lay leaders.

Volunteers Need Support, Succession, and Formation

Many identified:

- Ageing volunteers, Difficulty recruiting new volunteers, Burnout, Resistance to handing on roles.

The emphasis was not simply on recruiting more volunteers but creating mentoring and formation pathways.

Conclusion: Volunteer sustainability is becoming a critical risk for parish viability.

Participants Want Less Administration and More Mission

Repeated comments highlighted:

- Excessive paperwork, Compliance burdens, Administrative responsibilities, Desire for automation and Chancery support.

Participants welcomed efforts to centralise resources and provide practical assistance.

Conclusion: People want parish leaders and volunteers freed to focus on evangelisation, discipleship, and community-building rather than administration.

9. The Deanery Forum Process Is Valued

Participants overwhelmingly appreciated:

- Sharing ideas across parishes, Learning what works, Networking, Practical examples, Follow-up from previous forums.

The strongest criticism was not of the process itself, but of:

- Information overload, Lack of time for discernment, Need for stronger follow-through.

Conclusion: Participants support the Deanery Forum model and want it to continue, with more time for reflection, action planning, and implementation.

10. There Is a Strong Desire to Move from Discussion to Action

Perhaps the most significant finding is that participants want to move beyond identifying problems.

They repeatedly asked:

- What are the next steps? How do we implement these ideas? Who will lead? How do we maintain momentum?

Many comments reflected the sentiment that: "We know the issues. Now we need practical action."

Overall Conclusion

The Deanery Forum revealed a shared desire for **parishes that are more connected, welcoming, intercultural, sustainable, and mission focused**. Participants recognise that the future will require new models of leadership, stronger partnerships with schools, intentional engagement of younger generations, and greater collaboration across parishes. Above all, there was a strong sense of hope that renewal is possible if the conversation now leads to practical action and ongoing formation.

Part 2: Table Notes

Item 2: What Was Shared, Heard and Acted Upon

Is there anything standing out to me (good idea, really like that, something missing, implications...) from *Deanery Forums Round 1: Various Categories of Needs/Issues Raised?*

Standing out is the key missing demographics. Some of the acronyms people do not know. We seem to have lost the notion of what a parish community looks like, let's get back to the old sense of community. How to meet the needs of the community in the time suited to those who need it. The needs of buildings, also understanding the relationship when parish buildings are taken over by schools.

Filipino: How we interact with them is where we need education. Kangaroo Flat: There is no effort in communication outside of Mass. Age group demographic: Sport interferes with availability; teens are also working. Making stronger connections through school and the parents.

St Joseph's, Quarry Hill, is heading towards extinction, Syro Malabar use this location and have asked about taking it over. St Monica's demographic is older and attendance is declining; there was a good Diocesan showing for RCIA at Easter. Worldwide trend of young men converting to Catholicism.

The Chancery contact list is a helpful listing of all the needs and issues, comprehensive, thorough. Is it too much? How can we get a handle on all of this?

Can we focus on automation once we have our own IT people? Looking to the future, changes are needed in how we think about parish. We need to re-examine leadership positions. Could we share the burden between parishes and have Chancery support (Bulletin templates, volunteer paperwork, WWCC compliance). Could the responsibility for volunteer paperwork fall to the volunteer? Can Chancery make paperwork more automated?

Discuss the priests and expectations on them, including lay leadership. Cultural education on both sides' practises etc. recognition of different cultures.

Volunteer sustainability if we can bring more young people, especially children, during Sunday masses.

The Tablemat: Diagram depicting the nature and dynamic of the Deanery Forum?

Communication regarding the Deanery forums sometimes doesn't get through. Like the idea of getting together, sharing resources, centralising. Knowing what's happening in local parishes.

Need within community, recognising our role across the whole community, Catholic/Christian/Agnostic. Glossing over what the whole community needs, outside of the parish.

Inviting people to attend the forum, not an active task within parishes. People aren't being heard in the parish about what they want. How are we inviting people to participate? Involvement of the Chancery, too much paperwork and not enough doing.

Emphasising missionary aspects and not getting caught up in the administrative areas is challenging and needs assessment.

Communication regarding Deanery Forums is poor, sometimes the information doesn't get through. We like the idea of getting together, sharing resources and centralising ideas and also knowing what's happening in local parishes.

Look further than planned giving or tap and go, to actual parish fund raising. Most parish councils have no finance representative.

Items 3, 4, 5: Chancery matters raised in Deanery Forum 1

Would like clarification on the benefits (Australia Procurement), i.e., bulk buying, why should we? Convenience? Parish Admin day would be a better time to present on this.

PACEM: Time to learn all its functions is challenging.

Resources and guidelines: PFC & PPC: we want this!

Financial reporting: Looking forward to what this will look like, will it create more work for smaller parishes? It needs to be targeted at each parish. Query for clarification on whether this will benefit the Chancery or the parishes?

Communication to the whole parish for events/meetings. Email is not most effective for the demographic with knowledge and spirit. Older parishioners want to be involved. Youth led Mass is now planned at the Cathedral. There are 5 Sundays identified.

St Kilian's PRAISE is a good idea but doubtful if current parishioners who will or would attend.

RCIA: Each year at least 1 person put their hand up to serve and act at the Cathedral in a serving role. RCIA member idea was a cup of tea after Mass.

Monthly exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at the Cathedral. Monthly meetings at St Monica's for the older parishioners on 3rd Wednesday of month in the afternoon with membership growing. Idea: On screen Mass in the church if there is no clergy present, with a communion service provided.

List of names of Chancery staff, please include phone numbers.

Is there a need for a Diocesan Chancellor?

"Soup Kitchen" at Heathcote, for the beginning of a potential Alpha.

Bank charges mess up balancing of books and fees. Fuel costs (700k each week for Father Arun), parishes cannot afford this. Fuel, insurance, tech support, admin costs to obtain bulk pricing such as utilities, even Mass items such as altar bread and wine is truly needed.

PPC always gets too absorbed in topics like maintenance and spends no time on spiritual topics and growing the community.

How do we buy into procurement Australia? Could someone from the Chancery finance department attend PFC meetings once a year quarter/month? One person managing multiple issues across a number of parishes. Do things like communion wine and hosts fall into this are only secular supplies? How about Sacramental resources, Catholic books are expensive can we get them cheaper if we order as a diocese? Clarity around parish planning unpacking sessions. It is really positive to hear practical ways of assisting parishes.

Turns out the hassle of claiming back the GST is a bonus. This would all be brilliant! If everyone is using the same thing consistently it's easier to share finance committees between parishes and breakdown the barriers. Getting people together to be on the Finance Committee is hard. People will be more likely to put their hand up and join a committee with structures in place and support.

GST, what things are included. Finance person volunteers. Could we get advice on fuel cards for priest's, link tolls into it. Fund raising resource, to assist parishes, what grants are available? Where to look and how to get them. Pacem, support how do we use this, can we have training? Parish guidelines needing renewal and review, we're waiting on Bishop's review.

Parishes should create their own set of officers, a PPC for young adults and young people.

Most parishes had no one present at this meeting from their parish Finance Committee, so they really didn't discuss this area very much.

Item 6: What's working exchange: A substantial initiative from St Kilian's Parish on a challenging issue was presented. The idea of Deanery Forum 2 was to find an initiative that shows promise and share it as an example.

Questions that arise for our parish from the "What's Working Exchange": *Does this have relevance for our Parish? Does it stimulate thinking about what we might do in this or another area? Is there a follow-up discussion we can have with the presenting parish? Can our parish leverage this? Is there momentum for a Deanery project here?*

They have done a lot of work, and love the idea of sharing food. Fantastic resource, well done.

Consistency is the theme, thinking to target RCIA to refer onto PRAISE. Can we have a central RCIA program rotating through the parishes?

Encourage Kangaroo Flat to PRAISE. New hall to run RCIA/PRAISE event. Needs to be advertised.

Volunteers aging out or limiting time and those volunteers being spread across multiple groups causes resources to be too thin. Sustainability of people, clergy, volunteers, youth, all roll into one another. Interfaith groups and opportunities. Common mission. Social and faith gatherings are being done well. Connection between parish and school is zero. Cultural awareness of what they want. Clergy capacity has run thin.

Recruit volunteers by not being intentional, but invitational. Working through the shyness of some demographics is always a challenge. Good amount of young people in Pyramid Hill (mostly Filipino) and Rochester. There is interest, it needs to be cultivated. Have altar servers, focus on creating community. Rochester: I have the young people and now that I have the PRAISE outline, I know what to do with them.

Making the hour of Mass very different from the social time with parishioners, talking before and after Mass, but not during. Letting kids act like kids. Let parishioners spur themselves (allow space for BBQ's, family get together/s on church property) like providing park space for them to use, creates community.

PRAISE is a way to direct Young People in a way that isn't just social. Cherry pick from it what will work for you and then add your own flavour to it.

Ministry to young families, one mass per week, catechesis and cuppa afterwards, movie afternoon.

Praise, it looks like a great initiative. Parish council, from little things big things grew. Strong ideas, effort for more engagement. How can we welcome, reach out, integrate. Third weekend cuppa.

After mass, gaining momentum. Healing mass, once each month with a cuppa. Father Boniface has holy hour adoration on Thursday night quiet time for reflection.

Item 7: Priority Discernment -What Matters Most in the Deanery Now?

Table 1

1	Clergy Capacity/Multi-parish models
2	Connection with and between diverse cultures within parish communities
3	Volunteer sustainability
4	Connection between parish and school
5	Key missing demographic 35-60
6	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)

Table 2

1	Clergy capacity/multi-parish models
2	Volunteer sustainability
3	Connection between parish and schools
4	Joint social and faith gatherings
5	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)
6	Intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners – mutual not one way
7	Key missing demographic 35-60
8	Parish models and leadership: shared leadership models, lay leadership & preparation for fewer resident priests
9	Common mission focus or two across the Deanery
10	Chancery assistance with Parish Administration

Table 3

1	Connection with and between diverse cultures within parish communities
2	Connection with parish and schools
3	Key missing demographic 35-60
4	Parish models and leadership: shared leadership models, lay leadership & preparation for fewer resident priests.
5	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)
6	Volunteer sustainability
7	Intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners – mutual, not one way
8	Clergy capacity/multi-parish models
9	Joint social and faith gatherings
10	Chancery assistance with Parish Administration compliance matters

Table 4

1	Connection between parish & school
1	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)
1	Key missing demographic 35-60
2	Volunteer sustainability
3	Intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners – mutual, not one way
3	Connection with and between diverse cultures within parish communities

Table 5

1	Connection with and between diverse cultures within parish communities
2	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)
3	Parish models and leadership: shared leadership models, lay leadership & preparation for fewer resident priests
4	Intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners – mutual, not one way
5	Key missing demographic 35-60
6	Volunteer sustainability
7	Financial sustainability
8	Clergy capacity/multi-parish models
9	Connection between parish & school
10	Common mission focus or two across the Deanery
11	Joint social and faith gatherings

Table 6

1	Intercultural formation for clergy and parishioners – mutual, not one way
1	Connection with and between diverse cultures within parish communities
2	Key missing demographic 35-60
2	Common mission focus or two across the Deanery
3	Connection between parish & school
4	Clergy capacity/multi-parish models
4	Volunteer sustainability
4	Parish models and leadership: shared leadership models, lay leadership & preparation for fewer resident priests
5	Minimal/no presence of teenagers and young adults (20s)
5	Financial sustainability
6	Chancery assistance with Parish Administration Compliance Matters
7	Joint social and faith gatherings

Item 9: Progressing Action around Priorities: Self-selected groups gathering around a displayed Priority Issue.

Connection with Parish and School

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

Parishioners reading at school to build familiar faces. Student faith leaders are a good connection point. Being involved and present at schools. Attending footy. Catholic youth group for 1 hour after school. Mass on a Friday in a school classroom and parishioners are invited to attend, good way to get families involved. Whole school Mass 3x a year in the stadium. Monthly family day Mass, teachers do readings and have a cuppa afterwards.

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

Paperwork, compliance with WWCC.

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

Offering a Blessing for the younger children prior to communion.

Parish Models and Leadership: Shared Leadership Models, Lay Leadership and preparation for fewer resident priests

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

We must have discerning and wise leadership. What is the sustainability of parishes, we need to look at different models. Are we providing what they want? Thin on the ground due to clergy doing Administrative work.

Look around, do we have enough different inputs? What happens when there are no priests? Parish must step up and flourish while priest is not present. How can a communion service be as uplifting and fulfilling for people as attending a Mass?

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

1. *Some people do not feel lay led communion service is a replacement for Mass. They do not fully value the sacrament through a communion service.*
2. *Ensuring community is represented in leadership roles, find out why people are not participating and start to invite them (i.e. Indian, Filipino, Chinese, etc.)*
3. *Clergy spread thin or not existent at all.*

- **What do we want? What is the outcome we desire? Do we believe this is the same as what the Holy Spirit desires? IS this the “fruit that will last” that Jesus speaks of (Jn 15:16)?**

To provide the eucharist to people daily. To have diverse leadership in parishes that represents all the communities in the parish. More clergy or more support for lay led services and lay led decision-making.

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

Create connections and make everyone feel like they belong. Have clergy emphasise that receiving the eucharist as often as possible, including at a lay led service is important. Provide strong guidance and formation for lay leaders to own more of parish life and services.

- **What do we need to do? What are the next steps?**

Determine things like why Baptist churches have such good attendance. They engage with families so well.

Do we have the momentum for a Priority-Focused Working Group? (Enter Convenor and participant information if yes) *None of the group felt that they had the time to be part of a focus group.*

Key Missing Demographic (35-60)

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

Don't pay attention to the age group period always seems to be youth is the focus.

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

Growth and transformation. These people are working. They feel alienated by "Jesus botherer". What are the optics and assumptions they have? They only attend baptisms, marriages and funerals. There is an opportunity to engage. Nothing more off putting than why aren't you coming to mass? We need to stop labelling people, language is important. Inclusivity, people can be put off by rules and regulations.

- **What do we want? What is the outcome we desire? Do we believe this is the same as what the Holy Spirit desires? IS this the "fruit that will last" that Jesus speaks of (Jn 15:16)?**

How do I present myself in community and work as a witness in community. What is offered to this group, they need to be valued. Formation is important, have courses that draw people in and that assist in connecting parents and youth.

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

Training for people. Morning cafes, opportunity for people to connect.

- **What do we need to do? What are the next steps?**

In every parish we should have prayer of the faithful that includes mission an evangelization. Identify the groups that keep people connected, grief groups etc.

- **Who or what people/resources can we connect with? Perhaps, start with Chancery...**

Parishioners, parish council.

Intercultural Formation for Communication between Clergy and Parishioners

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

Three to four months integration for clergy and for parishioners. This area needs work.

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

Cultural and personality.

- **What do we want? What is the outcome we desire? Do we believe this is the same as what the Holy Spirit desires? IS this the "fruit that will last" that Jesus speaks of (Jn 15:16)?**

Understanding. Faith formation. Allowed disagreement. Be open minded, listen, and ask.

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

Talk! Have conversations. Accept diversity and adapt. There will be demographic change, accept.

- **What do we need to do? What are the next steps?**

Start with simple question and answer sessions when welcoming a new priest, use Ice Breakers.

- **Who or what people/resources can we connect with? Perhaps, start with Chancery...**

Cultural change acknowledgement. Mutual understanding. Immerse in each other's cultures. We feel that steps are happening in this direction.

Do we have the momentum for a Priority-Focused Working Group? (Enter Convenor and participant information if yes) Yes, Nadene and Angela would like to keep up an informal group.

Volunteer Sustainability

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

Have a number of groups in the parish that are older and female, not being replaced. Not that people don't want to remain volunteers, but they physically cannot as they age. There is a lot to be done. Older volunteers struggle to let go. Would like to be able to ask for help from culturally diverse parishioners.

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

Age. Letting go and teaching. Personal approach. New people are intimidated to take on someone who has done this so long.

- **What do we want? What is the outcome we desire? Do we believe this is the same as what the Holy Spirit desires? IS this the "fruit that will last" that Jesus speaks of (Jn 15:16)?**

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

Personal approach and engaging on a level they are comfortable with first. Sharing with small steps, quietly. Formation skills being built up. Volunteer rotation max of 3-year term.

- **What do we need to do? What are the next steps?**

Identify our priority area and mentoring new volunteers, education on PPC.

- **Who or what people/resources can we connect with? Perhaps, start with Chancery...**

PPC, Parents, Schools, Volunteer resource services.

Do we have the momentum for a Priority-Focused Working Group? (Enter Convenor and participant information if yes) MAYBE – Julie Moyle

Minimal/No Presence of teenagers and young adults (20's)

- **Why did I select this Priority?**

No idea how to bring along young people. I don't have any resources. We have no influence. How do you bring them to the parish? None of the friends of the kids are going or getting connected. This is for

the future of the church. How do we get the young people back? How to get them to the church, divert from gadgets, get a closer relationship with Jesus.

- **What is this group identifying as key issues within this Priority?**

Not all students in the primary or secondary schools are Catholic. Do not know how to bring young people into the church. There are many young people going to the Protestant churches, Baptists in particular for youth groups. How do we get them into your Catholic Church, local parishes?

- **What do we want? What is the outcome we desire? Do we believe this is the same as what the Holy Spirit desires? IS this the “fruit that will last” that Jesus speaks of (Jn 15:16)?**

I want to see more young people coming to the church. We are interested and willing to learn new strategies.

- **How do we go about this? What do we need to know?**

We should be able to invite students from schools to church. Are there informative resources that we could use? What could be the strategies that we can adapt and implement based on our local context? Is there a standard one that we can use as a base?

- **What do we need to do? What are the next steps?**

Ask for help from the Chancery. Find a local person focused on young people. Announce, regularly and always, in the Mass that we have a youth group. Coordinate with schoolteachers, primary/secondary, so that we can discuss how to work together.

- **Who or what people/resources can we connect with? Perhaps, start with Chancery...**

Parents, Chancery youth ministry.

Item 10: What happens next? Follow-through (Detailed comments from all participants)

- **My thoughts...**

Good timing, patience, sowing seeds. Would like to see important, stable community activities.

My head was full, too many information points, takes a bit of time to judge and digest.

“A vision without action is merely hallucination....”

The day ran smoothly. Some parts were not relevant depending on those present at the meeting.

Clear action taken from last deanery forum. Quite valuable, it was not too long.

Would the Deanery be best run by the Deanery rather than the Chancery? But with Chancery input on notice?

There was not a mention of the over 60-year-old parishioners the whole day. Their input their spirit, wisdom, their desire to be involved.

- **My notes...**

The content was well structured however it was too big, too fast and too much to do, we were lost at some points. For next steps we need time to discuss things and make plans, at the parish level.

Please let people know about the Shepparton gathering in August.

My feedback on the Content, Structure, Rhythm of the Day...

- **What I appreciated/worked well for me...**

Coming together. Moving. Follow up from previous forum was very good.

Sharing of ideas on what works from the priority list. Timing of sessions was excellent keep moving through the items.

Opinions of other priests or volunteers.

I found the entire day uplifting; it has given me hope that it is possible to make positive changes to our parish to potentially increase parishioners. Make a plan and stick with it!

Input and discussion was useful. Had a very good discussion with the small group.

Short sessions, movement around the area.

The opportunity to connect with people from other parishes. The lunch was good and provided an opportunity for community. A sense that we're looking at practical steps, finally!

Positivity, people know we have challenges but no one is giving up.

The fact sheets. The Chancery contact list. Clergy capacity/ multiple parish model discussion. Saint Kilians praise young adult workshops.

The parish groups and then swapping into mixed groups. Two parishes at my table were good and then it was great when there was a lot of parishes. Discussion about youth and how to connect with them and bring them back to the church.

The succinct updates on supports from the Chancery and other projects in the pipeline. Balance overall was better than the last forum.

I appreciated the well-prepared resources. There was a good mix of information and discernment. The session flowed affectively for me.

It is good to have a table guide who understands the process at our table.

I liked knowing the links to the Deanery meeting in August.

- **What didn't work well for me or frustrated me...**

Around multiple priorities and how they tied together seem more effective than narrowing them down to one priority discussion, there were only a couple of people at some of the priorities.

Sometimes there were too many topics in a very short period of time.

Wary of Synodality.

Too tightly controlled from chancery and not enough involvement from parishes.

No mention of inclusion of over 60-year-old parishioners, no invitation for anyone over 70 years old to participate in ongoing mission of planning and participation.

I would have liked to have seen Claire Spinelli or Jessan Tano present on youth ministry. I appreciate Chris is oversight of youth, however, I feel for Claire and Jessan not being the presenters.

Ranking the priorities felt like a lot of wasted time, I would have been happy to just be presented with the list of ideas that seem most important from the last forum meeting.

- **In the next Deanery Forum I would do more of...**

Listening.

Hoping some of the things waiting on Bishop approval can be rolled out and put into practise soon.

Have another sharing session on a different chosen priority.

Discuss families and how to attract young people back to Mass.

Pastoral issues from parishes.

No personal invitation 3 parishes interested and no people participating.

I would like us to get practical with visionary planning and inspiring speakers on topics such as multicultural engagement in formation, volunteer sustainability and recruitment, school parish connections by leadership, clergy capacity multi parishes, youth connection etc.

I'd like to see the number attending tripled, with more space between tables and in discussion groups.

Noise is an issue for old ears. The assembly was better.

It would be good to hear another example similar to Saint Kilians, of what is working.

More time for discussion, maybe start at 9:30. More time for parish staff to connect with Chancery staff, make connections, afternoon tea whilst meeting discussing issues with staff.

And with Chancery staff, give opportunity so maybe we then swap into a different staff breakout.

More open floor discussions. If the groups had come back and shared ideas, we might have formed some project consistencies.

This is an ongoing conversation and formation process, therefore continue the links from previous conversations. A mix of information in conversation.

I would like to hear the Bishop's thoughts on where this diverse diocese is heading. Does he support this ongoing formation process?

- **In the next Deanery Forum I would do less of...**

Talking.

Next Deanery Forum please communicate beforehand.

Less papers, questions and paperwork. I come here open minded but feeling a lack of investment period, the materials are difficult to follow and do not connect with the daily reality of pastoral life.

Congregate with my own parishioners, testing their passion for action!

Appreciate the current format, do not need to change anything.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This report forms part of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst Deanery Forum Round 2 consultation series and is intended to support ongoing discernment, planning, formation and pastoral action across the Diocese.