

Weekly Newsletter #78 - 26 November 2025

From the Executive Director

As we move toward the final weeks of term, there has been a strong sense of focus and momentum across our Diocese. With only a short time left before the Christmas break, I want to acknowledge the collective effort that continues to carry us through this busy and important period of the year.



Recently, I had the opportunity to join Kate Fogarty, Executive Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, for a conversation on the CESL podcast, *Catholic Education Matters*. Our discussion appears as the full episode “**After the Vote**”, where Kate and I unpack the recent enterprise bargaining offer from the Victorian Catholic Education Authority and Catholic school employers.

In the episode, we speak openly about the decision to present a best-offer directly to employees, the current cost-of-living realities facing our staff, and the ongoing importance

of unity and portability across Catholic education. It is a thoughtful and good-faith discussion about leadership under pressure and keeping students, staff and mission at the centre of our work. I encourage you to take a moment to listen to the episode [here](#) when you have the opportunity.

Today, I have the pleasure of visiting St Patrick’s School in St Arnaud and St Malachy’s School in Edenhope – and tomorrow I look forward to spending time with the community at Sacred Heart School, Casterton and St Joseph’s School, Coleraine.

Being in our schools continues to be one of the most rewarding aspects of my role. Each visit offers a renewed appreciation for the warmth, dedication and deep sense of purpose within our communities. I am always grateful for the hospitality extended by staff and students, and for the opportunity to see firsthand the vibrant learning and care that defines our schools.

As we enter the final stretch of the term, I know many of you are balancing significant workloads, end-of-year commitments and preparations for 2026. Thank you for the energy, professionalism and generosity you continue to bring to your roles. Your efforts make a profound difference, and they are deeply appreciated.

With best wishes,
Tom Sexton
Executive Director



Students at St Malachy's Edenhope enjoying a visit from Executive Director Tom Sexton

Message from the DOBCEL Board Chair

Term 4 Board Meeting Update – October 2025

I am pleased to share an update from the DOBCEL Board following our Term 4 meeting, held earlier in the term at St Patrick's Primary School, Port Fairy – one of the oldest continuously operating schools in Victoria, having opened in 1849.

We were warmly welcomed by Principal Olga Lyons, Deputy Principal Benson Steere, and the School Captains Gabrielle, Isaac, Evie and Maya, who led us on an engaging and informative tour. St Patrick's celebrated its 175th anniversary last year and is the second oldest school in our Diocese, after All Saints in Portland.

The Board was particularly impressed by the school's exceptional commitment to environmental stewardship. With a 5-star sustainability rating and the honour of being named Sustainability Victoria's Community Leadership School of the Year, St



Patrick's stands as a model of ecological awareness and community partnership. A group photo was taken beside one of the school's earliest remaining buildings – a meaningful reminder of the school's rich heritage.

During the opening proceedings, students led the Acknowledgement of Country and Prayer, followed by a wonderful surprise performance from the school choir. They unveiled a new St Patrick's theme song created collaboratively with a local artist – a piece known only to the choir until that moment, and a highlight for all present.

On Tuesday evening, the Board was delighted to share a meal in Port Fairy with local Principals, School Advisory Council Chairs and Southern Zone Priests. It was an outstanding turnout, and the Board greatly valued the high level of engagement and the strong sense of community shown throughout the evening.

As part of our visit to the region, the Board also took the opportunity to stop at several schools on the journey to Port Fairy, including:

- All Saints Parish School, Portland
- St Patrick's, Koroit
- St John's, Dennington
- St Patrick's, Camperdown
- Mercy Regional College Junior Campus, Noorat
- Our Lady Help of Christians, Warrnambool East
- St Thomas', Terang
- St Colman's, Mortlake
- St Joseph's, Warrnambool
- St Pius X, Warrnambool West

These visits offered valuable insight into the vibrant learning environments, dedicated leadership and strong Catholic identity across our Southern Zone communities.

Key items discussed during the Board meeting included the Enterprise Bargaining offer put forward by Catholic school employers across Victoria, as well as ongoing DOBCEL Board succession planning. The Board also received a progress update on the Nexus Project and engaged in a constructive discussion regarding Catholic Education reporting directly to the Board.

On behalf of the Board, I extend sincere thanks to the St Patrick's Port Fairy community for their generous hospitality, and to all schools who

welcomed us during our travels. The dedication, faith and community spirit shown throughout the region continues to strengthen Catholic education across our Diocese.

We look forward to our final meeting for the year, scheduled for 3 December 2025.

Best Regards,
Terry Harney
Chair of DOBCEL Board

Reflection of the Week

Reflecting on The Jubilee Year Pilgrims of Hope

This Jubilee Year, Christians have been invited to experience **journey** and to cross boundaries. The travel, experienced during this Jubilee Year is not only about the change of a place physically, but also involves changing hearts and actions, an invitation for the transformation of society and all of creation. This week's reflection is an opportunity to stop, look back and to plan what being a Pilgrim of Hope may look like going forward.

In the Twilight of the Jubilee Year

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7274/in_the_twilight_of_the_jubilee_year.pdf

Our Schools in Action

Clontarf Foundation Awardees – St Patrick's College

Last Friday, we proudly celebrated the achievements of Clontarf Foundation scholars at St Patrick's College. These awards recognise not only academic success but also commitment to values such as respect, integrity, and community spirit.

What is the Clontarf Foundation?

The Clontarf Foundation works to improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem, and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



men. Through its programmes, students are supported to achieve their potential and transition successfully into further education or employment.

Congratulations to this year's awardees:

- **Attendance Award** – Clifford Ogilvie
- **Academic Award** – Shannon Tipiloura-Young
- **Junior MVP** – Brandon Triangolo
- **Senior MVP** – Tyler Kelly
- **Employment Award** – Max Shields
- **Integrity and Respect Award** – Riley Seden-Kurnoth
- **Junior Clontarf Spirit Award** – Sloan Pring-Spark
- **Senior Clontarf Spirit Award** – Requan Taylor

These awards highlight the hard work and dedication of each student. We commend their efforts and look forward to seeing their continued success.

(Photos of other awardees are on the Facebook post of St Patrick's College)



Successful Mission Day at St. Brendan's Primary School

Last week, St Brendan's Primary School in Coragalac hosted a vibrant and meaningful Mission Day, bringing together students, staff, and parents in a wonderful display of community spirit.

Through their collective efforts, the school raised an impressive **AUD \$3,334** to support important mission initiatives. This achievement reflects the generosity and commitment of everyone involved.

Students enjoyed a day filled with fun activities, all centred around the shared goal of helping those in need. It was a fantastic opportunity for young learners to experience the joy of giving and understand the impact of their contributions.

(Photos from the Facebook page of St. Brendan's Primary School)



Celebration of Damascus College Year 12 Graduation Mass

The Year 12 graduating class of Damascus College marked a momentous occasion yesterday with a beautiful Graduation Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, surrounded by family, friends, and teachers.

The Mass, celebrated by Fr Justin Driscoll, centred on the graduation theme:
"Clothe Yourselves in Love."

A highlight of the liturgy was the Presentation of the Light, featuring three candles symbolising Wisdom, Love, and Faith—values that will guide graduates as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.

This special day also included the formal handover of the College Captaincy to next year's leaders, continuing the tradition of student leadership at Damascus College.

Congratulations to the Class of 2025 – the Pride of Damascus College!

(Photos from the Facebook page of Damascus College, Ballarat)



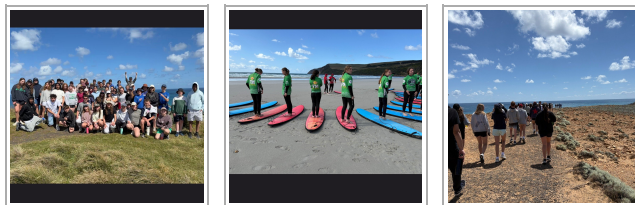
St Mary MacKillop College Year 8 Camp Activities Wrapped Up

Year 8 students from St Mary MacKillop College recently concluded their camp with perfect weather, making it an unforgettable experience by the sea.

Students embraced the coastal adventure, enjoying the refreshing sea breeze while learning to surf the waves. The camp also featured a variety of beach activities and a scenic stroll to the nearby seal colony, offering a unique opportunity to connect with nature.

This memorable week was more than just fun—it strengthened friendships, built camaraderie, and created lasting bonds among peers.

(Photos from the Facebook page of St Mary MacKillop College)



Catholic Identity & Mission Updates



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

[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.

Enhancing Catholic School/office Identity

While festivals from *religious traditions and secular practices* are **not to be equated with each other**, they point to a human need to be together in ways that are particular for those who claim them, and which very often, are invitational for those desiring to be present as guests.

November - December 2025:

30 November	First Sunday of Advent	Advent anticipates the coming again to Earth of Jesus Christ. Christians celebrate Advent by lighting Advent candles, engaging with timely prayers, studying Scripture, displaying wreaths and hosting special rituals.
6 December	Feast of St. Nicholas	This day originated in Europe centuries ago. It honours Saint Nicholas, a Christian Bishop who had a reputation for secret gift-giving and generosity. Every year, people exchange gifts and treats to honour the spirit of Saint Nicholas, spreading joy and goodwill around them.
7 December	Second Sunday of Advent	The celebration of Advent takes place across the four Sundays prior to Christmas and follows four weekly themes
8 December	Bodhi Day	Bodhi Day commemorates the day Buddha attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree. It generally falls on the eighth day of the twelfth month of the lunisolar calendar. Mahayana Buddhists in China, Korea and Vietnam celebrate Lunar Bodhi day on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. In Japan, Bodhi Day follows the Gregorian calendar and is celebrated on 8 December every year.
14 December	Third Sunday of Advent	Hope, Peace, Joy, Love
21 December	Fourth Sunday of Advent	

14-22 December	Chanukah Festival of Lights	<p>Chanukah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime “festival of lights,” celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods.</p> <p>The Hebrew word Chanukah means “dedication,” and is thus named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple.</p> <p>In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of mitzvah observance and belief in G-d. Against all odds, a small band of faithful but poorly armed Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G-d.</p> <p>When they sought to light the Temple’s Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Miraculously, they lit the menorah and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.</p> <p>To commemorate and publicise these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah.</p>
25 December	Christmas Day	<p>Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus and is celebrated by many in Australia regardless of religious affiliation. Christmas lights and trees are displayed, carols are sung, and individuals come together to exchange gifts and spend time with family and friends. For many Christians, attendance at Midnight Mass Christmas Eve or Christmas Day is a much loved ritual tradition.</p>
26 December - 01 January	Kwanzaa	<p>This week-long celebration honours African and African-American cultures. It culminates in a feast and gift-giving. It was first celebrated in 1966.</p>
31 December	New Year’s Eve	<p>This date commemorates the arrival of a new year following the Gregorian calendar. New Year’s Eve is a time for communities, families and friends to celebrate the year past and the year to come.</p>

For an extensive list of Feast Days, festivals,

and celebrations to help us recognise and respect each other and what is particular to us:

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-affairs/about-multicultural-affairs/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates>

If you have questions, please contact Gina Bernasconi gbernasconi@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au



Bonding time: the Nativity in Townsville, Australia
Painting by Jan Hynes, December 2021
<https://holyrirritant.blogspot.com/2021/12/bonding-time-nativity-in-townsville.html>

CI&M last online PL session for 2026

Please see [Awakenings Website](#) for link to this professional learning opportunity:

Exploring Ecological Conversion: Living Laudato Si’ at Christmas facilitated by Sarah Page

During our workshop on Thursday, there will be an opportunity for a little hand-on sustainable Christmas craft.

Participants are asked to please bring along the following:

- x 5 scrap pieces of paper (*pages from an old unwanted novel work best*)
- Glue (*hot glue or a glue stick will work best*)

Catholic Education Week Theme 2026

Bishop Paul Bird has endorsed the Catholic Education Week theme for 2026 highlighting the phrase from the theme of World Day of Peace, 2026, “Peace be with you all” (as captured in “Peace be with you all: Towards an ‘unarmed and disarming’ peace”).

While a brief phrase, its meaning could be spelt out in various ways according to various ages of students.

In explaining the phrase we also note that these were the first words of Pope Leo XIV when he greeted the people in St Peter's Square after he was elected as Pope. He said, "La pace sia con tutti voi!" ("Peace be with you all!").

More on CEW developments in future newsletters.

Social Justice Updates

Ecological Spirituality

The Season of Advent



Advent and ecological conversion

- **A time for change:** Advent is a time to reflect on our lifestyles, consider our harmful consumption habits, and make a decisive shift toward more simple and respectful ways of living.
- **A new start:** Just as Advent is a time to prepare for the coming of Christ, it is also a time for "ecological conversion" to heal our relationship with the Earth.
- **A call to action:** This spiritual conversion must translate into concrete actions that are more respectful of creation.
- **Community effort:** Pope Francis calls for a "community conversion" where groups and communities work together to address social and ecological problems.

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, reminds us that:

"There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology."

(LS)

The following ecological spirituality prayer and reflection has been prepared for you based on the reading from this Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent. [The First Sunday of Advent - Matthew 24:37-44](#)

Social Justice Partner News:

Catholic Mission updates...

It's been wonderful hearing about all the amazing activities you have been running with your students to celebrate Socktober and World Mission Month!



Still want to be part of Socktober?

There is **still time** to fundraise if you haven't already. In fact - did you know - we accept funds all year round!

Register here to fundraise via our peer-to-peer platform online: <https://www.socktober.org.au/register>

Fundraising offline:

We encourage all types of fundraisers and love when schools are creative with how they engage their students in Socktober.

If your school collected funds offline:

Electronic Transfer: Catholic Mission Donations Account BSB: 062 784 Account: 10000 8854 Reference: Your school supporter number	Over the Counter: Catholic Mission Donations Account BSB: 062 000 Account Number: Reference: Your school supporter number
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Please reach out to Rachel at rprince@catholicmission.org.au for your supporter number if you are not sure.

2026 Planning

If you haven't already please consider Socktober/Mission Month is in your school calendar in the future. If it's difficult for your school to celebrate during Mission Month, please feel free to choose a time that works best for your community - we're here to support you whenever you run your activities.

Rachel Prince
VIC/TAS Youth and School's Engagement Officer

W: 02 9919 7817

M: 0406 229 239

E: rprince@catholicmission.org.au

Caritas Australia updates...

ADVENT 2025

Our new Advent resources are now available online! All resources can be found at www.caritas.org.au/advent

Project Compassion Launch 2026

Save-the-date for the Project Compassion Launch in February with Bishop Paul at the Cathedral.

Date: Sunday 15th February 2026

Time: 5pm Sunday Mass

Venue: St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat

Who: Student Leaders, RELs, Principals... all are welcome!

You can access the save-the-date flyer [here](#).

Jillian Hogbin

Caritas Australia, Diocesan Director, Ballarat
W: 03 5337 7171
M: 0408 179 574
E: caritas@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Upcoming Key Social Justice Dates:

Term 4, 2025 Dates:	Events:
25 th November to 10 th December 2025	<u>16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence</u>
1 st December 2025	<u>World AIDS Day</u>
2 nd December 2025	<u>International Day for the Abolition of Slavery</u>
3 rd December 2025	<u>International Day of People With A Disability</u>
7 th December 2025	The 60th anniversary of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Latin for "Joys and Hopes") is a Pastoral Constitution from the Second Vatican Council, issued in 1965, that explores the relationship between the Catholic Church and the modern world. It emphasizes the dignity of every human person and calls for the Church to be actively engaged in contemporary issues like social justice, economics, politics, and culture. The document rejects any artificial split between faith and daily life, affirming that the "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties" of modern people are of concern to the Church.
10 th December 2025	<u>Human Rights Day</u>
18 th December 2025	<u>International Migrants Day</u>
Term 1, 2026 Dates:	Events
1 st January 2026	<u>World Day of Peace</u>
26 th January 2026	<u>Australia Day / Survival Day</u> <u>Uluru Statement from the Heart - Secondary Caritas</u>
2 nd February 2026	<u>World Wetlands Day</u>
8 th February 2026	<u>Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita, Patron Saint of Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking</u>

Student Agency – Schools that Listen

16 th February 2026	World Whale Day
20 th February 2026	World Day of Social Justice
1 st March 2026	Clean Up Australia Day
3 rd March 2026	World Wildlife Day
21 st March 2026	International Day of Forests
22 nd March 2026	World Water Day
28 th March 2026	Earth Hour

Our first Educator Workshop involved 108 principal, student agency leader and CEB participants. In order to establish the context for the work ahead, we worked on building shared language and a clearer understanding of what it means to create “schools that listen”. There were several opportunities for discussion about student agency and sharing our current school practices in breakout sessions.

We explored the act of listening and considered Margaret J. Wheatley’s observation “Willing to be Disturbed.” She notes,

“As we work together to restore hope to the future, we need to include a new and strange ally—our willingness to be disturbed. Our willingness to have our beliefs and ideas challenged by what others think. No one person or perspective can give us the answers we need to the problems of today. Paradoxically, we can only find those answers by admitting we don’t know. We have to be willing to let go of our certainty and expect ourselves to be confused for a time.”

The full text and video versions are linked below for your reference.

- [Willing to be Disturbed - Article](#)
- [Willing to be Disturbed - YouTube](#)

This piece prompted thoughts about the role of dialogue in our Catholic schools as described in the Church document *The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of Dialogue*.

“Dialogue combines attention to one’s own identity with the understanding of others and respect for diversity. In this way, the Catholic school becomes “an educating community in which the human person can express themselves and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony. Such a school is truly an educating community, a place of differences living together in harmony”.[41].

Both excerpts emphasise openness to others as essential for growth. Dialogue within a Catholic school can be seen as a means to foster harmony, respect for diversity, and relational trust based on a Catholic understanding of the human person made in the image and likeness of God. While the *Willing to be Disturbed* article highlights the need for personal humility—embracing uncertainty and being willing to have our beliefs challenged—as a path to collective problem-solving. Considered together, we

might see that authentic community and progress arise from both constructive interaction and a readiness to let go of certainty.

Before we invite students—the key rights holders—into our workshops, we explored foundational conditions for success and reflected on how we, as leaders, can prepare ourselves for this important journey.

We know that over the past several years, our schools have demonstrated a deep and sustained commitment to fostering student agency. This has laid a strong foundation for our work in this initiative.

Understanding what engages students in their learning and school experience is essential to realising our shared mission of “fullness of life for all”. We thank all participants for making the time and space to contribute to this system-wide initiative.

Our Second Educator session will be on **Tuesday, 17th February 2026 at 9:15 AM**. We look forward to continuing our conversations then and sharing (possibly laughing about) our Year 12 graduation photos.

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).



DOBCEL
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BALLARAT
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
UNITED

DOBCEL Early Career Incentive Program 2026

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 - Indexed annually

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

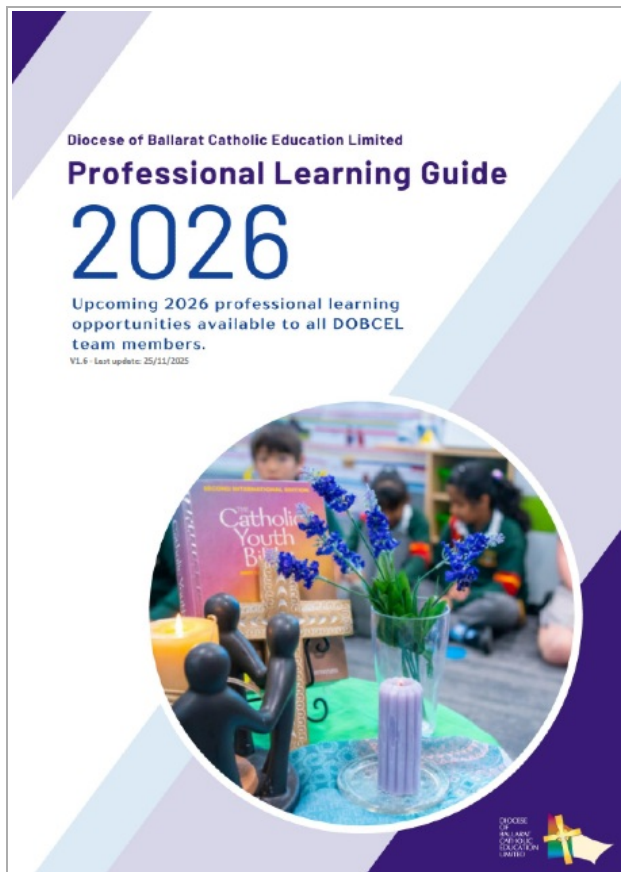
*Pro-rata payment

2026 Professional Learning Guide

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

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.

2026 Professional Learning Guide (as of 25 November 2025)



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

Workplace Gender Equity Act reporting requirements

The **Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012** requires non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees to submit a report to the *Workplace Gender Equality Agency* ('WGEA'). The reporting period is the same each year, from 1 April (the previous year) to 31 March (the current year).

As part of our governance obligations, DOBCEL successfully submitted our WGEA Report covering all DOBCEL schools in May 2025 and in November 2025 we received notification to advise compliance with the requirements.

Access to the public reports and summary can be viewed on the link below.

[WGEA Reporting 2025](#)

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](#)

Scrollsafe

The Department of Education recently partnered with Orygen to develop **ScrollSafe**, a comprehensive resource package of social media and youth mental health supports for secondary-aged students, parents/carers, teachers, and mental health professionals.



The resources are designed to help understand the impact of social media on young people’s mental health, equip users with the tools and knowledge to keep young people safe when navigating online spaces and offer evidence-based tips to support healthy digital habits.

Resources for **teachers** include:

- [ScrollSafe for secondary school teachers: A fact sheet that supports teachers to have conversations about social media and the online world in the classroom.](#)
- [ScrollSafe for secondary school teachers: A classroom activity that supports students to build skills to manage online safety, digital identity and digital wellbeing.](#)

Resources for **students** include:

- [ScrollSafe guide for teens \(booklet\) Top 10 tips for teens to stay smart on social media](#)
- [ScrollSafe for teens \(take-home flyer\)](#)
- [ScrollSafe digital wellbeing plan \(fillable template\)](#)

The resources are aimed at secondary-aged students, however primary school teachers can discuss these resources with upper primary-aged students as appropriate.

The resources are available on both the Department of Education's public [Safe Socials and Mental Health and Wellbeing Tool Kit](#) pages

SWPBS Update

Thank you to the schools that have **expressed interest** in joining Phase 1 or Phase 2 for 2026.

The Student Wellbeing team is currently finalising numbers and developing timeframes and dates to support these requests. Schools that have submitted an expression of interest for either phase will receive correspondence this **Friday**.

If you are interested in upskilling or learning more about national work in SWPBS, there is an opportunity to join us at the **PBL Conference in Brisbane – June 2026**. Click the event link below.



Positive Behaviour for Learning Conference

Learning & Teaching Updates

IMPORTANT Lit-HAS Integrated Curriculum Update



STORY SHELF - Get ready for 2026!

Schools across the Diocese are now accessing and using STORY SHELF, and it's continuing to grow!

Through the Story Shelf, schools:

- Ensure all students have a copy of the chosen text for novel studies.
- Browse a wide selection of class sets available to borrow
- Connect directly with other schools
- Arrange their own easy, school-to-school book exchanges

It's the perfect way to plan ahead for your 2026 novel studies while reducing costs and boosting access to quality texts.

[Click here to access Story Shelf](#) (don't forget to bookmark the page!)

It's not too late to be part of the Story Shelf network!

- Does your school have class sets of novels or texts that are just sitting on your shelves for part of the year?
- Share them with other schools across the Diocese and help strengthen our collective resources.

[Add your books to the Story Shelf here!](#)

Thank you!

Your contributions help other schools and supports DOBCEL's commitment to collaboration, collective efficacy, and shared resources, ensuring we continue to work together to strengthen teaching and learning across all of our schools.

If you'd like further information, please reach out:

Belinda Chiswell (*Education Officer: Learning & Teaching*)
✉ bchiswell@dobcel.catholic.edu.au | 0484 641 997

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.

Flare Primary Literacy Assessment & Data Management Update



As communicated last term, Breeana Wade (*Flare Primary Literacy Education Officer*) will be taking on a two-year secondment to Sacred Heart Primary, Mildura, as Deputy Principal in 2026 and 2027.

To support continuity of Flare Primary Literacy for our schools, Belinda Chiswell (*Education Officer: Learning & Teaching*) will take on key aspects of the Assessment & Data Management portfolio throughout 2026 and 2027. She will also oversee system tools currently accessed via DOBCEL Schools' Hub and continue partnerships with selected schools across the Central and Mid-Northern Zones, with specific school allocations to be finalised.

Breeana and Belinda have prioritised close collaboration across Term 4 to ensure a thorough handover. Those familiar with Breeana's work will know that her meticulous approach will support a seamless transition to ensure the high standard our Flare Primary Literacy improvement schools value greatly, is maintained.

We thank both Breeana and Belinda for their leadership, commitment, and ongoing support in this space, and wish Breeana every success during her time at Sacred Heart, Mildura.

Early Career Teacher Feedback

We're gathering feedback on our DOBCEL Early Career Teacher program so we can continue to improve and support ECTs - both personally and at a school level. We'd love to hear feedback about the supports already in place at schools, as well as any ideas for what we could offer at a system level to make the early career teacher experience more sustainable, energising, and positive in the long term.

We want this process to be easy and flexible and not to add to already full workloads. We invite anyone happy to share their thoughts and to select whatever format suits them best:

- ☕ **A coffee catch-up** - our shout, of course as a thank you!
- 📞 **A phone call**
- 📺 **A Teams/Zoom meeting**
- 📄 **Send me a questionnaire!**

We'll happily work around your schedule.

Here are links to book a time with any of us:

- [Book time to meet with Julie](#)
- [Book time to talk with Samantha](#)
- [Email to book a time with Jim](#)
- [Email to book a time to talk to Lisa](#)
- [Email to book a time with James](#)

Thank you again for your ongoing involvement. We truly appreciate your insights and look forward to connecting with you soon.

Please contact James Murphy on james.murphy@dobcel.catholic.edu.au with any questions.

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.**

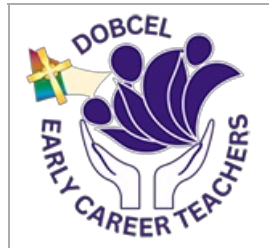
For more information, click the flyer below to share with any 2026 first-year teachers.

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





VCAA Resource Hub

School leaders are encouraged to look over the VCAA F-10 **Resource Hub**, the new home for all high-quality, curriculum-aligned resources to help plan and implement the **Victorian Curriculum F-10 Version 2.0**.

The hub is intended to save teacher time in locating relevant resources using the built-in search bar and filters.

VCAA will be seeking feedback in 2026. Further details will be available in the **F-10 Update newsletter**.

Explore the Resource Hub

School Video & Photography for 2026

As 2026 approaches, now is the ideal time to ensure your school has a strong and engaging presence in the community and online. Prospective families want to experience the values, culture and learning environment your school offers – and high-quality video and photography are the most effective ways to bring that story to life.

A concise, well-crafted promotional video, supported by professional still photography, gives families a genuine window into school life. When they can see your classrooms in action and hear directly from principals, students and parents, it creates a compelling invitation to book a tour and learn more about Catholic education.

Kevin Cummins from Modular Media has worked closely with many DOBCEL schools – as well as schools across Melbourne and Geelong – producing video and photography that strengthens school identity and increases community engagement. He understands the unique context of Catholic education and is highly regarded by principals across the diocese.

Kevin is currently offering a special DOBCEL rate for schools wanting to refresh their online presence through professional video and photography. With Term 1, 2026 filling quickly, now is a great time to get in touch.

Contact

Kevin Cummins – Modular Media
0400 885 534
kev@modularmedia.com.au

YouTube example of work: <https://youtu.be/JjGnp1y4EG8>



Smart Novated Car Lease Promotion for DOBCEL Employees



Smart has recently launched a salary packaging promotion for DOBCEL employees via **novated car lease**. This is one of the most convenient and cost-effective ways to own or run a vehicle.

With a novated car lease, employees can pay for car expenses using a combination of pre-tax and post-tax salary. If the car you choose is eligible for the electric vehicle discount, all payments can be made using your pre-tax salary. Both options help reduce your taxable income and the amount of tax you need to pay.

For more information, download the SMART Factsheet flyer below or contact **Claud Cantatore** of Smart Group for further details.

Smart Factsheet & Promotional Details

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7279/1_34_202510_smart_factsheet_a4_cost_of_living_bootload_web_0.pdf

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

- **Expression of Interest – Sounds Write Training**
 - **Training Dates:** 9th, 10th, (11th-Real time teaching day across the school observation) 12th & 13th February 2026
 - **Location:** Siena Catholic Primary School, 150 Eleanor Dr, Lucas
 - To express your interest, please contact sryan@slucas.catholic.edu.au

Student Wellbeing Updates

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

Career Opportunities

Schools

- **Learning Diversity Assistants** – Emmanuel College, Warrnambool – ongoing position at 0.85 FTE (**closes 2 December**)
- **Textiles Teacher** - St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 3 December**)
- **English Teacher** – St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 3 December**)
- **Classroom Teacher** – St Patrick’s Primary School, St Arnaud – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 3 December**)
- **Acting Head of Students (POL) including teaching allocation** – Trinity College, Colac – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 3 December**)
- **Classroom Teacher (H&PE, Outdoor Ed, Mathematics, Humanities, RE & Science)** – Trinity College, Colac – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 3 December**)
- **Teachers – English and Mathematics (Yrs 7-12)** – Emmanuel College, Warrnambool – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 4 December**)
- **Learning Support Officer** – St Patrick’s Primary School, Ballarat – fixed-term, part-time position (**closes 7 December**)
- **Learning Support Officer** – Damascus College, Mount Clear – part-time or casual positions (**closes 8 December**)
- **Teacher – Art/Textiles** – Monivae College, Hamilton – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 7 December**)
- **Classroom Teacher** – Sacred Heart Primary School, Casterton – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 12 December**)
- **Maths Teacher** – St Joseph’s College, Mildura – fixed-term position at 0.8 FTE (**closes 18 December**)
- **Casual Relief Teachers** – St Patrick’s Primary School, Ballarat – casual positions (**closes 31 December**)
- **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** – Sacred Heart Primary School, Mildura – fixed-term position at 0.2 FTE (**closes 1 December**)
- **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**)
- **Learning Support Officer** – St Thomas More, Alfredton – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 1 December**)
- **Director of Finance** – Loreto College, Ballarat – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 1 December**)
- **Learning Support Officer - Integration** – St Coleman’s Primary School, Mortlake – fixed-term, part-time position (**closes 2 December**)