



BALLARAT DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

The establishment of the Diocesan Pastoral Council marks an important milestone in the life of our diocese. It reflects the shared commitment to fostering a culture of prayerful discernment, collaboration and participation in the mission entrusted to us by Christ. It is a significant step forward in our Diocese's commitment to synodal governance.

This Council will serve as a central, trusted leadership body that advises and supports the Bishop in guiding the whole Diocese through a synodal model of co-responsibility, inclusiveness and collaboration.

At its heart, the DPC is an instrument of relationship and strategic partnership. It brings together lay people, clergy, and the Bishop to advance the mission of the Diocese in a unified and visionary way. Recognising that all the baptised share responsibility for this mission, the DPC will foster and encourage co-responsibility at a diocesan level.

The DPC exists to **foster a deeply synodal Church**—one that listens, walks together and seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all decisions. Its purpose is to ensure that every aspect of diocesan life reflects this synodal vision.

The DPC is entrusted with guiding and overseeing the strategic direction of our Diocese. Through its work, the DPC will foster structures that reflect the lived experience of the faithful, strengthen trust in diocesan leadership, and embody a collaborative vision for the Church's future. The following commitments outline how the Council will carry out this mission.

1. Provide Strategic Leadership through Synodal Discernment

Acting as an executive advisory group to the Bishop, the DPC will offer insight and direction **through a process of shared listening and dialogue**. Strategic leadership will not be top-down but collaborative, ensuring that decisions emerge from genuine consultation with the People of God.

2. Support Governance established in Participation

The DPC will help shape and sustain governance structures that is **transparent, participatory and accountable**. This means creating pathways for voices from parishes, ministries and diverse communities to inform decision-making, so governance reflects the lived reality of the Diocese.

3. Make Synodal Engagement the Heart of Leadership

The DPC will **embody and promote a synodal approach in every action**—prioritising listening, dialogue and co-responsibility. It will actively seek out diverse perspectives, especially those on the margins and integrate them into planning and policy. Synodality is not an optional value but the guiding principle for all deliberations.

4. Serve as an Information and Listening Hub

Beyond collecting data, the DPC will **create spaces for authentic listening and discernment**. Feedback from across the Diocese will be synthesised not just as information but as a voice of the Spirit speaking through the community. This ensures decisions are grounded in real experience and communal wisdom.

5. Build Trust through Transparency and Shared Mission

Trust grows when people feel heard and valued. By operating with openness and clarity, the DPC will strengthen confidence in diocesan leadership. The Bishop can trust the Council's commitment to synodal principles, and the community can trust that its voice shapes the mission of the Diocese.

Ultimately

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will be a **living expression of synodality**—a vital structure for shaping the future of our Diocese. It will review current realities, develop strategic pastoral plans, and **cast a shared vision for the road ahead, embedded in communion, participation and mission.**