



Ballarat Diocese Social Justice Commission

Report of Meeting Saturday, December 14, 2024

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met on Saturday, December 14, 2024.

Present were Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, Jillian Hogbin (Acting Chair & Diocesan Director Caritas), Michael Ryan (St Vincent de Paul representative), Jim Ryan, Dr Susan Crowe, and Jane Collins. Apologies were from Sarah Page (Executive Officer to the Commission and Social Justice Educator for Catholic Education), Tanya Kehoe

Minutes were taken by Fiona Tonkin:

- The Commission spent time discussing and learning about solidarity and subsidiarity. Pope Francis talks about “how solidarity is the way out of the crisis: it unites us and allows us to find solid proposals for a healthier world. But this path of solidarity needs subsidiarity. Someone might say to me: “But, Father, today you are using difficult words!”. This is why I am trying to explain what it means. Showing solidarity because we are taking the path of subsidiarity. There is no true solidarity without social participation, without the contribution of intermediary bodies: families, associations, cooperatives, small businesses and other expressions of society. Everyone needs to contribute, everyone. This type of participation helps prevent and correct certain negative aspects of globalisation and government action, as also occurs in caring for the people affected by the pandemic. These contributions “from the bottom” should be encouraged. How beautiful it is to see the work of volunteers during the crisis. Volunteers from every part of society, volunteers who come from wealthier families and those from poorer families. But everyone, everyone together to emerge. This is solidarity, and this is the principle of subsidiarity.”
- The Commission discussed the recent Diocesan Assembly and what issues does it raise for the Commission. The concept of deep listening was seen as an important strategy that could be used by the Commission at their meetings.
- The Social Justice Commission’s charter, strategy and role description are available on the Diocesan website and parishes can access these to understand what the Commission does and how it works [Social Justice – Diocese of Ballarat](#).
- The Commission is seeking stronger communication with the Parishes of the Diocese and will soon contact the Parish Priests and Parish Councils or Leadership Teams to nominate a person in the parish to be that communication contact for the parish.
- Proposed dates for 2025 meetings: 22nd March, June 14th, August 23rd, and November 15th.