

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
of
BALLARAT



**Ballarat Diocese
Social Justice Commission**

Report of Meeting
Saturday, 21 November, 2020

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met for a two-hour meeting via Zoom on Saturday 21 November 2020.

Attending were Anthea Hinchey (chair), Bishop Paul Bird, Stacey Atkins, Sue Searls, Tony Fitzgerald, Noel Gregory, Sr. Helen Nolen, Jim Ryan and Executive Secretary: Dr Rachel Smith. Apologies were received by Andrew O'Flynn and Felicity Liston.

Rachel prepared and led prayer based on the Australian Bishops' Social Justice statement for 2020 - 'To Live Life to the Full - Mental Health in Australia Today'

The meeting focused on several issues that have been areas of discussion and action by the Commission this year with discussion about their progress and future actions.

The Commission has written letters to Members of Parliament living in the Diocese and all Victorian Senators concerning the lack of natural justice being denied Bernard Collaery and Witness K. No responses or acknowledgement of these letters have been received. The Commission will publish a paragraph summary of this issue in eNews with links to BDSJC website and transcript of the letter as well a link to an online petition calling for the case against Collaery and Witness K to be dropped.

Zali Steggal's Private Member's Bill regarding the environment has been presented to Parliament at the November sitting. The Commission has written letters to Members of Parliament living in the Diocese and the Victorian Senators supporting this Bill and will make a Submission to House Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy.

Tony announced his decision to resign from the Commission. He was warmly thanked for all the work he has done on the Commission. The Commission wishes him well as he returns to Melbourne.

The Commission will present their Annual Report to the Bishop by the end of the year.

We thank Bishop Paul for hosting the meeting and Rachel for all her work behind the scenes.