



Ballarat Diocese Social Justice Commission

Report of Meeting
Saturday, 26 August 2023

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met on Saturday 26 August 2023.

Present were Bishop Paul Bird, Anthea Hinchey (Chair), Dr Susan Crowe (Executive Member), Sr. Helen Nolen, Jillian Hogbin and Sue Searls.

Apologies were received from Tanya Kehoe, Jim Ryan, Michael Ryan.

Prayer and formation was lead by Jillian Hogbin. Jillian is the Caritas coordinator for the Diocese. The prayer reflected the Catholic Social Teaching principles of Preferential Option for the Poor, Human Dignity, Care for our Common Home, Subsidiarity and Participation, The Common Good and Solidarity. A pack of photo cards showing the work of Caritas around the world provided the Commission with the opportunity of discussing the practical examples of these principles.

We went on to discuss how the Diocese will respond to the Australian Bishops Social Justice Statement for 2023: Listen Learn Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Ballarat launch of the Statement will include an Acknowledgement of Country and prayer, reflections about the Statement by prominent people and both sides of The Voice Referendum will be explored. All presentations in the Ballarat launch will be pre-recorded and in digital format so that Parish communities and individuals can access these resources at their convenience.

The Commission re-visited its context, purpose and areas of responsibility as developed in 2016. This discussion led to a clearer understanding and definition of how and why we work as a Commission. Further discussion will take place between meetings.

Tanya has re-styled a brochure describing some of the Catholic organisations in our region that welcome volunteers. Her focus aimed specifically on students at ACU who are looking for local volunteer opportunities. The Commission has decided that this could be further developed as an on-line tool for all people in the Diocese, young or not so young, seeking to volunteer in their local communities. This will be worked on over the coming months and Parishes are welcome to contribute to this resource by identifying volunteer organisations in their local community.