

Report of Meeting BDSJC February

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met on February 9 in Ballarat. All members were present except Jo Rix who was an apology. The Council welcomed two new members: Sr Helen Nolen and Felicity Listen.

The meeting began with a time of prayer, reflection and formation. We all listened to Stacey talk of her recent time in Myanmar. Stacey, under the auspices of the Catholic Education Office program has twice visited Myanmar to work with developing teachers to increase their teaching and learning classroom strategies. For many years, under the previous military régime, schools in Myanmar had one main learning strategy, rote learning which discouraged children learning to problem solve and think for themselves. Catholic Mission supports students in Myanmar to attend school. Sue Searls thought that if every classroom in the Diocese could raise \$70.00 for Catholic Mission to sponsor a child in Myanmar to attend school for a year, it would make a significant difference and it is a proposition that is very do-able.

The Council has developed a professional development program for teachers highlighting Catholic social teaching and the Bishops' annual Social Justice statements.

Rachel spoke of her current research in support of The Victoria and Tasmania Anti-Slavery Task Force. She will publish her finding in 2020 but she spoke of the statements recently sent to schools and parishes on ethically sourced chocolate and how to find out if the chocolate you are purchasing is fair trade.

The Council submitted to Bishop Paul a list of its activities over the last years to be included in his statement sent to Rome in advance of his ad limina visit later in the year.

The Council highlighted concern regarding how the different political parties were responding to issues of Social Justice in light of the coming national election. The Council invites parishioners to support any forums where all political candidates can be questioned about their party's stand on important social issues.

The Council is researching how parishes and schools are increasing their environmental awareness and responding to climate change issues by installing solar power, and costs associated with such.

The next meeting will be in April.