



Celebration of Service to CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic Education Week (April 29 – May 3) is an annual opportunity for Catholic schools across the Diocese of Ballarat to celebrate their distinctive ethos and mission with their school and wider communities. In 2024, 52 primary schools and 11 secondary Colleges, educate more than 18,500 students and employ over 2,500 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

“Catholic schools offer a high-quality, faith-based, holistic education choice for families across Western Victoria, and currently educate around 25% of all students,” Executive Director, Tom Sexton said. “There was a wonderful array of school and community activities held across the diocese, with the week also having special significance this year as our community of schools recognised the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat. We also especially acknowledged our oldest school in the Diocese – All Saints Portland – and we offer best wishes to the school community as they celebrate a remarkable 175 years of service this year,” he said.

“In addition, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat, and in recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers who have educated their people on this land for thousands of years, four Message Sticks will be commissioned at the Mass, and will simultaneously begin a journey to every Catholic school across the four education zones of the Diocese,” Tom Sexton said.

The week closed with a Diocesan Catholic Education Week Mass and Dinner in Ballarat on Friday, May 3 where outstanding contributors to Catholic education were recognised. Three outstanding educators received the Spirit of Catholic Education Award, chosen from seventeen nominees from across the diocese, along with a remarkable thirty-four teachers and staff who have given thirty years of dedicated service.

DOBCEL is proud to continue sponsoring an award aimed at recognising the outstanding service and leadership within Catholic education throughout our Diocesan school communities, and Catholic Education Office. In 2024, the refreshed awards align with the DOBCEL strategic priorities, which are positioned to support the DOBCEL vision “as partners in Catholic Education and open to God’s presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.”

All Catholic education communities were encouraged to nominate an individual or team who consistently performs in an exemplary way. Nominations were from any of the following five categories :

- Building inclusive Catholic learning communities.
- Empowering all to flourish.
- Fostering inspiring leadership.
- Achieving best practice.
- Enhancing family engagement, governance, and stewardship.

The three outstanding educators for 2024 are:

Tony Haintz – Damascus College, Ballarat, for *Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities*.

Cynthia Maiden – St Joseph’s Primary School, Hopetoun, for *Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship*.

Cathy Prunty – Damascus College, Ballarat, for *Empowering all to Flourish*.



Spirit of Catholic Education Award recipients 2024 (from left) Executive Director, Tom Sexton, Cathy Prunty, Cynthia Maiden, Tony Haintz and Dr Berenice Kerr (Deputy Chair, DOBCEL Board).

Catholic Education Ballarat Executive Director, Tom Sexton, said the Diocese is blessed to have teachers and leaders of the calibre of Tony, Cynthia, and Cathy, along with the other 14 nominees, working in its schools.

‘We want every student to have the opportunity to flourish fully in their learning in schools that are caring, committed to excellence, and live out the Catholic faith, in partnership with families. Tony, Cynthia, and Cathy, and the other nominees, exemplify the approach to teaching, and genuine care for their students and communities, that allows our schools to live out these values. I thank them for their wonderful work and congratulate them on their well-earned recognition,’ Mr Sexton said.

Special congratulations to all nominees for the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards in 2024:

- **Christina Sofis (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Fostering Inspiring Leadership**
- **Sharon Dwyer (OLHC Warrnambool) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Kevin Brodie (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Finance and Compliance Team (St Brigid’s College) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship**
- **Cynthia Maiden (St Joseph’s, Hopetoun) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship**
- **Olga Lyons (St Patrick’s, Port Fairy) – Fostering Inspiring Leadership**
- **Breana Wade (DOBCEL Mildura Office) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Caitee Carter (St Alipius School, Ballarat) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship**
- **Simone Jans & Sarah Goodbourn, Da Capo Instrumental Music Program (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Achieving Best Practice**
- **Eliza Dwyer (St Patrick’s School, Port Fairy) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities**
- **Brooke Nester (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Bernadette Lynch (St Aloysius’ School) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities**
- **Mark Vanderkley (SIMON, DOBCEL Office, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Tony Haintz (Damascus College, Ballarat) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities**
- **Lindy Crowe-Procaccino (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish**
- **Religious Education Curriculum Team (DOBCEL Office, Ballarat) – Achieving Best Practice (Bernie Tolan, Justin McInerney, Jo-anne Van der Voort, Kim Hawkes, Bernadette Luckman)**
- **Cathy Prunty (Damascus College, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish**

A remarkable thirty-four teachers and staff who have committed their gifts and talents over 30 years of service to Catholic education were also recognised at Friday's celebration. They are:

Christine Carmichael, Annemaree Chapman, Jane Clark, Carolyn Clementson, Paula Cox, Andrea Cox, Cathryn Harrington, Janet Cain, Timothy Kermeen, Jamie Lamb, Gavin Lang, Sheelagh Leary, Kellie Lee, Clare Levings, Michael Mahoney, Hamish McCrum, Justin McLnerney, Steven Mifsud, Marie O'Donnell, Tim O'Farrell, Giorgio Paolucci, Carmel Parker, Lesley Pearce, Kym Penry, Jacqueline Pierce, Cathy Prunty, Maria Richards, Maria Salvo, Nerida Thurn, Dympna Turner, Judith Vanderkley and Mark Vanderkley.

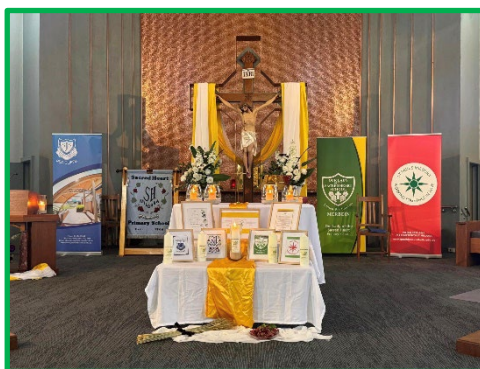


Congratulations to the 30 Year Service Award recipients for 2024.

We thank you for your dedicated service and recognise the profound influence you have had on the generations of young people in your care.

Celebrating Catholic Education Week and 150 years of Catholic education in our Diocese - stories about Catholic Education Week celebrations from around the diocese:

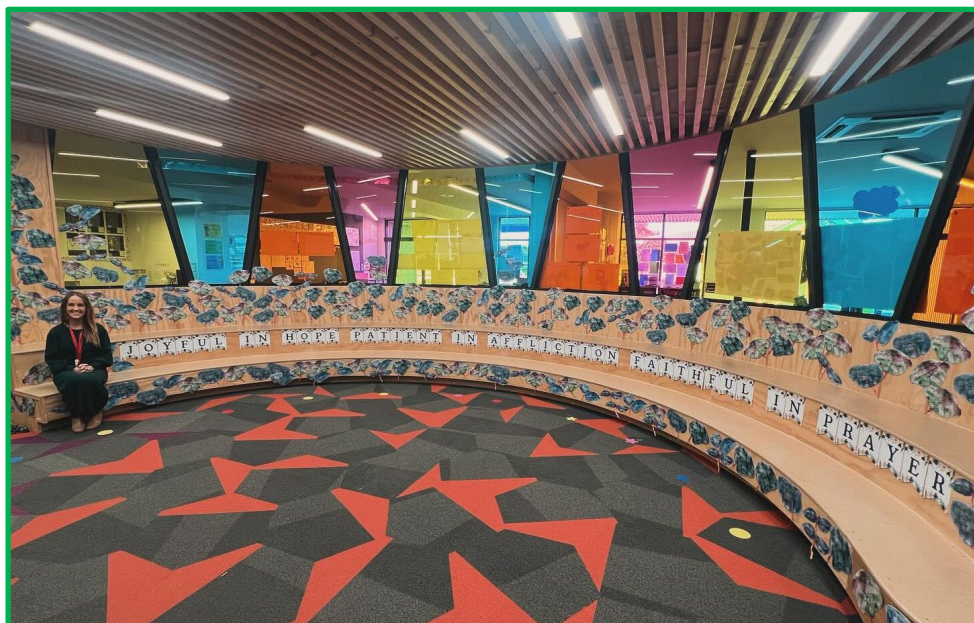
St Paul's Primary School Mildura, along with other Catholic Primary schools from Mildura, Merbein and Red Cliffs, gathered at Sacred Heart Church for a special Mass. Huge thanks to Fr Matt Thomas, Fr John Corrigan and our Religious Education Leaders for their dedication in making this event memorable for everyone.



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Alfredton held a very special whole school prayer to celebrate Catholic Education Week, led beautifully by their 3/4 Edwards class. The focus was on 'Community', as a group being drawn together by Christ and how as a community St Thomas More School can look to the future with hope. Also as part of Catholic Education Week, they celebrated with a 'Special Person's Day', with so many visitors to the school sharing time with students, it was 'community' in action.



Our Lady Help of Christians School, Wendouree - Step into the world of joy, patience and faith at OLHC's captivating display for Catholic Education Week! Each leaf in our stunning arrangement represents a student's heartfelt response to the theme: being joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Special mention to our incredible teacher and author, Jodi Toering, for bringing this vision to life! As we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, we're reminded of our rich heritage and unwavering commitment to education and faith. Dive deeper into the celebration of Catholic Education Week 2024 and discover the beauty of our display at OLHC Wendouree.



St Patrick's Primary School, St Arnaud - we gathered in Charlton to celebrate Catholic Education Week as a community with St Joseph's Charlton and St Mary's Donald. Students from the three schools celebrated a Mass together, planted

a tree in recognition of the three schools celebrating 150 years of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, had fun with KaBoom Sport and enjoyed a shared lunch.

