

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
of
BALLARAT



**Ballarat Diocese
Social Justice Commission**

Report of Meeting

Saturday, 23 March 2024

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met on Saturday 23 March 2024.

Present were Anthea Hinchey (Chair), Bishop Paul Bird, Sue Searls, Jillian Hogbin (Diocesan Caritas co-ordinator), Jim Ryan, Michael Ryan (St Vincent de Paul representative), and Sarah Page (Social Justice Educator for Catholic Education).

Sr. Helen Nolen attended by Zoom.

Apologies were received by Tanya Kehoe, Dr Susan Crowe.

The meeting began with prayer lead by Sarah that focused on creation and that we are partners in the care of creation. Discussion was shared on our personal response to the information *Water, a Global Urgency* article from La Civilita Cattolica.

[Water, A Global Urgency - LA CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA \(laciviltacattolica.com\)](https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/)

Water is a world issue. We need access to clean drinkable water for humanity to survive. The issue is as relevant in Australia as anywhere in the world. This article helps us to be articulate about this issue when working with others to develop awareness raising.

Sarah spoke about how Catholic Education is responding to Laudato Si in a positive, engaging manner that aims to educate both students and Parishes on being more environmentally friendly.

She also spoke on the Catholic Education response to the Modern Slavery Act 2018 by following the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network guidelines. It is shocking to think that there is slavery in Australia, but several members could articulate cases where people were being abused and treated as slaves.

We sadly farewelled two long-term members. Sue Searls has been a member of the Commission since it began under Bishop Peter Connors. Her valuable insights and understanding of social justice issues in the community have been a valuable resource to the development of the commission.

Our Chairperson for the last five years, Anthea Hinchey, has also decided to retire as a member. Her leadership has been directive and supportive. Commissioners spoke of her skills of inclusion, energy and positivity. She will be very missed.