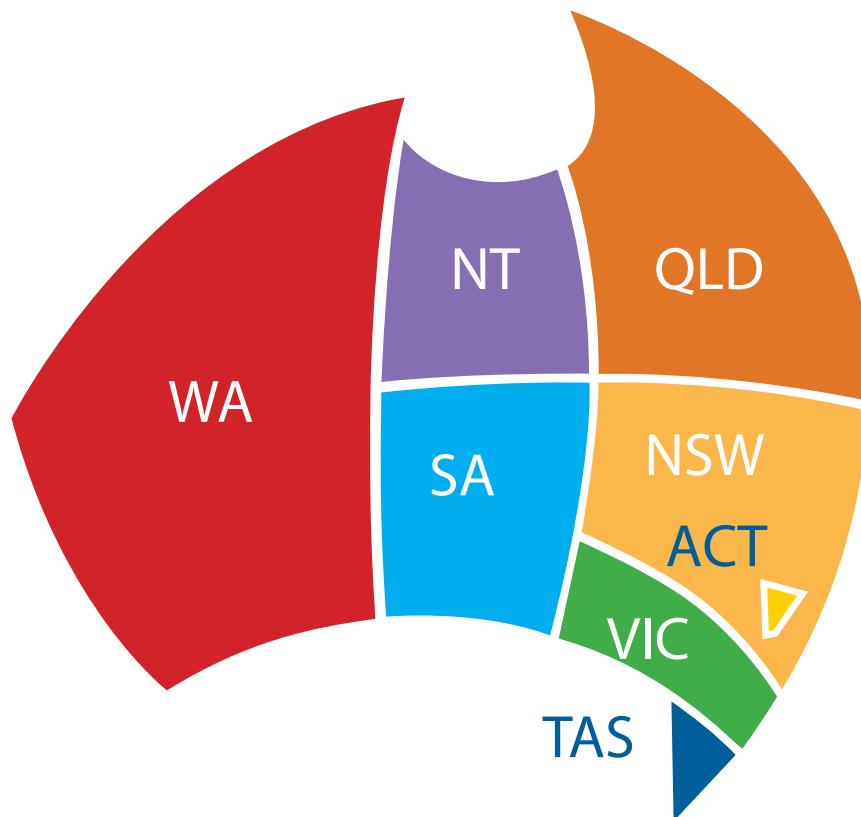


2019 Survey of Non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia



Part Two:

A View of Churches –
from Capital Cities to Remote Centres

**OCTOBER
2020**

Southern Pacific Christian Research
in association with Klesis Institute.

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Introduction to Part Two

The Focus of Part Two

- Part Two of the 2019 survey report presents a more detailed view of non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia, including an analysis of:
 - (1) Churches in various settings, from those in Australia's major cities to those in the country's remote locations;
 - (2) Churches of various sizes, from small 'house churches' to those with over 100 members; and
 - (3) Churches starting, closing or continuing between the 2013 and 2019 surveys.
- The characteristics and challenges of churches in each of the various types of urban and rural areas are markedly different.
- In the same way, the challenges faced by churches of various sizes are also significantly different (for example, churches with over 100 members compared with those under 30).
- These findings from the 2019 and 2013 surveys are presented to help understand the particular challenges faced by churches in different parts of Australia.

Rural and Urban Locations in Australia

- In order to provide an overview of the make-up of churches in rural and urban areas, the survey results were analysed using the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) Classification.¹
- Locations are classified as 'Metropolitan', 'Rural', or 'Remote' (Table 11).
- There are 7 sub-categories ranging from 'Capital Cities' to 'Other remote Areas'. Examples of each are shown in the table below.
- For ease of analysis in this report 'Other Rural Areas', 'Remote Centres' and 'Other Remote Areas' have been merged together.

¹ The Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) Classification was developed in 1991 to meet the needs of various Commonwealth departments, until replaced by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) in 2011. As the RRMA was used in 2013 and previous years, it was again utilised to compare the survey results for 2013 and 2019.

Table 11: Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification

Category	Population	Examples
Metropolitan (urban)		
Capital Cities		Sydney, Brisbane
Other Metropolitan Centres	100,000+	Geelong, Wollongong
Rural		
Large Rural Centres	25,000 to 99,999	Ballarat, Mackay
Small Rural Centres	10,000 to 24,999	Wangaratta, Bathurst
Other Rural Areas	Less than 10,000	Temora, Barossa
Remote	Less densely populated/ 00s kms from urban	
Remote Centres	5,000 or more	Mount Isa, Katherine
Other Remote Areas	Less than 5,000	Roxby Downs, Cobar
Source: <i>Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) Classification</i>		

Size of Churches

Churches were classified on the basis of the number of members, into twelve size categories. Nine categories, those between 10 to 99 are in intervals of ten. The remainder are the categories of 'Over 100 members', '6 to 9' and '5 members or less'. For the purpose of summarising the findings, churches were also classified as 'Larger Churches' (Over 100 members), 'Medium Size Churches' (10 to 99 members), and 'Smaller Churches' (Table 12).

Table 12: Church Size Classification

Church Size Category	No. Members
Larger churches	100 + members
Medium size churches	30 – 79 members
Smaller churches	< 30 members

New, Closed and Continuing Churches

Between each survey there are some churches which cease to meet. This could be for a number of reasons: the church is no longer viable as families have moved out of the area; or it was composed of a few elderly members; or it merged with a larger church; or was made up of the families of transient workers (mining, oil/gas, agriculture, medical, administration, etc); or the church no longer wishes to be connected with the non-denominational Churches of Christ). Collectively this group of churches will be referred to as

'Closed Churches'. At the same time there are churches which had started meeting during the period between the surveys and are naturally referred to as 'New Churches'. Churches which took part in both the 2013 and 2020 surveys are referred to as 'Continuing Churches' (Table 13).

Table 13: Definition of Closed, New and Continuing Churches

Closed churches	Churches included in the 2013 survey, but which were no longer meeting (or identifying as a non-denominational church of Christ) as of October 2019
New churches	Churches taking part in the 2019 survey which were established in the period following the 2013 survey
Continuing churches	Churches taking part in both the 2013 and 2019 surveys

Key Observations from the 2019 Survey Results

Some of the key observations from the analysis of the 2019 survey results are drawn from changes taking place in the size of churches.²

Changes among larger churches (see page 20)

1. The most noticeable changes were the increase in the number of members in churches over 100 and the gap opening up between churches over 100 and those under 80 in size (Tables 14 & 24 and Figure 18).
2. The number of churches of over 100 members increased from 2 to 3 during the period 2013 to 2019. The number of members in the churches with over 100 members increased from 300 in 2013 to 457 in 2019 (Table 25 and Figure 19). Thus, the number of members in churches of this size grew by 157, or 52% between 2013 and 2019. The percentage of the total membership represented in this category had increased from 15% to 24%.
3. This means that nearly one quarter of the total membership of non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia is found in these three churches. *These three churches are located in state capital cities.*

² Thanks to Benny Tabaluja for providing input and advice in shaping the Key Observations section of this report.

4. In 2013 there were three churches with between 80 and 99 members. Together these churches had a combined membership of 259 (13% of all members in Australia). However, in 2019 there were no churches between 80 and 100 members. *A comparison of the 2013 and 2019 data reveals that of the three churches with 80-99 members in 2013, one church in 2019 has over 100 members, while the other two churches each has less than 80 members.*

Changes among smaller churches (see page 21)

1. The most significant changes between the 2013 and 2019 surveys were seen in the number of churches with below 30 members. At the lower end of the church size category the number of churches with 5 members or less increased from 11 to 20. This represented an increase from 14% to 25% of the total number of churches. This means that a quarter of all churches surveyed in 2019 had less than 6 members. While the percentage of churches of this size is substantial, the actual number of members in this grouping was small: 68 members in 2019.
2. Other significant changes taking place between the surveys concern the decrease in the number of churches between 20 to 29 members and an increase in those between 10 to 19 members. Churches with between 20-29 members decreased from 14 to 7 (from 18% to 9% of the total number of churches). The number of members in this group decreased from 320 to 174 (from 17% to 9% of members). At the same time, churches with 10-19 members increased from 22 in 2013 to 25 in 2019, a shift from 28% of all churches to 31%. The percentage of members in churches of this size increased from 15% to 18%. The percentage of churches with less than 20 members increased from 60% in 2013 to 69% in 2019.
3. The above changes from 2013 to 2019 suggest that churches with under 30 members were experiencing a shift downwards in size. In effect, a trend for a large number of small churches in 2013 becoming even smaller in size by 2019.
4. The table below (Table 14) summarises some key comparisons between 2013 and 2019.

Table 14. Key Comparisons Between 2013 and 2019 Surveys

	2013	2019	% Change
Total members in Australia	1,941	1,906	(2%)
Total churches in Australia	80	81	+ 1%
Larger churches (100 + members)			
Number of churches	2	3	+ 50%
As % of churches in Australia	3%	4%	
Number of members	300	457	+ 52%
As % of members in Australia	15%	24%	
Upper medium churches (80 – 99 members)			
Number of churches	3	0	(100%)
As % of churches in Australia	4%	0%	
Number of members	259	0	(100%)
As % of members in Australia	13%	0%	
Medium churches (30 – 79 members)			
Number of churches	13	15	+ 15%
As % of churches in Australia	16%	19%	
Number of members	613	774	+ 26%
As % of members in Australia	32%	41%	
Smaller churches (< 30 members)			
Number of churches	62	63	+ 2%
As % of churches in Australia	78%	78%	
Number of members	769	675	(12%)
As % of members in Australia	40%	35%	

Rural and Urban Location

Rural and Urban Location of Churches (2019) – An Overview

Churches, Members, Attendance, Baptisms

- Churches in urban areas (capital cities and other metropolitan areas) account for 53 congregations (65%), 1,714 members (90%), 2,042 average Sunday attenders (90%) and 76 baptisms (92%) (Table 15; Figures 7 and 8).

Table 15. Churches, Members, Attendance, Baptisms - Rural and Urban Locations (2019)

Urban/Rural Category	Churches	Members	Average Sunday Attendance	Baptisms
Capital City	42	1,531	1,780	62
Other Metropolitan	11	183	262	14
Large Rural Centre	4	31	34	0
Small Rural Centre	12	94	119	6
Other Rural/ Remote*	12	67	77	1
Total Australia	81	1,906	2,272	83

*Other Rural Areas/Remote Centres, Other Remote Areas

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

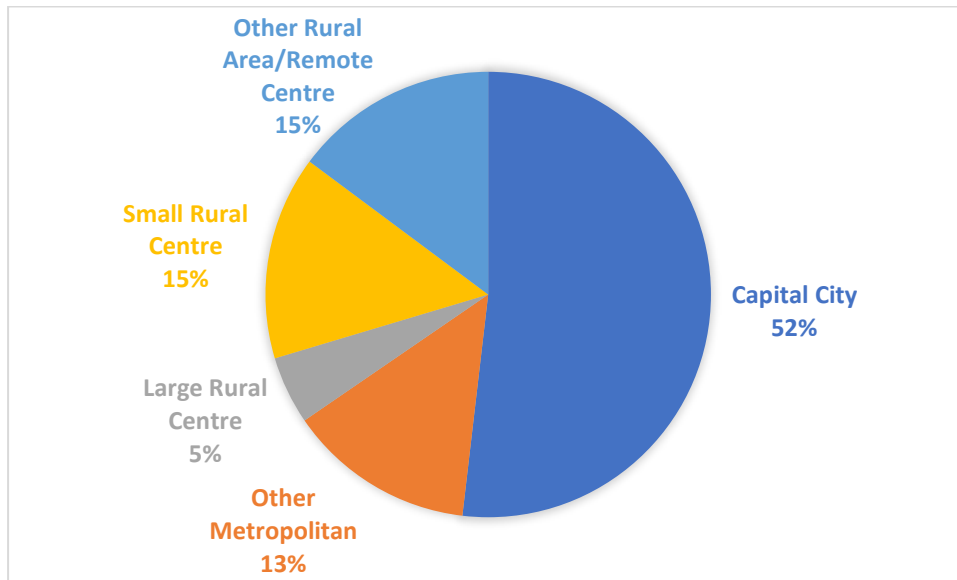
Rural Locations

- Churches in rural locations (large rural centres, small rural centres, other rural areas, remotes centres, other remote areas) account for 28 congregations (35%), 192 members (10%), 230 average Sunday attenders (10%), and 7 baptisms (8%).
- Large rural centres have 5% of churches, 2% of members, and 2% of average Sunday attendance.
- Small rural centres have 15% of churches, 5% of members, and 5% of average Sunday attendance.
- Other rural/remote locations 15% of churches, 3% of members, and 3% of average Sunday attendance.

Urban Locations

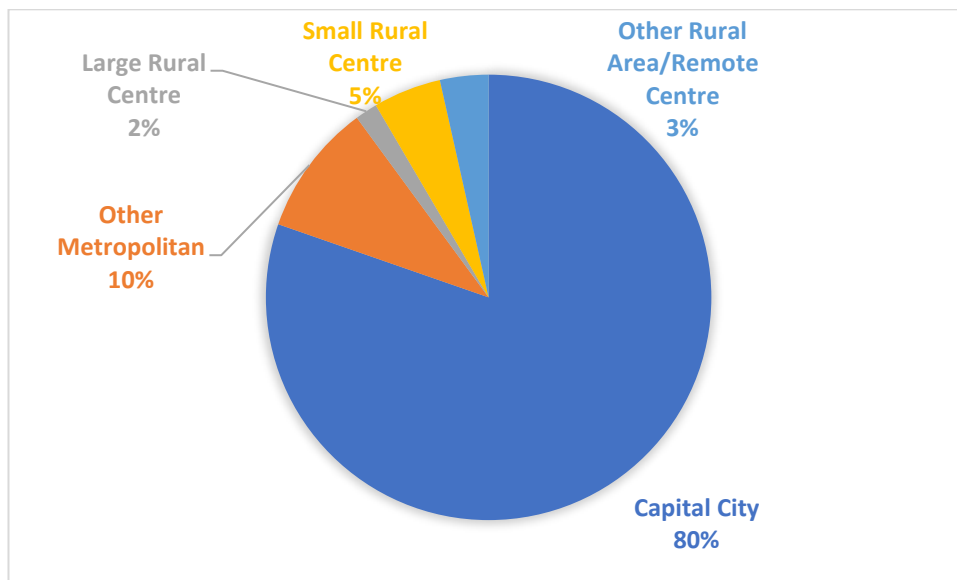
- The nation's capital cities have 52% of churches, 80% of members, and 78% of average Sunday attendance (Table 15; Figures 7 and 8).
- Other metropolitan areas have 13% of churches, 10% of members, and 11% of average Sunday attendance.

Figure 7. Rural and Urban Location – Churches (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 8. Rural and Urban Location – Members (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Average Number of Members and Average Sunday Attendance

Urban Locations

- Churches in capital cities have an average of 37 members and an average Sunday attendance of 42 (Table 16; Figure 9).
- In other metropolitan locations churches have an average of 17 members and 24 in average Sunday attendance.

Rural Locations

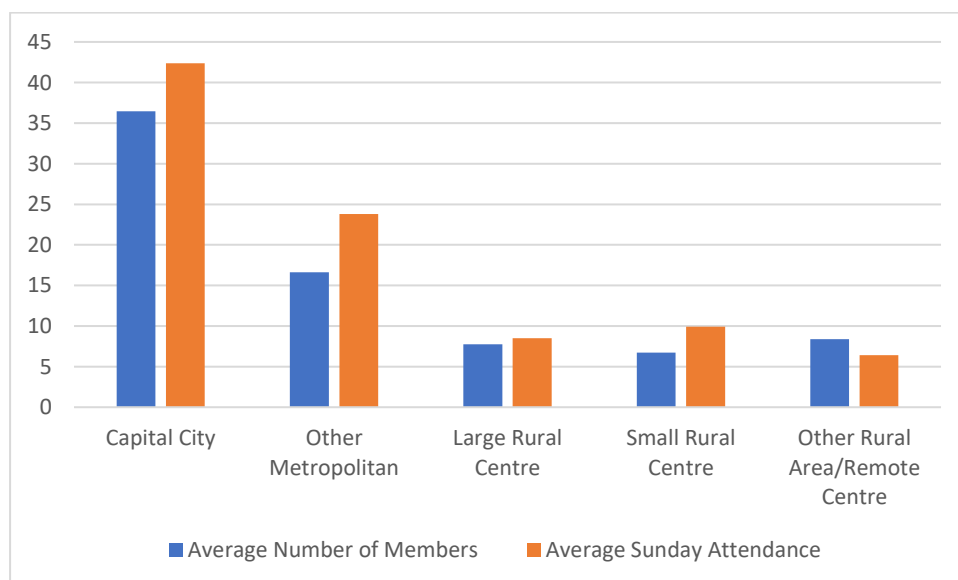
- For locations in rural locations, churches have an average of less than 10 members and less than 10 in average Sunday attendance.

Table 16. Average Church Size and Attendance – Rural/Urban Location (2019)

Urban/Rural Category	Average Number of Members	Average Sunday Attendance
Capital City	36.5	42.4
Other Metropolitan	16.6	23.8
Large Rural Centre	7.8	8.5
Small Rural Centre	6.7	9.9
Other Rural/ Remote*	8.4	6.4

*Other Rural Areas/Remote Centres, Other Remote Areas
 Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 9. Rural and Urban Location – Average Number of Members and Sunday Attendance (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Churches in Cities and Metropolitan Areas with over 100,000 Population (2019)

Urban Locations

- Table 17 and Figures 10 & 11 provide a comparison of urban churches located in cities with a population over 1 million with those in cities with populations between 100,000 and 1 million.
- Cities over 1 million in population include Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney.
- Cities with populations between 100,000 and 1 million people with churches represented in the survey include Cairns, Canberra, Darwin, Gold Coast, Hobart, Launceston, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville, and Wollongong.

Churches, Members, Average Attendance and Baptisms

- The survey indicates that cities with populations over 1 million had just under 72% of the urban churches, 84% of members, 81% of average Sunday attendance, and 80% of baptisms.
- In contrast, other urban areas had 28% of churches, 16% of members, 19% of average Sunday attendance, and 20% of baptisms.
- The size of churches in cities with over 1 million in population is larger than for smaller cities, in terms of the average number of members (38 and 18 respectively) and average Sunday attendance (44 and 25 respectively).

Table 17. Churches, Members, Attendance and Baptisms – Cities Over 100,000 Population (2019)

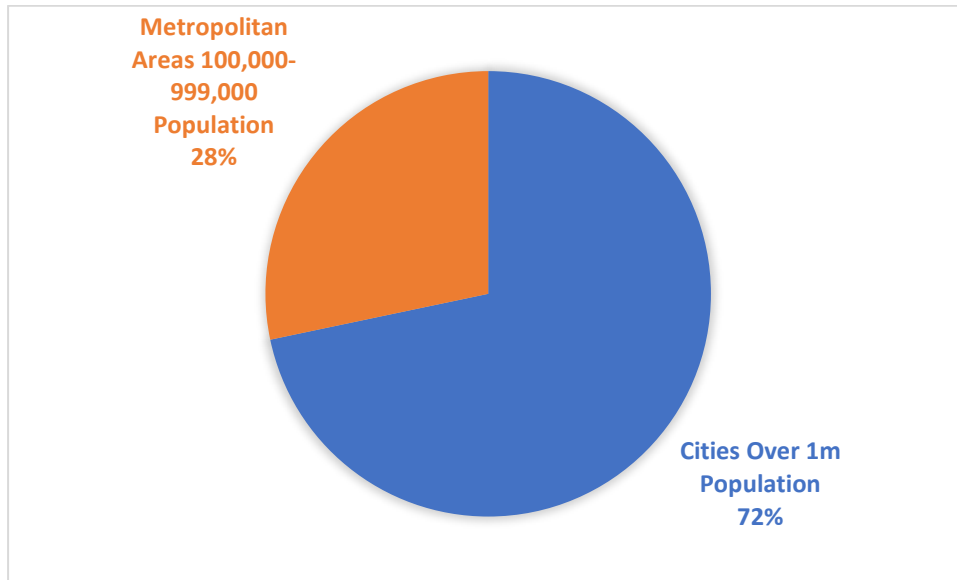
Population	Churches	Members	Average Sunday Attendance	Baptisms
Cities Over 1m Population*	38	1,441	1,663	61
Metropolitan Areas 100,000-1m Population**	15	273	379	15
Total	53	1,714	2,042	76

*Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney.

**Cairns, Canberra, Darwin, Gold Coast, Hobart, Launceston, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville, Wollongong.

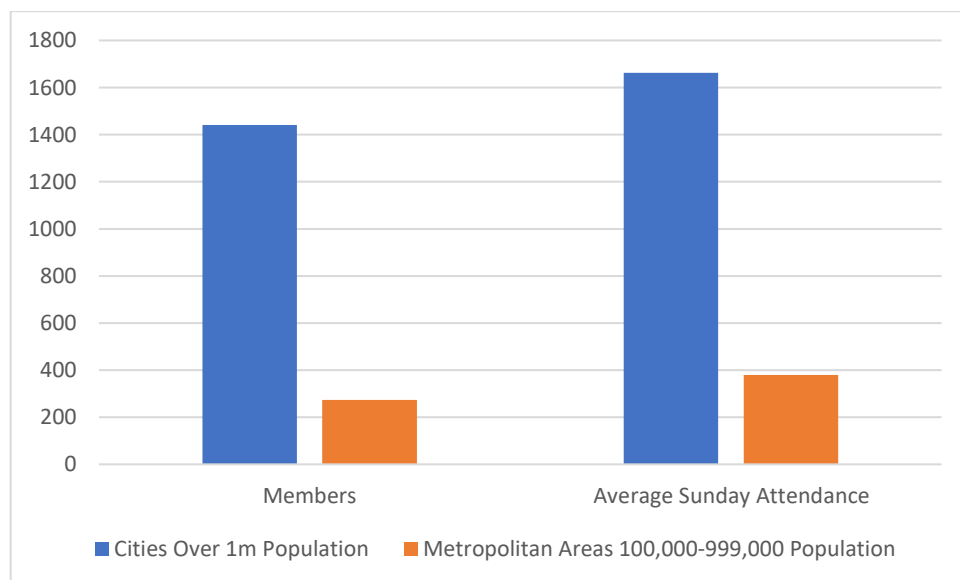
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 10. Cities Over 100,000 Population - Number of Churches (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 11. Cities Over 100,000 Population - Number of Members and Average Attendance (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Major Capital Cities - Churches, Members, Attendance and Baptisms (2019)

- There are five State capital cities with a population of over one million people: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney.
- The number and percentage of churches, members, average Sunday attendance and baptisms in each major capital city is shown in Table 18 and Figures 12 & 13.
- Sydney has the largest number of churches (12), members (400), and average Sunday attendance (468).
- Brisbane is the next largest in terms of churches (9), members (350), average Sunday attendance (370).
- Melbourne has a similar profile to Brisbane in the number of churches (9) and average Sunday attendance (362), although the number of members is lower (257).
- Perth and Adelaide are smaller in terms of churches (3 and 4 respectively). However, they differ in terms of members (Perth, with 257 and Adelaide, with 117). Perth's average Sunday attendance of 325 is much higher than that for Adelaide (112).

Table 18. Major Capital Cities - Churches, Members, Attendance and Baptisms (2019)

Major Capital Cities (over 1m population)	Churches	Members	Average Sunday Attendance	Baptisms
Adelaide	4	117	112	4
Brisbane	9	350	370	12
Melbourne	9	291	362	11
Perth	3	257	325	12
Sydney	13	400	468	21
Total	38	1,415	1,637	60

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 12. Major Capital Cities - Number of Churches (2019)

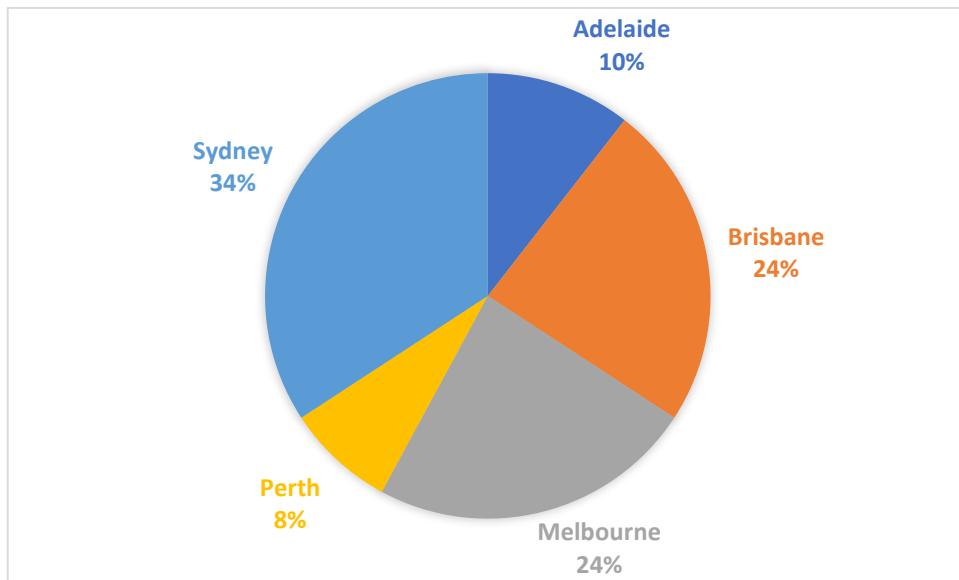
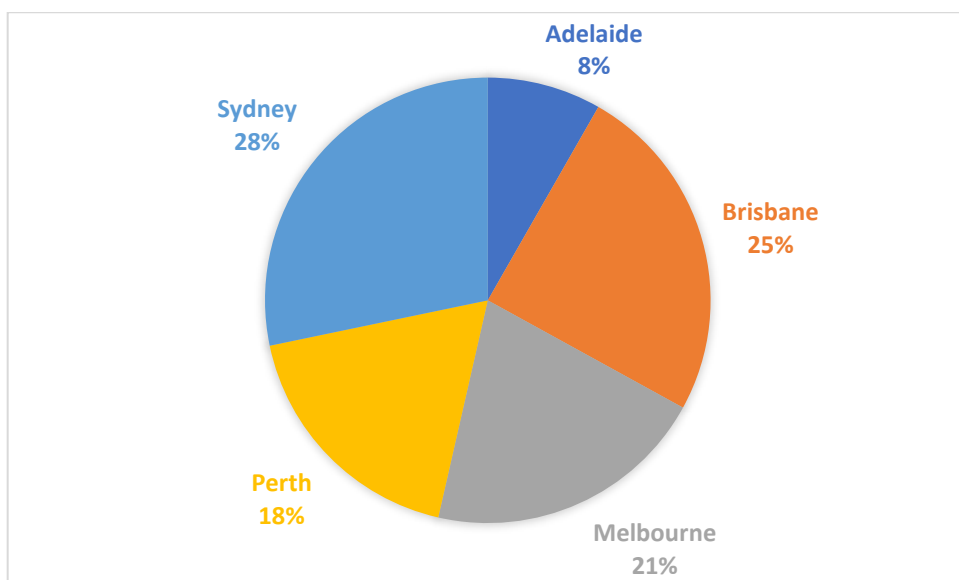


Figure 13. Major Capital Cities - Members (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Major Capital Cities – Changes from 2013 to 2019

- Between 2013 and 2019 the number of members in churches in Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne all increased (Table 19).
- Brisbane saw an increase of 109 members during that time.
- Adelaide increased by 47 members and Melbourne by 40.
- The number of members in Sydney remained essentially the same.

- Perth, however, saw a drop in the number of members by 33. However, in contrast, the average Sunday attendance increased from 300 in 2013 to 325 in 2019.

Table 19. Major Capital Cities – Changes in Churches and Members (2013 to 2019)

<i>Major Capital Cities (over 1m population)</i>	Churches			Members		
	<i>2013</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>Change - 2013 to 2019</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>Change - 2013 to 2019</i>
Adelaide	3	4	1	70	117	47
Brisbane	8	9	1	241	350	109
Melbourne	7	9	2	251	291	40
Perth	3	3	0	290	257	-33
Sydney	13	13	0	398	400	2
Total	34	38	4	1,250	1,415	165

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Rural and Urban Location – Changes from 2013 to 2019

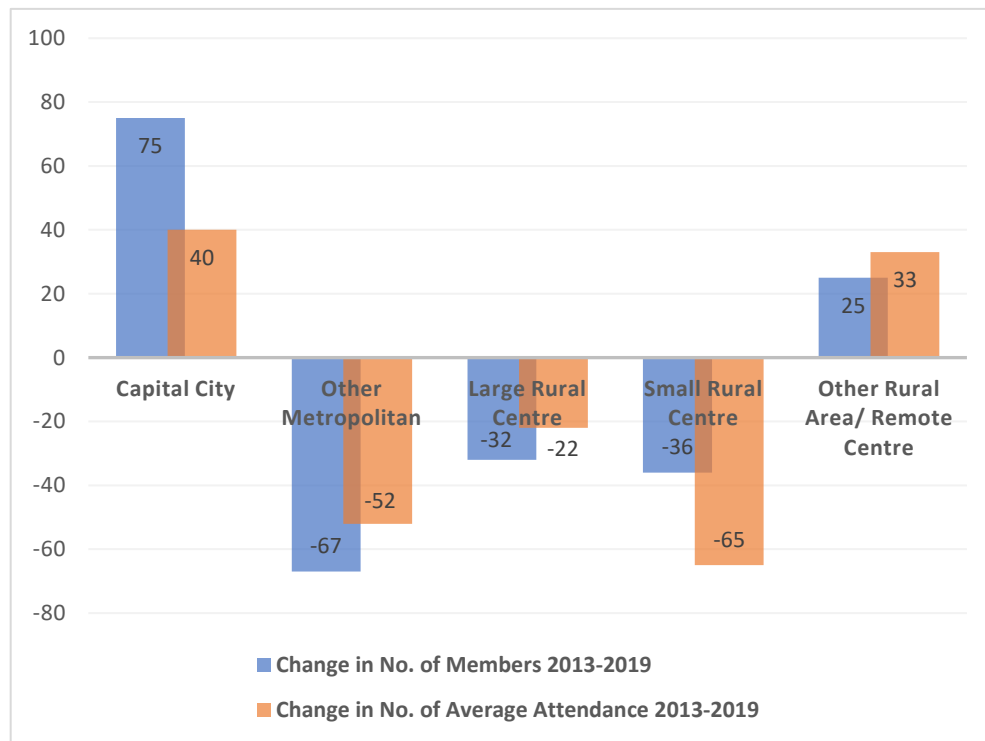
- Churches in capital cities (including Canberra, Darwin and Hobart), between 2013 and 2019 saw modest rises in the number of members (5.2%) and in average Sunday attendance (2.3%) (Tables 20 & 21; Figures 14 & 15).
- While the numbers are relatively small, churches in other rural areas, remote centres, and other remote areas saw a significant rise in members (59%) and in average Sunday attendance (75%) and an increase of churches from 8 to 12.
- In contrast, significant falls during the period were seen in these urban and rural locations: ‘other metropolitan’, ‘large rural centre’ and other rural/remote’.
- While, it is only one survey period, this result may reflect significant challenges being faced by smaller churches outside of the capital cities.

Table 20. Rural and Urban Location - Churches, Members, and Attendance (2013 to 2019)

Urban/Rural Category	Churches		Members		Average Sunday Attendance	
	2013	2019	2013	2019	2013	2019
Capital City	41	42	1,456	1,531	1,740	1,780
Other Metropolitan	13	11	250	183	314	262
Large Rural Centre	4	4	63	31	56	34
Small Rural Centre	14	12	130	94	184	119
Other Rural*	8	12	42	67	44	77
Total	80	81	1,941	1,906	2,338	2,272

*Other Rural Areas/Remote Centres, Other Remote Areas
 Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 14. Rural and Urban Location - Change in Number of Members and Attendance (2013 to 2019)



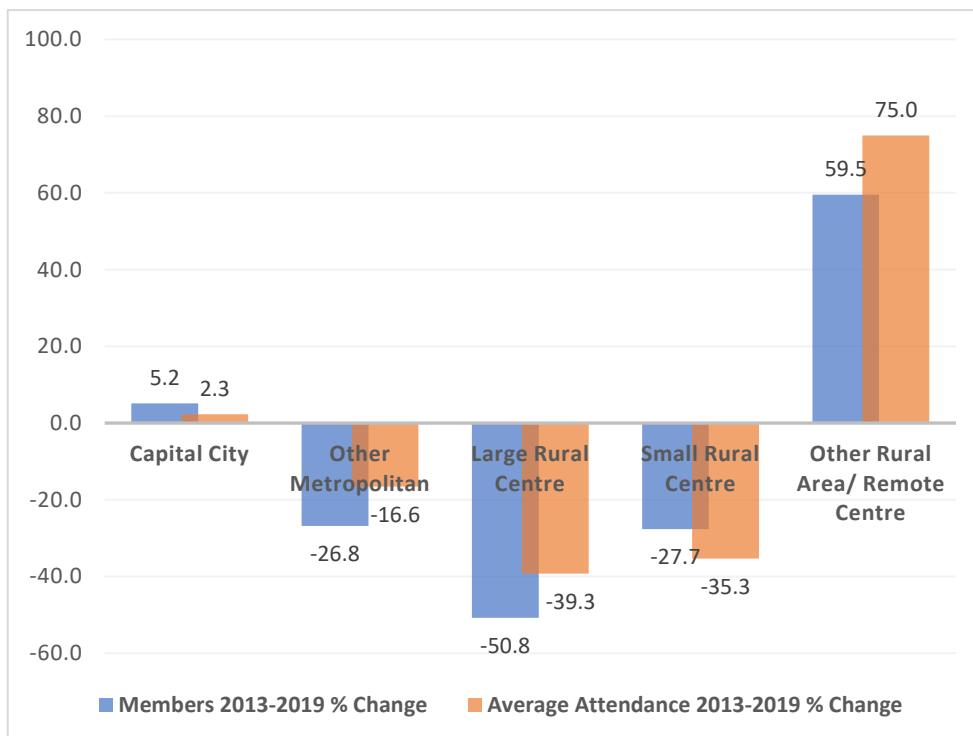
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Table 21. Rural and Urban Location - Change in Number of Members and Attendance (2013 to 2019)

Urban/Rural Category	Change in Number of Members 2013-2019	Change in Average Sunday Attendance 2013-2019	% Change in Members 2013-2019	% Change in Average Attendance 2013-2019
Capital City	75	40	5.2	2.3
Other Metropolitan	-67	-52	-26.8	-16.6
Large Rural Centre	-32	-22	-50.8	-39.3
Small Rural Centre	-36	-65	-27.7	-35.3
Other Rural/Remote*	25	33	59.5	75.0
Total	-35	-66	-1.8	-2.8

*Other Rural Areas/Remote Centres, Other Remote Areas
 Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 15. Rural and Urban Location - Percentage Change in Number of Members and Attendance - (2013 to 2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Changes in Average Size of Members and Attendance (2013 to 2019)

- The average number of members and Sunday attendance in churches in capital cities was stable between 2013 and 2019. The average number of members increased from 35 to 36 and the average Sunday attendance remained at 42 (Table 22).
- In contrast, the average number of members and Sunday attendance in churches dropped significantly in other metropolitan locations, large rural centres and small rural centres.

Table 22. Rural and Urban Location - Change in Average Size of Members and Attendance (2013 to 2019)

Urban/Rural Category	Average No. of Members		Average Sunday Attendance	
	2013	2019	2013	2019
Capital City	35.5	36.5	42.4	42.4
Other Metropolitan	19.2	16.6	24.2	23.8
Large Rural Centre	15.8	7.8	14.0	8.5
Small Rural Centre	9.3	6.7	13.1	9.9
Other Rural/ Remote	5.3	8.4	5.5	6.4

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Rural and Urban Location by State and Territory (2019)

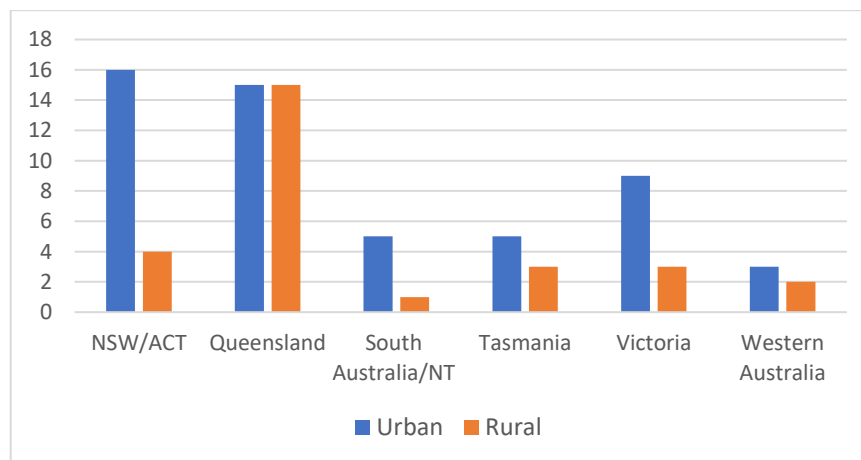
- The number of churches and members for rural and urban locations in each state are shown in Table 23 and Figures 16 & 17.
- Queensland has the largest share of rural churches, accounting for 15 of the 28 churches (54%) outside of urban areas.
- Other states have between 1 to 4 churches in rural locations (note: this only includes those locations classed as 'Rural Areas', 'Remote Centres' and 'Other Remote Areas'.
- NSW/ACT and Queensland combined account for 31 (58%) of the 53 churches in urban locations, with 16 churches in NSW/ACT and 15 in Queensland.
- If Victoria's 9 urban churches are added to the above, Australia's eastern mainland States and the ACT have 75% of the churches in urban locations.

Table 23. Rural and Urban Location by State and Territory – Churches and Members (2019)

State/Territory	Churches			Members		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
NSW/ACT	16	4	20	476	31	507
Queensland	15	15	30	484	89	573
South Australia/NT	5	1	6	127	4	131
Tasmania	5	3	8	73	23	96
Victoria	9	3	12	297	27	324
Western Australia	3	2	5	257	18	275
Total Australia	53	28	81	1,714	192	1,906

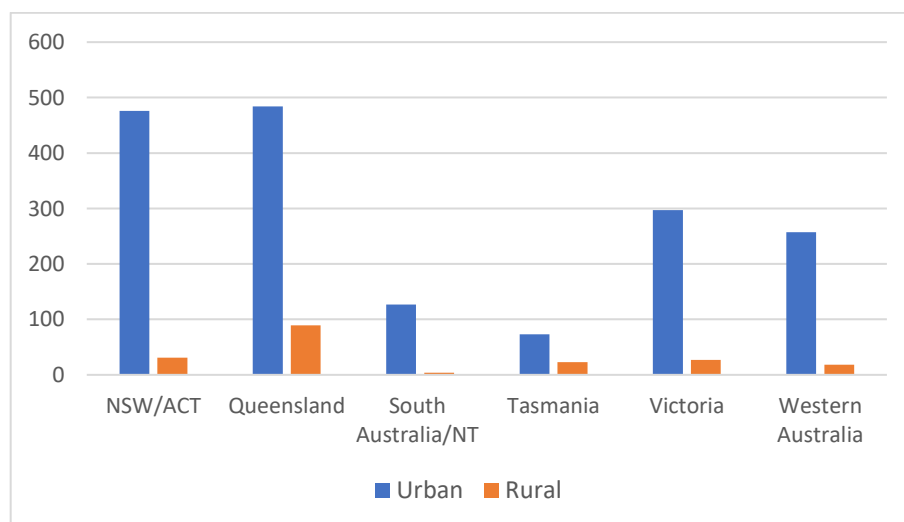
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 16. Rural and Urban Location by State and Territory – Churches (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 17. Rural and Urban Location by State and Territory – Members (2019)



Size of Churches

Changes in the Size of Churches 2013 to 2019

- In the six years between the 2013 and 2016 surveys, considerable changes took place in the highest church size categories (70-79 and above) and the lowest (20-29 and below) (Tables 24 & 25 and Figures 18 & 19).

Changes Taking Place in Larger Churches

- The most noticeable changes were the increase in the number of members in churches over 100 and the gap opening up between churches over 100 and those under 80 in size (Table 25 and Figure 19).
- The number of churches of over 100 members increased from 2 to 3 during the period 2013 to 2019.
- The number of members in the churches with over 100 members increased from 300 in 2013 to 457 in 2019 (Table 23 and Figure 19).
- Thus, the number of members in churches of this size grew by 157, or 52% between 2013 and 2019.
- The percentage of the total membership represented in this category had increased from 15% to 24%.
- This means that nearly one quarter of the total membership of non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia is found in these three churches.
- In 2013 there were three churches with between 80 and 99 members. Together these churches had a combined membership of 259 (13% of all members in Australia).
- However, in 2019 there were no churches between 100 and 80 members.

Changes Taking Place in Churches 'in the Middle' (Between 30 to 79 members)

- In 2013 there were 13 churches in the 'middle range' of 30 to 79 members. By 2019 there were 15 churches in this group.
- However, the number of members in churches of this size grew from 613 (32% of total members) to 744 (41%).
- This consolidation of churches in this size range is due to some churches at the top end decreasing in numbers, while some churches, below 30 members in 2013, increasing in size and moving up into this group.

Changes Taking Place in Smaller Churches

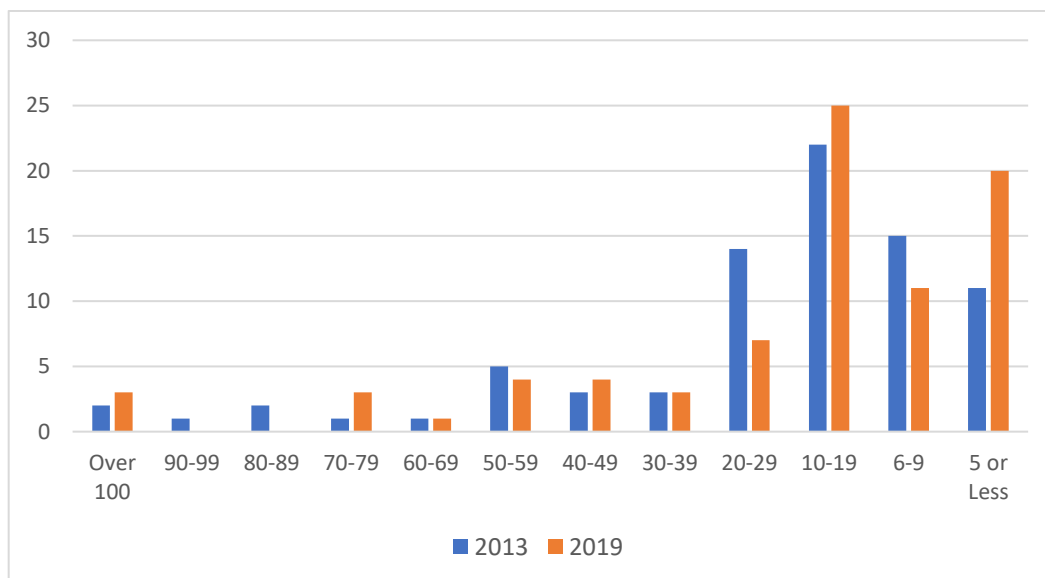
- The most significant changes between the 2013 and 2019 surveys were seen in the number of churches with below 30 members.
- At the lower end of the church size category the number of churches with 5 members or less increased from 11 to 20. This represented an increase from 14% to 25% of the total number of churches.
- This means that a quarter of all churches surveyed in 2019 had less than 6 members.
- While the percentage of churches of this size is substantial, the actual number of members in this grouping was small: 68 members in 2019.
- Other significant changes taking place between the surveys concern the decrease in the number of churches between 20 to 29 members and an increase in those between 10 to 19 members.
- Churches with between 20-29 members decreased from 14 to 7 (from 18% to 9% of the total number of churches). The number of members in this group decreased from 320 to 174 (from 17% to 9% of members).
- At the same time, churches with 10-19 members increased from 22 in 2013 to 25 in 2019, a shift from 28% of all churches to 31%. The percentage of members in churches of this size increased from 15% to 18%.
- The percentage of churches with less than 20 members increased from 60% in 2013 to 66% in 2019.
- The above changes from 2013 to 2019 suggest that churches with less than 30 members were experiencing a shift downwards in size. In effect, a trend for a large number of small churches in 2013 becoming even smaller in size by 2019.

Table 24. Number and Percentage of Churches in Each Church Size Category (2013 and 2019)

Church Size (Members)	No. of Churches		% of Churches	
	2013	2019	2013	2019
Over 100	2	3	2.5	3.7
90-99	1	0	1.3	0.0
80-89	2	0	2.5	0.0
70-79	1	3	1.3	3.7
60-69	1	1	1.3	1.2
50-59	5	4	6.3	4.9
40-49	3	4	3.8	4.9
30-39	3	3	3.8	3.7
20-29	14	7	17.5	8.6
10-19	22	25	27.5	30.9
6-9	15	11	18.8	13.6
5 or Less	11	20	13.8	24.7
Total	80	81	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 18. Number of Churches in Each Church Size Category (2013 and 2019)



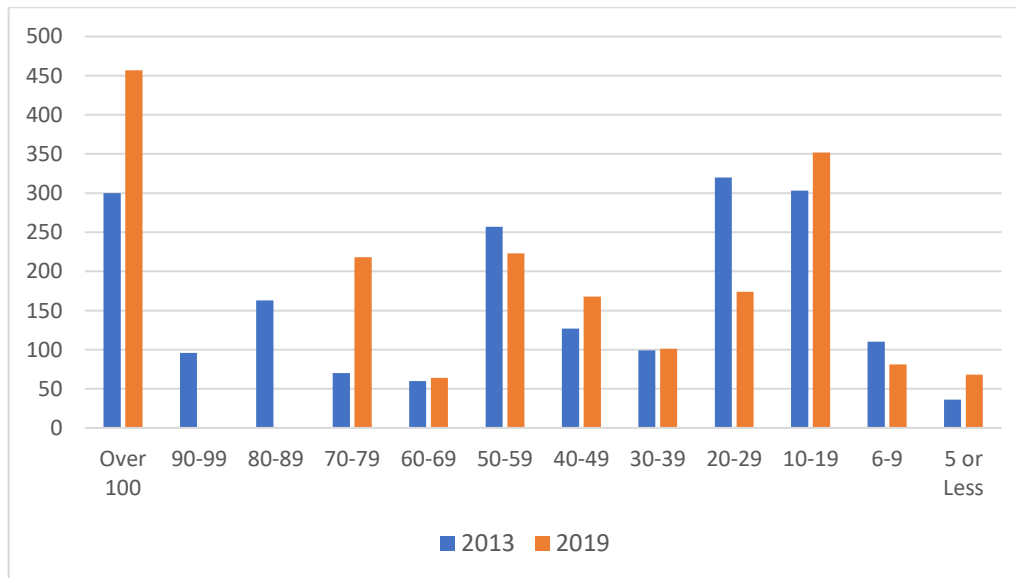
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Table 25. Number and Percentage of Members in Each Church Size Category (2013 and 2019)

Church Size (Members)	No. of Members		% of Members	
	2013	2019	2013	2019
Over 100	300	457	15.5	24.0
90-99	96	0	4.9	0.0
80-89	163	0	8.4	0.0
70-79	70	218	3.6	11.4
60-69	60	64	3.1	3.4
50-59	257	223	13.2	11.7
40-49	127	168	6.5	8.8
30-39	99	101	5.1	5.3
20-29	320	174	16.5	9.1
10-19	303	352	15.6	18.5
6-9	110	81	5.7	4.2
5 or Less	36	68	1.9	3.6
Total	1,941	1,906	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 19. Number of Members in Each Church Size Category (2013 to 2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Size of Churches by Rural and Urban Location (2019)

Size of Churches in Rural Areas

- There are 28 churches located in Australia's rural areas - those areas classified as 'large rural centres', 'small rural centres', 'other rural areas', 'remote centres', and 'other remote area'.
- There are 192 people who are part of these churches.
- All of these churches have less than 20 members (Table 26 and Figures 20 to 24).
- There are 7 churches with between 10 and 19 members. They make up 25% of churches in rural areas. These churches have a total of 106 members which is 57% of all members in rural areas.
- The remaining 21 churches, 75% of those in rural areas, are in churches with less than 10 members. These churches have a total of 86 members.

Table 26. Size of Churches in Rural Locations (2019)

Church Size (Members)	Churches		Members	
	No.	%	No.	%
Over 100	0	0	0	0
90-99	0	0	0	0
80-89	0	0	0	0
70-79	0	0	0	0
60-69	0	0	0	0
50-59	0	0	0	0
40-49	0	0	0	0
30-39	0	0	0	0
20-29	0	0	0	0
10-19	7	25	106	55.2
6-9	4	14.3	30	15.6
5 or Less	17	60.7	56	29.2
Total	28	100.0	192	100.0

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Size of Churches in Urban Areas

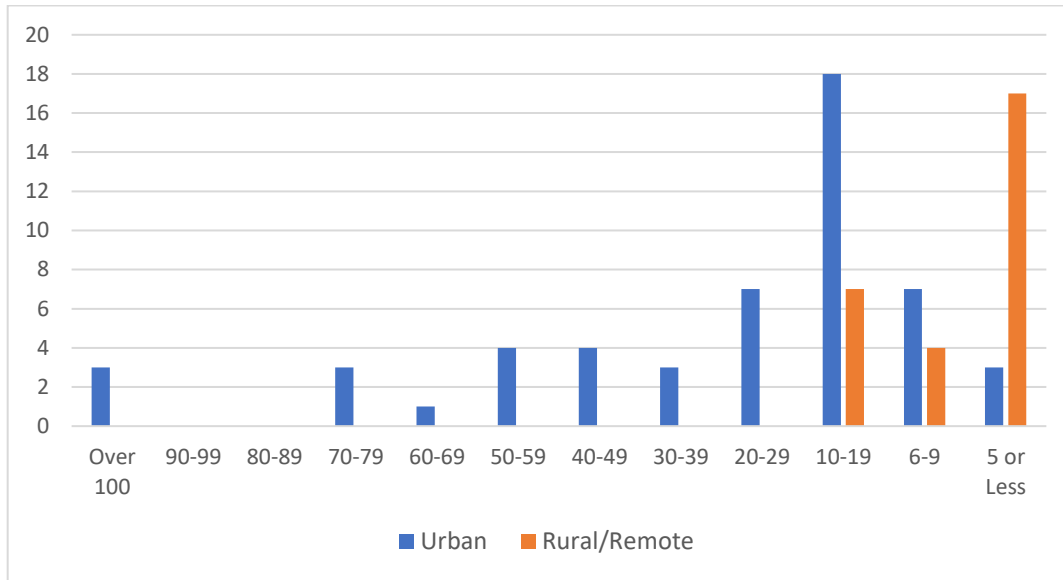
- There are 53 churches located in urban areas – including Australia’s major capital cities (over one million in population), smaller capital cities, and regional metropolitan cities over 100,000 in population.
- In 2019 there were 1,714 members in these churches (Table 27 and Figures 20 to 24).
- There were 3 churches with over 100 members. These churches have a total of 457 members. Together they represent 27% of all members in urban churches.
- There is a gap between churches with over 100 members and those below 80 members.
- A further 15 churches have between 30 to 79 members. Together these churches have 774 members. They represent 28% of all urban churches and 45% of the members in urban churches.
- There are 35 churches with less than 30 members. This group makes up 66% of all churches in urban areas. These churches have a total of 483 members, which represents 28% of all members in urban areas.
- Of these, 18 churches had between 10 and 19 members, with a total of 246 members. They represent 34% of churches and 14% of members in urban areas,

Table 27. Size of Churches in Urban Locations (2019)

Church Size (Members)	Churches		Members	
	No.	%	No.	%
Over 100	3	5.7	457	26.7
90-99	0	0.0	0	0.0
80-89	0	0.0	0	0.0
70-79	3	5.7	218	12.7
60-69	1	1.9	64	3.7
50-59	4	7.5	223	13.0
40-49	4	7.5	168	9.8
30-39	3	5.7	101	5.9
20-29	7	13.2	174	10.2
10-19	18	34.0	246	14.4
6-9	7	13.2	51	3.0
5 or Less	3	5.7	12	0.7
Total	53	100.0	1,714	100.0

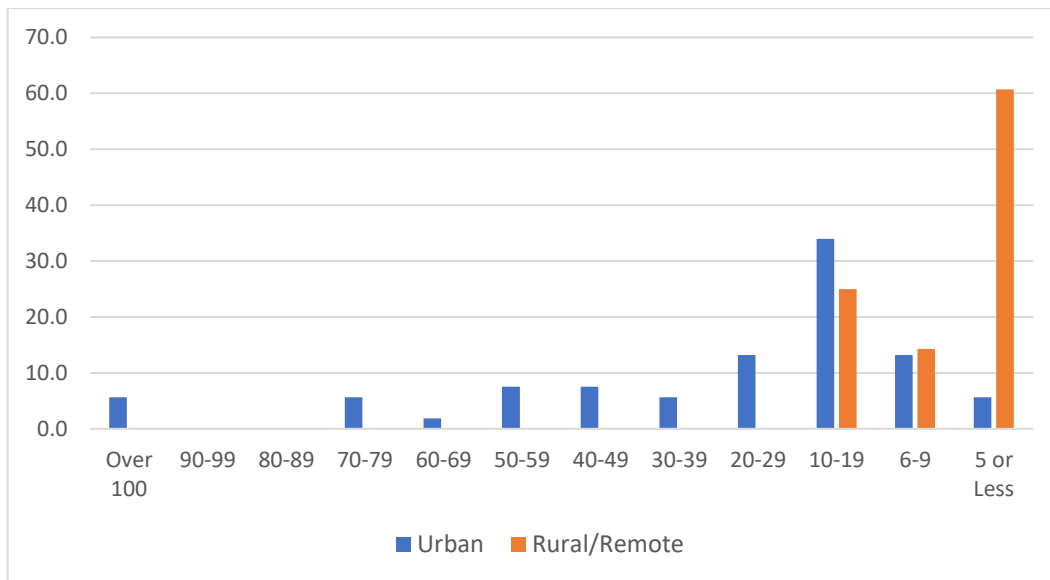
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 20. Church Size by Rural and Urban Location – Number of Churches (2019)



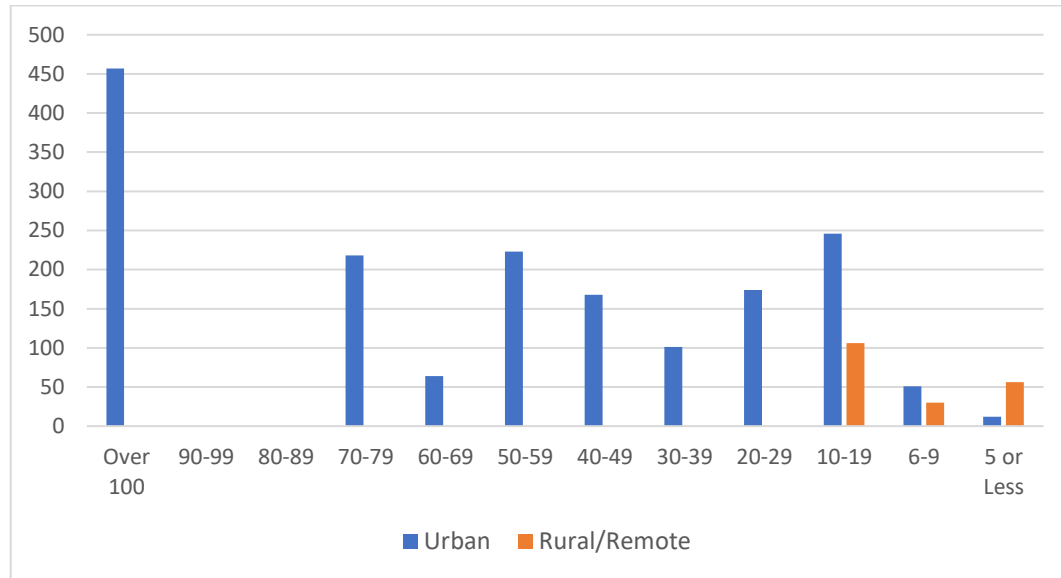
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 21. Church Size by Rural and Urban Location – Percentage of Churches (2019)



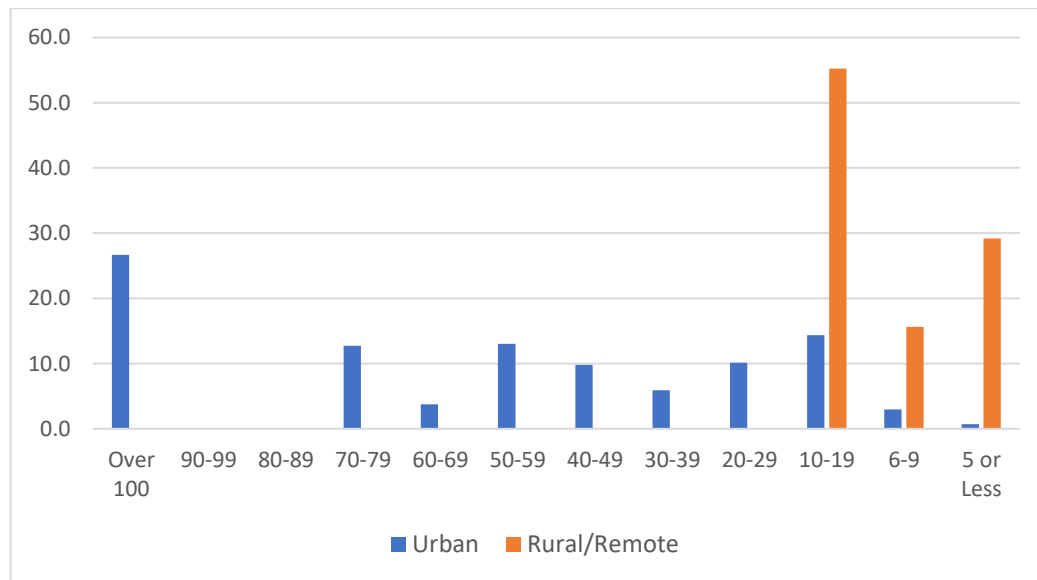
Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 22. Church Size by Rural and Urban Location – Number of Members (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

Figure 23. Church Size by Rural and Urban Location – Percentage of Members (2019)



Source: Australian Church Surveys (2019)

New Churches, Closed Churches and Continuing Churches

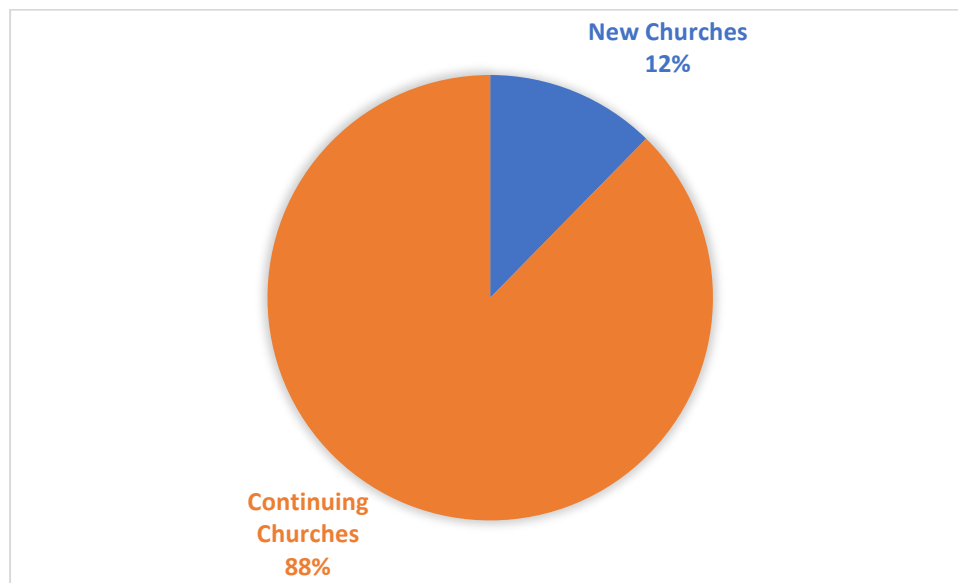
New, Closed, and Continuing Churches: 2013 to 2019

- Of the 80 churches taking part in the 2013 survey, 71 churches were in existence at the time of the 2019 survey.
- There were 8 churches which closed and one no longer identified with non-denominational churches of Christ. These 9 churches account for 11% of the churches that took part in the 2013 survey (Table 28).
- Five of the above 9 churches were located in Queensland.
- Three of these churches were in capital cities and six were located in rural or urban locations outside of the State capitals.
- Of the 81 churches taking part in the 2019 survey 71 were continuing churches and 10 were new churches (Figure 25).
- Of the 10 new churches, 5 were located in Queensland and the remainder in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.
- Four of the new churches were located in capital cities and 6 in rural locations.

Table 28. New Churches, Closed Churches and Continuing Churches (2013 to 2019)

	<i>Rural/Regional Locations</i>	<i>Capital Cities</i>	<i>Total</i>
Closed Churches	6	3	9
New Churches	6	4	10
Continuing Churches	33	38	71

Source: *Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)*

Figure 24. New and Continuing Churches Taking Part in the 2019 Survey

Growth, Stability or Decline in Churches between 2013 and 2019

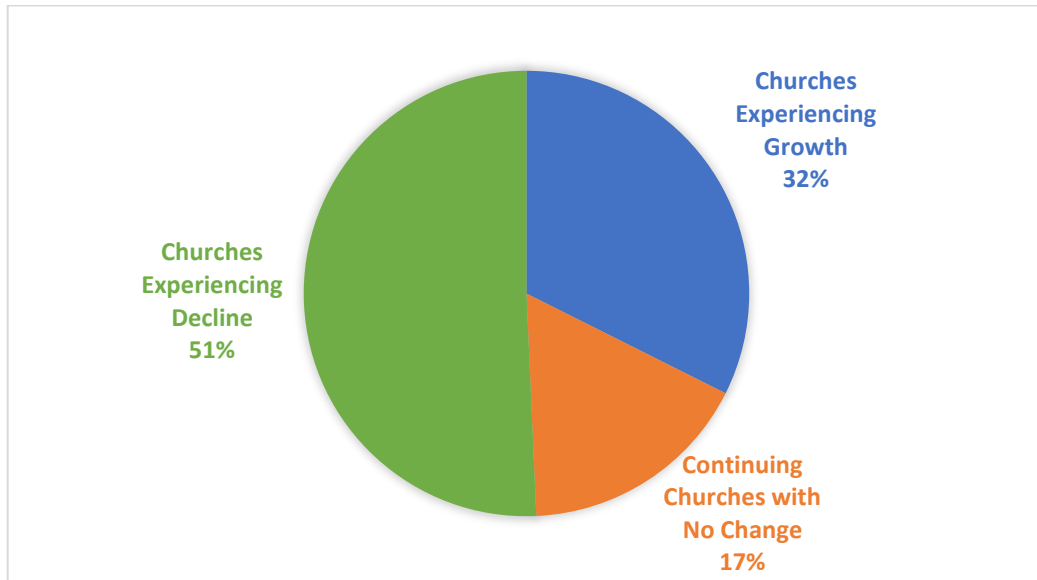
- Of the 71 churches taking part in both 2013 and 2019 surveys, 23 (32%) experienced growth in members (Table 29; Figure 25).
- There were 12 churches with the same number of members in both surveys.
- Just over 50% of the churches saw a decline in members between 2013 and 2019.
- Of the above, 6 (8.5%) saw a decline of 10% or less, while 30 (42%) saw a decline in members of over 10%.
- In contrast, there were 6 (8.5%) churches which had growth of 10% or less, while 17 (24%) churches saw growth of over 10% during the period.

Table 29. Continuing Churches - Growth, Stability or Decline in Members (2013 to 2019)

<i>Growth, Stability or Decline in Members 2013 to 2019</i>	<i>No. of Churches</i>	<i>% of Churches</i>
Churches Experiencing Growth	23	32.4
Continuing Churches with No Change	12	16.9
Churches Experiencing Decline	36	50.7

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 26. Continuing Churches Experiencing Growth, Decline or No Change between 2013 to 2019



Continuing Churches Experiencing Decline (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Decline in Church Members

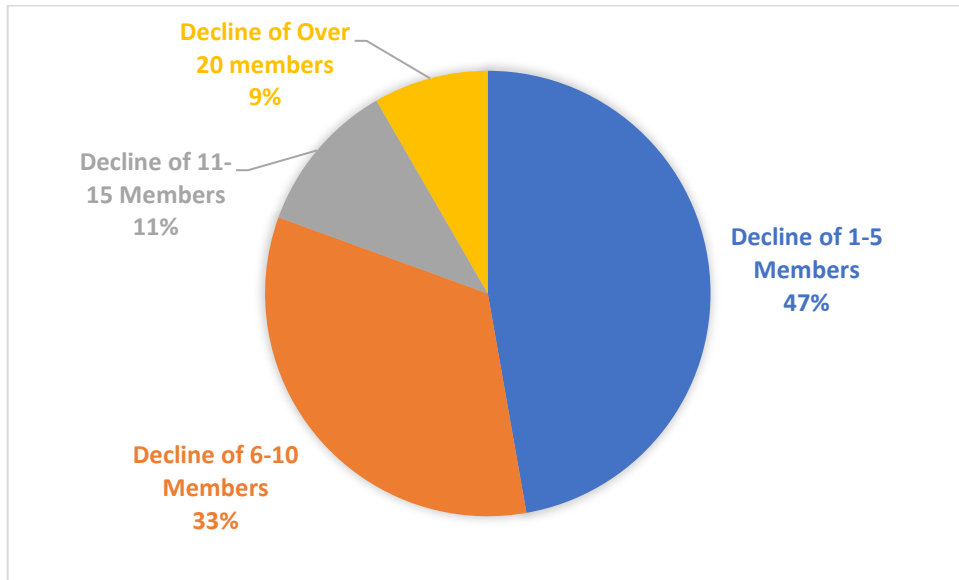
The size of the decline in members is shown in Table 30 and Figure 27. For 17 out of the 36 churches experiencing decline, 17 (47%) saw a decline of between 1 to 5 members. A further 12 (33%) saw a decline of between 6 to 10 members. The remaining 7 (19%) lost over 11 members.

Table 30. Continuing Churches Experiencing Decline (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Decline in Church Members

Size of Decline	No. of Churches	% of Churches
1-5 Members	17	47.2
6-10 Members	12	33.3
11-15 Members	4	11.1
Over 20 members	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 27. Continuing Churches Experiencing Decline (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Decline in Church Members



Continuing Churches Experiencing Growth (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Growth (Number of Church Members)

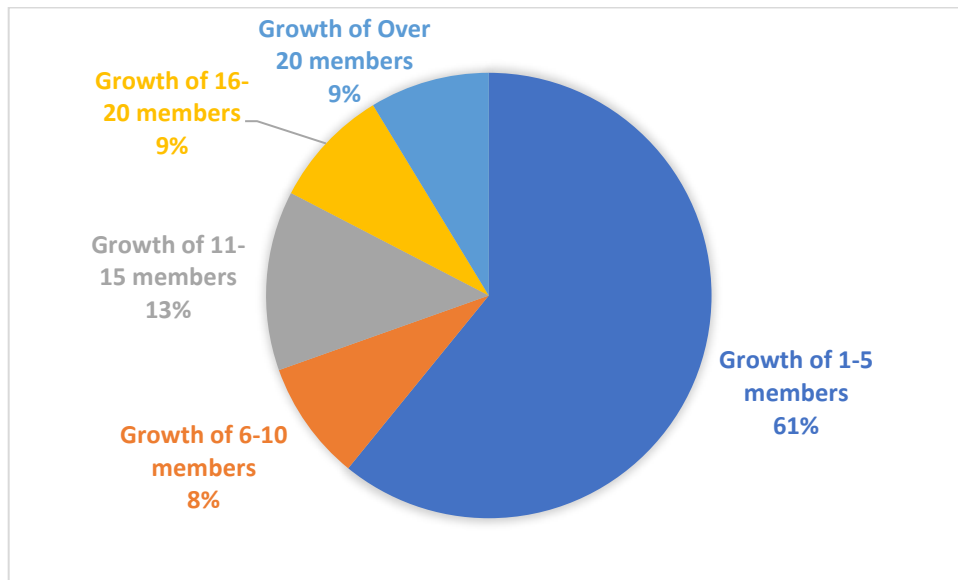
Of the 23 churches experiencing growth, 14 (61%) saw an increase of between 1 to 5 members (Table 31 and Figure 28).

Table 31. Continuing Churches Experiencing Growth (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Growth in Church Members

Size of Growth	No. of Churches	% of Churches
1-5 members	14	60.9
6-10 members	2	8.7
11-15 members	3	13.0
16-20 members	2	8.7
Over 20 members	2	8.7
Total	23	100.0

Source: Australian Church Surveys (2013, 2019)

Figure 28. Continuing Churches Experiencing Growth (2013 to 2019) - The Size of Growth in Church Members



Some Key Questions

Some key questions to ask about the Key Observations identified earlier in the report (see *discussion, pages 5-7*):³

1. *Larger churches over 100 members:* There is an increase in numbers (from two in 2013 to three in 2019) and membership (from 300 in 2013 to 457 in 2019). This is an increase of 157 members (52%) over six years. In 2019, these three churches comprise 3.7% of the total number of churches in Australia but encompass 24% of total members. In comparison, in 2013, the two churches in this grouping comprise 3% of the total number of churches in Australia but encompass 15% of total members.

This raises some questions:

- a) What accounted for the significant growth in both churches and members between 2013 and 2019?
- b) What can other churches learn from the experience of these churches?

³ Thanks to Benny Tabaluja for his input into this section of this report.

2. *Medium churches of 30-99 members:* We can divide this category into two: an “upper medium group” of churches with 80-99 members, and a “medium group” of churches with 30-79 members. The upper medium group sees three churches in 2013 but none in 2019. For the medium group, there is a consolidation in numbers and membership from 13 churches in 2013 to 15 churches in 2019, with a steady increase in members from 613 in 2013 to 744 in 2019 – an increase of 161 members (26%) over six years. In 2019, these 15 churches comprise 18.5% of the total number of churches in Australia but encompass 41% of total members. In comparison, in 2013, the 13 churches in this grouping comprise 13% of the total number of churches in Australia but encompass 32% of total members.

This raises some questions:

- a) What accounted for the fall in the upper medium group from three churches to zero between 2013 and 2019?
 - b) A more granular examination of the 2013 and 2019 data shows that of the three churches in 2013, by 2019 one had moved up to become a larger church (100 + members), one church downsized to between 70-80 members, and the third church downsized to between 50-60 members. Is it helpful to learn more about what these three churches experienced which can help other churches on their journey?
3. *Smaller churches below 30 members:* In this category, there is a downsizing of members per church coupled with a slight increase in the number of churches. In terms of number of churches, this increased from 62 in 2013 to 63 in 2019. In 2019, these 63 churches comprise 78% of total churches in Australia but encompass 35% of total members. In comparison, in 2013, the 62 churches in this grouping comprise 78% of the total number of churches in Australia but encompass 40% of total members.

This raises some questions:

- a) What accounted for the rise in churches and the fall in members between 2013 and 2019?
- b) The rise in number of churches coupled with the fall in number of members indicate that churches in this category are generally getting smaller. Is this due to intentional new church plantings, church splits, or some other reasons?
- c) Since this category forms the bulk of churches (78%), it is important to find ways to assist these churches. What would help these churches flourish?

4. *Overall, looking at the 2013 and 2019 data:* are we seeing a three-track development path among non-denominational Churches of Christ in Australia? One track reflects the larger churches (100+ members) which are growing in numbers. The second track reflects the medium size churches (30-99 members) which appear to be either stable or increasing in numbers. The third track reflects the smaller churches (< 30 members) which appear to be witnessing, on average, slightly more but smaller churches.

This raises some questions:

- (a) What can be done to explore possible factors which have given rise to these trends and what are the possible scenarios for these churches in the future?
- (b) How can the data also assist churches in making decisions for mission work and church planting in Australia?

