

LOOKING FURTHER

Looking Forward is a strategy initiated by Bishop Paul and the Bishop's Advisory Council in order to prepare now for the future. It is an ongoing process, commencing in 2014 with four stages.

Looking Forward continues in 2015 with Stage 5. The stages are part of a continuous process - in other words, all stages are still relevant and happening.

Stage 1 consisted of the Parish Self-Appraisal which were surveys to guide Parishes in making a self-appraisal to provide a 'snapshot' of their own parish situation and as a planning guideline within parishes

Stage 2 was about the **Looking Forward** resource document for pastoral planning in the Diocese of Ballarat. This resource booklet was distributed from February 2014 onwards. The aims of this document are to encourage personal reflection and discussion within parishes.

Stage 3 involved **Looking Forward** Gatherings and there were eight gatherings held around the Diocese of Ballarat between July and October 2014. Altogether, nearly 600 people attended. The Gatherings were led by Vicar-General Fr Justin Driscoll and Diocesan Pastoral Services Consultant Amanda Smith. At each Gathering, issues raised by the **Looking Forward** resource document were discussed and parishioners shared their hopes and ideas in smaller groups.

Stage 4 looked at sharing resources where parishes and other groups were asked to continue the discussions, to share resources and ideas and to start taking steps forward.

We are now at Stage 5 of the **Looking Forward** strategy – the 2015 Gatherings when Parish Pastoral Councils, School and Parish Leadership Groups and Priests are invited to attend gatherings held around the Diocese to discuss and reflect on their progress during the past months, as well as discussing the future. While these groups are particularly invited, all those who are interested are welcome to attend.

The first 2015 Gathering was in Warrnambool on July 28 and around fifty people attended. The presentation was led by the Vicar-General, Fr Justin Driscoll and Amanda Smith, Pastoral Services Consultant. The discussion was animated and there was lively feedback and engagement in the group discussions. Experiences and ideas were shared, and steps for the future were considered. Each Gathering also includes time for prayer and reflection.

The second Gathering was in Ararat on August 4 and again the response was good with thoughtful and committed discussion. Those gathered discussed their goals, evaluated their progress and looked at their next steps in the Looking Forward process.

Further Gatherings are to be held in the following centres:

- Hamilton Tuesday 11 August
- Horsham Tuesday 18 August
- Colac Tuesday 25 August
- Wendouree Tuesday 1 September
- Birchip Tuesday 8 September
- Swan Hill Tuesday 15 September

Click [HERE](#) for full details of the Gatherings

Click [HERE](#) for the Parish Preparation (Focus) for the Gatherings document



Above: Looking forward at the Warrnambool gathering



Above: More Looking forward at the Ararat gathering