

CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE  
of  
BALLARAT



**Ballarat Diocese  
Social Justice Commission**

**Report of Meeting  
Saturday, 22 March 2025**

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

Apologies were from Tanya Kehoe.

Fiona Tonkin took minutes and provided the summary of the meeting.

The Bishop led the Commission in an understanding of the Encyclical Document “Brothers and Sisters All” In this reflection, Pope Francis offers a commentary on the parable of the Good Samaritan. He refers to each character in the story – the man travelling on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, the robbers who attacked him, the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side, and the Samaritan who came to his aid. The Pope invites us to consider how there is something of each of these characters in each one of us. *All of us have in ourselves something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by, and something of the Good Samaritan. (par 6.)* Recognising this can help us appreciate all the more how much we have in common – both strengths and weaknesses.

The Pope makes a further point from this parable about the value of working together to achieve good results. He highlights the fact that the Good Samaritan did not do everything himself. He enlisted the help of the innkeeper. *The Samaritan discovered an innkeeper who would care for the man; we, too, are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members. (par 78)*

The annual report of the activities of the Commission will be sent to the Bishop this week.

The Commission reviewed its vision and mission statement and unpacked the strategies, including how each one can be implemented in the Diocese this year. This will guide the BDSJC's work in 2025.

The Commission highlighted ethical matters in Parish communications, such as purchasing ethical chocolate this Easter.

Communication with Parishes is vital, and the Commission does this regularly. The Commission would appreciate feedback on how Parishes use this information.

The Commission is looking for new members, and if you believe you have the insight to offer, please contact any current members.

Dates for 2025 meetings: March 22, June 14, August 23 and November 15