

On Wednesday, March 22, first year graduate teachers from many of our Diocesan Primary Schools, gathered in Ballarat for a professional learning day.

Twenty-two young people met with the Graduate Teacher Support Team from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat and explored a number of topics including the concept of working for the Catholic Church. Teachers in our Catholic schools are bearers of the mission of Jesus and respond to a vocational call that is integral to Christian discipleship. In the confusion and demands of a new teaching career, it is important to reflect on both the privilege and responsibility such a position holds. Those present explored the question: *“What does it mean to be a lay teacher working in this vital ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?”* They will continue to explore this further at future gatherings.



The graduate teachers also spent some time discussing the importance of making connections and forming networks, as our Diocese is such a geographically large area and these teachers were representing schools *from the Murray to the Sea*. The primary foci of the *‘Building Connections’* part of the first year Graduate program, was to develop and enhance connections with other early career colleagues across the Ballarat Diocese and to build an understanding of one’s personal wellbeing and presence within Catholic Education.



The central purpose of working together was the creation of attitudes, relationships and supports that will help to minimise the effects of stress to early career teachers. The Graduates were involved in a number of activities which highlighted the importance of working together in our schools where all staff members are part of the support team.

As each of these teachers are employed in a Victorian school, they must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Mr Pat McGarry explained the evidence based process each teacher must undertake, to gain full registration ensuring that each has the opportunity to develop their own teaching practice as they work towards meeting standards within a supported environment.

The day was a busy one and all of these teachers engaged in each of the experiences sharing their ideas, feelings and knowledge with their early career colleagues

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