

# Synod of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

## Survey Practical Ideas Mapped to the Diocesan Vision & Mission, Local & Diocesan

May 2026



Over 250 submissions to the Synod survey were received in late 2025. The official Survey Collation feeds back trends and responses across the whole survey. This compilation of 'practical ideas' sits alongside the Collation and seeks to honour the practical suggestions that may have bearing on the process towards the Synod Agenda and will help generate local action arising from this discernment.

These ideas have been organised according to the ten dot points of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes Vision and Mission Statement. Within each category, ideas are further divided into those that can be initiated at the local parish level, and those that require diocesan-level coordination, resourcing, or authority. Some ideas appear under more than one category where they speak to multiple dimensions of the Mission.

This document uses the actual words from survey entries, but at times some words or phrases have been omitted for length, and punctuation altered accordingly. In each case, the main point of the idea was kept, with explanations removed except for clarification. Blanket or theoretical ideas have not been included; as much as possible these are specific ideas. The document includes all responses sent in to the survey within the Collation timeline, all extra-survey submissions, and survey responses that came in late.

The Synod Subcommittee,  
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**LOCAL IDEA** Ideas that can be initiated and led by a parish or local community group

**DIOCESAN IDEA** Ideas requiring diocese-wide coordination, resourcing, or authority

### 1. Celebrate and share in the beauty of Catholic spirituality and traditions

#### LOCAL IDEAS

- Liturgies celebrated beautifully and reverently
- Regular Sacraments, Rosary, prayer, celebration of feast days, Ember days, Rogation days, etc.
- Return of Latin Mass
- Bring the Traditional Latin Mass to more places
- Increased use of chant
- Return to old traditional style of hymns
- Quiet masses
- Bring about the First Saturday devotion
- Men's rosary groups
- Rosary groups (home rosary)
- Procession of Mary
- Regular adoration
- Eucharistic adoration on a regular basis – at least once a month
- Benediction
- Divine Mercy Sunday
- A formal consecrated group to live a life with proper rules – Third order of Franciscans or Legion of Mary, etc.
- Re-establishment of the Legion of Mary
- A choir
- Music e.g. gently playing music during special reconciliation times
- Baptisms during Sunday Mass (wherever possible)
- Holy Communion be available under both species at all Masses
- Bring back communion including 2 x species

- Extraordinary ministers of communion should be used during Mass only as a necessity, not the norm
- 30 minute quiet time announced in Church before each Mass with ways to prepare for Mass posted around the church walls and in bulletin
- A special prayer of thanks that we say together at the end of Mass
- A freshen up in the noticeboards and children's section
- Parishes to have a sacramentals stall/shop available after Mass/es
- Church architecture – get rid of fluorescent lighting, replace power point screens with missals and hymnals
- More involvement of migrant groups in celebrations and liturgies
- Multicultural interactions e.g. special dialogues, get together meals
- Possibilities for pilgrimages in the diocese

#### **DIOCESAN IDEAS**

- Better music resources for musicians – diocesan sourcing/provision
- Research into finding better music resources at diocesan level

## **2. Engage in the work and witness of evangelisation, inspiring a relationship with God and the life of faith**

#### **LOCAL IDEAS**

- More colour in the church. Make it more welcoming from the outside. Show that people are inside (banners out front).
- The ALPHA program
- Events such as ALPHA-SIP
- A plan to welcome people back to the church – both new and lapsed
- Good priests and speakers visiting parishes and homes of the faithful
- Fostering creative approaches that help people explore their beliefs, supporting programs like RCIA
- Follow up RCIA. Peer partnerships
- Better catechesis programs outside the parish school (e.g. RCIA, sacramental preparation)
- Enlist missionary activities
- A youth group beginning outside of mass for community members and eventually bringing them into the church
- Supporting priests to write more succinct homilies for masses on Sundays and more age appropriate homilies for school masses
- Priests being allowed to marry people outside the church (rather than marriage by a celebrant)
- A retreat by an Aboriginal Catholic leader
- Creating opportunities for yarning circles, creative workshops and community-led worship

#### **DIOCESAN IDEAS**

- Strong ALPHA programs run annually through the high school to get youth involved – diocese coordinating
- Stronger education and commitment for RCIA candidates – diocesan standards and support
- Useful and inspirational common education resources on the WF webpage, e.g. a RCIA course

## **3. Support the clergy and all those entrusted with God's mission in leadership**

#### **LOCAL IDEAS**

- Building strong Parish Councils and making their work known to parish members
- Parish Councils need to listen to the younger members of the Church and accept change
- Financial transparency at parish level
- Transparent finances of Parish
- Recognition of the contributions and value of women, through REAL steps
- Women having more roles in church

## DIOCESAN IDEAS

- More visits from the Bishop
- Visit by Bishop other than at Confirmation
- Explore integration with neighbouring dioceses
- The diocese should be divided up and absorbed into the neighbouring dioceses
- Mandatory Vatican II theology formation of Presbyters
- Involve greater participation and formation and recruitment of clergy, women and lay people
- Greater role for nuns
- Inviting orthodox nuns and brothers into the diocese for families to engage with
- The diocese to provide on-site training, support and advice for parishes needing help navigating finances or pastoral planning
- Transparent finances of Diocese
- Transparency on financial matters, genuine consultation at diocesan level
- Sell off some diocesan riches
- Conduct an inventory on all diocese and parish buildings, renting out office spaces, halls and unoccupied dwellings at affordable rates
- Dio needs to actually support small parishes more with clerical support, budget and accounting

## 4. Foster participation in spiritual and faith formation and openness to our personal vocations

### LOCAL IDEAS

- Meetings, adult education
- Discussion groups
- Bible study groups during daylight hours
- Times of shared prayer, bible study/formation or synodal listening
- Catechism teaching. Bible study groups
- Bible study or prayer group meetings
- Having theologically sound education presented on different topics of our faith
- A study of the feminine genius for mothers and daughters in our parish
- A retreat
- Retreat days
- Mini retreats for families or different groups
- Having retreat days/weekends run for adults/families that are orthodox, spiritually nourishing and reinvigorating
- Prayer and meditation groups
- Online prayer groups
- More prayers for world peace
- Baptismal preparation group
- Spend more time in the preparation of parents prior to the reception of the Sacrament

### DIOCESAN IDEAS

- At the diocesan level an annual program of 3 lectures; could partner with a wealthier diocese; 1 held in W/F and others on Zoom or livestreamed
- The Diocese to provide support with planning/organising/accessing opportunities for spiritual growth, education and ministry
- Access to digital resources and educational opportunities for interested personnel – diocese providing
- Access to informed guidance/best Catholic teaching on end-of-life matters – advanced care plans, palliative care, use of morphine, etc.

## 5. Nurture all people and ministries of our Catholic community as they reach out to others, encouraging their efforts within families, parishes, schools and organisations

### LOCAL IDEAS

- A flourishing parish council with committees such as liturgy/music, faith formation, communion to the housebound, communications, 'buddy committee', including representatives from CCWF, religious, local Catholic schools, Vinnies and any other Catholic agency
- Establishing of Basic Ecclesial Communities
- A youth group
- Youth groups or contributing to existing youth groups
- Events outside of mass, youth groups, more involved with the school
- Increase youth activities within the Church
- Activities bringing children, teens and adults together during the week
- More bonding activities – morning teas etc.
- Opportunities to mix/socialise which are woven into Parish life
- Social gatherings
- Social events such as BBQ or casual sports days that involve the young community
- Having family-friends times for Church things. Having events based on the celebration of Feast Days.
- Social connection other than church
- Get togethers outside of church, like BBQs and movie nights
- More social functions
- Community events and activities
- More family centred programs, youth engagement and spaces for cultural sharing
- Being able to connect with other families
- More social groups e.g. for youth, children, women, men, sporting such as tennis or cricket
- Consider using the parish hall for more functions, such as wedding receptions, dances for kids, baptism parties and so on
- The parish to provide a range of opportunities for people to engage with faith through action and service
- Children's session during Mass
- Engaging school students in masses
- More family Masses run by the school
- One day school does a Mass

### DIOCESAN IDEAS

- Youth groups especially in remoter areas for children/teenagers – diocese coordinating across parishes
- Social gatherings that involve parishioners from different parishes
- Interparish activities to establish new and reinforce friendships
- To organise or plan more community/youth events – diocese coordinating
- Youth events – adult events with purpose – diocese wide
- Try to do some activities to attract young families and the new generation – diocesan strategy
- More community gatherings and youth involvement – diocese wide
- Greater connections to other schools in the diocese, for students, parishioners and staff

## 6. Minister to regional, rural, remote and isolated communities

### LOCAL IDEAS

- With an aging population, finding a way to provide transportation to Mass
- Public notifications of Mass times in newspapers and Facebook
- Church guides and supports available for neurodiversity
- Better use of church buildings, e.g. availability for appropriate music performances and housing
- Provide lists to parishioners, parents and agency workers of the many and varied ways there are to participate in their/our community

## DIOCESAN IDEAS

- Live streaming of masses and events – maintaining a virtual presence for remote parishioners
- WF needs an increased and strong online presence. Each Parish's link should be something worth consulting, adding information/articles, events, etc.
- Parish bulletins to provide email/contact details for PPC and DPC prominently next to other parish contact details, along with Vinnies and CCWF contact details/website
- Bishop and Archbishop of Sydney actively explore creation of sister parishes to provide parish support

## 7. Walk with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the original custodians of the land

### LOCAL IDEAS

- Space for Aboriginal voices and cultural practices
- A retreat by an Aboriginal Catholic leader
- Creating opportunities for yarning circles, creative workshops and community-led worship
- Each church, parish building and school to have a First Nations acknowledgment of country displayed

### DIOCESAN IDEAS

- Enact a First Nation Reconciliation Action Plan
- Continue listening to community voices, especially Aboriginal families and young people – diocesan commitment
- Further cultural awareness for the diversity within the local communities – diocesan training/resources

## 8. Welcome and care for the vulnerable and seek justice for the marginalised, connecting with those within and beyond our faith community

### LOCAL IDEAS

- Soup kitchens, especially soup kitchens being run by the unemployed
- A soup kitchen for hungry and homeless people
- Involve youth in Caritas activities in Lent, e.g. Friday night simple meal for \$5 or \$10 to raise money
- Opportunity to participate in a social justice group
- Social justice activities
- Community volunteer groups
- Mental health retreats – more outreach in the local area with people that may not usually go to church
- More combined ecumenical worship services
- More ecumenical activities
- More interdenominational outreach
- Help those who can't speak English in our parishes to learn English

### DIOCESAN IDEAS

- Temporary housing in unused Catholic owned buildings
- Use of empty church building and land – convert to different levels of housing
- Encouraging the younger generation to become more involved by expanding services offered by the Catholic diocese e.g. Temporary accommodation and soup kitchens in each town centre
- Social justice programmes – diocese coordinating

## 9. Promote peace, the life and dignity of the human person, and care for God's creation

### LOCAL IDEAS

- Get involved in Plant a Tree Day, Clean up Australia Day, etc.
- Laudato Si taken up in a big way across parishes and schools
- Laudato Si' guidelines for parishes to be implemented, and encouraged for individuals/families

## **DIOCESAN IDEAS**

- Embed and promote Laudato Si principles throughout the whole Synod process
- Access to informed guidance/best Catholic teaching on end-of-life matters – advanced care plans, palliative care, use of morphine, etc.
- DEPJC disseminate information from peak Australian Catholic agencies, e.g. Vinnies, and draw attention to global matters raised by the Pope, with ways to participate at local levels

## **10. Cultivate a variety of communication methods to connect and educate**

### **LOCAL IDEAS**

- Suggestions boxes be available in each parish
- Opportunity for discussion outside the mass in more social settings
- Invite our parishioners to be more part of their parishes with discussions on what they need

### **DIOCESAN IDEAS**

- WF needs an increased and strong online presence. Each Parish's link should be something worth consulting
- Public notifications of Mass times in newspapers and Facebook – diocesan coordination
- Parish bulletins to provide email/contact details for PPC and DPC prominently
- Live streaming of masses and events
- The Diocese to provide access to digital resources and educational opportunities
- Open communication and transparency, especially with this synod process. Keep us all informed.
- Allow the Synod to function as it should. Listening and hearing what is being said, encouraging open and frank conversations.
- Could the Synod provide an opportunity to ascertain if there is a need to dialogue about understandings, questions, struggles etc. around issues of Doctrine?
- Communication, co-ordination and collaboration between parishes around the issues of 'change of era' in this Diocese
- Consulting at grassroots level more often
- Listening/hearing/open and frank discussion