



Monday June 15, 2026

Registrations now open for ACPA 2026 Christchurch

The Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA) Conference and Awards Dinner will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, from August 26-27. The conference theme is *Preserving Human Faces and Voices* and is focussed on Pope Leo XIV's message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications.

"Safeguarding faces and voices ultimately means safeguarding ourselves. Embracing the opportunities offered by digital technology and artificial intelligence with courage, determination and discernment does not mean turning a blind eye to critical issues, complexities and risks," Pope Leo XIV said.

In his first encyclical the pope added, "The risk of dehumanisation – of building a future that excludes God and reduces the other to a means – is an ancient and ever-new temptation that today takes on a technical guise."

The conference and the awards dinner will be held at Crowne Plaza, Christchurch while the Thursday night Mass will be held at Nazareth House with the Bishop of Dunedin Michael Dooley the main celebrant. The dinner speaker will be Sinead Boucher, former journalist, owner, executive chair and publisher of Stuff Group, comprising two separate print and digital media divisions.

Registrations are now open at trybooking: <https://www.trybooking.com/DMVVZ>

Cardinal John Dew, who was at the conclave to elect Pope Leo XIV, will be one of the session speakers, along with James Bergin, a Catholic expert on AI technology and the Executive GM of Technology Research and Advocacy at Xero and Chelsea Houghton, Strategic Communications and Fundraising Specialist with a technology focus.

ACPA president David Ahern said the focus on AI was timely. "The pope is providing important advice at a time of great social change. He is clearly concerned, as we all should be, about the pace of change and the impact AI is having on human relationships," he said.

"The pope's communications statement and the release of his first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, warn of the dangers of "dehumanisation" and should be heeded. The conference will interest many who work in media and communications in dioceses, parishes and Catholic charities. All are most welcome."

Thanks also to the Catholic Development Fund (CDF), which has come onboard for the second consecutive year as the major sponsor. Further details at ACPA: <https://acpa.asn.au/>