

Weekly Newsletter #79 - 03 December 2025

From the Executive Director

In last week's newsletter, I shared the recent conversation I had with Kate Fogarty, Executive Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, on the CESL *Catholic Education*



Matters podcast. The episode, "**After the Vote**", explores the recent enterprise bargaining offer and reflects on the leadership challenges and opportunities facing Catholic education. Given its relevance to our current context, I again encourage staff to take a moment to listen when you have the opportunity.

Today, the DOBCEL Board met for the final time in 2025, considering a full agenda that included the approval of a suite of policies and endorsement of all 57 school budgets for the coming year. As always, I am grateful for the thorough, thoughtful and mission-focused approach the Board brings to its work.

The meeting also marked

the conclusion of service for two highly respected Board members: Chair Terry Harney and Deputy Chair Sr Berenice Kerr. On behalf of the entire DOBCEL community, I extend our sincere thanks for their outstanding leadership, wise counsel and deep commitment to Catholic education. Their contribution over the past five years has been significant and will continue to shape our direction well into the future.

We also look ahead with confidence as Eugene Dalton prepares to take up the role of Chair in 2026, supported by Anne Pekin as Deputy Chair. Their experience and dedication will provide strong continuity and stewardship for our system.

As we move further into December, there is a growing sense of anticipation across our schools – with end-of-year celebrations, community gatherings and liturgies beginning to fill our calendars. I know many of you are managing substantial workloads alongside these important events. Thank you for your continued energy, professionalism and generosity. Your work ensures that these final weeks are both meaningful and memorable for our students and families.

With best wishes,
Tom Sexton
Executive Director

Principal Appointment – St Pius X Primary School, Warrnambool

I write to inform you that Tristan Fay has been appointed as the next Principal of St Pius X Primary School, Warrnambool, commencing at the beginning of the 2026 school year.

Tristan is a highly regarded educational leader who has served the community of St Alipius, Ballarat East, since the beginning of this year, and prior to this held the role of Deputy Principal at St Patrick's Primary School, Port Fairy. Earlier in his career, Tristan held teaching and leadership positions across several Catholic and government schools, including Lumen Christi (Delacombe), Clairvaux Catholic School (Belmont), and Acting Principal roles at Casterton Primary School and Branxholme–Wallacedale Community School.

Across his leadership roles, Tristan has consistently fostered a positive learning culture that is inclusive, innovative and grounded in Gospel values. He has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving student outcomes through structured approaches to literacy, and he has prioritised wellbeing and inclusion for all students. Tristan has also contributed significantly to strengthening Catholic identity through recontextualised prayer, meaningful liturgical celebrations and an engaging religious education program.

Tristan is well regarded by staff for his authentic, collaborative and supportive leadership style. He brings a clear commitment to school improvement, informed by his contributions to annual action plans, alignment with School Improvement Plans, and support for the DOBCEL Strategy 2035 – Pursuing fullness of life for all.

A committed lifelong learner, Tristan has completed a Bachelor of Primary Education and accreditation in Religious Education through the University of Divinity and is currently undertaking a Master of Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University. He has also participated in several leadership formation programs, including the Country Diocese Leadership Program, Victorian Aspiring Principal Assessment and the Beating Heart of Educational Transformation Program with Andy Hargreaves.

Tristan and his family look forward to reconnecting with the Warrnambool region and becoming actively involved in the Star of the Sea Catholic Parish community.

The selection panel was impressed by Tristan's vision for St Pius X and his strong focus on ensuring improved educational outcomes for all students. His breadth of experience across Catholic primary

settings, combined with leadership roles in both the Melbourne Archdiocese and the government sector, position him well to serve the St Pius X community.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Tristan on his appointment. I also thank Nick Murrell for his leadership of St Pius X Primary School and for his service to the community.

Please join me in welcoming Tristan to St Pius X and wishing him every success in his new role.

With best wishes,
Tom Sexton
Executive Director

Reflection of the Week

Dare to Dream

The birth of Christ is an event that invites people to transform the world on an ongoing basis. We often hear during Advent **O Come Emmanuel!** What does Emmanuel mean? It is a name of Hebrew origin that means "God with us". It is a biblical name that appears in the Old Testament Book of Isaiah and is later identified in the New Testament as a name for Jesus Christ. The implications of the birth of Christ are ongoing. It was not just a one off event that took place many years ago. For Christians Advent includes remembering and importantly a time to be conscious. Advent according to Richard Rohr OFM is a time for being **aware, alive, attentive, alert** and **awake**. Maybe for Christians Advent could be a time to be aware, alive, attentive, alert and awake to the presence of God and a time to explore ways of "birthing" God anew on an ongoing basis, a time to make known **God with us**.

In the following reflection Jim Quillinan expresses Advent as a time for Christian to **Dare to Dream** which includes reflecting on ways to be more aware, alive, attentive, alert and awake to God's presence and bringing this presence to others and all creation.

Dare_to_Dream.pdf

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7312/dare_to_dream.pdf

Explore New My School Website Today

Australia's most comprehensive school-level data is now available on ACARA's [My School website](#).

It's been updated for 2025 with the latest school-level NAPLAN data and new profile information on schools.

My School gives parents and carers information about schools in their area, including student and teacher numbers, attendance rates, income and expenditure, and NAPLAN results. It also provides principals and teachers with important insights into school performance.

This year's update includes new student progress data, showing how much the same students at the same school have improved since their last NAPLAN assessment two years ago. This provides a clearer picture of learning growth over time.

ACARA CEO Stephen Gniel said the return of progress data allows improvement to be recognised "in a fairer way that considers the individual circumstances of a school".

2 new explainer videos about ACARA's My School website

- Learn more about how to find your local school in the updated explainer video below.
- Learn more about how ACARA calculates our student progress in this [new explainer video](#).

Please find below ACARA's My School Parent and Carer Information Sheet.

ACARA My School Parent and Carer Information Sheet

https://ceob.schoolzineplus.com/_file/media/7320/acara_my_school_parent_and_carer_information_sheet.pdf

<https://youtube.com/embed/NiQFzjm8mws?autoplay=0&modestbranding=1&rel=0>

Our Schools in Action

Celebrating St James' Green Success!

We are thrilled to share some wonderful news: St James' Primary School in Sebastopol has won the Victorian Schools Garden Award for *Most Engaging Garden for Play!* This award is especially meaningful to the school and the Common Home – a space where students explore, wonder, and connect with nature every day.

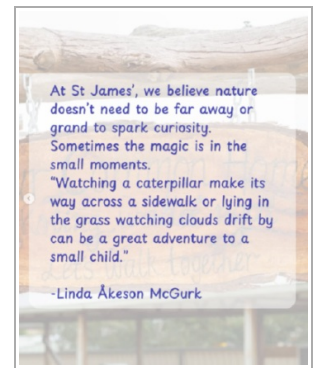
The school community believes that nature doesn't need to be far away or grand to spark curiosity. Sometimes, the magic is found in the smallest moments:

"Watching a caterpillar make its way across a sidewalk or lying in the grass watching clouds drift by can be a great adventure to a small child." – Linda Åkeson McGurk

The school's garden is more than just a play space; it's a living classroom that nurtures imagination, mindfulness, and a love for the environment.

Congratulations to St James' students and staff who made this wonderful initiative for our mother nature!

[Photos from the Instagram Account of [St James' Primary School Sebastopol](#)]



St Michael's Primary School Spreads Christmas Cheer at Hepburn House

Recently, the Mini Vinnies School Choir from St Michael's Primary School in Daylesford brought festive joy to the residents of Hepburn House with a heart-warming performance of Christmas carols.

These talented students, guided by Millie and Jude, filled the room with music and smiles, creating a special moment of connection and celebration for all.

Thank you to our wonderful choir and their mentors for sharing the true spirit of Christmas with the community!

[Photos from the Facebook Page of [St Michael's Primary School](#)]



Celebrating Wellbeing Day at St Colman's Primary School

On Monday, St Colman's Primary School marked its second Wellbeing Day, with a special focus on gratitude. Students spent time reflecting on the big and small things they are thankful for — at home, at school, and in the wider community.

The day began with buddy reading sessions of *The Gratitude Jar*, inspiring students to create their own classroom gratitude jars. Throughout the week, these jars will be filled with messages of appreciation, which will later be compiled into a whole-school Gratitude Book — a beautiful way to celebrate thankfulness together.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Narelle Marsden, for planning such a thoughtful and meaningful day. Her dedication to student wellbeing shines through in every detail. A highlight for many students was the personalised Zooper Dooper holders Narelle crafted for each child — a small gesture that made the day extra special!

[Photos from the Facebook Page of St Colman's Primary School]



Congratulations to the Year 12 Students of Trinity College Colac – Class of 2025

The moment our Year 12 students at Trinity College Colac had been waiting for finally arrived — Graduation Day!

Graduates celebrated this special milestone with family, friends, teachers, and staff at St Mary's Church, where a beautiful Graduation Mass was held. During the ceremony, students received their Certificates of Graduation along with personalised candles, presented by Professor Paul Clohesy and Fr Andrew.

As Steve Jobs once said: *“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.”*

We wish all our graduates every success and happiness as they embark on the next chapter of their journey!

[Photos from the Facebook Page of Trinity College Colac]



Pursuing Fullness of Life for All: A year in review - Sensemaking and System Transformation in 2025

This year, we have been engaged in a journey of sensemaking, guided by the vision of the DOBCEL Strategy 2035—“Pursuing fullness of life for all.” This co-designed strategy sets a bold direction for our system of Catholic schools, aiming to move from good to great by 2035.

Why do we need to change?

Our world is rapidly evolving, shaped by forces like climate change, technology, shifting demographics, and growing inequalities. At the same time, student learning outcomes are stagnating, educational gaps are widening, and wellbeing is under threat. These trends are seen globally, nationally, and in our own schools. Simply maintaining current practices will not prepare our young people for the future. That's why we dedicated this year to making sense of these big ideas together—so we can respond with purpose and unity.

Making sense of our Practical Principles

In formulating the DOBCEL Strategy 2035, we have examined school systems around the world that have successfully improved academic standards while also fostering student faith, holistic development, wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging. This is the type of schooling system we aim to be.

To guide our response, we have enacted the DOBCEL theory of change, which centres on three practical principles: deeper collaboration, networked local innovation, and collective autonomy and agency. These principles call us to work together across schools, invest in local innovation, and empower schools to make decisions that best serve their communities—while staying connected and accountable to our shared mission.

Throughout 2025, we have embraced the idea that everyone has a role in shaping our system. Our focus has shifted from simply improving individual schools to transforming the entire system, recognising that complex challenges require collaborative solutions. Key events included international seminars with leading educators, such as Professor Andy Hargreaves and Professor David Hopkins, and network collaboration days across our zones, involving over 1,200 participants. Our Collaborative Innovation Research Prototypes have also evolved over the year.

List of initiatives:

These initiatives have sparked dialogue and shared learning, helping us understand our complex challenges and explore solutions. By enacting our theory of change, our community has led and participated in a range of initiatives throughout 2025—demonstrating our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and empowerment, and shaping the future of Catholic education in our region.

As we look ahead, the DOBCEL Strategy 2035 reminds us that our Catholic identity underpins all we do. We strive for a system where every student feels safe, valued, and engaged, and where compassion, service, and respect for human dignity are at the heart of learning.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's initiatives. Together, we are shaping a future of fullness of life for all.

DS2035 Initiatives for 2025

Leading from the Middle, Professor Andy Hargreaves

- Keynote - 100 participants

Seminar presentation, International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI)

- An International Collaboration: Making sense of past reforms in current times, DOBCEL & Alberta, Canada

Unleashing Greatness: A Strategy for School Improvement, Professor David Hopkins

- Keynote – 90 participants

Network Collaboration Days

- 22 April - Central Zone
- 24 April - Southern Zone
- 14 May – Mid North Zone
- 27 May – Northern Zone
- 1270 participants

DOBCEL Baseline Survey

- 1131 responses

Beating Heart of Educational Transformation (Andy Hargreaves)

- Masterclass and 8 x in-person and online workshops

School Improvement Action Research Group (David Hopkins)

- Masterclass and 6 x online workshops

Enhancing Catholic Identity: Introducing the Leuven Project

- 1 September – 4 September, 60 participants, 7 completing credentialed unit THCT605

Aurora - Flare initiative

- Partnership between 10 DOBCEL Schools, La Trobe University and the Bertalli foundation continuing in 2026

AI Digitech initiative

- Digital Positioning Plan, Artificial Intelligence guidance and Digital Networks

Student Agency – Schools that Listen

- First Educator Workshop, 108 participants

Collaborative Innovation Research Prototypes - CIRPS

13 Prototypes involving 30 schools

ACU Research opportunities

- Submissions underway for Master of Ed Research or PhD in 2026

Secondary Network Collaboration Days 2026

- Four locations - Term One 2026

Student Agency – Schools that Listen: Student Agency Facilitators and Principals

Thanks to those who attended our first Educator session on 20 & 21 November. Resources and recordings from the session are now available through Canvas [here](#). Session participants will also be sent an email from Canvas with a link to these resources.

Student Agency Facilitators who are not enrolled in the Canvas Student Agency - Schools that Listen course in, please request access [here](#).

Catholic Identity & Mission Updates

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:

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>
		<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	This week-long celebration honours African and African-American cultures. It culminates in a feast and gift-giving. It was first celebrated in 1966.
31 December	New Year's Eve	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.

For an extensive list of Feast Days, festivals,

and celebrations to help us recognise and respect each other and what is particular to us: [Click Here](#)

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://holyyirritant.blogspot.com/2021/12/bonding-time-nativity-in-townsville.html>

Induction Materials for staff New to Catholic Education 2026

A short Canvas course has been developed around the Mission and purpose of Catholic Education titled **What makes Education Catholic?**

Employees can join this course via two methods:

If employees **already have a DOBCEL Canvas account** – you can access the course via the DOBCEL Learning Library!

[Log into your DOBCEL Canvas account](#)

- Select 'Courses' from the left-hand side menu options
- Select 'All Courses'
- Select 'Browse More Courses'
- Join the "DOBCEL Learning Library Directory" course
- Team members can enjoy any of the available courses, including **What Makes Education Catholic?** by enrolling onto any course as they please!

For employees **who do not yet have a DOBCEL Canvas account** – you can access the course via the following link and creating a new account

[Click HERE to create an account and join into the course!](#)

Alternatively, if you would like this presented as

a professional learning face to face or online session/s tailored to your context to suit your community, contact Jim Waight Education Officer: Formation for Mission Primary & Secondary on 0417869912. There is also the possibility of several schools/colleges joining together to explore professional learning opportunities. Professional learning will attract TAP hours for those involved.

This course and professional learning is being road tested at the beginning of 2026, thus feedback will be sought regarding what it may look like in the future.

The intention of the course is to give an overview of the purpose and Mission of Catholic Education as part of an overall induction process for all new staff joining Catholic Education.

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 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:
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</u> , Patron Saint of Victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
16 th February 2026	<u>World Whale Day</u>
20 th February 2026	<u>World Day of Social Justice</u>
1 st March 2026	<u>Clean Up Australia Day</u>

3 rd March 2026	<u>World Wildlife Day</u>
21 st March 2026	<u>International Day of Forests</u>
22 nd March 2026	<u>World Water Day</u>
28 th March 2026	<u>Earth Hour</u>

Ballarat Diocesan Principal Network (BDSP)

Principals from the Catholic Secondary Schools across the Diocese gathered in Mildura for the meeting in Term 4. The group meet online each fortnight throughout the year and in-person in one of the schools each term.



Meetings are an opportunity for the principals to collaborate, share educational insights, and further develop collegiality across the principal group. The network has welcomed new principals in 2025; Catherine Howison, Marian College and Rachel McGennissen, Emmanuel College and will farewell Michelle Brodrick, Loreto College and Peter Morgan, Emmanuel College at the conclusion of the year.

The meeting in Mildura was hosted by Greg Kluske at St Joseph's College, Mildura beginning with a Murray River cruise and a shared meal on the Sunday night. The Monday meeting Agenda included a tour of the Mercy Campus for Year 8 students, the Mercy Theatre, sporting stadiums and Riverside Trade Training Centre.



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 Early Career Incentive Program 2026

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- \$5,000* graduate sign-on bonus
- \$10,000* graduate sign-on bonus in identified remote or small schools

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.

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

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?

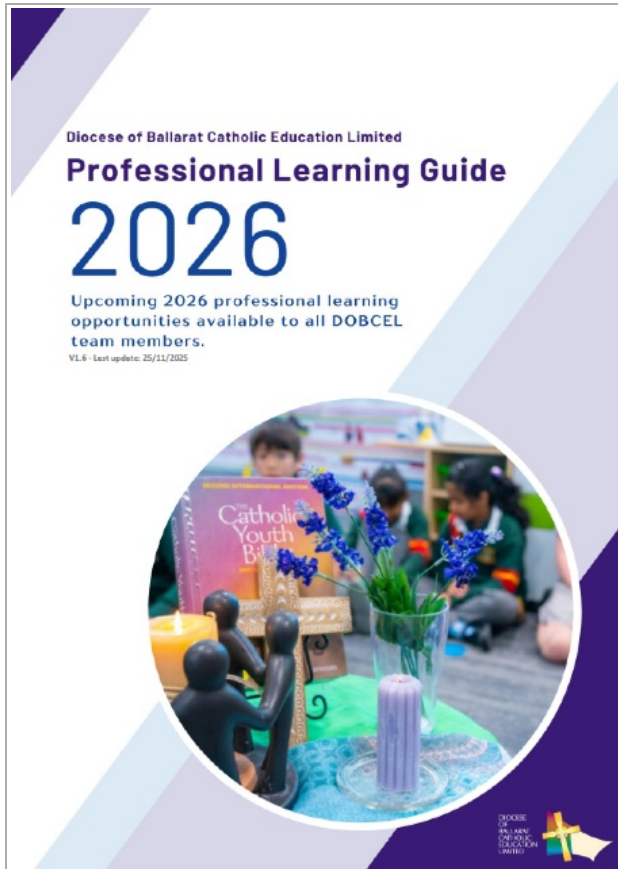
- \$5,000* graduate sign-on bonus
- \$10,000* graduate sign-on bonus in identified remote or small schools
- *Pro-Rata payment for part-time

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)



Student Wellbeing Updates

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

Christmas Message and 2026 Updates

Please find a [Christmas message from Michael Carr-Gregg](#) including an outline of the School TV updates and 2026 resources including:



Surviving Christmas Special Report provides practical guidance to help them navigate the festive season with calm and connection.

New Topic Release Calendar 2026 to help with planning and preparation.

SWPBS Update

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**.

The 2026 conference theme is 'Better together: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support' with the following strands:

- Bringing behaviour, academics and wellbeing together
- Designing equitable and inclusive practices to improve school achievement
- Supporting student agency, belonging and connection
- Building participation using evidence, shared understandings and voice

Mid-North Network Collaborative Practice Sharing

Last Thursday, Student Wellbeing and MHiPS leaders from the North and Mid-North came together in Horsham for an engaging day of collaborative practice sharing. A key highlight was an informative session on The Orange Door, delivered by Renee Clarkson, Team Manager – Community Based Child Protection (Wimmera), Department of Families, Fairness and Housing



Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress



Today is the International Day of People with Disability 2025- a day dedicated to increasing

awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability.

IDPwD is part of creating an inclusive and diverse community for the 5.5 million people with disability in Australia.

This day is an opportunity to celebrate disability, inclusion, learning and connection.

Together we can break down barriers and create environments where everyone feels supported and included.

This IDPwD celebrate the power of learning and connection and commit to taking meaningful action that builds a more inclusive, informed and empowered community within our schools and local areas.

International Day of People with Disability

Learning & Teaching Updates

Japanese Karuta tournament held in Ballarat

On Thursday 27th November, almost 100 Years 5/6 students from eight Catholic and Government primary schools in the Ballarat area joined together to participate in the annual Japanese Karuta tournament, held at St Alipius Primary.

Karuta is a traditional Japanese card game played in teams, similar to 'Snap'. Students must listen to the words called in Japanese and find the matching card in front of them. Guests enjoyed a sushi lunch and were also treated to an incredible Taiko drumming performance from the talented senior students at St Alipius under the guidance of Japanese teacher, Adam Cameron. All students displayed outstanding teamwork and communication skills throughout the day.

Overall winners were Emmaus (1ST place), St Alipius (2nd place) and Lucas PS (3rd place). We extend our appreciation to St Alipius for hosting, members of our local Japanese community for donating prizes and to the dedicated group of Japanese language teachers and assistants from St Alipius, Emmaus, St Thomas More, Lumen Christi, St Patrick's Gordon, Buninyong PS, Lucas PS and Pleasant St PS for their time spent coordinating the event.



Celebrating the Outstanding Achievements of Our Secondary Learning Leaders

Throughout 2025, our Secondary Learning Leaders (SLL) have demonstrated exceptional commitment, professionalism, and a strong collective purpose in strengthening learning and teaching across our diocesan secondary schools. Their contributions to the Leading Pedagogical Learning (LPL) program—facilitated by Christopher Thomas from PWRD Leadership—have been central to this year's systemwide growth in pedagogical leadership.

Across the year, SLLs have engaged deeply with the LPL framework, refining their capacity to lead instructional improvement, strengthen teacher practice, and embed consistent, evidence-informed approaches in classrooms. They have implemented LPL tools and protocols with clarity and confidence, consistently supporting teams to focus on what matters most: high-quality teaching that improves student learning.

A particularly significant achievement has been the way SLLs have used their LPL learning to establish shared expectations of practice, drawing on research from Rosenshine, AERO, Doug Lemov and other leading thinkers. Their work has strengthened coherence between classroom practice and school-based learning and teaching frameworks, helping to build a more aligned and purposeful approach to pedagogical improvement.

The LPL workshops have become key touchpoints for professional dialogue and strategic growth. Christopher Thomas has brought deep expertise, discernment and encouragement; in turn, our SLLs have brought openness, curiosity, and a proactive willingness to translate learning into meaningful action within their schools. This partnership has resulted in noticeable growth in leadership confidence and strengthened cross-school collaboration.

On Monday, the SLL network met in Horsham to showcase the projects they have been developing with their schools. These included:

- designing and leading professional learning grounded in LPL principles
- strengthening collaborative cultures and modelling evidence-informed decision-making
- guiding teams in data-informed practice using AERO, PAT, NAPLAN and school-based assessment data
- supporting teachers to refine explicit instruction, checking for understanding, and coherent lesson design
- designing and refining instructional models for their schools
- developing classroom observation protocols and structured professional discussions

A defining success of 2025 has been the growing sense

of collective efficacy across the network. SLLs have consistently supported one another, drawing on cross-school partnerships, shared problem-solving, and a genuine commitment to lifting student learning across the system. Their professionalism, generosity, and willingness to learn from and with one another has significantly elevated the impact of the LPL program.

As we look ahead to 2026—with an expanded program of evidence-informed professional learning, strengthened networks, and continued collaboration with Christopher Thomas—our Secondary Learning Leaders are exceptionally well-placed to continue driving improvements in teaching and learning through effective pedagogical leadership and coaching.

Guided Literacy Improvement Schools - Letter for Families



The DOBCEL/La Trobe research partnership supports and enhances Flare Primary Literacy in many ways. In 2026 we look forward to welcoming Distinguished Professor Pamela Snow and Professor Tanya Serry into our regular Literacy Leader networks, as they take on a more visible role in the important work happening in our schools.

This **letter** informs the families of students in Guided Literacy Improvement schools about our partnership with La Trobe and provides them with the opportunity to 'opt out' of the study if they wish. If you are a Guided school, please ensure all 2026 Foundation families and the families of any new enrolments across the grade levels are provided with this letter. We will send this out again at the beginning of Term One.



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

Primary Leaders of Learning - 2026

We're pleased to share that Primary Leaders of Learning (PLoL) has been put forward to be added to the 2026 Professional Learning Guide. This Learning and Teaching focused opportunity builds the capability and confidence of leaders to drive improvement, support colleagues, and strengthen high-quality practice across our schools.

We look forward to continuing this important work in 2026 and supporting leaders across the diocese.

Please refer to the Professional Learning Guide for future updates or reach out to Belinda Chiswell if further information is needed for 2026
bchiswell@dobcel.catholic.edu.au

As we head into the final weeks of Term 4, our 2025 Primary Leaders of Learning participants shared some key tips of things to STOP, START or CONTINUE doing that will support leaders in the final weeks of the year!



- **STOP** and break any tasks down week
- **CONTINUE** to listen and support staff
- **START** prioritising and being systematic

Shared by: Nicole @ St Joseph's, Lindy @ SFX



- **STOP** trying to do everything at once
- **CONTINUE** being present - stick to stu
- **START** mapping 2026 out now. Timeli

Shared by Lisa Glatz, Jenny Curran, Joe Ewing

- **STOP** worrying.
- **CONTINUE** to give people grace and t
- **START** communicating possibilities.

Shared by: Abby & Jill

Learning & Teaching Team Farewells

As we approach the end of the year the CEB Learning & Teaching Team bids farewell to Sarah McKnight and, for 2026, Meagan Becker.

Sarah joined us in 2024 and has worked as a generalist Primary Education Officer, working closely with her allocated schools in pedagogy, curriculum development and Primary Mathematics. We are grateful for Sarah's clarity, enthusiasm and action orientation with schools and with colleagues. We wish her the very best as she begins a new role with Loreto College in 2026.

Meagan, our EAL Education Officer, is taking a year's leave to work in a similar position with Catholic Education NT. Meagan will be moving to Darwin with her family for 12 months but will return to CEB in 2027. We are currently examining ways in which EAL needs will be supported in her absence.

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 Support Officer** – St Malachy's Primary School, Edenhope – fixed-term position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 10 December**)
- **Laboratory Technician** – Damascus College, Mount Clear – ongoing, part-time position (**closing 10 December**)
- **Student Extra Curricular Activities Coordinator** - St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 12 December**)
- **Learning Support Officer** – St Brigid's College, Horsham – ongoing, part-time position (**closes 12 December**)
- **Art Teacher** – St Brigid's College, Horsham – ongoing, part-time position (**closes 12 December**)
- **Classroom Teacher** – Sacred Heart Primary School, Casterton – ongoing position at 1.0 FTE (**closes 12 December**)
- **Deputy Principal** - St Alipius Primary School – ongoing teaching role at 1.0FTE (**closes 14 December**)
- **Maths Teacher** – St Joseph's College, Mildura – fixed-term position at 0.8 FTE (**closes 18 December**)
- **Learning Support Officer** – St Patrick's Primary School, Stawell – ongoing, part-time position (**closes 19 December**)
- **Casual Relief Teachers** – St Patrick's Primary School, Ballarat – casual positions (**closes 31 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**)
- **Curriculum Leader POL 1** - St Patrick's Primary School, St Arnaud – POL Appointment (**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**)
- **Laboratory Technician** - Damascus College, Mount Clear – ongoing, part-time position (**closes 9 December**)