

Report of BDSJC November Meeting

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met in Ballarat on the Saturday 23rd November. Present were Anthea Hinchey (Chair), Rachel Smith (executive secretary), Jim Ryan, Sue Searls, Jo Rix, Stacey Atkins, and Felicity Liston. Andrew Flynn from St Vincent de Paul has agreed to join the Commission and attended for a short time during the day.

Apologies were received from Tony Fitzgerald, Sr. Helen Nolen, Noel Gregory and Bishop Paul.

The meeting began with a reflection on the Australian Bishops' Statement, *Making it Real: Genuine Human Encounter in our Digital World*, which addresses issues and concerns regarding the use and mis-use of social media. The BDSJC has presented the statement to all Catholic Education Office staff and teachers, religious educators and professionals from Catholic primary and secondary schools and will continue to be promoted next year. The relevance of this statement for young people cannot be underestimated and it is hoped that schools take it up and look at how many of the issues raised can be addressed.

The environment is a continual area of concern and the Commission hopes to have a Diocesan forum on this topic in 2020. The Catholic Earthcare movement sent out liturgy notes for the "Season of Creation" (September 1 to October 4) and hopes that parishes found them valuable.

The annual report to the Bishop was discussed and after its ratification by the Bishop, it will be published to the Diocese via eNews.

Rachel spoke about the fair trade and how schools are hosting fair trade morning teas. The Commission looked at the different official logos and Rachel noted that some products are developing their own logos, but these are not official, and buyer beware!

The Commission was delighted with the double page spread in the Our Diocesan Community magazine that told of the lived experiences of Refugees/Asylum Seekers, their advocates and supporters. It thanks the contributors for so generously giving their time and stories.

The next meeting will be in 2020.