

Learnings from the Development of New Lay-Led Church Entities in Australia

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Since 1994, eleven ministerial public juridic persons (MPJPs) have been established in Australia to take the education, health and community service ministries of the instigating religious institutes purposely into the future as ministries of the Catholic Church. Subsequently other ministries have been entrusted to established MPJPs, including some diocesan and parish health and aged care services. In the period from 2012 to 2016, representatives of the MPJPs explored means of fostering collaboration between the respective entities, leading to the founding of the Association of Ministerial PJP Ltd in May 2016. These are historic developments for the Australian Church in relation to lay ecclesial leadership, and offer a canonically recognised means of expanding lay women and men's participation in church governance. Table 1, in the pages that follow, summarises details of the Australian MPJPs.

This study reveals eight themes to guide canonical stewards about best practice establishment and operation of MPJPs. The guidance is that MPJPs are agencies of the church exercising canonical authority similar to religious institutes and should be established and operated accordingly. MPJPs should be established cautiously in stages, and church ministries gradually transitioned to MPJP sponsorship. Trustees act communally, and should be appointed for their ability to exercise canonical as distinct from corporate authority. Success of MPJPs is determined by exercise of relationships with their ministries and other

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parts of the church, but also by trustee and ministry leader formation in the Catholic tradition. Determination of an MPJP's property ownership is a prerequisite of establishment, as is adequate financial resourcing for ongoing operations. Appointment of trustees is best done by more than one member representative of an MPJP.

What Is a Ministerial Public Juridic Person?

A *juridic person* is a legal entity under canon, or church, law that is set up for one or more specific purposes; within church law, it is analogous to a corporation within civil law. Each juridic person functions through designated physical persons who serve as its representative according to its approved statutes. Such ecclesial entities are designated as *public* juridic persons when their purposes have been formally sanctioned by a church authority and are carried out publicly under its auspices. PJPs include dioceses, parishes and religious institutes. To distinguish these traditional PJPs from the new entities, the latter have been given the tag 'ministerial' PJPs. A *ministerial* PJP (MPJP) has the role and responsibilities of stewardship or sponsorship of ministries, enabling the ministries to relate directly to the church, comparably to when they were sponsored by the religious institute/s that instigated the PJP.¹

The establishing authority for the ministerial PJPs has varied: some have been established by the Holy See through the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) and are known as MPJPs of pontifical right. Others have been authorised by diocesan or provincial bishops. While the model varies, such religious–lay partnerships have in common the continuation and long-term stable governance of church ministries and are authorised for this apostolate through their establishment as new church entities under the Code of Canon Law. Most importantly, in taking responsibility for church ministries formerly conducted by religious institutes, MPJPs enable their service of the disadvantaged and marginalised to be continued.

At any given time, a group of trustees is 'missioned' to take responsibility for an MPJP's ministries. In their role, trustees exercise the *ministry of stewardship*. Theirs is a 'calling' to what is technically titled canonical stewardship, and the trustees (canonical stewards) generally have both canonical and civil responsibility for the ministries entrusted to them. In exercising their ministry of stewardship, trustees delegate to incorporated boards of directors, senior executives and other entities the governance and conduct of specific

1. For further information on MPJPs, see, e.g., S. Holland, 'Vatican Expert Unpacks Canonical PJP Process', *Health Progress* 92, no. 5 (2011): 50–62; Catholic Health Association of the United States, 'Ministerial Juridic Person: The Growing Role for Laity in Canonical Sponsorship of Catholic Health Care', *Health Progress* 95, no. 5 (2014): 60–3; F.G. Morrisey and S. Holland, 'Ministerial Juridic Persons and Their Communion with Diocesan Bishops', *Health Progress* 97, no. 6 (2016): 68–71; M. Wright, 'The Development of the Ministerial Public Juridic Persons: Questions and Challenges', *Proceedings of the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand Annual Conference*, 2018, 14–23.

ministries. Together, these partners must seek to develop a strategic direction to ensure that the ministries flourish, exemplify contemporary best practice, and crucially remain faithful to their gospel calling.

MPJP members or sponsors (generally the founding religious institute/s and/or diocese/s; see table 1) and trustees of MPJPs retain certain reserved powers consistent with their specific roles and canon law requirements, in particular in relation to mission and fiduciary matters such as the purchase and disposal of property. The trustees' relationship with their ministries should seek to promote subsidiarity as appropriate and foster the development of the ministries to meet the needs of the contemporary church and society.

In the MPJPs, we see the church continuing the ministry of Jesus in a new way for a new age. Edward Hahnenberg has stated: 'The emergence of lay ecclesial ministry ... stands out as one of the top three or four most important ministerial shifts of the past two-thousand years'. It offers 'a way of living out the gospel and serving the church's mission that [is] at the same time both traditional and radically new ... The shape of the Spirit in the lives of the baptized will find new forms as new needs arise'.²

Context for the Study

For almost 175 years, the Sisters of Mercy have founded and conducted ministries across Australia and since 1956 in Papua New Guinea. During that period they have responded prophetically to the signs of the times 'to ensure that God can be Mercy for others', including through the establishment of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) in 2011.³ Lay collaborators, in responding to their baptismal call to ministry, have been an integral part of realising the Mercy mission. Currently, in Australia and Papua New Guinea, the Mercy mission is expressed through the institute's ministries in education, health and aged care, community services, community development, advocacy and spirituality.

ISMAPNG's Second Chapter, in 2017, envisaged a new era for the stewardship of the institute's incorporated ministries, requesting the newly elected Institute Leadership Team to explore different options for their governance 'so that they can flourish into the future'.⁴ The need for change reflected 'two compelling factors', namely 'a maturing theology of the Laity with its welcome teaching that lay women and men who are personally committed to the Christian gospel have both the right and responsibility to share directly in the leadership of ministries of the Church', and 'advancing

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2. E.P. Hahnenberg, 'The Holy Spirit's Call: The Vocation to Lay Ecclesial Ministry' (presentation at the Ministry National Symposium on Lay Ecclesial Ministry, St John's University, Collegeville, MN, 1 August 2007), www.csbsju.edu/Documents/SOT/Events/2007Symposium/8.Hahnenberg-SpiritsCall.pdf.
 3. Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea website: institute.mercy.org.au/.
 4. ISMAPNG, *Acts of Chapter*, Direction to Leadership No. 7, 2017, 18.

diminishment of the Institute's capacity to continue to execute civil and canonical trusteeship of the ministries' through the Institute Leadership Team.⁵

A Future Governance Working Party (FGWP) was established in August 2018 by the Institute Leadership Team. It was asked to review options for future canonical governance of the institute's ministries, to make a recommendation to the Institute Leadership Team on a preferred future canonical governance arrangement, and to develop a transition plan for that new arrangement. Its report responding to these three requests was submitted to the Institute Leadership Team in December 2019. The FGWP members were Ms Bobby Court, Adjunct Professor Martin Laverty (Convenor), Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM, Sr Sharon Price RSM and Sr Kath Tierney RSM AO. The work of the FGWP was assisted by the ISMAPNG Executive Officer Ministry Governance, Mr Jonathan Campton (Executive Officer). The FGWP separated its work into three domains.

The first domain considered the mission of Mercy and, particularly, the hope that the mission of Mercy might see its ministries change and evolve in response to needs of the poor and vulnerable in the years ahead. Through a discernment process, a mission purpose statement was formulated and proposed to the Institute Leadership Team for adoption. It is intended to guide the establishment of new canonical governance and the initial mission focus of new canonical leaders.

The second domain considered seventeen canonical governance options, each of which could serve the future governance of the institute's ministries. Following due consideration, the FGWP recommended to the Institute Leadership Team that the establishment of a new ministerial PJP be proposed to the Holy See.

The third domain involved testing future arrangements with leaders of the ISMAPNG's ministries, members of the institute, members and trustees of other PJPs, and canon lawyer Sr Mary Wright IBVM. Rich learnings from previous transitions to lay-led governance were gathered, and these will inform the establishment of the new MPJP. These learnings are the focus of this article.

Nature of the Study

The design of a new MPJP can be informed by the challenges and successes experienced by canonical stewards and congregational leadership teams who have previously transitioned ministries from congregational to lay leadership. In the period February to August 2019, the FGWP made contact with the eleven Australian MPJPs, their sponsoring religious institutes and the Association of Ministerial PJPs Ltd. Their representatives were invited to provide written feedback or to meet with some members of the FGWP and its Executive Officer in relation to learnings in the establishment and operation of the Australian MPJPs.

5. ISMAPNG Institute Leadership Team, Future Governance Working Party terms of reference, August 2018.

Input was received in the consultation process from the eleven Australian MPJPs (Calvary Ministries, Catholic Healthcare, Dominican Education Australia, Edmund Rice Education Australia, Good Samaritan Education, Kildare Ministries, Mary Aikenhead Ministries, MercyCare, Mercy Partners, Sophia Education Ministries and St John of God Australia Ltd), the Executive Officer of the Association of Ministerial PJPs Ltd and congregational leaders of six religious institutes that had instigated the establishment of MPJPs (Little Company of Mary, Christian Brothers Oceania Province, Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands, Sisters of St John of God and Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia).

Learnings of the Study

The feedback from representatives of the MPJPs, religious institutes that have transitioned ministries to lay leadership, and the Association of Ministerial PJPs led to eighty-five ‘findings’, with considerable overlap across the contributors. These findings have been summarised, in a deidentified manner, and are presented below under eight overarching groupings. The wisdom contained in the advice received by the FGWP was invaluable in advancing its task and the FGWP expresses its appreciation to the participants for their support of this study.

Agencies of the Church

MPJPs are first and foremost agencies of the church. They are granted specific canonical authority, similar to that granted to and exercised by religious institutes. Establishing and operating an MPJP warrants the same care as establishing and operating a religious institute, and trustees must be selected for their ability to hold and exercise canonical authority according to requirements of canon law. Like religious institutes, MPJPs will be expected to contribute practically and financially to church priorities and developments (e.g., Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, national and state/territory education, health and community service agencies).

Transition

The reason for establishing an MPJP is to provide a new ‘owner’ in the Catholic tradition for the ministries. Imparting this understanding to the ministries with the transfer of ownership gives authority to the new entity.

Some religious institutes regret that not all their members were well briefed before and at the time of creation of the MPJP. Meetings of congregational members and ongoing communication are critical for an effective process as is good canonical advice. A letter from the congregational leader clearly indicating the reasons for establishment of an MPJP is recommended.

It is suggested that the MPJP trustees be in place following the Holy See's or other church authority's approval of the MPJP but prior to its formal establishment and transfer of canonical governance. This allows the trustees to prepare for the role, establish working relationships and identify as a group, continue their formation, and be involved with the religious institute/s in overseeing the transfer of the ministries to the MPJP. Further, it is suggested that this early role for the trustees signals to the ministries a degree of confidence in the new canonical leadership. There should be a missioning of the trustees and a formal ceremony marking the establishment of the MPJP.

Consideration might be given to a 'staged' approach to ministry transfer, with ample communication describing each stage. For example, some ministries (e.g., health or education ministries under a well-established company structure) might be transferred initially. Ministries that are 'struggling' or in transition should not be transferred to a newly established MPJP.

Trustees

Establishing the initial cohort of MPJP trustees with inclusion of some from the forming religious institute/s may assist the transition and embedding of the charism in the MPJP. On the other hand, it may hinder realisation of the canonical independence of the new body. Any appointment of religious institute members as trustees needs to take these two elements into consideration in the selection of suitable candidates.

An extended and well-developed discernment process leading to the appointment of the first and subsequent new trustees is critical. This allows candidates to develop an understanding of the MPJP's mission and charism, the nature of the stewardship role, and the responsibilities of trustees prior to their appointment, and the member's council⁶ to discern who would be appropriate appointees. Canonical leadership is ecclesial, about the spirit, and trustees need to be recruited for their 'behaviours' and their knowledge and attitude towards the church as much as for their expertise. Those of professional corporate skill unable to embrace this style of church leadership are not suited to canonical leadership.

Means of establishing a pool of candidates for such a discernment process vary. One proposal, suggested to be best practice governance, is for competitive recruitment of trustees, with a call for applications advertised and a nominations committee conducting interviews and recommending candidates on merit to the appointing authority.

6. The religious institute/s instigating or sponsoring an MPJP need/s to put in place a mechanism for the appointment of future trustees. This is termed a member's council or, if there are multiple members, members' council. Its membership should be specified to ensure sustainability (e.g., congregational and/or non-professed members; the latter might include members or trustees of other MPJPs).

Self-appointment of trustees is not best practice. Thus, importantly, for a sustainable future, it is suggested that the member's council include appointees beyond the congregation/s (e.g., non-professed lay members, trustee or member representatives from other MPJPs, a bishop).

The size of the trustee cohort depends, to some extent, on the number and breadth of the ministries and their geographical spread. The number of trustees needs to be large enough to facilitate their presence at ministry events and, potentially, to allow for trustee 'portfolios' to develop deeper knowledge of areas of ministry (e.g., education, healthcare, community services, aged care) to ensure their effective stewardship.

Canonical stewards of MPJPs act communally, as a 'college', having inherited a communal tradition. Theirs is not the experience of corporate board directors, and trustees should be selected for their ability to act communally. The trustees' chair should derive authority from the full complement of MPJP trustees, not act as an authority alone. This practice differs from the usual authority of a corporate board, where the chair carries additional authority. It also differs from that of other types of PJPs, where authority rests in an individual, for example, in a bishop for his diocese and a priest for his parish.

MPJP trustee meetings are not typical 'business' meetings: they should be a combination of prayer, formation, necessary 'business' matters and liaison with the ministries and the church. They require adequate time, with a half-day meeting insufficient. Two-day meetings allow trustees to bond and undertake the necessary formation and discernment for their canonical role.

Relationships

As the MPJP and its sponsoring religious institute/s are separate PJPs, it is essential to draw and maintain an appropriate 'boundary' between them. At the same time, congregational members are invited to appropriate ministry events and rituals and acknowledged as the original founders of the ministries. Some congregational members may also be formally engaged in professional or governance roles in the ministries.

Distinguishing the role of canonical leadership in a ministerial PJP from that of 'business' leadership in a ministry board and management team is essential to mission fulfilment. The Australian MPJPs have different statute-specified and practical relationships with their member/s and incorporated ministry boards. Clear documentation of the respective roles of the MPJP member/s, trustees and boards is critical. Examples of such documents include role charters, a governance matrix with the authorities of each body, and/or a delegations register. Those chosen as board directors and ministry leaders need to understand the nature of ministry and embrace the canonical governance model. Further, subsidiarity needs to be understood and operationalised by the member/s and trustees in their respective domains. Foundation and subsequent board directors

and CEOs of the ministries must be well briefed in relation to the MPJP's reserved powers.

Ministry leaders who have been used to dealing with a religious institute may seek to continue to do so. If they do not transfer their relationship to the MPJP, this can give rise to blurring of governance authorities. Ministries need to realise that there will be no 'interference' from the religious institute and that they are now accountable to the MPJP.

Of importance is a focus on relational interaction and ongoing discourse, with times to meet, get to know one another and develop trust in order to have effective formal member-PJP and trustee-board director relationships. The trustees should visit individual ministries about once each year and meet occasionally with other stakeholders (e.g., the local bishop).

The MPJP should have a newsletter or similar means to keep stakeholders, including congregational members, informed of developments.

Formation

Formation of MPJP trustees, board directors and executive leaders of the ministries is essential. In particular, trustees as the canonical leaders need to be formed for their role of ecclesial oversight of a church body. It is also critical that board directors and executives gain an understanding of, and recognise, the role and authority of the canonical leaders.

Conducting formation nationally for trustees, directors and leaders comes with practical challenges of geographical distance, cost, determination of meaningful 'curriculum' and access to quality program leaders. Some MPJPs have underestimated the cost and effort involved in formation. Formation may be best conducted regionally and not nationally. In some instances, a sponsoring religious institute was initially involved in formation of the MPJP's ministry personnel but withdrew after a period.

An MPJP formation committee or other forum with key ministry representation can be effective in establishing shared thinking on formation and developing and implementing a formation strategy. Annual formation programs, retreats and/or conferences with a formation focus, attended by the trustees, directors and key leaders are also recommended. Immersion experiences in an instigating religious institute's history can also support evolution of the MPJP's charism.

Formation is not sufficient to assure mission fulfilment. A method of 'automation' or 'industrialisation' of mission delivery should be required of the MPJP by its member/s. Elements would be formation of key people, systems reporting of mission outcomes, clarity on where mission discernment is to be used, the role description of mission managers and their place in the management team, mission in the recruitment process, and external mission 'audits'.

The MPJP statutes should detail requirements for formation of key leaders, as should the constitutions of ministries. It is recommended that the MPJP receive and adopt ministry budgets for formation.

Property Ownership

MPJP ownership of the ministry assets is recommended as this gives ‘authority’ over ministries to ensure stewardship of the ministries aligned with mission. To varying degrees and with varying timelines, instigating religious institutes have transferred ministry properties to the MPJP. Arrangements have been put in place for the ‘gifting’ of the properties and some transfer of monies to support congregational members. The MPJP should develop its own skill in property ownership to oversee ministry asset management. Co-location of the MPJP office with a ministry has ‘pros and cons’; while it may help to ‘ground’ the trustees, it could lead to blurring of relationships and lines of authority.

Resourcing

MPJPs require their own operating budgets to be viable and conduct their stewardship role. A planned MPJP needs to have a revenue source identified prior to its establishment. Options in place include rental/lease payments for properties occupied by the ministries and ‘owned’ by the MPJP. For schools, these tend to be calculated on a per capita basis with due regard to government funding constraints. There will be limits for some ministries to contribute to MPJP financing. One Australian MPJP has a foundation established by the instigating religious institutes for partial support of the MPJP’s resourcing.

Trustees and board directors should be remunerated at a market value relevant to their role. Remuneration is key to accessing sufficient time of ‘high-quality’ people, and a ‘lever’ for managing trustee (and board director) performance.

Membership

In the case of MPJPs with a single member, it is recommended that the MPJP have a member’s council rather than a single member representative. The member/s should establish their council with membership specified to ensure sustainability (e.g., congregational and/or non-professed members; the latter might include members or trustees of other ministerial PJPs).

The reserve powers of the member/s should be detailed in the statutes/constitution. These normally relate to the mission, patrimony and financial outlays of the MPJP.

Table 1. Australian Ministerial PJPs

Ministerial PJPs	Instigating Congregations/Members; Civil Entities; Current Ministries
<p>Calvary Ministries</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2009 by CICLSAL</p> <p>Established: 2011</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Little Company of Mary</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Calvary Ministries Ltd, a company incorporated in 2009</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Calvary Ministries Ltd is the member of Little Company of Mary Health Care Ltd, which operates public and private hospitals, retirement and aged care facilities, and a network of community care services located in the ACT, NSW, SA, Tas. and Vic. (www.calvaryministries.org.au/Home.aspx)</p>
<p>Catholic Healthcare</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 1994 by the Bishops of the Province of Sydney</p> <p>Established: 1994</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregations/Members:</i> Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia,* Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (NSW), Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Singleton,* Little Company of Mary, Sisters of St John of God,* and Hospitaller Order of St John of God*</p> <p>* These members have since resigned with new members admitted, namely Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Dioceses of Bathurst, Lismore, Parramatta and Wollongong, ISMAPNG, Little Company of Mary, Maronite Diocese of St Maroun, Our Lady of Dolours Parish Chatswood, Province of the Brigidine Sisters (NSW), Sisters of Mercy North Sydney Congregation, Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, St Augustine's Parish Coffs Harbour and St Thomas Aquinas Parish Springwood</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Trustees of Catholic Healthcare, a statutory body corporate established in 1994</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Catholic Healthcare carries out its mission through Catholic Healthcare Ltd, which is responsible for its residential aged care and retirement living facilities as well as community care and healthcare services in NSW and Qld (www.catholichealthcare.com.au/)</p>
<p>Dominican Education Australia</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2015 by CICLSAL</p> <p>Established: 2016</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregations/Members:</i> Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands, Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide and Holy Cross Congregation of Dominican Sisters Adelaide</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Dominican Education Australia Ltd, a company incorporated in 2016</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Dominican Education Australia has five secondary colleges, a primary school for students with disabilities and an early learning centre. Its ministries are in NSW, SA and Vic. (dominicandeducationaustralia.com/)</p>
<p>Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA)</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Congregation of Christian Brothers</p> <p>There are five members, designated the EREA Council and appointed by the congregation leader with the advice of his council</p>

Ministerial PJPs	Instigating Congregations/Members; Civil Entities; Current Ministries
<p>Granted canonical status: 2012 by CICLESAL</p> <p>Established: 2013</p>	<p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Trustees of EREA, a statutory body corporate established in 2013</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> The council appoints the board of EREA, which oversees the operation and management of EREA's schools, flexible learning centres and an early childhood centre. The ministries are conducted in all states and territories of Australia (www.erea.edu.au)</p>
<p>Good Samaritan Education</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2011 by the Archbishop of Sydney</p> <p>Established: 2012</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Institute of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Good Samaritan Education, a statutory body corporate established in 2011</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Good Samaritan Education conducts schools in NSW, Qld and Vic. (goodsameducation.org.au)</p>
<p>Kildare Ministries</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2011 by CICLESAL</p> <p>Established: 2014</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregations/Members:</i> Congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid and Victorian Congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Trustees of Kildare Ministries, a company incorporated in 2013</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Kildare Ministries encompasses schools located in NSW, Qld, SA and Vic. and three Victoria-based community works (www.kildareministries.org.au)</p>
<p>Mary Aikenhead Ministries</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2008 by CICLESAL</p> <p>Established: 2009</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, a company incorporated in 2009</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Mary Aikenhead Ministries has responsibility for education, health, research and community care ministries located in NSW, Qld and Vic. and conducted through Mary Aikenhead Education Ltd and St Vincent's Health Australia (maryaikenheadministries.com.au)</p>
<p>MercyCare</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2001 by the Archbishop of Perth</p> <p>Established: 2002</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Perth (now ISMAPNG)</p> <p>PJP members are the Trustees of MercyCare, one of whom is appointed by the Archbishop of Perth and the remainder by the trustees</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> MercyCare Ltd, a company incorporated in 1999</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> MercyCare conducts ministries in the areas of health, aged care and family and community services in WA (www.mercycare.com.au)</p>

Ministerial PJPs	Instigating Congregations/Members; Civil Entities; Current Ministries
<p>Mercy Partners</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2008 by CICLESAL</p> <p>Established: 2008</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregations/Members:</i> Congregations of Sisters of Mercy Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville</p> <p>With the formation of ISMAPNG and new members joining, members are now the Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Brisbane, Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, ISMAPNG and Presentation Sisters in Queensland</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Mercy Partners, a company incorporated in 2009</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Mercy Partners is based in Qld, where it conducts five schools, the Mater Group of hospitals, health centres, a world-class research institute and pathology and pharmacy services in South-East, Central and North Qld as well as aged care and community services (www.mercypartners.org.au)</p>
<p>Sophia Education Ministries</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2016 by CICLESAL</p> <p>Established: 2019</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Society of Sacred Heart of Jesus</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> Sophia Education Ministries Ltd, a company incorporated in 2017</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> Sophia Education Ministries has taken responsibility for three schools, one in each of Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, previously conducted by the congregation</p>
<p>St John of God Australia Ltd</p> <p>Granted canonical status: 2004 by the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Western Australia</p> <p>Established: 2004</p>	<p><i>Instigating Congregation/Member:</i> Sisters of St John of God</p> <p>Members are now the Sisters of St John of God, Hospitaller Order of St John of God, Archdioceses of Perth and Sydney, and Dioceses of Ballarat, Broome, Bunbury, Geraldton, Parramatta and Sale</p> <p><i>Civil Entity:</i> St John of God Australia Ltd, a company incorporated in 2004</p> <p><i>Current Ministries:</i> St John of God conducts its mission through St John of God Health Care Inc. It operates hospitals, social outreach activities, and advocacy and disability services located in NSW, Vic. and WA as well as in NZ and the Asia-Pacific region (www.sjog.org.au/about_us/governance_and_stewardship.aspx)</p>

Conclusion

In coming years new MPJPs are likely to be established in Australia—the learnings of this study can inform their processes of foundation and operationalisation. Further, existing MPJPs will look to increase collaboration and share expertise as a means to optimise resources for mission—here the Association of Ministerial PJPs Ltd has a key role to play. For a similar reason and in an increasingly regulated environment, ultimately some of the Australian entities will probably amalgamate, as has been the case in the United States of America—again, the experiences of the pioneering MPJPs recorded above will provide insights for such new ventures. Importantly, the maturing of MPJPs as a canonically recognised

means of involving lay women and men in church governance provides an efficacious means of enabling church works to continue and develop in countries where religious and priestly vocations are continuing to decline.
