

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020

LISTEN TO WHAT  
THE *spirit* IS SAYING.  
REVELATIONS 2:7

# Support Kit

## for selecting your Local Animator

### General Information & Submission Form

Based upon the text and concept of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay.  
Original author: Daniel Ang, Office for Evangelisation. © Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay 2018





# Introduction

## Why Plenary Council 2020 Matters

The Plenary Council to be held in 2020 represents an extraordinary and unique opportunity to discover and discern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the future course for the Church in Australia. It is time to ask “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia?”

The Plenary Council opens up opportunities for all of God’s people to name those issues that are important to our faith, and to share perspectives and practices that God can use to touch ordinary lives. As a gift of the Holy Spirit, the Plenary Council has the potential to open up new horizons within ourselves and our Catholic communities, to discern ways to live our faith anew in contemporary Australian society. It will decide and legislate on matters that will shape and impact upon generations of Australian Catholics to come.



## Why do we need Local Animators?

In anticipation of the Plenary Council to be held in Australia in 2020, Bishop Brian Mascord invites the people of the Diocese of Wollongong to set out on a journey of listening, dialogue and prayer, to discern how the Catholic community can best live the life and mission of Jesus in contemporary Australian society.

The Diocese of Wollongong will enter into this process of discernment beginning with a year dedicated to listening in 2018 and the first part of 2019, followed by discernment for the balance of 2019, and the development of proposals to share at the Plenary Council in 2020.

The fruit of our listening and dialogue about the future of the Australian Catholic community will not only inform our intended diocesan submission to the Plenary Council in 2020: it will also provide each of us in the Diocese of Wollongong - including our Bishop, parish and school communities, agencies, families, and individuals – with perspectives and insights to shape our local mission of evangelisation and renewal.

To support the sharing of faith and hopes, by and for our Catholic community, Bishop Brian Mascord invites each parish, school and agency of the Diocese to discern and appoint ‘Local Animators’ to assist in hearing and gathering the views of our people.

Specifically, the Bishop invites each church community in every parish, every Catholic primary and secondary school, each CatholicCare centre and ministry, and religious institute, ecclesial movement and youth network, to discern a Local Animator in their midst.



## What role will the Local Animator play?

This Local Animator – in close liaison with their parish priest, principal or community leader – will be responsible for coordinating and encouraging listening sessions in their local community on the future of our Church, on what God is asking of us in Australia.

These listening sessions are to take place between September and November 2018 in a form that best suits each local community or group.

Hence the role of the Local Animator is to ‘animate’ listening sessions in their community. However, they need not facilitate all local conversations and can invite others to help in leading groups of conversation within the community.

The Local Animator will be provided with training and support, resources and practical ideas to lead and coordinate these listening sessions in their community.

Half-day training sessions conducted by the Office for Renewal and Evangelisation will take place on **Saturday 18, Friday 24 or Saturday 25 August 2018** by our Office for Renewal and Evangelisation.

“It is my hope that through patient dialogue and faith-filled discernment, the conciliar journey will confirm the Catholics in Australia in a spirit of fraternal unity and missionary discipleship, thus enabling them to be a leaven of holiness, justice and reconciliation in today’s rapidly changing society.”

POPE FRANCIS  
APOSTOLIC BLESSING (18 MAY 2018)

## The Local Animator will:

- Distribute Plenary Council guides for local listening sessions;
- Lead and encourage others to lead such local sessions using these guides
- Encourage all participants to share the feedback of their dialogue with their local Parish Pastoral Councils, school staff and teams, community leaders and social support centres for their local discernment and action, and also upload these responses to the National Plenary Council website at **[www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)**
- Share new information about Plenary Council 2020 as it comes to hand and serve as the primary liaison with our Diocesan Plenary Council Working Group.



# Who, how, what?

## **WHO** should we choose as our Local Animator?

Your Local Animator should be chosen following prayerful discernment in your community and with the agreement of the person selected.

We invite the selection of one Local Animator per community in a parish (eg for Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong, one from St Francis Xavier's Wollongong, one from St Brigid's Gwynneville and one from St John Vianney Fairy Meadow); a Local Animator from each Catholic primary and secondary school; and from each CatholicCare centre, religious institute, ecclesial movement, and youth network.

Following are some helpful criteria which your local community can use to discern your Local Animator:

- A prayerful and joyful Catholic who trusts in the Holy Spirit at work in the community of faith;
- A collaborator, connected to the community, who is open and committed to supporting local conversations about the future of the Church and its mission;
- A good listener who can encourage others and believes in the value of shared discernment; ie, the importance of all voices;
- The ability to coordinate and promote listening sessions between September and November in your community in close collaboration with the parish priest, principal or local leader;
- The ability to encourage participants to share this feedback with their local parish pastoral councils, school staff and teams, community leaders and social support centres for local discernment, and upload their responses to the national plenary process via **[www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)**
- The willingness to undergo training for this role in August, to gather in November 2018 or February 2019 with other Local Animators in your region (eg, Illawarra and Southern Highlands in November; Shoalhaven and Macarthur in February), and attend the Diocesan Assembly in April 2019.

Ideally, your Local Animator should be someone who has led a pastoral ministry or is active in community engagement in one form or another.





## **HOW should we choose our Local Animator?**

The process for selecting your Local Animator can itself be an opportunity for ‘synodality’, of ‘walking together’ as a local community, in prayerful discernment and decision making. Consultation can take place with your Parish Pastoral Council, parish or school staff, or with colleagues to consider potential candidates, again with the suggested criteria in view.

Your Parish Priest, principal or local leader is encouraged to share information about Plenary Council 2020 and the involvement of our Wollongong communities in this process of listening, using the general information provided in this kit (see opposite page) and the videos and promotional materials online at **[www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)**. They might then call for expressions of interest for the role of Local Animator from within the community, highlighting the suggested criteria.



## **WHAT do we do next?**

Once your Local Animator is selected, please invite them to identify themselves by filling out the online submission form and booking in for a training session:

**<http://dow.sh/localanimator>**

This information must be provided by Tuesday 14 August, 2018.

## **TRAINING SESSION OPTIONS**

**(for parishes, religious institutes, ecclesial movements and youth networks)**

### **Saturday 18 August 2018**

3:00pm–5:30pm

*(followed by 6:00pm Vigil Mass launching Diocesan 2020 Plenary processes)*

St John Vianney Co-Cathedral  
1 Cabbage Tree Lane, Fairy Meadow

### **Friday 24 August 2018**

9:30am–12:00noon

Micah House  
35a Cordeaux St, Campbelltown

### **Saturday 25 August 2018**

9:30am–12:00noon

Xavier Centre  
38 Harbour Street, Wollongong

## **TRAINING SESSION OPTIONS**

**(for Catholic Education, CatholicCare)**

*To be organised in consultation with these agencies.*

When your Local Animator is identified, we will send them all the relevant information they need. Please note that all the information in this support kit is also available from the Wollongong diocesan website for convenience: **[www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au)**

# What is Plenary Council 2020?

- A Plenary Council is the highest form of communion between the various local or particular churches of a nation. This gathering of all the dioceses of Australia represents a once-in-a-century opportunity to discover and discern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the future course for the Church.
- It is time to ask ‘What do you think God is asking of us in Australia?’ The announcement of the Plenary Council expresses a commitment to ‘walk together’ in faith to discern how God is calling us to better express and live the Gospel in our time. All people are invited to share their hearts and minds in this process of prayer and discernment.
- It invites us to listening, dialogue and prayer with all of God’s people to determine how best to ensure the pastoral needs of the People of God are provided for.
- The calling of such a Council trusts in faith that it is by our mutual listening to the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church ‘into all truth’ (John 16:13), that we can exercise our Gospel mission most effectively as a community of faith.
- In 2020 and 2021 the bishops of Australia, along with other council delegates, including laity and religious, will convene to discuss and make decisions about the future of the Church, informed by their careful discernment of the work of the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of all the People of God. This is why our Bishop is calling forth ‘Local Animators’ to assist him to hear and gather the sense of the faith of our people.
- Each church community in every parish, every Catholic primary and secondary school, each CatholicCare centre and ministry, and religious institute and ecclesial movement is invited to enter into dialogue on the future of the Catholic community between September and November 2018, appointing a Local Animator to coordinate such dialogue with the support of guides, resources and training that will be provided by the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation.
- Following a process of listening and discernment, our Diocese will then prepare to make a submission to the national Plenary Council process in Advent 2019 reflecting the views, experiences and suggestions of our people for the good of the Australian Church.
- The feedback from our listening and dialogue will also provide our Diocesan community – including our Bishop, parish and school communities, agencies, families, and individuals – with perspectives and insights to shape our local mission of evangelisation and outreach in faith.

## Important Dates to Note in 2018

- **July 2018** – Release of Bishop Brian Mascord’s Pastoral Letter on Plenary Council 2020 to the people of Wollongong and outline of our diocesan journey.
- **14 August 2018** – Submission date for Local Animators from each church community in every parish, every Catholic primary and secondary school, each CatholicCare centre and ministry, youth network, religious institute and ecclesial movement of the Diocese.
- **18 August 2018** – Diocesan Mass and launch of Plenary 2020, including commissioning of Local Animators (6:00pm Vigil, St John Vianney Co-Cathedral, Fairy Meadow)
- **18, 24 & 25 August 2018** – Training session options, see page 5.



- **September to November 2018** – Local listening sessions to commence in parish communities, schools, agencies, and centres of ministry and religious life, coordinated by Local Animators.
- **November 2018 & February 2019** – Regional dialogues with our Local Animators and others.

**ILLAWARRA**

**Sunday 11 November 2018**

12:00pm–4:00pm  
St John Vianney Co-Cathedral  
1 Cabbage Tree Lane, Fairy Meadow

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

**Sunday 18 November 2018**

12:00pm–4:00pm  
*venue to be advised*

**SHOALHAVEN**

**Sunday 17 February 2019**

12:00pm–4:00pm  
*venue to be advised*

**MACARTHUR**

**Sunday 24 February 2019**

12:00pm–4:00pm  
*venue to be advised*

- **Saturday 30 March 2019** – Diocesan Assembly for discerning what has been said.

**THE YEARS AHEAD**

**2018**

A YEAR OF  
**Listening**

- 20 May** Launch at Pentecost
- 18 August** Diocesan Mass and launch
- 18, 24 & 25 August** Training of local animators
- September–November** Local listening in communities
- 11 November** Illawarra regional forum
- 18 November** Southern Highlands regional forum

**2019**

A YEAR OF  
**Discerning**

- 17 February** Shoalhaven regional forum
- 24 February** Macarthur regional forum
- 6 March** *Ash Wednesday*  
Final date for online submissions to **plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au**
- 30 March** Diocesan Assembly (Macarthur region)  
*Date & venue TBC*

**2020**

A YEAR OF  
**Proposing**

*further dates to be announced*

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Based upon the text and concept of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay.  
Original author: Daniel Ang, Office for Evangelisation. © Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay 2018



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**Plenary Council Working Group**

plenarycouncil@dow.org.au  
[www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au)