



Ballarat Diocese Social Justice Commission

Report of Meeting: Saturday, June 1, 2024

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission met on Saturday, June 1, 2024.

Present were Jillian Hogbin (Chair and Caritas Diocesan Director), Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, Jim Ryan (Colac Parish), Michael Ryan (St Vincent de Paul representative), Sarah Page (Executive Member and Social Justice Educator for Catholic Education Ballarat), Tanya Kehoe (ACU) and Dr Susan Crowe (Education Officer Catholic Education Ballarat)

The meeting began with Mass in the Cathedral.

The Commission shared discussion on the following:

- **National Reconciliation Week:** May 27 – June 3 is National Reconciliation Week. This year's theme is Now More Than Ever.
- **Protecting Nature:** The recent federal budget will not help the deteriorating state of Australia's environment. The Budget does provide significant subsidies to green industries, but it does little to arrest the slide in the health of the environment itself.
- **Mariana Dam Disaster:** The Mariana Dam disaster in Brazil is a tragic reminder of the devastating consequences of environmental negligence.
- **Human Trafficking and Cyber Scams:** The intersection of cybercrime and human trafficking represents a growing and deeply troubling trend in Southeast Asia, where vulnerable individuals are lured into horrific conditions under false pretences.
- **2024 Budget and Jobseeker:** The 2024 Federal Budget has been met with both anticipation and scrutiny, particularly regarding its response to the escalating cost of living crisis in Australia.
- **Climate Crisis in Tuvalu:** Tuvalu is a small island country in the South Pacific. Rising seas are threatening to inundate it, making it one of the Pacific countries most at risk.

It was decided to draft letters to be sent to Politicians voicing our concerns about some of these issues.

The Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement will be released in August. The Commission will hold a Retreat Day to unpack the key messages of the statement through prayer and reflection. All members of the diocese will be invited to attend.

Since the last meeting, three members of the Commission have retired. We are looking for new members who can contribute to the Commission's work in the diocese.