



2026 National Church Life Survey Media Brief

Organisation: NCLS Research
Subject: 2026 National Church Life Survey
Website: www.2026ncls.org.au
Media Kit: www.2026ncls.org.au/media
Interviews: Dr Ruth Powell
Contact: Dr Ruth Powell, Director, NCLS Research
 Phone: 02 91392525 Email: rpowell@ncls.org.au

Announcing the 2026 NCLS

Thousands of churches across Australia are expected to take part in the *National Church Life Survey (NCLS)*, from August to October 2026.

The Australia-wide survey has been run by NCLS Research every five years since 1991. In 2026, the NCLS will reach 35 years of research into church and community life, making it the largest, longest running survey of its type in the world.

The *National Church Life Survey* incorporates around:

- 20+ denominations
- 250,000+ church attenders
- in multiple languages
- 3,000 churches
- 7,000 leaders
- in paper and online options

Why?

As churches continue their post-COVID recovery, and respond to social changes, it is more important than ever to have an informed approach to modern day ministry. Through the *National Church Life Survey* we work towards our vision of **thriving churches with an understanding of their role and mission within a changing society**. Our mission is to **provide credible research to identify signs of hope and nurture in churches, leadership and communities**.

What makes the NCLS unique?

It is not only the wide-reaching research, asking the people in the pews, but a solid frame including theory within which to interpret the results, that gives our findings a nuanced perspective, that embraces complexity and the day-to-day reality of church ministry and community life.

Our practical application processes encourage active participation in learning from research and shaping effective ministry practices.

We believe that we have built trust, credibility and respect as a result of this approach.



Outcomes:

- Participating churches receive their own survey results, to help them identify their strengths, equip their leaders and inspire new directions for the future.
- Regional and denominational leadership receive data and overview findings, on church health, sustainable and effective leadership and church connections with the wider community, to inform strategic and pastoral planning.
- Media and academic bodies receive reports on trends and findings on the state of the Australian Church and churches' contributions to society.



Timeline:

Mar 2026	Denominations confirm level and type of participation	Oct - Nov 2026	Local churches return surveys to NCLS Research
Mar - Jul 2026	Denom coordinators and local churches update details and place survey orders	Late 2026 - early 2027	NCLS Research delivers results to local churches
Aug 2026	Local churches complete Church Activities Survey	By mid 2027	NCLS Research delivers regional and denominational results
Sept - Oct 2026	Local churches complete Attender Surveys and Leader Surveys	2027 onwards	NCLS Research delivers commissioned reports and commences research agenda

About NCLS Research: NCLS Research is a world leader in research focused on connecting churches and their communities. Decades of rigorous and thoughtful work has examined church health, effective leadership, spirituality and social trends. Our most well-known project is the five-yearly National Church Life Survey, which has had millions of participants. NCLS Research is the trading name for Magnify Research Ltd.

Media Kit: A Media Kit will be updated regularly and is available at www.2026ncls.org.au/media

