



## CONCERNED CATHOLICS CANBERRA GOULBURN MEDIA RELEASE

### Plenary Tracker program to cover Catholic summit

**Monday 27 June 2022**

With the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church holding its culminating session next week, a Catholic reform group will once again broadcast a nightly *Plenary Tracker* online program to provide expert analysis and discussion of the event.

The Plenary Council's Second Assembly is expected to vote on motions to address a range of issues confronting the Church at a time of crisis – dwindling congregations, falling credibility among many of Australia's six million nominal and practising Catholics and the wider community.

The group, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, established five years ago in the aftermath of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse, has called for a more open and inclusive church, and dismantling of its male, clerical dominance.

The *Plenary Tracker* series, which during last year's First Assembly drew total audiences of several thousand, presented each night a panel drawn from Plenary members and lay commentators.

That format will be repeated next week with nightly programs at 7.30pm from Sunday 3 July, to Friday 8 July, presented by broadcasters Genevieve Jacobs and Paul Bongiorno.

Concerned Catholics Chair, Emeritus Professor John Warhurst AO, said the keen response to the inaugural *Plenary Tracker* series made the likely role of next week's series of even greater worth, given the Second Assembly is the final stage of the Plenary process.

'Among the vital issues to be considered, the Plenary Council will also vote on moves to integrate Indigenous spirituality and its recognition of the integral part ecology – the land – plays in that spirituality.

'Given the tightly controlled nature of the Plenary Council, including restraints on full debate of crucial issues like ordination of women priests and clericalism, the *Plenary Tracker* provides a vital avenue for the free and open expression of views by those seeking the best for their faith,' Professor Warhurst said.

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‘It was hoped by many of us that the Plenary Council would be a harbinger of renewal in the Church – an end to “business as usual” – but so far the authorities of the church, including most of the bishops, have shown little active leadership in making the church more inclusive and in pressing the Vatican for fundamental reforms such as a greater role for women.

‘The relationship between the broader community and Plenary Council Members individually and collectively has remained uncertain. The community has been deliberately kept at arm’s length by authorities when it tries to communicate its views to Plenary Council Members. The authorities would explain this as keeping a balance between a so-called bubble and a bridge.

‘I believe the Tracker will provide a bridge into the bubble, with interviews and discussion which go to the concerns and doubts of many Catholics in Australia,’ Professor Warhurst said.

***Produced by Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn with the support of ACCCR and Garratt Publishing, Plenary Tracker is a nightly online forum which follows the progress of the Australian Catholic Church's historic Plenary Council.***

***From Sunday, July 3 to July 8 at 7.30 pm AEST\*, Plenary members, insiders, advisers, observers and others will summarise, highlight, and discuss the day’s events as the Council votes on issues central to the life of the Catholic Church in Australia.***

**FREE [REGISTRATION](#)**

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**Contact: Mark Metherell 0417 603 697**