



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BALLARAT FOUNDATION

In June the foundation held its 31st Annual General Meeting, so it is timely to remind parishioners of the purpose of the Foundation and to update the diocese on the activities of the Foundation during 2016.

The Foundation was established in 1986 to raise funds to assist the Bishop fund the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Ballarat. Over the last twenty years in particular there has been a shift in the demographics of our diocese with declining population in many rural areas, population growth in regional towns, and a continuing decrease in mass attendance. Our diocese comprises 51 Parishes with 109 church communities within those Parishes. We are faced therefore with an increasing challenge to provide services to people within our Diocese. The Foundation is in its 32nd year of assisting the Bishop in providing these services.

The objectives of the Foundation are:

- to financially assist the Diocese in its mission to grow Christ's kingdom here on earth;
- to financially assist the charitable works of the Diocese; and
- to provide for relief, support and comfort of those suffering from disadvantage within the Diocese, inter alia from unemployment, low income, age, physical or mental disability, language difficulties or social or economic isolation.

The Foundation has its own rules, constitution and board of management; and operates as a distinct entity from general diocesan finances. It has grown and now holds net assets of \$8.9m. In total \$336,701 was distributed during 2016 to the Diocese and through Parishes to support activities such as: sponsoring representatives attending the World Youth Day in Poland and the Proclaim Conference in Sydney; Merbein Parish's *Year of Mercy* activities; and Warrnambool's *Caring for the Homebound* program. The Foundation also supported organisations such as Centacare, the Ballarat Hospice, and Saint Vincent de Paul's North West Central Council.

Supporting the Foundation:

Financial Assistance:

The Foundation relies on donations to continue to build its investment reserve to fund its activities. You can assist by making a donation (all donations, regardless of the amount, are gratefully received); through a pledge (individuals or families can choose to commit to a pledge of a chosen amount on a yearly basis, or for a set period of time); or a bequest via your will.

Become a Board Member:

To assist with continuing its proud tradition of supporting the diocese The Foundation relies on the guidance and capability of its voluntary Board members and is currently seeking expressions of interest from people to join the Board. The Board meets just four times per year for usually around an hour (noting there would be some time required to read meeting papers also). So the commitment is not large, but it will make a big difference to the ongoing success of the foundation. For more information about becoming a Foundation Board Member, please contact Jim Muller, our Foundation Chair, ph. 0437 562 262, or email jimmuller39@gmail.com; or Andrew Jirik, Diocesan Business Manager, ph. 5337 7126 or andrew.jirik@ballarat.catholic.org.au for further information.