

Weekly Newsletter #77 - 19 November 2025

From the Executive Director

Yesterday, I attended the VCEA Consultative Committee meeting alongside colleagues and counterparts from across the state. Our discussions focused on several important



matters currently shaping the Catholic education landscape: progress on Enterprise Bargaining, the re-establishment of the Catholic School Parents Victoria Council (CSPV), and ongoing work relating to the statewide compliance review. These robust discussions continue to shape our priorities and the direction of Catholic education across the state.

Today, I joined Bishop Paul and the diocesan community for the Anniversary of the Dedication of St Patrick's Cathedral. This annual celebration is a meaningful moment in the life of our Diocese, honouring the history, faith and mission embodied in our Cathedral and the generations of people who have worshipped and gathered there. It is always a privilege to

come together in this sacred space.

Earlier this week, the DOBCEL Directorate had the pleasure of meeting with Dr JC Couture, who is visiting from Canada. Dr Couture was highly involved in the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) and is currently a lecturer at Alberta University in the Faculty of Education – Master of Educational Studies program. JC brings deep expertise in futures studies, educational leadership and governance. His insights into organisational renewal and system-level innovation are highly valuable and the discussions this week have provided much to reflect on as we continue advancing the DOBCEL Strategy 2035.

Tomorrow, we begin the next stage of our Student Agency – *Schools that Listen* initiative, one of the key programs supporting our Strategy 2035. Across our Diocese, schools have already demonstrated significant commitment to strengthening student agency, building strong foundations through sustained effort, thoughtful leadership, and the contributions of many educators and students. *Schools that Listen* will further develop how we listen, respond and act alongside our young people to enhance their sense of belonging, engagement, and influence within their school communities.

As part of this work, principals and their school's Student Agency Facilitators will join our first Student Agency Educator online seminar with Dr Jean Stiles tomorrow and Friday. These sessions will explore the factors that shape student voice, engagement in learning, and participation in school life – areas central to both global

Our Schools in Action

educational trends and our local aspirations for *fullness of life for all*.


Thank you, as always, for your leadership and your ongoing commitment to Catholic education.

With best wishes,
Tom Sexton
Executive Director

Reflection of the Week

We Remember

The month of November is a special time when the Catholic Tradition, together with many other communities, takes time to contemplate, pray and reflect especially for those who have died. The ones who have gone before us. Our reflection this week by Sr. Joyce Rupp, OSM, continues around this theme.



Spirit of our Ancestors,
this day we join in acknowledging the blessedness
of the many who inspired us and shaped our faith.
We turn in memory and appreciation
toward those ancestors in our family of origin
who influenced and encouraged us to live as our best selves.
We remember, too, those ancestors who left this world
with hurts unresolved. We open our deep self to you
and pray that any woundedness we've inherited
will be healed through your grace and our love-filled hearts.
We bring to mind others beyond family who enriched our lives
and led us further on our journey of personal transformation.
We honor all those who sacrificed and suffered
in order for peace and justice to be furthered on our planet.
We give thanks and rejoice for the countless, unnamed persons
whose lives left a lasting mark of kindness and compassion.
May the remembrance of each of these blessed ones
inspire and increase our personal commitment
to leave a trace of goodness wherever we go.
When we depart this sphere of life may our inner strength
have contributed to individual and world peace.
Beloved ancestors, your presence stretches back through the ages.
It touches and influences the deep part of each of us today.
Your strength sings in our spirit.
Your courage abides in our heart.
Your resilience resonates in our bones.
Your love abounds in our soul.
May we remember how connected we are to these enduring qualities.
We offer gratitude for how the best of you continues to find life in us.
Amen.

Exploring History at Sovereign Hill

Last Monday, the Foundation superstars from St Brigid's Primary School, Ballan embarked on an exciting adventure to the iconic Sovereign Hill. The students spent the entire day immersed in history, discovering what life was like during the gold rush era.

With the guidance of the talented Sovereign Hill educators, our young learners gained a deeper appreciation of how people lived in the past. They didn't just observe—they rolled up their sleeves and took part in hands-on activities that brought history to life! From exploring old-fashioned trades to experiencing the sights and sounds of a bygone era, it was a day filled with curiosity, learning, and plenty of fun.

(Photos from the Facebook Page of St Brigid's Primary School, Ballan)



Making Waves in Surf Safety

Last Friday, our Year 5 students from St. Patrick's Parish Primary School, Port Fairy took part in their very first 'wet' session of the Surf Safety Programme at Port Fairy. Before diving in, they visited the Patrol Tower at the Port Fairy Surf Life Saving Club for a thorough surf conditions briefing.

Students impressed with their knowledge—spotting rip currents, identifying wave types, and reading beach safety signals. Shaun and Mick praised their enthusiasm and confidence, making this first session a great success!

(Photos from the Facebook Page of St. Patrick's Parish Primary School, Port Fairy)



Colour Run Success at St Francis Xavier Primary School

Last week, students and staff at St Francis Xavier Primary School, Ballarat East celebrated a vibrant

day of fun during their Colour Run Fundraiser. The event wasn't just about splashes of colour—it was about community spirit and making playtime even better!

Thanks to the incredible support of families and friends, the school raised an impressive AUD \$13,792 from 379 generous donors. These funds will go towards adding a climbing net and other exciting equipment to create a more engaging and adventurous playground for students.

(Photos from the Facebook Page of St. Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East)

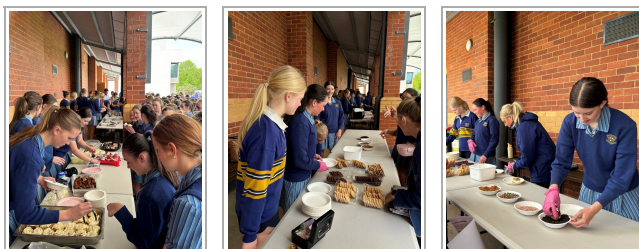


Students Shine in \$20 Boss Program

Year 10 Commerce students of Loreto College, Ballarat recently took part in the \$20 Boss Program, turning a small investment into big ideas. With just \$20, they created businesses and sold treats such as ice-cream cookie sandwiches, cake pops, and brownies during lunchtime.

The initiative raised \$800, donated to St Vincent de Paul to support those in need. DOBCEL commends the students for their creativity, teamwork, and generosity. Next up: Christmas Hampers!

(Photos from the Facebook Page of Loreto College, Ballarat)



Building Meaningful Connections at Mercy Place

Year 9 students from Trinity College Colac have been fostering meaningful relationships with residents of Mercy Place through regular visits, showing empathy and care. This term, they brought festive cheer by creating decorations and sharing conversations that brightened the residents' days.

Before the year ends, the school's program will conclude with a student-led Christmas liturgy and joyful carols, a beautiful way to wrap up this year's Community Connections initiative.

(Photos from the Facebook Page of Trinity College, Colac)



Formation in Synodality

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is excited to be joining with the Catholic Theological College to provide formation in Leadership for Synodality in the Diocese of Ballarat through a bursary funded by the Therese D'Orsa Mission Fund.

The idea for this program emerged following the Ballarat Diocesan Assembly at the end of 2024. The Diocesan Assembly Report details the support for building a Synodal Church in this diocese with a prominent outcome of the Assembly being the need to provide formation for synodal leadership.

For more information, please see attached Synodal Formation Flyer.

The Assembly report is also attached for your information.

Expression of Interest for CTC project

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7157/expression_of_interest_for_ctc_project.pdf

Synodal Formation Flyer

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7156/synodal_formation_flyer.pdf

Assembly Account

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7158/assembly_account_mar_3.pdf

Catholic Identity & Mission Updates

Aggiornamento Letter to Principals

Dear **Principals and Religious Education Leaders**,

Following the success of this year's **Aggiornamento** professional learning sessions (*aggiornamento*, Italian for "updating" came to prominence as one of the aims for the Church of the Second Vatican Council), we are pleased to say that we are able to offer further sessions in 2026.

The *Aggiornamento* sessions we are offering are 90-minute online modules with TAP accreditation. We are appreciative of ACU, Assoc Prof. Robyn

Horner and Dr. Teresa Brown in particular, for the privilege and generosity of access to *Aggiornamento*.

The Learning Outcomes for the modules include introducing participants to the practice of thinking and talking about Catholic faith in dialogue with their experiences in the contemporary world and, enabling participants to consider the ways in which they may apply their learning in their specific school and our diocesan context. As such, the first two modules, we are offering 101 & 106 are specifically oriented towards *graduate teachers and those teachers new to the diocese or who are returning to the diocese*.

The cost per module will be from \$30-\$50 depending upon numbers; this cost is payable to ACU.

Module	Repeat date:	Time:	Focus:
Module 101 Thursday Feb 12 th 2026	Tuesday Feb 17 th	3.45-5.15pm	The Contemp Context
Module 106 Thursday March 5 th 2026	Thursday March 12 th	3.45-5.15pm	Talking about An Invitation
Modules open to all			
Module 102 Thursday Nov 12 th 2026	Tuesday Nov 17 th	3.45-5.15pm	A Personal G
Module 103 Thursday Dec 3 rd	Tuesday Dec 8 th	3.45– 5.15pm	The Great Tr

Although clashes in dates will inevitably occur, our hope is that you'll be able to prioritise these learning opportunities for colleagues not only for their theological content, also and essentially for the personal and spiritual learning each session will offer.

The modules will be advertised via the PL Calendar and enrolments invited early in 2026.

Sincerely,

Gina Bernasconi & Justin McInerney



You're Invited to Deepen your Advent journey!

Join this four-part virtual series of inspiring talks led by Australian biblical scholars from Yarra Theological Union. Each week, participants will explore advent readings and discover fresh insights to prepare for Christmas.

Speakers:

Dr Mary Reaburn NDS | Dr Chris Monaghan CP | Dr Paul Creevey FMS

Event Details:

- Tuesdays – 25 Nov, 2, 9, 16 Dec
- 7:00–8:00 pm (AEDT)
- Zoom
- No Accreditation: Free
- With Accreditation: \$22 incl GST (up to 4 PD hours)

Why join?

- Enrich your Advent reflections
- Learn from leading scholars
- Connect with a vibrant faith community

Online registration is essential. Zoom meeting details will be forwarded upon registration.

No Accreditation - Register Here

With Accreditation - Register Here

Social Justice Updates

We Are the Action Heroes

Hope is not only a feeling — it's something we do.

At the recent ***Raising Hope for Climate Justice Conference***, actor and former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger called **Pope Leo XIV** an “action hero for climate justice.”

Smiling, the Pope turned the spotlight toward the people:

“There is indeed an action hero with us — it is all of you, who are working together to make a difference.”

He then offered a timeless challenge:

“God will ask us if we have cared for the world He created and for our brothers and sisters. What will be our answer?”

Our Answer Begins with Action

While governments debate their *Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs - climate commitments)* under The Paris Agreement, people of faith are responding with *People’s Determined Contributions (PDCs)* — living commitments from families, parishes, schools, and communities around the world.

Add your voice and your action:

raisinghope.earth/action

Watch and share the 50-second campaign video — tag your parish, movement, or family, and show that hope is alive: **Let’s Turn Hope into Action – Pope Leo XIV (YouTube)**

Use the hashtags: **#AnswerTheCry**
#CommitToOurCommonHome **#RaisingHope**

Together, we are the action heroes Pope Leo spoke of — ordinary people with extraordinary hope.

This is what faith in action looks like.

ResourceSmart Schools Awards 2026

The ResourceSmart School Awards are Victoria’s largest sustainability celebration for primary and secondary school students, teachers and school volunteers. Since 2008, over 1,600 schools have participated in the ResourceSmart Schools program, with over 200 recognised in the ResourceSmart Schools Awards.

Showcase your sustainability story: Entries are open!

This year, the ResourceSmart Schools Awards celebrate 17 years with the theme ‘***Our Sustainable Community***’, acknowledging the supportive network where teachers, students and stakeholders share knowledge, passion and commitment to drive sustainability for a thriving environment.

- **Entries open:** Now!
- **Entries close:** Monday 9 March 2026
- **Finalists announced:** Wednesday 23 April 2026
- **Award ceremony at Melbourne Cricket Ground:** Thursday 11 June 2026

[Find out more and enter here](#)

[Prophetic Voices from the Margins: The Way Forward to COP30](#)

“We are one family, with one Father. We inhabit the same planet and must care for it together.” — Pope Leo XIV

As the Church’s call to *ecological conversion* grows stronger, bishops, youth, and faith leaders from Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Brazil unite ahead of **COP30 in Belém, Brazil**. Together, we’ll lift a moral voice for creation and explore what it means to care for our common home today.

Join the Laudato Si’ Movement Asia Pacific for an inspiring online gathering of *prophetic voices* for climate justice.

- **Date & Time:** November 27th 2025, 8:00pm (AEDT)
- **Duration:** 2 hours
- **Register now:** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Featured Speakers:

- Bishop Allwyn D’Silva (India) – Champion for the poor and ecological justice across Asia
- Bishop Gerry Alminaza (Philippines) – Leading voice for fossil fuel divestment and just transitions
- Adi Mariana Waqa (Pacific/Australia) – Theologian uplifting Pacific voices of resilience and hope
- Ashley Kitisya (Africa) – Youth leader driving faith-based climate action in Africa
- Eduardo Scorsatto (Brazil) – Catholic youth leader connecting faith and ecological awareness in the Amazon
- Jacqui Rémond (Australia) – Co-founder of the Laudato Si’ Movement, reflecting on integral ecology in the Pacific

Come be part of the Church’s living witness for creation — a global family caring for our common home.

[Upcoming Key Social Justice Dates:](#)

Term 4 Dates:	Event:
Wednesday 19 th November	World Toilet Day
Thursday 20 th November	World Children's Day United N
Tuesday 25 th November	International Day for the Elimin
Sunday 30 th November	1st Sunday of Advent
Tuesday 2 nd December	International Day for the Aboliti
Wednesday 3 rd December	International Day of Persons w
Wednesday 10 th December	Human Rights Day
Saturday 20 th December	International Human Solidarity I
Thursday 25 th December	Christmas Day

“This is a worthwhile initiative that supports the growth of the teaching profession,” Ms Collins said. “But to truly address Australia’s teacher shortage, incentives must apply across all school sectors. Catholic schools serve diverse communities — including many in regional and remote areas — and should be included in programs designed to boost the national teacher workforce.”

Ms Collins emphasised that Catholic education is ready to work with the government to ensure future rounds of teacher workforce programs adopt a more consistent, sector-wide approach.

“A national challenge requires national solutions. We encourage the government to expand eligibility so Catholic school communities can participate fully in this important initiative.”

[Below is the copy of the Media Release for your reference]

Catholic Education calls for inclusion in Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships_17 November 2025

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7221/mr_catholic_education_calls_for_inclusion_in_commonwealth_teaching_scholarships_171125.pdf

Catholic Education Welcomes Landmark Child Safety Reform

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) has welcomed the Albanese Government’s announcement of \$37 million in funding to implement the National Continuous Checking Capability (NCCC) — a major step towards a consistent, national approach to safeguarding children.

The NCCC will introduce continuous, near real-time monitoring of criminal history information for Working with Children Check (WWCC) holders across all states and territories, with rollout beginning at the end of 2025. The reforms also include:

- Mutual recognition of negative WWCC decisions nationally
- A unified risk framework across jurisdictions

These measures close long-standing safeguarding gaps and reflect Catholic education’s advocacy for a national approach to child safety checks and information sharing.

“This is a landmark reform in child safety policy,” said NCEC Executive Director Jacinta Collins.

“Catholic schools place the safety and wellbeing of children at the centre of everything we do. Today’s announcement and investment

Media Releases from National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)

Catholic Education Advocates for Inclusion in Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) has called for Catholic schools to be included in the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program, following the announcement by Education Minister Jason Clare that applications are now open for the 2026 scholarship round.

NCEC Executive Director Jacinta Collins welcomed the government’s continued investment in the teaching workforce but expressed concern that the program’s current commitment-to-teach requirement limits scholarship recipients to government-run schools and early learning settings. This excludes Catholic and independent schools, which educate more than one-third of Australia’s students.

is a step closer to ensuring safeguarding of children is a national priority which is not impeded by jurisdictional variation.”

Ms Collins highlighted the significance of mutual recognition of WWCC decisions, noting that inconsistencies between states and territories have left children vulnerable for too long.

“This reform sets a new national benchmark of safety and protection.”

Catholic education looks forward to working with governments, school communities, families and other providers to embed these reforms across the sector.

“As organisations centred on interactions with children and young people, it is essential that we have access to mechanisms and systems which ensure our staff, volunteers and providers are committed to child safety.”

These reforms form part of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030, strengthening safeguarding across Australia’s education and care sectors.

[Below is the copy of the Media Release for your reference]

Catholic education welcomes 37 million national reform to strengthen child safety_ 14 November 2025

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7222/mr_catholic_education_welcomes_37_million_national_reform_to_strengthen_child_safety_141125.pdf

Empowering Secondary English Education: ECP & VECN Drive Collaboration and Innovation Across Catholic Schools

Catholic secondary schools across the Diocese of Ballarat and beyond are experiencing a transformation in senior English education, thanks to the VCE English Catholic Network (VECN). Emerging from the success of DOBCEL’s English Collaboration Project (ECP) – a teacher-driven initiative launched in 2023 – VECN reflects the system’s commitment to responding directly to the needs of educators and students.

On 18 November, more than 75 teachers from over 20 Catholic secondary schools representing all Victorian dioceses gathered for the annual VECN In-Person Planning Day. Coordinated and hosted by Catholic Education Ballarat (DOBCEL), the network has quickly

become an important state-wide platform for connection, collaboration, and professional learning. The day was expertly facilitated by VCE English specialist Kirstin Bourne, whose deep knowledge and engaging approach supported rich professional dialogue.

The program focused on strategic planning for 2026, drawing on reflections from the 2025 VCAA English examination, updates to the study design, and the 2026 text list to inform high-impact teaching and learning. Teachers explored text studies, crafting and creating texts, and analysis of argument and language – examining how curriculum decisions in Years 9–12 shape student readiness for VCE English.

A defining feature of the day was the strong spirit of positive collaboration. Teachers from metropolitan and regional contexts shared insights, resources, and classroom strategies, openly discussing challenges and celebrating successes. Through assessment conversations and shared planning, participants deepened their collective understanding of quality VCE English practice.

This collaborative culture is central to both ECP and VECN. Since its introduction as a pilot in 2023 and expansion in 2024, the ECP has supported more than 200 teachers across the Diocese of Ballarat and a further 20 schools across MACS, Sandhurst, and Sale. Designed in response to teacher feedback, the project focuses on effective pedagogy, assessment, feedback, and supporting those teaching outside their subject area. Its blend of online seminars, forums, and flexible Canvas resources has created a vibrant professional community – and it is from this strong foundation that VECN has grown.

The opportunity to collaborate across dioceses strengthened professional relationships and reinforced the power of a united network. Many teachers commented on the value of stepping beyond their own school to learn from the wider Catholic sector, describing the day as energising, supportive, and professionally rewarding.

Under DOBCEL’s coordination – led by Education Officer, Ingrid May, and with Kirstin Bourne’s skilled facilitation, VECN continues to expand its reach and impact. Both ECP and VECN bring to life the practical principles of the DOBCEL Strategy 2035: deeper collaboration, networked local innovation, and collective autonomy and agency. Teachers are not just participants but co-creators, shaping the direction of the program through ongoing feedback and shared expertise.

By fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared leadership, the ECP and VECN are setting a new standard for English education – one that aligns with the DOBCEL 2035 Strategy and prepares students and teachers alike for a dynamic future.



People & Development Updates

Applications for Early Career Incentives Program 2026 Closing Soon!

Applications for DOBCEL's **Early Career Incentive Program 2026** will be closing soon! Submit your applications on or before **14 December 2025** by accomplishing the form on this link: **ECIP2026**.

What's on offer?

- \$5,000* graduate sign-on bonus
- \$10,000* graduate sign-on bonus in identified remote or small schools
- *Pro-Rata payment for part-time

Additional for remote and small schools:

- \$5,000 relocation support
- \$9,629 annual remote allowance (paid fortnightly for 3 years)
 - Equivalent to POL 3 (CEMEA)
 - Indexed annually

Limited funding available. Click [here](#) to know more about the program.

For more information, kindly contact James Murphy (JMurphy@dobcel.catholic.edu.au) or Vicki Dekker (VDekker@dobcel.catholic.edu.au).

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION LIMITED

DOBCEL Early Career Incentive Program 2026

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Limited funding available.

Applications open 17 October - 14 December 2025

Scan QR Code to apply

For enquiries, please contact DOBCEL:

- James Murphy
JMurphy@dobcel.catholic.edu.au
- Vicki Dekker
VDekker@dobcel.catholic.edu.au

*Pro-rata payment

Professional Learning Opportunities

The following people and development professional learning opportunities are available for staff to attend:

Date	Course	Details	Try booking Link
Wednesday 26 November 10:30AM – 12:30PM	Managing Employee Performance – online	Click here for details	https://www.trybooking.com/CZNNS Please contact Jo Huntley or Tina Phillips for more information.

2026 Professional Learning Guide

Be sure to check our newest release of the DOBCEL 2026 Professional Learning Guide for new events and updated details!

New! – Aggiornamento: Bite-Sized Theology Conversations

- The Aggiornamento series consists of two sets of two 90-minute online modules in Term One and two in Term Four (with differing audiences). Aggiornamento is Italian for 'updating' and came to prominence as one of the aims of the Church of the Second Vatican Council. The four modules have been developed collaboratively by Professor Robyn Horner and Dr Teresa Brown of the School of Theology at Australian Catholic University and draw from the resources of experts in the field.

New! - Literacy Bridges: Strengthening Disciplinary Literacy at Year 7

- At DOBCEL, we recognise that literacy is more than just reading and writing - it's about understanding the unique ways each discipline thinks, communicates, and constructs meaning. Building on the ILSY Model (Improving Literacy in Secondary Years), this network focuses on equipping middle leaders and teachers with the tools to teach the specific literacy practices of their subject areas - from analysing sources like a historian to reasoning like a mathematician.

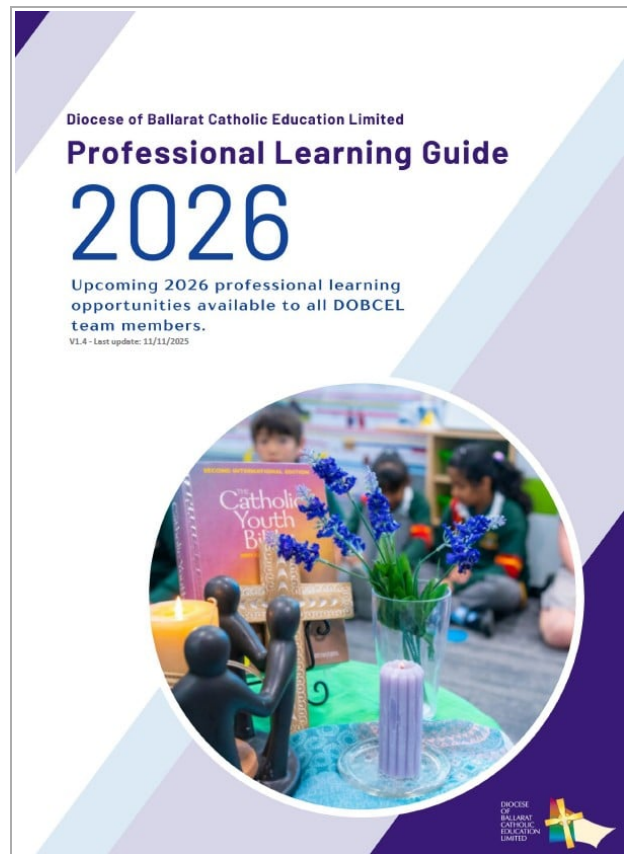
Update! – New 2026 dates have been added for the following networks:

- Secondary Learning Leaders (invitation only)
- Leading Pedagogical Learning with Christopher Thomas (invitation only)
- English Curriculum Project (ECP) – English (Diocesan Secondary Schools)
- English Curriculum Project (ECP) – Humanities (Diocesan Secondary Schools)
- VCE English Catholic Schools Network (VECN) (subscription only)

We encourage all team members to review the Learning Guide and invite team members to explore the many opportunities available for professional growth and collaboration in 2026.

Over the coming weeks, events will progressively be added to the Professional Learning Program and Calendar page on the **DOBCEL website**, where registrations will open via TryBooking.

2026 Professional Learning Guide (as of 11 November 2025).pdf



e-Safety Professional Learning

The following short professional learning opportunities outlines webinar, other training and tips to help you protect your school from cybercrime.

Webinar for school leaders and staff:

Social media age restrictions explained

- Hosted by the eSafety Commissioner
- Date: Various available
- Time: 3:45 pm to 4:15 pm
- Register at any time before the webinar, at [Social media age restrictions explained – a guide for educators and youth-serving professionals](#)

Tips for boosting cyber safety and password protection

To learn more about your cyber safety strengths and to receive a tailored plan to increase your individual cyber safety, complete this 5-minute cyber safety check.

We encourage all staff to change your passwords regularly. A strong, unique and unpredictable password is the first line of defence against a cyber security attack. To check the strength of your password and find out if it has been leaked, refer to the [Password strength tester](#).

Have Your Say – Australian Teacher Workforce Survey Now Open in Victoria

The **2025 Australian Teacher Workforce Survey** is now live across Victoria, offering educators a vital opportunity to shape the future of teaching in Australia.

This national survey is designed to capture the real experiences of teachers and school leaders—from classrooms to early childhood settings—and inform education policy, workforce planning, and support initiatives. The more voices we hear, the stronger and more representative the insights will be.

Why Participate?

- It takes just **10 minutes** to complete.
- Your input helps ensure decisions reflect the realities of today's education landscape.
- All registered teachers receive a unique survey link via email.

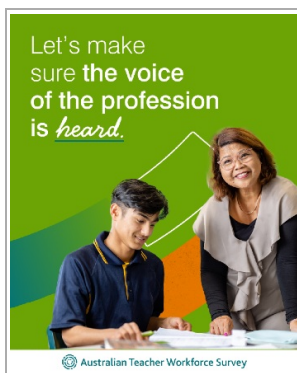
Promote the Survey AITSL has launched a dedicated [promotion toolkit](#) featuring:

- Newsletter copy
- Social media assets
- Posters
- Email templates
- PowerPoint presentations

These resources are ready to share across your networks, diocesan channels, and school communities.

Your voice matters — help shape the future of education.

For more information or to access campaign materials, visit the [AITSL website](#).



2026 – Primary School Community Improvement Grants

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation is offering **2026 School Community Improvement Grants** – providing up to **\$5,000** to **six Catholic Primary Schools** across our Diocese for projects that make a real difference in the welfare of your community.

This is a wonderful chance to bring your vision for community improvement to life!

Key Details:

- **Funding Available:** Up to \$5,000 per project
- **Eligible Schools:** Any DOBCEL primary school within the Diocese of Ballarat
- **Project Timeline:** Projects to be delivered during 2026
- **Funding Distribution:** February 2026

The Foundation is particularly interested in projects that provide relief, comfort, and support for those experiencing disadvantage within our Diocese – supporting initiatives that truly embody our mission of service and compassion.

APPLYING IS EASY !

Application closing date has been extended to 11th December 2025 !

Assessment will occur at the Foundation's November meeting, with successful applicants notified in early December 2025.

For schools who received grants in 2025 are still welcome to reapply and everyone is encouraged to consider how this funding could support your community improvement goals.

Have questions? The Foundation Secretary is ready to assist with any queries about the grant process. Please contact them at foundation@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

Find the information via: [Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation - Diocese of Ballarat 2026 – School Community Improvement Grants](#)

[Schools Community Improvement Grants Application Form](#)

[General Grants Application Form](#)

[Foundation_Grants_Aquittal_Form.docx](#)

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7095/foundation_grants_aquittal_form.docx

Student Wellbeing Updates

Term 4 Professional Learning/Network Opportunities

PL / Network Opportunity	Date & Time	Details
Mid-North Student Wellbeing/MHWL Leaders Network	27 November 10:00AM - 2:00PM	Location: TBC Register here

Advanced Notice: 2026 Professional Learning

Join us for a dynamic professional learning day designed for both primary and secondary teachers to explore effective, collaborative responses to school attendance concerns.

This full-day workshop will bring together educators and DOBCEL wellbeing staff, psychologists, speech pathologists, visiting teachers, and external agency partners—to unpack the drivers of attendance challenges and co-design practical, student-centred strategies. Through case studies, guided discussions, and planning sessions, participants will leave with deeper insight, shared tools, and clear next steps to support improved attendance outcomes in their school communities.

[Register Here](#)

CEP Exclusive Child Safety Series with Kristi McVee



Please find the recordings links below for CEP's three-part exclusive series (approx. 1 hour running time each) with former police detective and child safety advocate **Kristi McVee**.

- **Session One – Online Safety:** Practical strategies to help keep young people safe online. [Watch here](#)
- **Session Two – Abuse Awareness:** Understand the signs of abuse and how to respond effectively. [Watch here](#)
- **Session Three – Managing the Community:** Insights on fostering safe, connected, and supportive school communities. [Watch here](#)

CEP is also planning a 4th session next year with further Q and A which we will share when we receive more details.

Expression of Interest – Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS) Role 2026



In 2026, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders (MHWLs) across the **Central Zone** will have the opportunity to take on the **Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS)** role.

MHIPS is a Victorian Government initiative designed to upskill experienced teachers to become Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders, increasing schools' capacity to support student mental health and wellbeing. The program is a partnership between the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) at the University of Melbourne.

Please note: participation requires **current VIT registration**, and while the initiative is supported by designated central and regional staff, **DOBCEL does not run the training**.

Central Schools can contact **Jane Bennett** (jbennett@dobcel.catholic.edu.au) for further information or to clarify the role.

Learn more about MHIPS here: www.mhips.org.au

School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) in 2026

Thank you to those who have expressed interest in engaging with the **Student Wellbeing Team** to support your school's implementation of **School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)** in 2026.

We're currently collating all expressions of interest and will be in touch in the coming weeks to outline how **professional learning and tailored support** will look for your school.

4Rs Masterclass Opportunities (Secondary)



This two-day intensive training unpacks the updated **Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)** learning materials and builds participants knowledge, skills and confidence for its delivery. It is designed to empower those who are leading and/ or supporting the implementation of the

Respectful Relationships whole school approach, personal and social capabilities, and/ or consent education.

Secondary

Further Information: [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships \(RRRR\) SECONDARY 2-Day Masterclass](#).

Attendance is required for both days.

Ballarat Registration Link for 26-27 November 2025

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD)

The International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations-recognised day, observed annually on **3 December 2025**.



Its aim is to raise awareness, understanding, and inclusion of the 5.5 million Australians with disability.

Resources for schools, communities and workplaces can be found at [IDPwD website](#).

Click on the flyer below for more information.

IDPwD Flyer

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7180/what_idpwd_web.pdf

Learning & Teaching Updates

Opening the Doors Foundation: Financial Grants for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students



The Opening the Doors Foundation provides grants to families to assist with the extra costs incurred in the schooling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary or secondary school students. The 2026 Grant Round is now open, with a strict closing date of **2 April 2026**. For students to commence the 2026 school year with the necessary items, the ideal time to apply is now or before the start of Term 1.

Please note that due to a large increase in demand, changes have been made to this year's grant round. The Foundation will prioritise students with the highest financial need to ensure fair access to support. Please read the [Foundation Application Criteria and Guidelines](#) and if eligible, email [OTDF Applications](#)

to receive an auto message with a direct link to the OTDF grant portal.

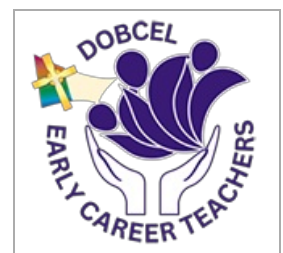
Further information can be obtained by contacting the Foundation (email [OTDF Applications](#) or phone 1300 236 356) or your relevant Education Officer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education –

Central and Far Northern Zone primary schools and Secondary Colleges - Damascus College, Loreto College and St Patrick's College, please contact [Helen Christensen](#).

Mid-Northern and Southern Zone primary schools and Secondary Colleges - Emmanuel College, Marian College, Mercy Regional College, Monivae College, St Brigid's College, St Joseph's College, St Mary MacKillop College and Trinity College, please contact [Jeanette Morris](#).

ECT Individual Check-ins

We recognise that Term 4 is always a busy one, and some teachers may prefer more individual support at this time of year. If you would like a 1:1 conversation with a CEB staff member to reflect on your experiences, discuss challenges, celebrate successes, or simply debrief on the year that's been, please contact [James Murphy](#) who will arrange a meeting with a CEB staff member of your choice at a suitable time.



Any questions please contact [James Murphy](#) or [Julie Cooper](#)

Setting up for Success Day - 2026

After a successful pilot in 2025, we are pleased to again offer the 1st year graduate teacher 'Setting Up for Success' day. A day specifically tailored for graduate teachers commencing their first year of teaching in 2026. This day is designed to provide graduates with practical tips and early connections that will set them up for a confident start to the year.

The program will cover:

- Professional responsibilities
- Setting up classroom routines
- Engagement strategies
- Getting to know your learners
- Taking care of yourself - educator wellbeing



Session Details

- **Central - Ballarat:** Tuesday 20 January 2026, 9:00am – 12:30pm, followed by a networking lunch (supplied) location – Catholic Education Ballarat office – 200 Gillies St, Lake Wendouree
- **North - Robinvale:** (if required): Thursday 22 January 2026 – 9:00am – 12:30pm, followed by a networking lunch (supplied) location – St Mary's School, 12 Watkins St, Robinvale (session to be confirmed based on graduate numbers – location of session will be based on the location of the majority of graduates, so may be subject to change)

This is a free, optional program and we recognise that not everyone may make it. It is deliberately scheduled before the school year starts to provide meaningful learning to enable early career teachers to succeed from day 1.

Participants of the 2025 Pilot Group found it highly valuable, helping to refresh practices learned at university and during placements, while also building peer connections with fellow graduate teachers. ***We invite you to encourage your 2026 graduate teachers to register and take advantage of this opportunity.***

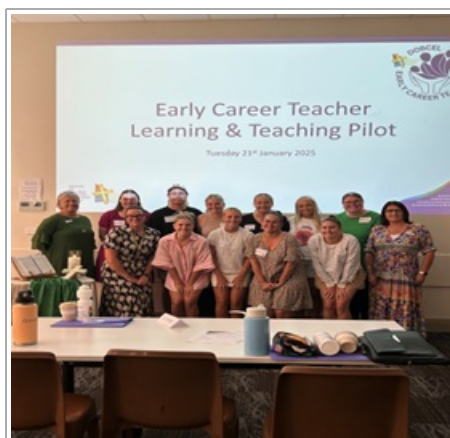
For more information, click the flyer below to share with any 2026 first-year teachers.

Graduates can register for the program [here](#).

Registration Link

Setting up for Success

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7249/setting_up_for_success.jpg



Primary Leaders of Learning 2026

Thank you to those who were able to attend our final Session of PLoL for 2025. We know how busy this stage of term 4 is and we really appreciate you making the time to join us.

We are in the stages of formalising Primary Leaders of Learning for 2026 and your feedback and thoughts are very much welcomed and appreciated. If you are yet to do so, please tuck away some time to complete this [GOOGLE FORM](#) by the end of Week 4. Your contributions will contribute greatly to the future direction of PLoL. All leaders across the diocese are invited to complete this feedback.

Below, you'll find the Session #4 recording, slide deck, and other relevant professional readings and resources we explored together.

- [Session #4 Recording](#)
- [Presentation Slide deck PDF](#)
- [AllReady Project](#)
- [Intention Setting Slides](#)
- [PLoL 2025 Feedback and 2026 thinking \(please complete\)](#)

We thank you for your support across 2025 and look forward to continuing to support leadership capabilities of our Primary leaders across the diocese in 2026.

For further information please reach out to

- Samantha Meerbach ✉
smeerbach@dobcel.catholic.edu.au | 0417 511 118
- Sarah McKnight ✉
smcknight@dobcel.catholic.edu.au | 0427 406 918
- Joe Ewing ✉ jewing@dobcel.catholic.edu.au | 0429 985 460
- Belinda Chiswell ✉
bchiswell@dobcel.catholic.edu.au | 0484 641 997

IMPORTANT Lit-HAS Integrated Curriculum Update

As you would be aware the Flare Primary Literacy Lit-HAS Integrated Curriculum, Scope and Sequence and associated resources are currently being updated, to fully align with VC2.0 across English, Science



and the Humanities.

To allow teachers and leaders to begin planning for 2026 in a timely manner, we will be putting up the new resources (and taking down the current versions) at the beginning of Week 10 - Monday 8th December.

If you are planning to use any of the Flare Key Texts after Monday 8th December, you may wish to make copies of the texts you need, as they may not be available in the updated version.

Further information about this update will be provided to Primary Literacy Leaders.

If you have any questions, please contact Emma Rutherford erutherford@dobcel.catholic.edu.au

URGENT REMINDER - GUIDED SCHOOLS!

If you are a Guided Literacy Improvement school and you have not yet attended to your Flare school information database tasks, please do so as soon as possible. If these tasks are not completed by the end of Week 8 (Friday 28th Nov), your Literacy tools and resources will not be ready to go for 2026.

Please contact your Literacy Ed. Officer if you need any support with this.

Added Whole Staff PL Dates for 2026

In response to feedback, the Flare Team has added three further dates to the 2026 PL Calendar. These will provide the opportunity to gather face to face for whole-staff learning if schools wish to do so. We are not able to provide this option for all whole-staff sessions, but have prioritised one session per phase, depending on the content that best lends itself to real-life delivery.

Please note that schools do not have to attend BOTH of these. You will register for either the face-to-face option OR the online option.

ANYONE may register for any of these dates. If you are a self-guided school, you are more than welcome to join us for any Flare PL offering, either as a whole staff group or as individuals. If you are a guided school, you may wish to register new staff for prior phase PL as part of your induction processes.



Day 1	
Phase A	Wednesday, 25 February, 9:00AM - 3:00PM Online
Phase B	Monday, 16 February, 9:00AM - 3:00PM Online
Phase C	Thursday, 19 March, 9:00AM - 3:00PM Online OR Tuesday, 31 March 9:00AM - 3:00PM Face to Face in Warrnambool

Registrations will be opened prior to the end of 2025, via the Flare 2026 Calendar which will soon be made available on the Flare website. We kindly encourage you to register for the whole-staff PL days at your earliest convenience. Specific venues will be determined following registrations - as numbers dictate.

Literacy Leaders - Important Reminder

Please remember that if you are a Literacy Leader who missed the recent Literacy Leader Coaching VC, the recordings are now available. We ask that you please prioritise watching the recording and completing the required administration tasks within the next week or two.

Expression of Interest – Sounds Write Training

Siena Catholic Primary School is offering a **4-day training program** in **Sounds-Write**, a highly effective **Structured Synthetic Phonics program**. This training will equip educators with the skills and knowledge to implement a research-based approach to teaching reading and spelling. There will be both a focus on F-2 training, 3-6 and Education Support Training, building on our training this year.

Sounds Write Facilitator: Jacinda Vaughan

Training Dates: 9th, 10th, (11th- Real time teaching day across the school observation) 12th & 13th February 2026. Wednesday is a training free day - no payment required. The reason being is so that we can provide staff with a brain break in what is an intensive training schedule.

- **Location:** Siena Catholic Primary School, 150 Eleanor Dr, Lucas

- **Cost:** To be advised once details are confirmed.

We invite expressions of interest from all who are keen to attend.

To express your interest, please contact sryan@slucas.catholic.edu.au.

FIRE Carrier Program: Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education

We are delighted to see more schools across the Ballarat Diocese taking authentic steps towards reconciliation and developing in-depth cultural awareness. The FIRE Carrier Program can help you to formalise this process as well as address school compliance areas including Child Safe Standards, the VCEA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy. Beyond compliance it is a way of making your school a more culturally aware and culturally safe place. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families attending the school are welcome to be part of the process if they would like to be.



If you are ready to take the next step and join the FIRE Carrier Program, check the latest FIRE Carrier Program Information Booklet. Once you have had a look at the booklet and the FIRE Carrier Program Presentation, please discuss it with your school leadership team. If you are requiring further clarification/information, please contact your relevant Education Officer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education –

Central and Far Northern Zone primary schools and Secondary Colleges - Damascus College, Loreto College and St Patrick's College, please contact Helen Christensen.

Mid-Northern and Southern Zone primary schools and Secondary Colleges - Emmanuel College, Marian College, Mercy Regional College, Monivae College, St Brigid's College, St Joseph's College, St Mary MacKillop College and Trinity College, please contact Jeanette Morris.

2026 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science - Now Open for Nominations

Nominations are now open for the **2026 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science – Science Teaching Prizes**, recognising exceptional educators who have made outstanding contributions to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.



Two prizes are available:

- Primary School Science Teaching Prize – \$250,000
- Secondary School Science Teaching Prize – \$250,000

Each winner will receive \$250,000 in prize money, a medallion, lapel pin, and award certificate. There is also the opportunity for highly commended recognition for other exceptional nominees.

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and reward teachers who inspire curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong passion for STEM among their students.

Nominations close: Thursday, 18 December 2025, 5:00pm AEDT

Help shine a spotlight on Australia's most inspiring science teachers — share this opportunity with your networks and encourage your community to nominate a deserving educator.

Learn more and submit a nomination: [The 2026 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science – Science Teaching Prizes | business.gov.au](https://www.industry.gov.au/PMPrizes)

Quick Links

DS2035 – Stay Connected to the Strategy

- [DOBCEL Strategy 2035 – Full Document \(PDF\)](#)
- [Strategy Portal](#) – Resources, videos, and key messages
- [CIRP Page](#) – Details and application form

Catholic Identity & Mission

- Professional learning offerings will be updated via the following [calendar link](#) as they emerge

Teaching & Learning

- **Term 4 2025 ACER's PAT Webinars**
 - Please make note of the upcoming webinars being presented by ACER about the administration and analysis of PAT data:
 - [PAT Science and STEM Contexts: how and why schools use these assessments](#) [26 November, 4:00PM]
- **Monash University - Middle Years Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) Intervention Specialist Teacher Course**
 - To help us plan effectively, we're gathering [Expressions of Interest \(EOIs\)](#) from educators who are likely to register if applications open.

Student Wellbeing Updates

- Professional learning offerings will be updated via the following [calendar link](#) as they emerge

Career Opportunities

CEB

- **Speech Pathologist** – fixed-term position at 0.4 FTE (closes 23 November)

Schools

- **Specialist Primary Teacher** – St Mary's School, Robinvale – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 21 November)
- **Classroom Teacher** – Our Lady Help of Christians, Warrnambool – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 21 November)
- **Employee Relations Advisor** - Damascus College, Mt Clear – fixed-term position at 0.6 FTE (closes 21 November)
- **Teacher – Senior Mathematics** – St Brigid's College, Horsham – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 21 November)

- **Classroom Teacher** - Sacred Heart Primary School, Colac – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 21 November)
- **Pastoral Care Worker**- St Thomas More Primary School, Alfredton – fixed-term position at 0.6 FTE (closes 24 November)
- **2025 Casual Relief Teachers** – St Columba's Primary School, Ballarat North – casual positions (closes 25 November)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 26 November)
- **Secondary Teacher** - St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill – ongoing position at 0.6 – 0.8 FTE (closes 26 November)
- **Classroom Teacher (Grade 1)** – St Mary's School, Hamilton – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 1 December)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Malachy's School, Edenhope – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 1 December)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Patrick's Primary School, St Arnaud – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (closes 3 December)
- **Teacher – Art/Textiles** – Monivae College, Hamilton – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (closes 7 December)
- **Casual Relief Teachers** – St Patrick's Primary School, Ballarat – casual positions (closes 31 December)