



Welcome to the
2024 Staff Formation.

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION
BALLARAT**

Catholic Education: *On Holy Ground*

Catholic Education Ballarat Staff Formation

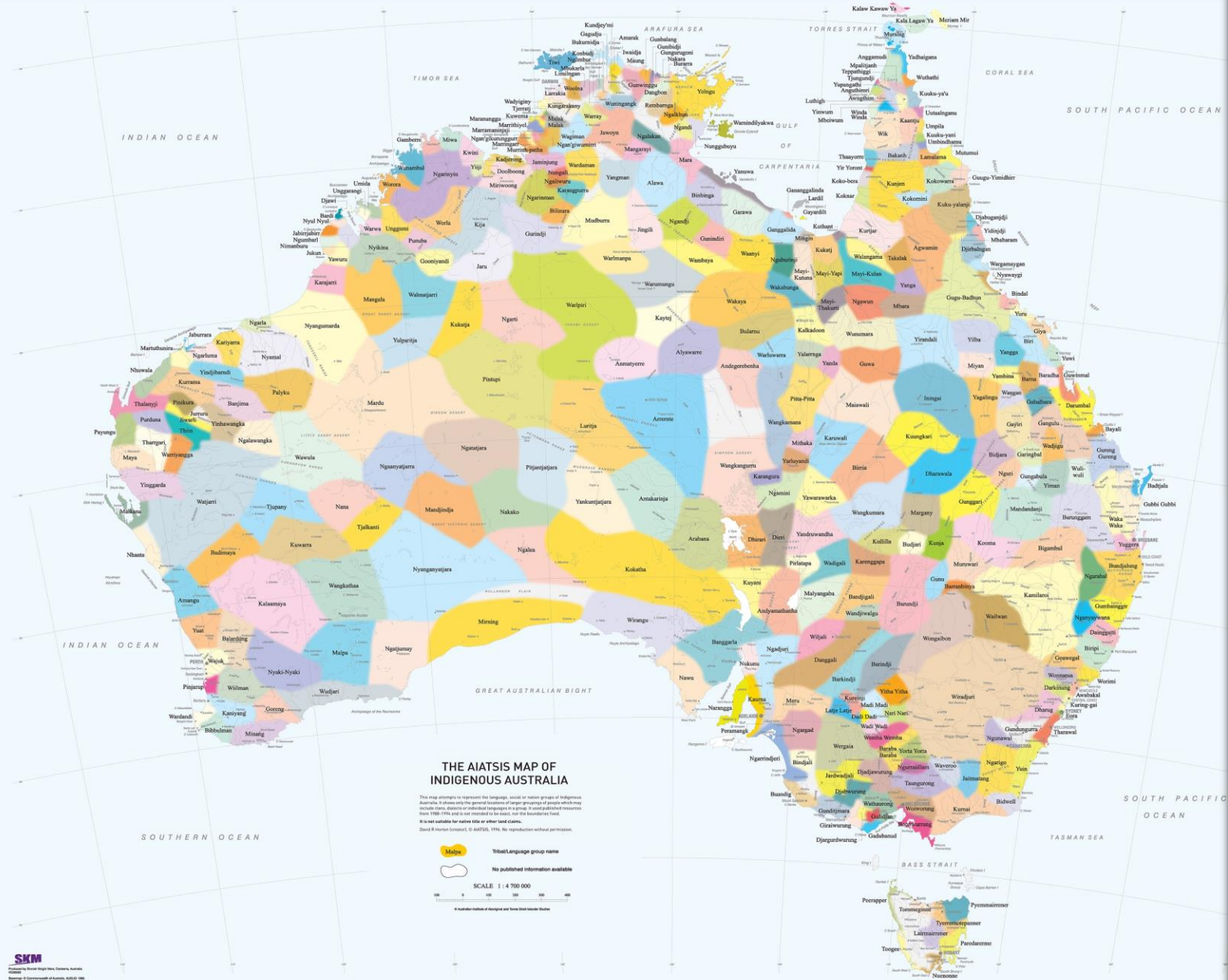
2 & 3 October 2024

DIOCESE
OF
BALLARAT
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
LIMITED



CATHOLIC EDUCATION BALLARAT

*As partners in
Catholic education
and open to God's presence,
we pursue fullness of life for all.*



Acknowledgement of Country

Our school and office communities are spread across the vast geographical area commonly known as Western Victoria, from The Murray to the Sea.

Before the Diocese of Ballarat existed, communities have lived on these lands for thousands of generations.

One of the themes of our formation over these two days is ***remembering***.

As we gather you will notice that each table is named in honour of a First Australian community, where each of our offices or schools are situated.

I invite you to stop and take a moment to remember the The First Australians from where you live and work.

We name and honour each of our First Australian groups, where our schools and offices are located. As we do, we remember and celebrate their presence, wisdom and resilience.

Djaara-Dja Dja Wurrung
Djab Wurrung
Djargurd Wurrung
Gulidjan
Gunditjmara
Jaadwa
Jadawadjali
Jupagalk
Kirrae Whurrung
Latji Latji
Nyeri Nyeri
Peek Whurrong
Tati Tati
Wadawurrung
Wemba Wamba
Wergaia
Wotjobaluk &
Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung



ALL:

We remember and continually
commit to creating hope,
justice, peace and
reconciliation for all.

Invitation to prayer...

Everyone is most welcome. Be at ease to participate in the way that is appropriate for you and will nurture your own spirit. At this time, I invite you to close your computers, turn your phones on silent and put them away as we pray or contemplate together. By doing this we are giving everyone the opportunity to explore the sacred, pray or contemplate without distraction.

Let us be still and become aware, aware of how we are today. Take a moment for yourself, become aware of your breathing. Aware of what your body is telling you.

Each of us and our families has our own sacred stories and we bring our stories and lived experience to this place. Some may be in faith, some may not and some may be in faith other than Christian. We all have our own story and lived experience and each and every single story is welcome here.

From a Catholic Christian perspective all of humanity reflects the Image of God. This prompts us to treasure and celebrate each of our unique stories.

During this time of stillness, I invite you to become aware of the divine, God the Creator – revealed in and through all creation.



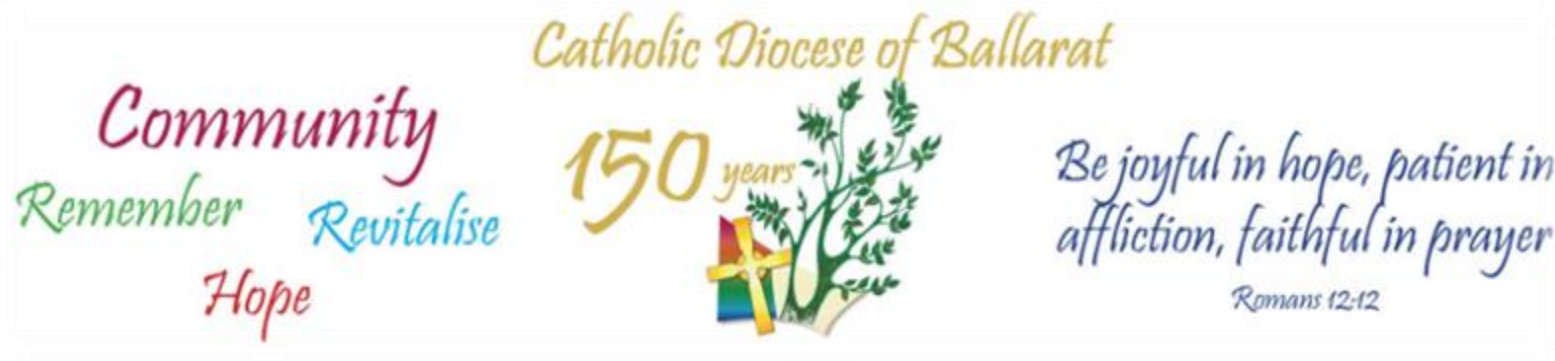
Together We Build Our Place

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION BALLARAT



As partners in
Catholic education
and open to God's presence,
we pursue fullness of life for all.

We are called to be your hands
We are called to be your feet
Called to reach out with your love
To everyone we meet
Be strength to all the broken
Light to all who seek your face
To walk your ways
To live each day together
We build our place



Each of us has come to share our story
To share our gifts
Our wisdom faith and love
To celebrate the work we do together
Linked with others
Journeying in faith

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Each of us is called
to work for justice
And walk together
in God's light and love
To recognise God's face
in every person
And work to build your kingdom
Here on earth



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We build our place
Together we build our place





Boots.....

I invite you to look at these boots.

Take some time to wonder.....

What could these boots symbolise?

These boots might remind you of work. Or someone who works hard. Of the hard work you do. That we do.

What is our work? What work do we do together as a community?

How might this time away at this formation experience be a time for us to take our “boots” off. A time to stop.

A time to stop and explore what is important in our shared story.

A time to take off our “sandals” or “boots” and to spend time in contemplation of what is ***Holy Ground***.

Holy Ground

God of the sun and the moon, of the mountains, deserts and plains.
God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams.
God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air.
Of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth.
We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which You have created.
Help us to love and respect it.
To repair what we have damaged.
To care for what You have made good and holy.
Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our minds, our hearts and our ways.
Let us be seeds in our world bringing about ecological conversion which grows and spreads to every corner of the Earth.
May we recognise every living being, human and non-human as Holy Ground.
For our sake, and for every generation which is to come.
Amen.



Exodus 3: 1-5

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

Going deeper

How might this text be metaphorical?

Like the boots here in our prayer space?

What could the text be inviting us to encounter? To re-imagine?

About ourselves?

About God?

About each other?

About all creation?

Going a bit deeper....

Moses was shepherding – an active ordinary part of his day.

In this story God is not revealed to Moses in prayer, fasting or meditation, nor in the synagogue or temple.

It happens while he is alone, working, in what could be described as unexciting and menial work at that! God is revealed in the everyday of Moses' life and work.

On this day Moses leads his flock far beyond the usual grazing area - the original Hebrew is "deep into the steppe".

Steppe is often translated as wilderness, desert or arid wasteland.

Moses was outside of his geographical comfort zone. Maybe the text is inviting us to consider that God may be encountered in our "wilderness places" as well? Perhaps in places that are uncomfortable, or hard?

In this text Moses is **unaware** of the significance of the place he is in.

Could the text be suggesting the divine may also be recognised in the unexpected places of our lives? In the ordinary?

Going a bit deeper....

In the bible fire is often used as a symbol for God.

In the exploration of this text there are several references to what connotes as ***seeing*** (*led, came, appeared, see, saw, sight*)

Maybe there's a nod here to being able to ***see*** people means to be aware, to look deeply at what is already there...

And possibly in the ordinary and unexpected places....

In and through creation... in relationships with others...

Is this text highlighting that through human experience and creation, people may have many opportunities, day after day to experience God? Hence these places are on ***"On Holy Ground"*** as these are possible places humanity is invited to be aware of God's presence.

Pope Francis describes these encounters as occurring in "the cathedral of creation."

V Hamilton, *Exodus An Exegetical Commentary*, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011.

What is your ***Holy Ground***? Our ***Holy Ground***?

I invite you to take out your phone.

Go to your photos and scroll.

Look at images that might remind you of your ***Holy Ground***. The “*holy*” in your life.

Spend some time contemplating the ***Holy Ground*** that emerges from the images you are looking at, from your life... a time for noticing and recognising, a time for being aware.



Where is *Holy Ground*?

The realm of God that Jesus preached and died for was one that was known for its kindness and generosity, its compassion and healing. There was no one deemed outside the love of the Holy One whom Jesus called “Father.” No one was excluded from fellowship, not the rich or poor, male or female, slave or free. Jesus went beyond superficial divisions and called for a culture of compassion.

Compassion changes everything. Compassion heals. Compassion mends the broken and restores what has been lost. Compassion draws together those who have been estranged or never even dreamed they were connected. Compassion pulls us out of ourselves and into the heart of another, placing us on holy ground where we instinctively take off our shoes and walk in reverence. Compassion springs out of vulnerability and triumphs in unity.

Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology Is Transforming Spiritual Life*, Notre Dame, Indiana, Sorin Books, 2010.

Holy Ground

God of Land, Sea and Sky

Creator of all that is seen and unseen.

Open our hearts to the rhythm of creation in the swells of the ocean, the movements of air and the wind, the breath of all living things.

Open our eyes to the fragile beauty of the biodiversity of which we are a part.

Open our ears to the sounds of life around us. Open our beings to recognise Holy Ground everywhere around us.

Open our minds to the awareness of our deep relationship with all creation.

May we hope and act with all creation.

Amen.

Welcome Staff Formation 2024



Community: Who are we?

Anthology - a collection of stories.

Today's activity allows us to contribute a small part of ourselves to our community anthology, this shared dialogue

Community Anthology: Worksheet

 	COMMUNITY ANTHOLOGY	
	Fork in the road: A decision or turning point.	
	River or Stream: A challenge or struggle.	
	Mountain or Hill: An achievement or milestone reached.	
	Tree: A time of reflection, support or guidance.	
	Shelter: A point of peace, rest or renewal.	
	Light: Hope, inspiration or illumination.	
Use this space to reflect and jot down key moments, thinking about what part of your story you're comfortable sharing. This could be as simple as how you came to work at CEB or something that shaped who they are today.		

Community Anthology: Activity

Reflecting on Your Chapter (10 minutes)

- Reflect and jot down key moments or thoughts, thinking about the part of your story you would like to share.
- This could be as simple as you came to work at CEB or something that shaped who you are today.

Share : Table Pairs (10 minutes)

- Pair up to share a small piece of your “story”—whether it’s how you came to work at CEB, a personal milestone, or a turning point in your life.
- This is an opportunity to listen as much as it is to share. Reflect on what you learn about your partner’s story

Share : New Pairs (15 minutes)

- Share a different part of your story, focusing on a different metaphor (fork in the road, river, etc.) or something else meaningful that highlights your life's journey.
- Reflect on the commonalities and differences in your stories and how community has played a role in shaping those moments.

COMMUNITY ANTHOLOGY



Whether it's a new connection, a new perspective, or a deeper sense of community... share one word or phrase that encapsulates what you've gained from the activity.

Now, following our activity, please scan this QR and share your thoughts.

Community
Remember *Revitalise*
Hope

Catholic Diocese of Ballarat

150 years

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*Be joyful in hope, patient in
affliction, faithful in prayer*

Romans 12:12

REMEMBERING

OCTOBER 2024



**Who pays the piper
calls the tune**

- What was the educational tune?
- Who actually called it?
- Who paid?
? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?
- Who was able to pay?
- What if they couldn't?



REMEMBER ...

- Retain in or call to memory
- Keep in mind
- Recollect
- Put back together

REMEMBER ... CALL TO MIND

150 Years	Foundation of Diocese
175 Years	Opening of School in Portland
c.190 Years	First Catholic School in Victoria
200 Years	First Catholic School in Colony
<hr/>	
60,000 Years	First Nations

PRE-COLONIAL

First Peoples

- culture
- customs
- language
- laws



Not transactional - Songlines – verbal maps

Pipers?

Tunes?

CATHOLIC EDUCATION VICTORIA



Something began in a 'commodious chapel' in Portland, which developed over 175 years into a system of schools, the administration of which is your ministry.

CASE STUDY 1: THE WESTERN DISTRICT, 1834-1874

1836: Major Thomas Mitchell - surveyor

- Portland – ‘A thriving township and a flourishing agricultural industry’
- From 1800: Sealers > Whalers > Henty Brothers >
(Pastoralists permanent settlement)

- 1844: Archbishop Polding

- Visit to Port Fairy – 50 households – Mass November 1
- Visit to Portland – 3 Sunday Masses

- 1849: Bishop Goold – Bishop of all of Victoria

- Visitation

CASE STUDY 1: THE WESTERN DISTRICT, 1834-1874

BISHOP GOOLD

- Portland February 1849
 - School requested: School opened in May

DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS BOARD

- regulation and inspection of denominational schools ... of Port Phillip Colony
- appointment and remuneration of school masters
- all that relates to fiscal and temporal part of education

NATIONAL SCHOOLS BOARD

- Same functions for schools not administered by religious denominations

OTHER SCHOOLS

- **Port Fairy** 1849
 - School requested: School opened
- **Tower Hill**
 - Private school opened 1850: later taken over by Priest



?? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

Who is Calling the Tune?

- Bishop?
- Priest?

Nature of Tune?

- Irish
- Basic literacy/numeracy
- Catechism + whatever else

Who Paid?

- Victorian Government via Denominational Schools Board

Conditions for Continued Payment

- Continued enrolment numbers

1862:

DEVELOPMENTS 1862-72

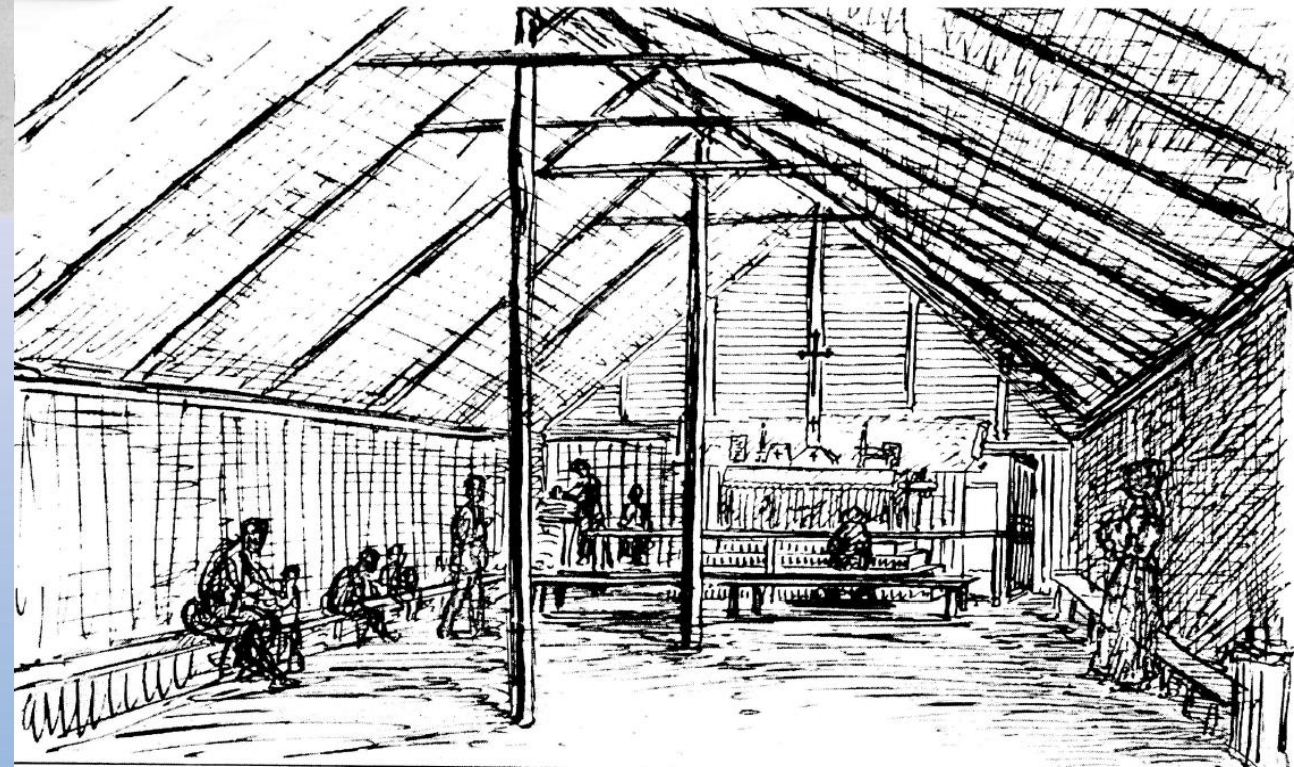
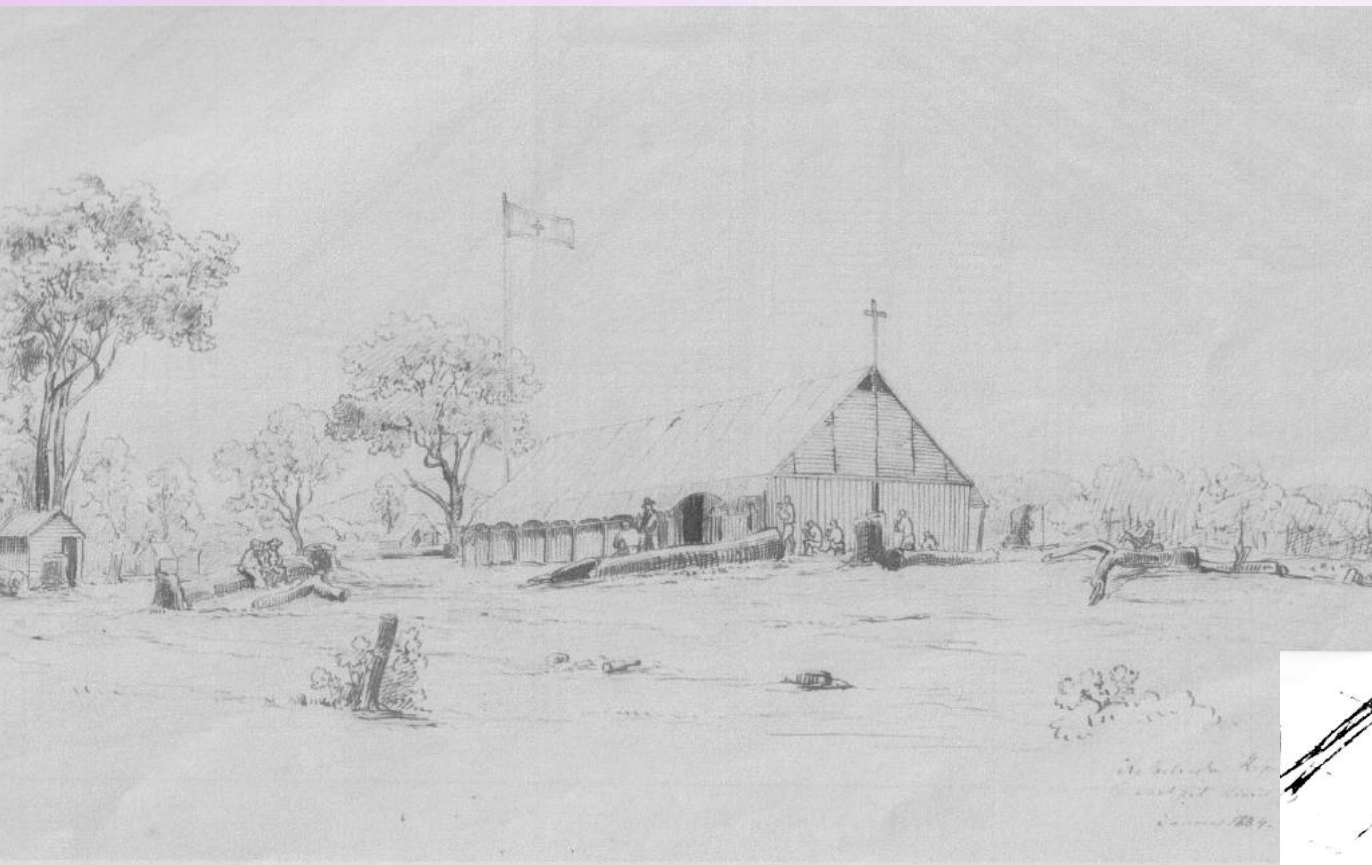
- ~~Denominational Schools Board~~
- ~~National Schools Board~~
- BOARD OF EDUCATION
 - National Schools
 - Common Schools

1872 EDUCATION ACT

- Modern, uniform school system
- Free compulsory (Godless) secular education



CASE STUDY 2: BALLARAT 1853-1874



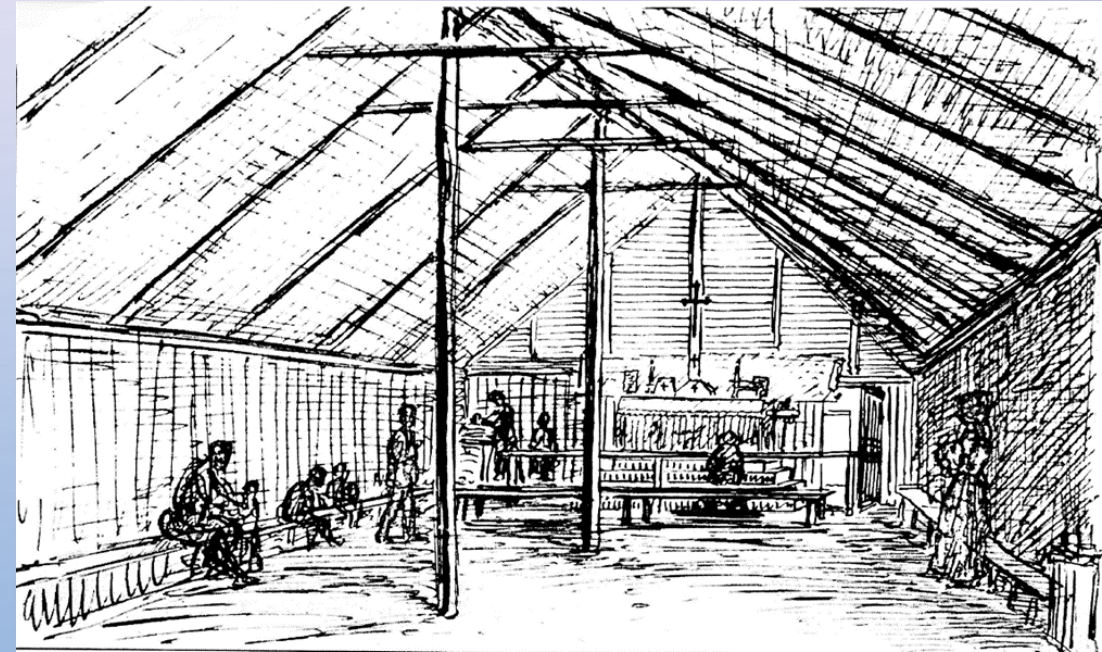
CASE STUDY 2: BALLARAT 1853-1874

St Alipius' – 1853

- Brown Hill: Tent church/school > Melbourne Road > 100 students
- Anastasia Hayes, Thomas McGrath, Honorah Ryan, Ellen Harrington, John Bouchier, Michael Campion Carey, John Manning
- *One very ungainly table ... serves as a writing desk for as many as can crowd around it – all who cannot must kneel on the wet floor along the seats and write thereon'*

Buninyong – 1854

- Two rooms – disorder and neglect
- Priest opened school in Church
- Dispute – former head mistress reopened **her** school
- Enrolments dwindled
- Aid withdrawn - School closed



CASE STUDY 2: BALLARAT 1853-1874

PALMERS GULLY (SFX 1854)

- 'One of the most respectable schools on the goldfields'
- 2 Rooms ... into which were crowded 35 boys and 51 girls
- High academic achievement ... 84 % passed government inspection
- After 1872 a 'capitation school'
- 1877 - 'capitation allowance hitherto given to Palmers' Gully school will cease'
- 1878 no funding - priest had to find funds somewhere
- Problem: How to prevent attempts to lure Catholic children to State schools which were being built in communities ... where Catholic schools were already in operation?

**From Justin:
2023**

Staffing and Funding:

Two of the recurring themes of
Catholic Education:

Where to find teachers?
How to pay them?

BISHOP MICHAEL O'CONNOR 1874-1883

A School in every Parish

- Right to build schools: duty to support them.
 - Smythesdale
 - Dead Horse (Invermay)
 - Fellmongers (The Gong)
 - Clunes
 - Dunolly
 - Colac
 - Port Fairy – Rev J O'Dowd collected funds
- Sponsored lay teachers from overseas

RELIGIOUS TO THE RESCUE

A winning card:

- Loreto nuns 1875
- Christian Brothers
- Sisters of Mercy
 - Warrnambool 1872
 - Ballarat 1881
- Trained overseas
- Missionary spirit: 'nothing but blessing'
- Bishop Moore - Plenary Council 1885
 - Catholic school in every parish
 - Supported from parish revenue; staffed by religious ... from everywhere
 - School to be built before Church – serve as chapel
 - Parents excommunicated for failure to send children to Catholic school



Teacher Registration: Loretos had college;
Mercies established one (Aquinas)

Tune – vibrant, optimistic

Catholics holding their own

Based on diocese ... Bishop authority

- Responsibility:
 - deliver religious education
 - ensure schools were equals of state schools

Responsibility for curriculum – Religious

Accountability – government inspections

Parish Priest

- represented Bishop
- provided and maintained buildings
- provided for living expenses of religious

Schools: property of parish – held in trust

1900 ➡ OPTIMISM



1950 ... CRACKS

- **Baby Boom**
- **Post-War immigration**
- **Inability to finance loans**
- **Compliance**
- **Decline in vocations**
- **Lack of appropriately qualified teachers**
- **Demand to pay lay teachers a just wage**

LOBBYING BEGINS



GOULBURN STRIKE

- 1962 – Catholic school in Goulburn could not afford to upgrade toilet block to meet health and safety standards
- Catholic schools in Goulburn went ‘on strike’
- 2000 catholic students arrived at government schools – no room
- Lasted one week
- Highlighted contribution of Catholic schools to the common good
- Gave impetus to demands for aid for all non-government schools.



Menzies saw opportunity to gain Catholic vote - a political imperative

- Scholarships irrespective of school attended
- Grants to build and equip science blocks
- 1964 beginning of Federal funding

FEDERAL FUNDING

Established present situation:

- Independent and religious schools receive most of funding from Federal Government;
- Government schools funded mainly by State Government



- 1972 - Federal Government contributed \$50 per primary student; \$68 per secondary student
- 1972 – national body – National Catholic Education Commission
- 1974 – State bodies - Catholic Education Commission – currently known by different names – in Victoria VCEA

1974: Catholic Education Commission In Every State

- Liaised with Diocesan bodies
 - Diocesan Education Boards
 - Catholic Education Offices

1970 - 2020

1974: Monies Paid to **Systems**

- Loose confederation of schools became **Diocesan System**

Responsibilities:

- Office: Religious Education, Curriculum, Grants, Administration, Compliance, Future Planning
- Parish: Ownership, Land, Buildings, Finance,
- Parish Priest: Governance

A different configuration needed

21ST CENTURY

Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses To Child Sexual Abuse

- Greater transparency
- Greater accountability for government funds
- Funding to be through an incorporated body

DIOCESE OF BALLARAT CATHOLIC EDUCATION LIMITED

- to advance Catholic education
- to operate an effective system of schools.
- to provide whatever services are necessary.

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On 1 January 2021, parish priests of the diocese ceded to DOBCEL the governance and operational responsibilities for 56 Catholic schools. Two previously-incorporated schools joined DOBCEL in 2022.

Priests freed to pursue their pastoral role

DOBCEL

- exercises a ministry of service to the educational community
- promotes dynamic collaboration in God's mission.
- ensures consistency and professional governance
- enables every student to flourish
- invites every student, staff member and family to encounter the Risen Christ.

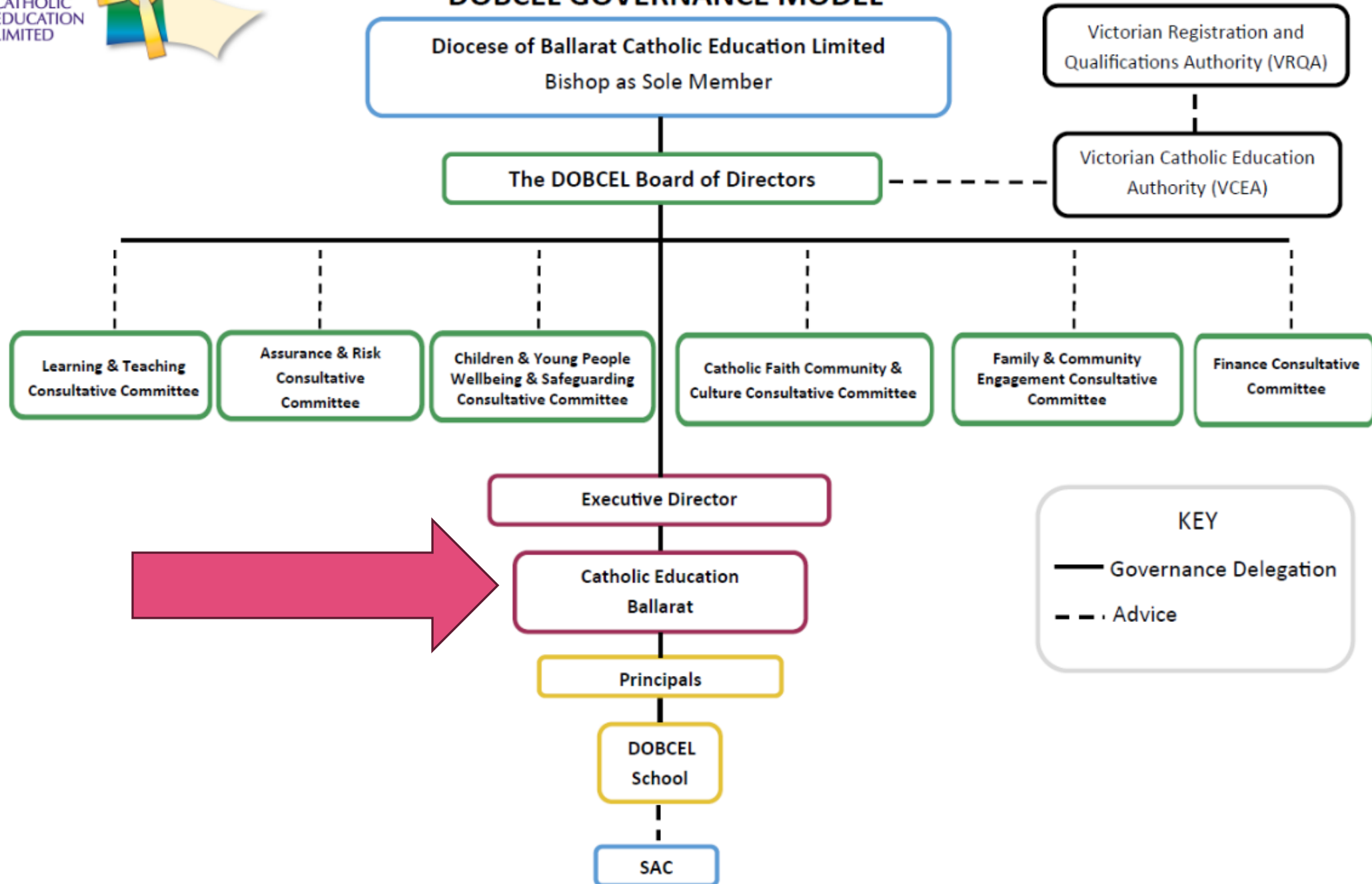
Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat

- continue to be staffed by teachers
 - committed to sound teaching practice,
 - who implement an effective curriculum.
- are safe places where children and young people can flourish.



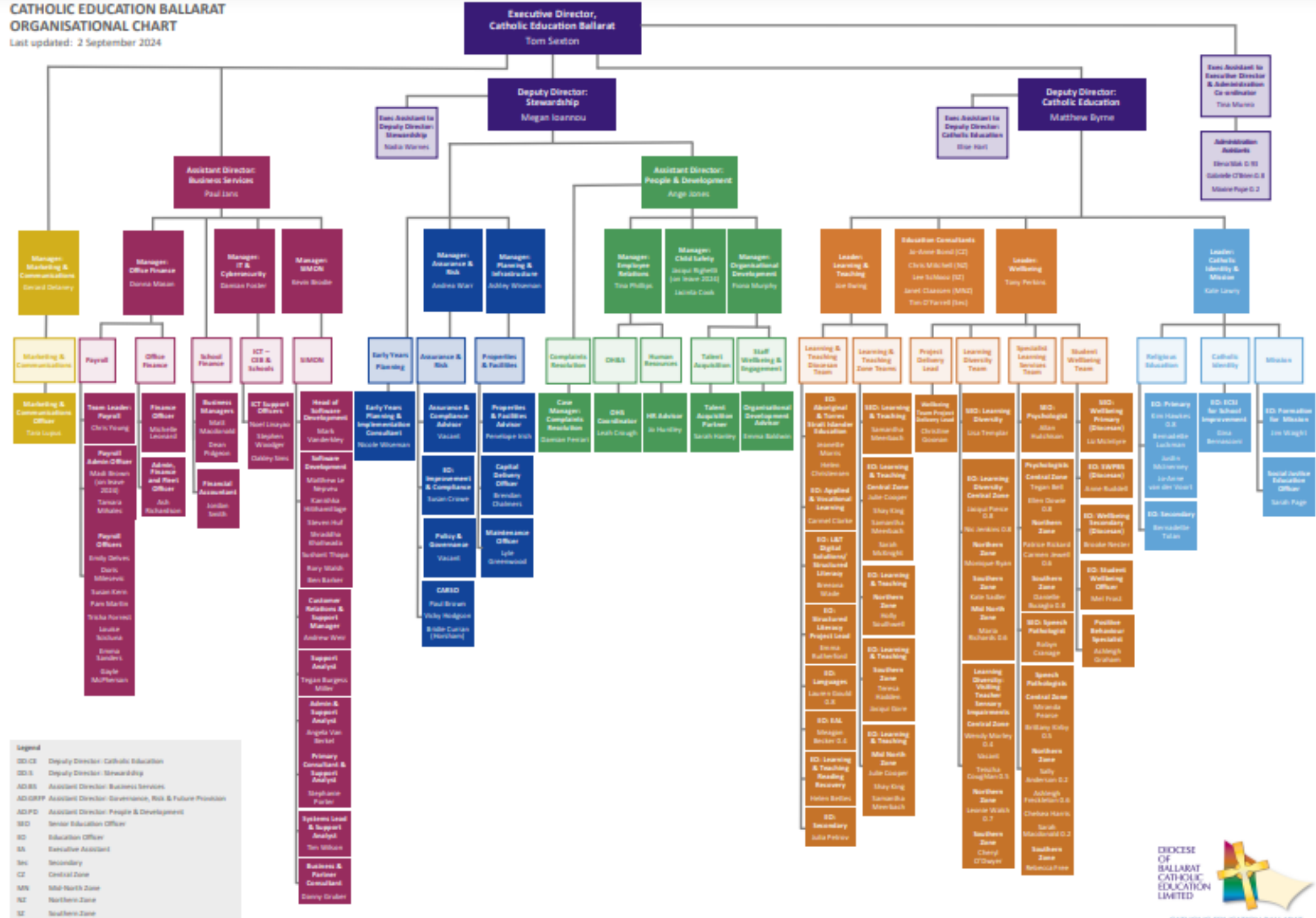


DOBCEL GOVERNANCE MODEL



CATHOLIC EDUCATION BALLARAT
ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Last updated: 2 September 2024



- Legend**
- DD-CE Deputy Director: Catholic Education
 - DD-S Deputy Director: Stewardship
 - AD-BS Assistant Director: Business Services
 - AD-CRPP Assistant Director: Governance, Risk & Future Provision
 - AD-PD Assistant Director: People & Development
 - SD Senior Education Officer
 - SO Education Officer
 - SA Executive Assistant
 - Sec Secondary
 - CZ Central Zone
 - MN Mid-North Zone
 - NZ Northern Zone
 - SZ Southern Zone



REMEMBER ...

- Retain in or call to memory
- Keep in Mind
- Re-collect
- Put back together

RE-MEMBER





Renew 1: The signs of the times

Dr Teresa Brown

Faculty of Theology and Philosophy
Xavier Centre for Theological Formation
Australian Catholic University



The signs of the times

“Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.”

Vatican II Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 1.

*What are the “signs of our times”? Make a list: **and let’s be real!***

“The signs of the times” named in DOBCEL Strategy 2035

Clergy sexual abuse and its ongoing impact on victims, their families, the Church and the wider community

Call for transparency, accountability and support for victims of sexual abuse

Pope Francis: mercy, social justice, environmental stewardship, promotion of peace, disarmament, international cooperation; dialogue, encountering God in the other

Church teaching on marriage and sexuality seen as out of step with societal trends

Social and structural inequalities

Urgent need for action on climate change

The role of women in the Church

Advances in technology

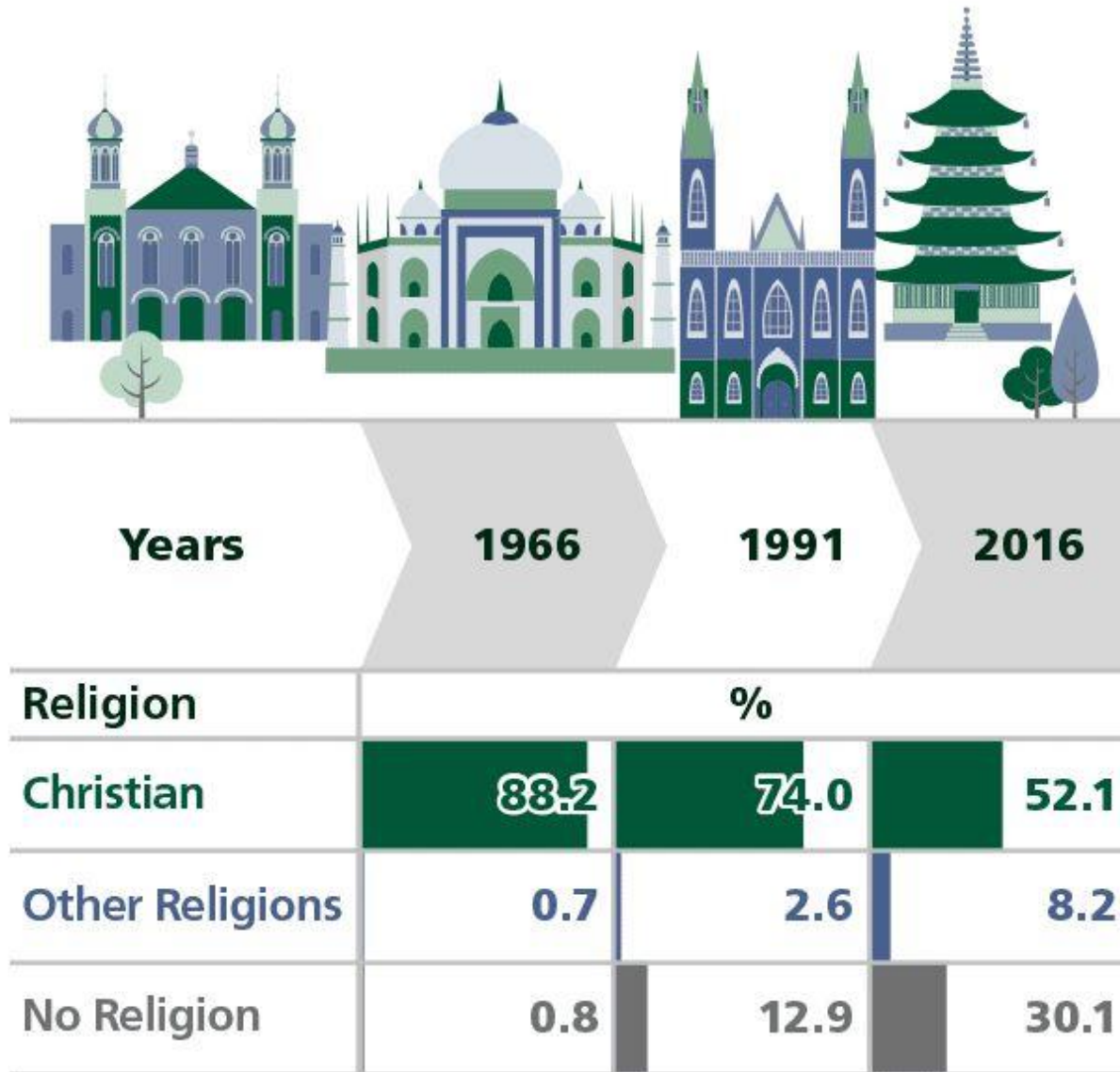
Internal divisions in the Church (amongst clergy as well as the laity)

Call for Jubilee: cancellation of debt, alleviation of poverty, support for health and education

The call to synodality: walking together; listening to the Holy Spirit, who speaks in the midst of human contexts and experiences

Social and hierarchical structures within the Church

Increasing social, cultural and religious diversity



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1966, 1991, 2016

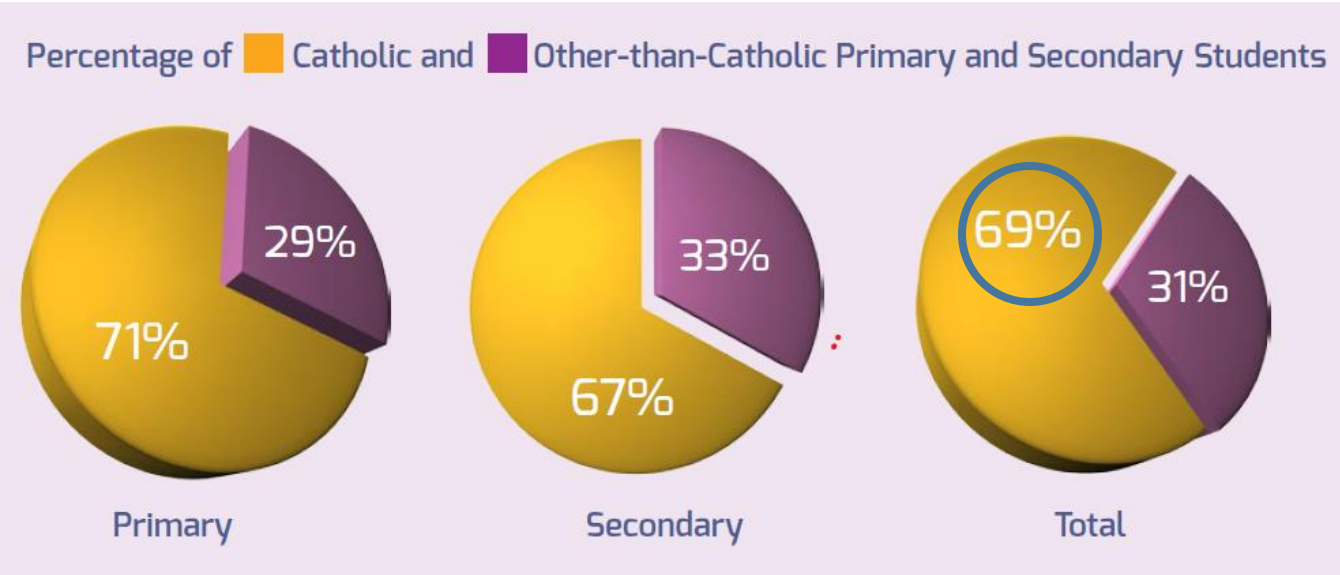
Census results Australia 1966 – 2021

2021**43.9****10.0****38.9**

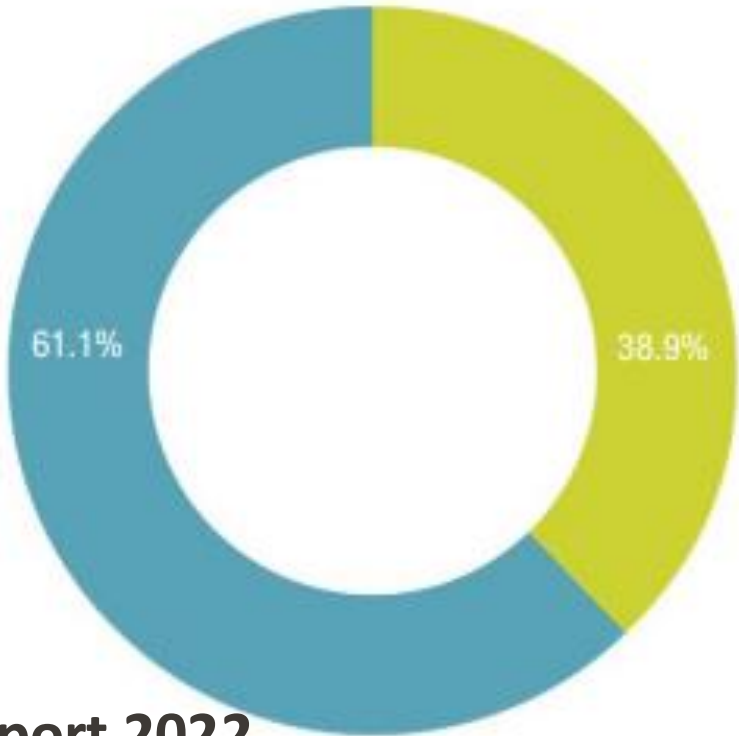
Previous census reports have highlighted Catholicism separately: **Identification with Catholicism decreased from 22.6% in 2016 to 20% in 2021.**

Catholic enrolments in Catholic Schools

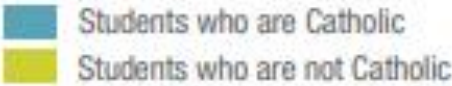
NCEC Annual Report 2016



STUDENT RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

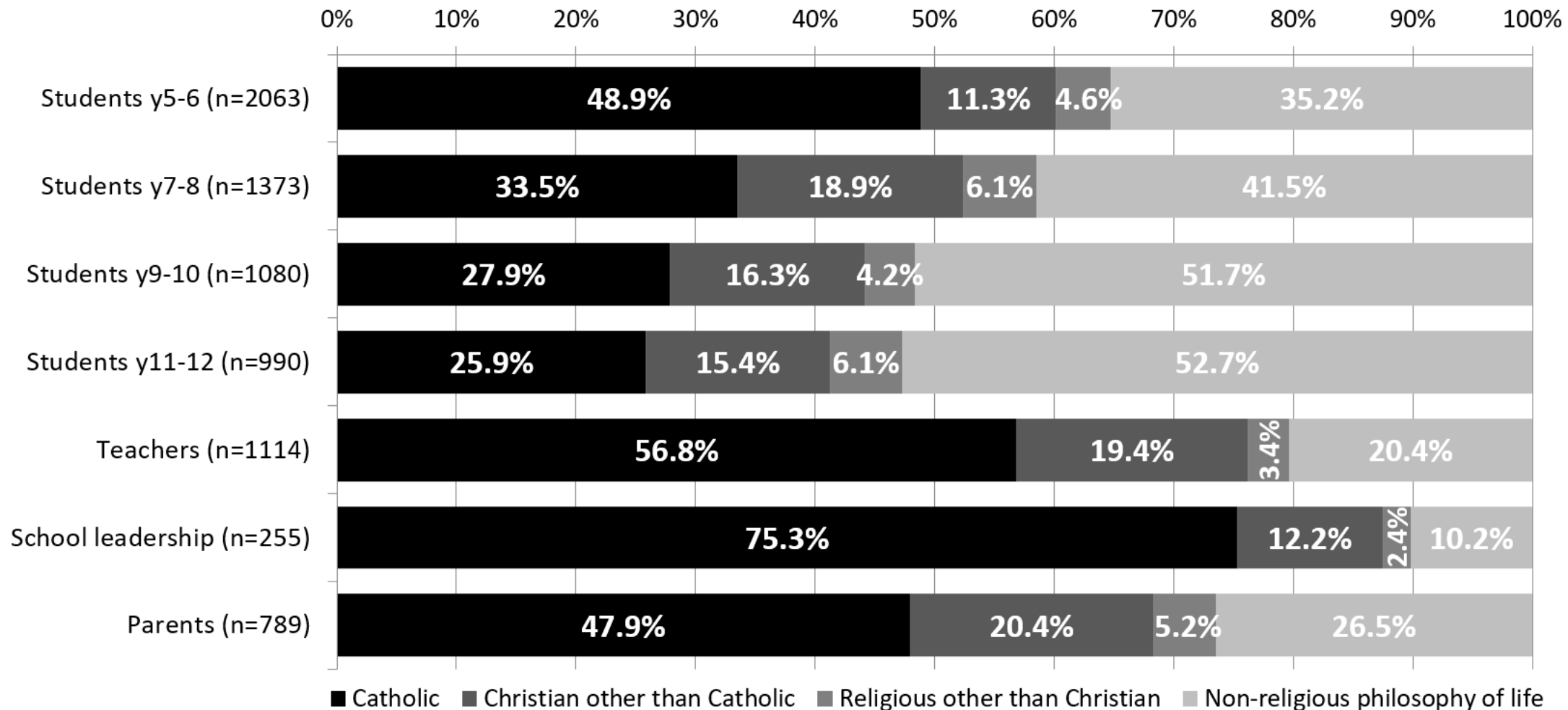


NCEC Annual Report 2022



Diversity of religions and philosophies of life

Ballarat Diocese 2020-2023



AGZ Study 2017

Australia's Gen Zs (13-18yo): negotiating religion, sexuality & diversity

... when asked about religion

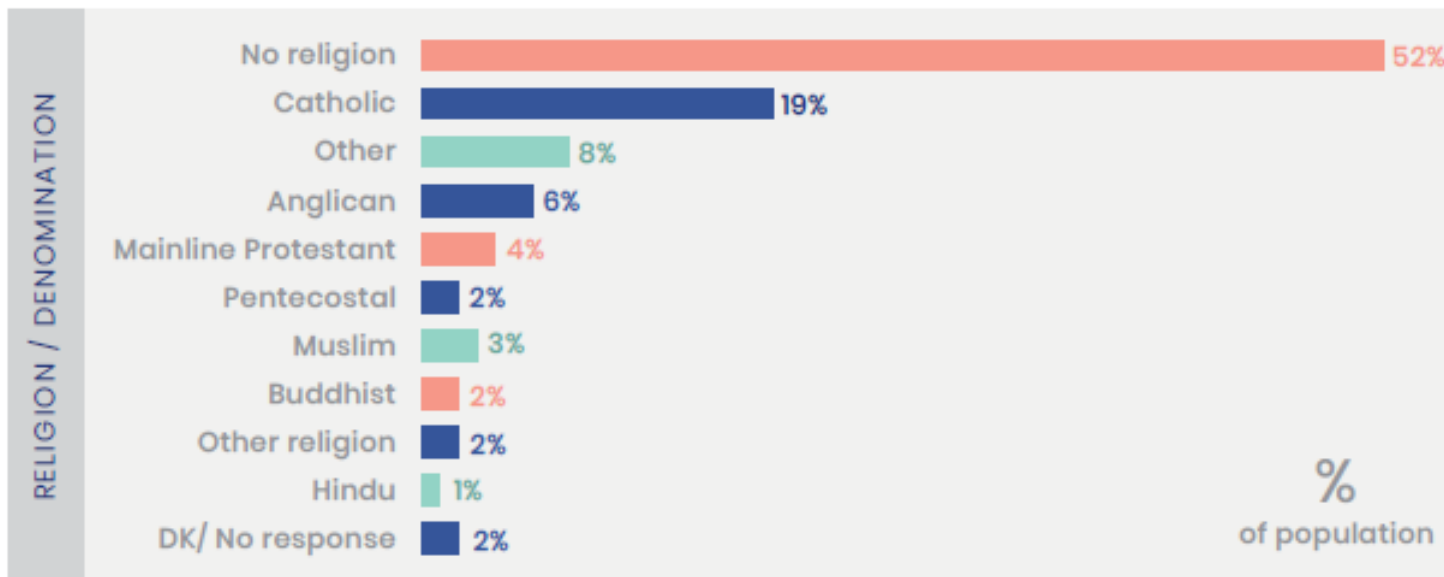


Figure 1. Australians aged 13-18: Religious Identification (% of teens)

Overview

A snapshot of
Australia's teens

52%

The majority of Australia's teens (52%) do not identify with a religion

91%

agree with the statement: 'Having people of many different faiths makes Australia a better place to live'

74%

Three quarters (74%) of Australia's teens have a positive attitude towards Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism

82%

of teens support marriage equality

50%

Half of Australia's teens (50%) think that people with very strong religious beliefs are often too intolerant of others

86%

An overwhelming majority (86%) of teens support secondary school students' right to learn about LGBTQI people as part of their schooling

AGZ Study 2017

Australia's Gen Zs (13-18yo): negotiating religion, sexuality & diversity

... when asked about belief

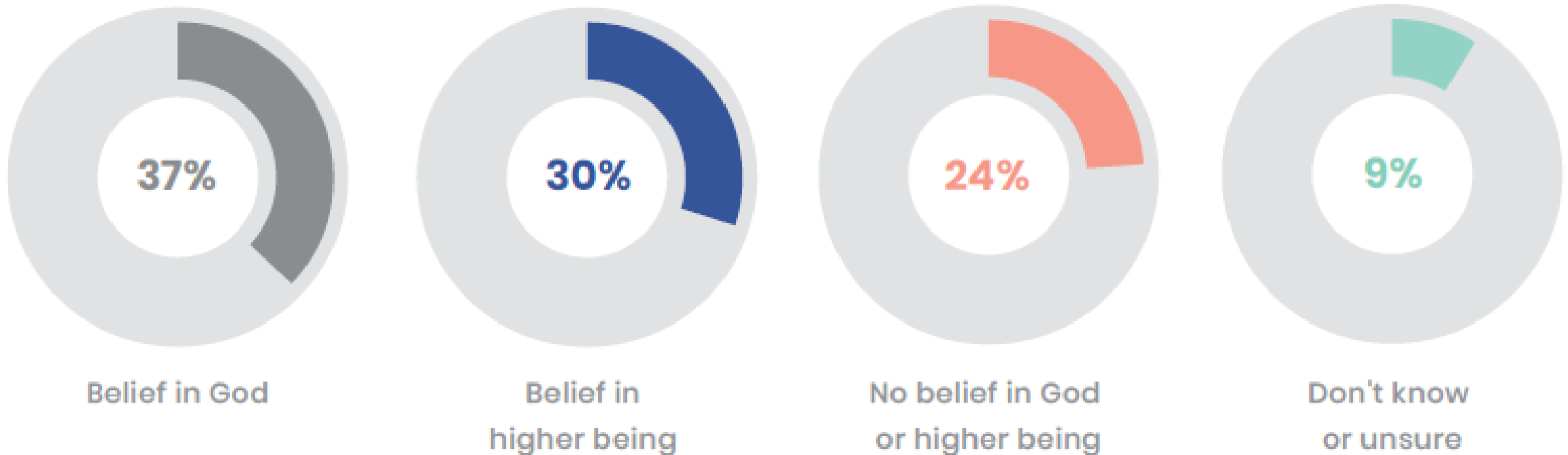


Figure 2. Australians aged 13-18: Belief in God/A Higher Power (% of teens)

The signs of the times

*What are the implications for
Catholic education today?*

Walking dialogues

*Reflect on what you have heard.
What have you **connected** with?
What has **extended** your thinking?
What do you feel **challenged** by?*

Renew 2: Catholic Education today

Dr Teresa Brown

Faculty of Theology and Philosophy
Xavier Centre for Theological Formation
Australian Catholic University

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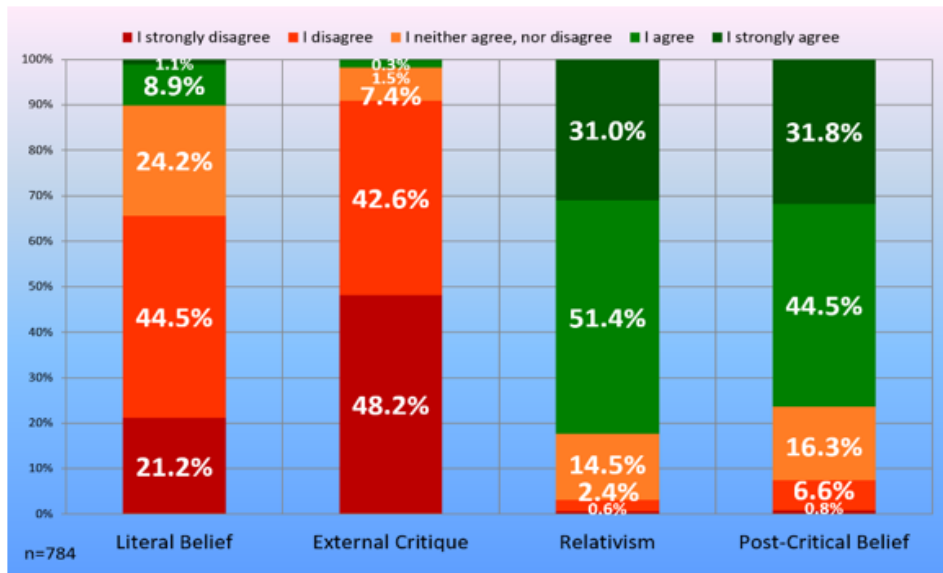
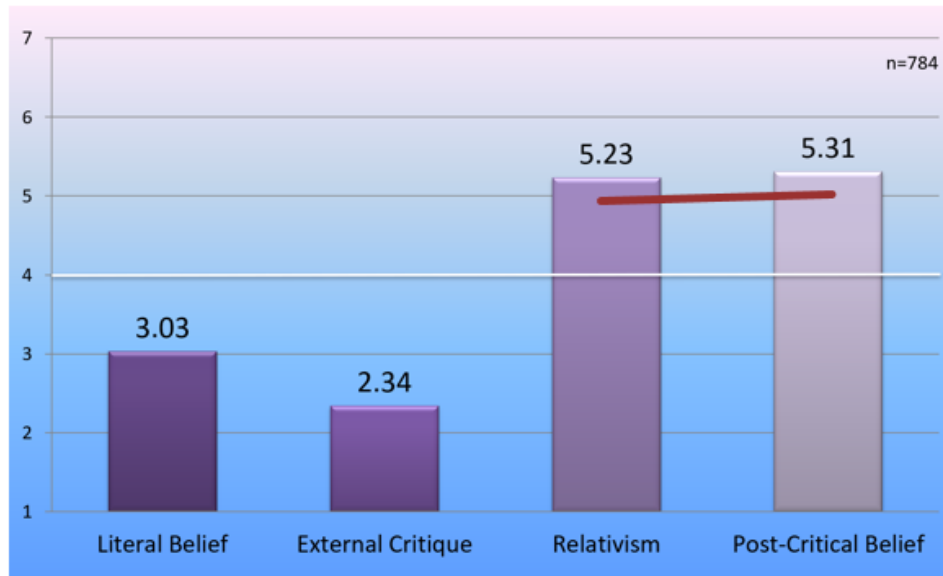
*As partners in
Catholic education
and open to God's presence,
we pursue fullness of life for all.*

Reflection

*Where do you stand in relation to faith
(Catholic/Christian or another faith tradition)?*

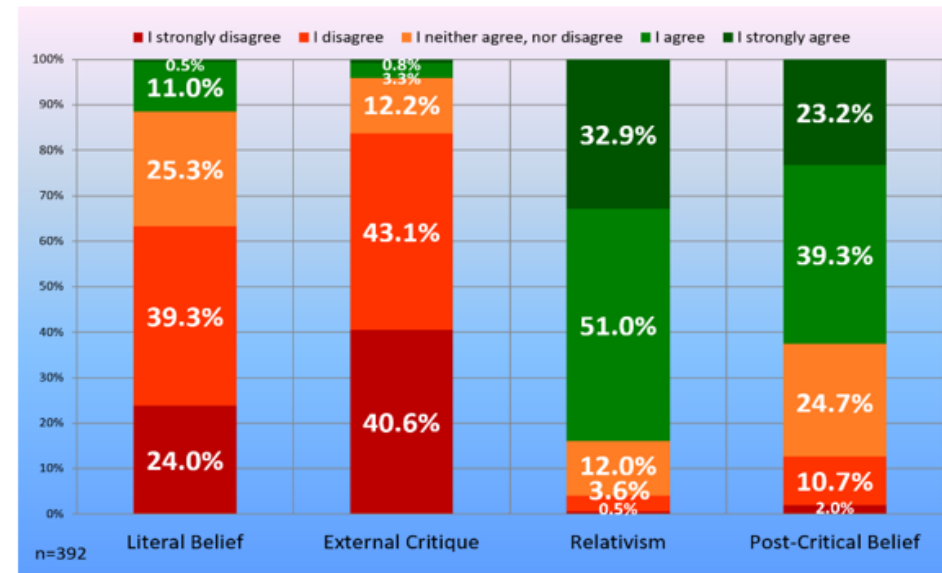
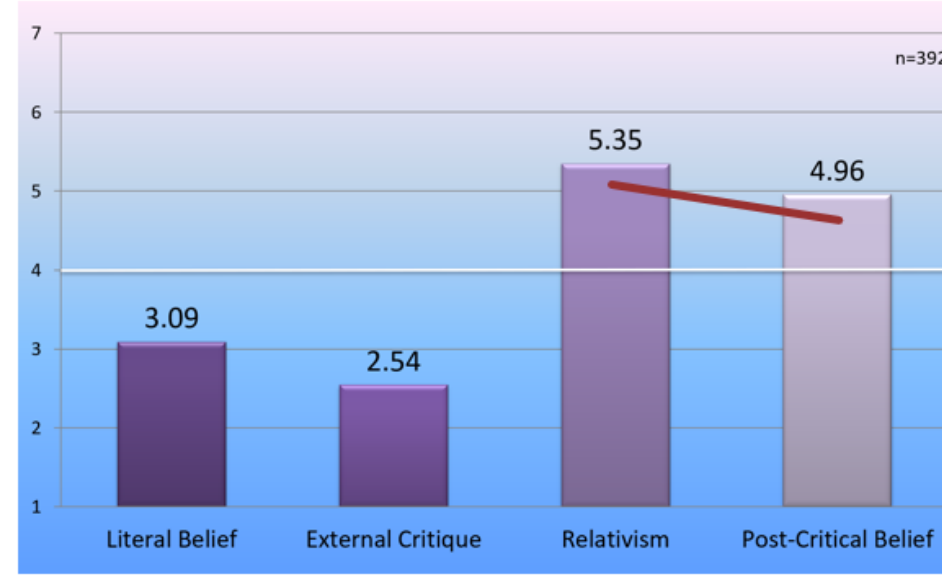
Why is it important that we think about this?

School staff PRIM



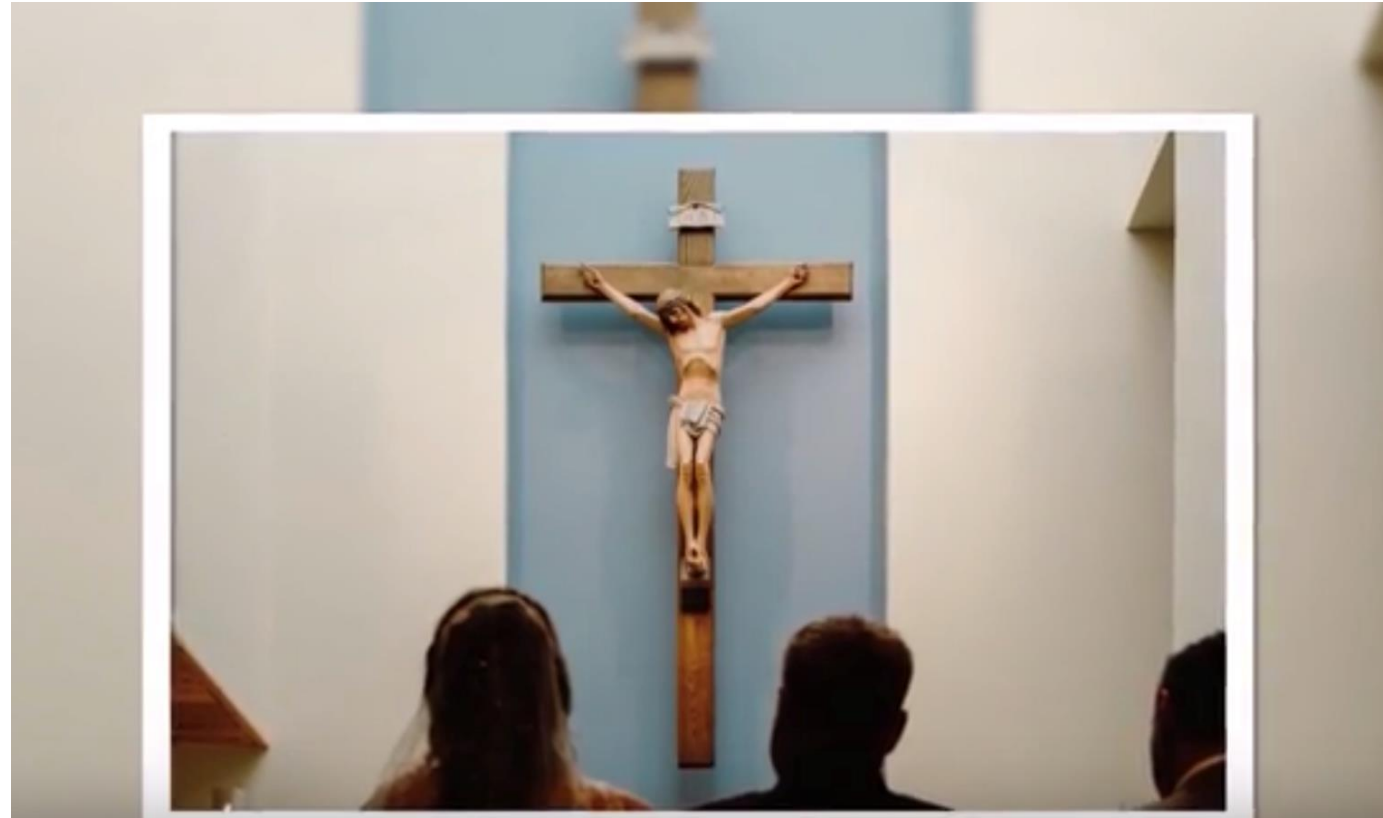
Teresa Brown, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy ACU

School staff SEC



Source: ECSI PCB Scale- Scale means percentage, Ballarat 2020-23, KU Leuven

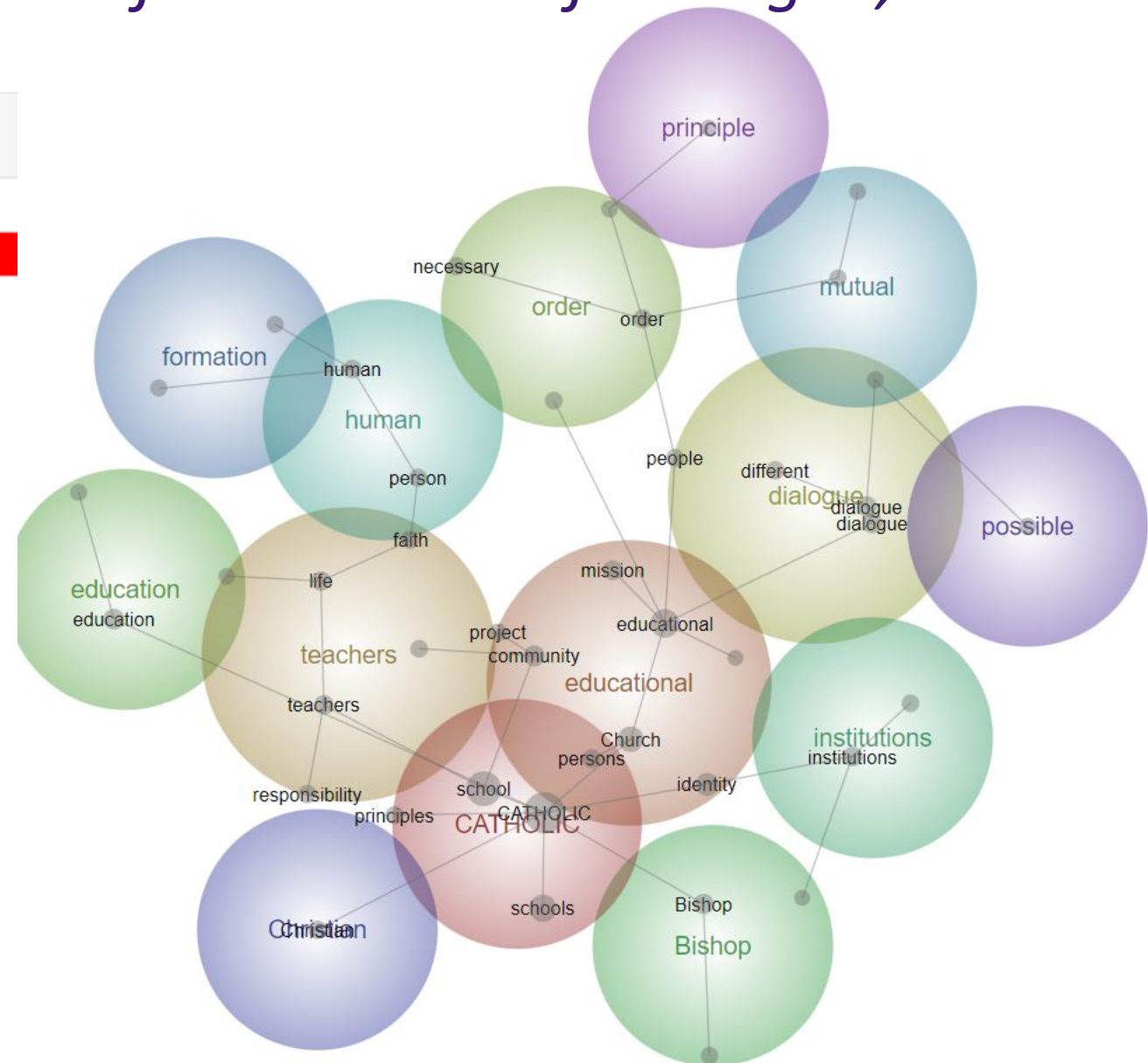
How does a Catholic education system (CEB) continue to be Catholic when society has changed to such an extent that many people struggle to understand what being Catholic means?



The mission and identity of Catholic education systems: CCE, *The Identity of a Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, 2022

Analyst Synopsis [Detail Level ▾](#) [Spreadsheet \(CSV\) Export](#)

Theme	Hits
CATHOLIC	171
educational	137
teachers	52
order	42
education	40
dialogue	36
Bishop	28
institutions	26
Christian	19
human	18
possible	12
formation	12
principle	10
mutual	10



claiming the mystery of salvation to all men [and women] and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of [human] life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on [humanity's] heavenly calling. Therefore, she has a role in the progress and development of education. Hence this sacred synod declares certain fundamental principles of Christian education especially in schools". This clarifies that the educational action pursued by the Church through schools cannot be reduced to mere philanthropic work aimed at responding to a social need, but represents an essential part of her identity and mission.

13. For her part, the Church has the duty to educate "especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unflinching solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life. The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ". In this sense, the education that the Church pursues is evangelisation and care for the growth of those who are already walking towards the fullness of Christ's life. However, the Church's educational proposal is not only addressed to her children, but also to "all peoples [to promote] the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human". Evangelisation and integral human development are intertwined in the Church's educational work. In fact, the Church's work of education "aims not only to ensure the maturity proper to the human person, but above all to ensure that the baptised, gradually initiated into the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of faith".

31. In the face of contemporary challenges, echoing the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis recognises the central value of education. It is part of the wide-ranging pastoral project for a "Church that goes forth", "standing by people at every step of the way", making her presence felt in an education "which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values".

30. Catholic schools are ecclesial entities. As such they participate "in the evangelizing mission of the Church and [represent] the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out". In addition, the Church considers dialogue as a constitutive dimension, as she is rooted precisely in the Trinitarian dynamics of dialogue, in the dialogue between God and human beings and in the dialogue among human beings themselves. Because of its ecclesial nature, the Catholic school shares this element as constitutive of its identity. It must therefore "practise the 'grammar of dialogue', not as a technical expedient, but as a profound way of relating to others".

32. Education consists in a polyphony of movements. First of all, it starts with a team movement. Everyone collaborates according to their personal talents and responsibilities, contributing to the formation of the younger generations and the construction of the common good. At the same time, education unleashes an ecological movement, since it contributes to the recovery of different levels of balance: inner balance with oneself, solidarity with others, natural balance with all living beings, spiritual balance with God. It also gives rise to an important inclusive movement. Inclusion, which "is an integral part of the Christian salvific message", is not only a property, but also a method of education that brings the excluded and vulnerable closer. Through it, education nurtures a peacemaking movement that generates harmony and peace.

of *Lumen Gentium*, it considers the school not so much as an institution but as a *community*. The characteristic element of the Catholic school, in addition to pursuing "cultural goals and the human formation of youth", consists in creating "for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity". To this end, the Catholic school aims "to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities", as well as "to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith". In this way, the Catholic school prepares pupils to exercise their freedom responsibly, forming an attitude of openness and solidarity.

21. The Catholic identity of schools justifies their inclusion in the life of the Church, even in their institutional specificity. And, all the more, the fact that Catholic schools are part of the Church's mission "is a proper and specific attribute, a distinctive characteristic which penetrates and informs every moment of its educational activity, a fundamental part of its very identity and the focus of its mission". Consequently, the Catholic school "takes its stand within the organic pastoral work of the Christian community".

Catholic Schools and the Mission of the Church

Individual: Word Phrase Sentence

What makes you say that?

27. Today's societies are characterised by a multicultural and multireligious composition. In this context, "Education contains a central challenge for the future: to allow various cultural expressions to co-exist and to promote dialogue so as to foster a peaceful society". The history of Catholic schools is characterised by welcoming pupils from different cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations. In this context, "what is required [...] is courageous and innovative fidelity to one's own pedagogical vision", which is expressed in the capacity to *bear witness*, to *know* and to *dialogue* with diversity.

30. Pope Francis provided three fundamental guidelines to help dialogue, "the duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions. The duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, because true dialogue cannot be built on ambiguity or a willingness to sacrifice some good for the sake of pleasing others. The courage to accept differences, because those who are different, either culturally or religiously, should not be seen or treated as enemies, but rather welcomed as fellow-travellers, in the genuine conviction that the good of each resides in the good of all. Sincerity of intentions, because dialogue, as an authentic expression of our humanity, is not a strategy for achieving specific goals, but rather a path to truth, one that deserves to be undertaken patiently, in order to transform competition into cooperation".

30. Catholic schools are ecclesial entities. As such they participate "in the evangelizing mission of the Church and [represent] the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out". In addition, the Church considers dialogue as a constitutive dimension, as she is rooted precisely in the Trinitarian dynamics of dialogue, in the dialogue between God and human beings and in the dialogue among human beings themselves. Because of its ecclesial nature, the Catholic school shares this element as constitutive of its identity. It must therefore "practise the 'grammar of dialogue', not as a technical expedient, but as a profound way of relating to others". 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".

28. For the Catholic school, a great responsibility is to bear witness. "The Christian presence must be shown and made clear, that is, it must be visible, tangible and conscious. Today, due to the advanced process of secularization, Catholic schools find themselves in a missionary situation, even in countries with an ancient Christian tradition". They are called upon to commit to bearing witness through an educational project clearly inspired by the Gospel. "Schools, even Catholic schools, do not demand adherence to the faith, however, they can prepare for it. Through the educational plan it is possible to create the conditions for a person to develop a gift for searching and to be guided in discovering the mystery of his being and of the reality that surrounds him, until he reaches the threshold of the faith. To those who then decide to cross this threshold the necessary means are offered for continuing to deepen their experience of faith".

84. Catholic identity should be a *place of encounter*, a tool promoting the convergence of ideas and actions. In this way, different perspectives become a resource and a foundational principle for the development of methodologies suitable to solve possible critical issues and find shared solutions.

87. Even in the most serious conflicts, the unity of lived faith based on the Gospel remains the guiding compass. In this framework, doors are open to a true culture of dialogue through *inclusive and permanent communication*. Dialogue and communication practices within the educational community of the local and universal Church must be established, promoted and practised even before any tensions arise.

Centrality of dialogue

Congregation for Catholic Education, The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue, 2022.

18. The Catholic school lives in the flow of human history. It is therefore continually called upon to follow its unfolding in order to offer an educational service appropriate to the present times. The witness of Catholic educational institutions shows on their part a great responsiveness to the diversity of socio-cultural situations and readiness to adopt new teaching methods, while remaining faithful to their own identity (*idem esse*). By identity we mean its reference to the Christian content of life.

[Section referred to in *Idem*, on Christian concept of life, from CCE, 1977. *The Catholic School: Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man to direct his thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes his norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school "Catholic"; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal. (CS, 1977, n. 34)]*

71. In addition to the definitions of exclusively juridical nature, there are others according to which what counts above all is the "Catholic spirit", the "Christian inspiration" or the "*charismatic fulfilment*", terms which are poorly defined, hardly concrete and seldom verifiable in reality. According to these interpretations, neither the application of canonical norms nor the recognition of legitimate hierarchical authority are considered necessary. If this were to be the case, it would only be of "symbolic" value and therefore hardly effective. Sometimes, in the case of educational institutions established and/or directed by Religious Orders, Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life or charismatic groups, there is an imbalance between the charism and ecclesial belonging. In some situations, any reference to the term "Catholic" is avoided, choosing alternative juridical terminology.

How do we define Catholic identity?

19. As individuals, it essentially shares the characteristics of all school institutions, which, through an organised and systematised teaching activity, offer a culture aimed at the integral education of persons. In fact, school as such "is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding". Therefore, to be defined as a school, an institution must know to integrate the transmission of the cultural and scientific heritage already acquired with the primary purpose of educating individuals, who must be accompanied towards achieving integral development while respecting their freedom and individual vocation. The school must be the first social setting, after the family, in which the individual has a positive experience of social and fraternal relationships as a precondition for becoming a person capable of building a society based on justice and solidarity, which are prerequisites for a peaceful life among individuals and peoples. This is possible through a search for truth that is accessible to all human beings endowed with rationality and freedom of conscience as tools useful both to study and in interpersonal relationships.

20. In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics which draw it apart from other ecclesial institutions such as the parish, associations, religious institutes, etc., a *Catholic school* is endowed with a specific identity: i.e. "its reference to a Christian concept of life *centred on Jesus Christ*". The personal relationship with Christ enables the believer to look at the whole of reality in a radically new way, granting the Church an ever renewed identity, with a view to fostering in the school communities adequate responses to the fundamental questions for every woman and man. Therefore, for all the members of the school community, the "principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal". In other words, it can be said that in the Catholic school, in addition to the tools common to other schools, reason enters into dialogue with faith, which also allows access to truths that transcend the mere data of the empirical and rational sciences, in order to open up to the whole of truth so as to respond to the deepest questions of the human soul that do not only concern immanent reality. This dialogue between reason and faith does not constitute a contradiction, because the task of Catholic institutions in scientific research is "to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth".

70. According to a formal interpretation, Catholic identity is expressed through a "Decree" issued by the competent ecclesiastical authority, which grants legal status, recognises property and governance according to canonical norms, also granting the possibility of civil legal status in the State where the institution is established. This identity is guaranteed by means of control and certification by the competent ecclesiastical authority, with the possibility of appealing to the Holy See in the event of conflict.

72. Another reason for conflicting interpretations is represented by the "narrow" Catholic school model. In such schools there is no room for those who are not "totally" Catholic. This approach contradicts the vision of an "open" Catholic school that intends to apply to the educational sphere the model of a "Church which goes forth", in dialogue with everyone. We must not lose our missionary impetus to confine ourselves on an island, and at the same time we need the courage to bear witness to a Catholic "culture", that is, universal, cultivating a healthy awareness of our own Christian identity.

Then, write a collective sentence to capture the spirit of the theme

Report back

11. In its declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, the Council offered a set of "fundamental principles" regarding Christian education, especially in schools. In the first place, education, as the formation of the human person, is a universal right: "All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share".

34. The path of the global compact on education tends to favour interpersonal, real, lived and fraternal relationships. In this way, a long-term project is launched to form people who are willing to put themselves at the educational service of their community. A concrete pedagogy based on bearing witness, knowledge and dialogue – is a starting point for personal, social and environmental change. For this reason a broad compact on education is needed, capable of imparting not only technical knowledge, but also and above all human and spiritual wisdom, based on justice" and virtuous behaviour "that can be put into practice".

23. Another important aspect, increasingly relevant to achieving the integral formation of students, is the witness of lay and consecrated educators. In fact, "In the Catholic school's educational project there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterized by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one Teacher".

24. The life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession".

12. Since education is a right for everyone, the Council called for the *responsibility of all*. The responsibility of *parents* and their priority right in educational choices rank first. School choice must be made freely and according to conscience; hence the duty of civil authorities to make different options available in compliance with the law. The *State* is responsible for supporting families in their right to choose a school and an educational project.

14. Another fundamental element is the initial and permanent formation of teachers. "The Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher". Their work "is in the real sense of the word an apostolate [...] and at once a true service offered to society".

36. Education is one of the pillars of a more just and fraternal society". The culture of care becomes the compass at local and international level to form people dedicated to patient listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding. In this way, a "fabric of relationships for the sake of a humanity capable of speaking the language of fraternity" is created.

26. The specificities of the lay faithful and of consecrated persons are enhanced by their *sharing in the common educational mission* which is not closed within the Catholic school, but "can and must be open to an enriching exchange in a more extensive communion with the parish, the diocese, ecclesial movements and the universal Church". In order to educate together, a path of common formation is also necessary, "an initial and permanent project of formation that is able to grasp the educational challenges of the present time and to provide the most effective tools for dealing with them [...]. This implies that educators must be willing to learn and develop knowledge and be open to the renewal and updating of methodologies, but open also to spiritual and religious formation and sharing".

38. The whole school community is responsible for implementing the school's Catholic educational project as an expression of its ecclesiality and its being a part of the community of the Church. "The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school 'Catholic'; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal".

39. Everyone has the obligation to recognise, respect and bear witness to the Catholic identity of the school, officially set out in the educational project. This applies to the teaching staff, the non-teaching personnel and the pupils and their families. At the time of enrolment, both the parents and the student must be made aware of the Catholic school's educational project.

Principles of Catholic education

One more piece: *Synodality*

- “The concept of synodality refers to the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.”
- **Mission:** “...to witness to and to mediate the presence of Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, is present in an ongoing way in the world. *The Church is not a place of bricks and mortar; it lives in the lives and experiences of Christians who witness to the reality of God’s grace in the world.* The Church, properly conceived, is not a hierarchy of persons sustained by leadership and power but *a movement of love and service that supports the creation of conditions for the acceptance of revelation.*” (Horner and Brown, *Doing Theology in Plural Contexts*, forthcoming 2024)
- **So, synodality is central to mission:**
 - It is “at the heart of the work of renewal” encouraged by the Second Vatican Council
 - “A path along which the People of God walk together.”
 - “A way of understanding and experiencing the Church where legitimate differences find room in ... a reciprocal exchange of gifts.”
 - It is about “carefully and courageously listening to ‘the groans’ of the Spirit’ (*cf. Romans 8,26*).”
How is the Spirit of Christ speaking to us today?
 - **Essential attitudes for synodality: humility, openness, listening, dialogue, discernment**



Image: “Emmaus,” Donald Jackson for *The St John’s Bible*
Teresa Brown, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy ACU

Source: International Theological Commission. “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church.” (March 2, 2018), nn. 3, 6, 9, 114)

Synodality and dialogue

“Synodal dialogue depends on **courage both in speaking and in listening**. It is not about engaging in a debate where one speaker tries to get the better of the others or counters their positions with brusque arguments, but about expressing whatever seems to have been suggested by the Holy Spirit as useful for communal discernment, at the same time being open to accepting whatever has been suggested by the same Spirit in other people’s positions, ‘for the general good’ (1 *Corinthians* 12,7).”

“Dialogue offers the opportunity to acquire new perspectives and points of view in order to shed light on the solution of the matter in question.”

“It is a matter of adopting ‘a relational way of viewing the world, which then becomes a form of shared knowledge, vision through the eyes of another and a shared vision of all that exists’. ... True dialogue is spiritual communication, which requires specific attitudes: **love, respect, trust and prudence**; ‘Dialogue thrives on friendship, and most especially on service’.”

“Discernment must be carried out in a space of prayer, meditation, reflection and study, which we need to hear the voice of the Spirit; by means of sincere, serene and objective dialogue with our brothers and sisters; by paying attention to the real experiences and challenges of every community and every situation.”

Image: “Emmaus,” Donald Jackson for *The St John’s Bible*
Teresa Brown, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy ACU

Source: International Theological Commission. “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church.” (March 2, 2018), nn. 111, 114.

Bringing it all together: Catholic education today

- **What is the relationship between Catholic education, Catholic identity, mission and synodality?**
- How does a Catholic education system (CEB) continue to be Catholic when society has changed to such an extent that many people struggle to understand what being Catholic means?
- The Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) Research shows us that the only way to support the enhancement (rather than diminishment) of Catholic identity in Catholic Education systems today is by engaging in **recontextualising dialogue—where *Catholic identity is enhanced and articulated in dialogue and solidarity with diverse perspectives and worldviews.*** In Catholic Education systems today, Catholic faith is not to be imposed, but instead *witness to, articulated and lived authentically.*

Walking dialogues

*Where do you stand in relation to faith
(Catholic/Christian or another faith tradition)?*

Why is it important that we think about this?

What are the implications for you?

What are the implications for your work?

Hope

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Defining hope

How would you define hope?

What is the source of your hope?

What difference does hope make in your life?

Defining hope

James KA Smith, in his engagement with philosopher Jacques Derrida, says that there are 5 essential elements of hope:

- “A hoper
- An object of hope (which is good)
- A distinct intentional act of hoping
- A ground (which enables it to be distinguished from wishful thinking)
- And the potential for fulfilment.”¹

A question that philosophers have grappled with is:

Is hope finite (in the sense that it can be realised within particular boundaries – for example in finite time), or does hope necessarily have an indeterminacy about it?

Moreover, is hope simply about waiting for something to come, or does it affect us in some way in the here and now?

Claude Romano: “[T]hat toward which this awaiting is held is not a future occurrence, as undetermined as it could be; it is rather the unawaitable in its strong sense, that which could overturn the world.” **This kind of awaiting “... disposes us, not only to that which we cannot await, but to that which it is impossible to await; it prepares us for that for which we find ourselves unprepared, but also for that which nothing can prepare us for.”**²

¹ Robyn Horner, "On Hope: Critical Rereadings." *Australian Ejournal of Theology* 15 (2010): 6. Horner cites James K. A. Smith, "Determined Hope: A Phenomenology of Christian Expectation," *The Future of Hope*, eds. Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 207-09.

² Claude Romano, "Awaiting," trans. Ryan Coyne, *Phenomenology and Eschatology: Not Yet in the Now*, eds. Neal DeRoo and John Panteleimon Manoussakis (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009) 32-52, 49-50, cite in Horner, "On Hope," 19.

Defining hope

The point is

Hope is not optimism or wishful thinking (e.g. I hope the Lions win the Grand Final).

Hope cannot be for something determinate that could be fulfilled in the present or foreseeable future (I hope that Mum remembers what I want for my birthday).

Hope is only *really* hope when it is hope against hope, hope for the impossible to take place.

Hope is keeping on going in the face of the impossible.

- Example: hope for democracy is continuing to work for it and hoping it will be achieved while knowing that all the examples we have of democracy are flawed and that no democratic state will ever be perfect.

The source of Christian hope: *The Resurrection*

Christians are “a people of the resurrection.”

What does this statement mean to you?

An encounter with Jesus

John 20:1-18: The Empty Tomb



Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’ ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

An encounter with Jesus

John 20:1-18: Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene



¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The source of Christian hope: *The Resurrection*

Hope is only *really* hope when it is hope against hope, hope for the impossible to take place.

Hope is keeping on going in the face of the impossible.



What happens in the resurrection CAN'T *happen* – it is the impossible.

That's why Mary can't help but see the *gardener* (why she doesn't recognise him as Jesus until he uses her name).

In fact, for most of us, there is no evidence of the resurrection having happened except on the basis of the testimony of others and a conviction that God has spoken here. "Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe."

The source of Christian hope: *The Resurrection*

To be “people of the resurrection” calls Christians to witness
to the *hope of the resurrection in word and deed*

... it is about *embodying* hope;
living hope

“Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again”

The source of Christian hope: *The Resurrection*

To call to be “people of the resurrection” is about *embodying* hope; *living* hope ...

Caitlin Kennell Kim: examples of resurrection women

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: the first democratically elected woman president of an African nation, Liberia. She worked for peace and prosperity for her people; was not silenced by threats of violence, nor silenced by imprisonment. Her leadership was instrumental in the rebuilding of war-torn Liberia and the first steps toward healing for its people.

Leymah Gbowee: united Christian and Muslim women in Liberia to protest the wars waged by dictator Charles Taylor. She refused to be ignored, refused to abandon the women and children who had been brutalized and displaced; worked to rehabilitate former child soldiers.

Tawkkol Karman: as a journalist and activist for peace in Yemen, spoke out against the silencing of the press and the intimidation of journalists at great personal risk, and in the shadow of constant threats to her life.

The source of Christian hope: *The Resurrection*

To call to be “people of the resurrection” is about *embodying* hope; *living* hope ...

Kim goes on to say...

“Resurrection Women are everywhere. You pass them on your way to work. They stand behind you in line at the grocery store. You sit next to them on your morning commute. Chances are you even know a few. Maybe you are a Resurrection Woman. Every woman who works two jobs so her family can eat is a Resurrection Woman. Every woman who speaks out against gang violence in her community is a Resurrection Woman. Every woman who refuses to be obliterated or cancelled by acts of sexual and domestic violence is a Resurrection Woman. Every woman who rebukes the notion that her biological sex makes her any less worthy or capable of serving her nation or her God with spirit and boldness is a Resurrection Woman. They are risen.”

- Who would you add to this list? (not necessarily limited to women)
- What is the relationship between suffering, vulnerability, hope, and resurrection?



Pope Francis on Hope

“I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love ... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile.” (*Fratelli tutti*, 55)

“The processes of change that lead to lasting peace are crafted above all by peoples; each individual can act as an effective leaven by the way he or she lives each day. Great changes are not produced behind desks or in offices. This means that everyone has a fundamental role to play in a single great creative project: to write a new page of history, a page full of hope, peace and reconciliation. There is an architecture” of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an ‘art’ of peace that involves us all.” (*Fratelli tutti*, 231)



Pope Francis on Hope

“We want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation.” (*Fratelli tutti*, 276)

Jubilee Year of Hope: 2025

- In his naming of 2025 as the Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Francis calls Christians to “discover hope in the signs of the times” and “to be tangible signs of hope”, through:

- Working for peace
- Caring for the poor and vulnerable
- Working to eradicate structures of poverty
- Supporting refugees and asylum seekers
- Supporting young people, especially those with mental illness
- Caring for the Earth, “our common home”
- Fostering a spirit of forgiveness and love
- The promotion of human dignity and the common good
- Building pathways for dialogue and peace

Be careful: For Christians, *embodying* hope—*living* hope—is about more than acts of social justice. **It is a way of being in the world that witnesses to the impossible and at the same times works towards it.** It is about preparing for the thing that we cannot possibly prepare for: life in God.

Source: Pope Francis, *Spes Non Confundit*, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html

Christians are “a people of the resurrection”

What does all of this have to do with the renewal of Catholic education?

5 global and local trends

- Stagnating or declining student learning outcomes
- Widening educational inequities
- Declining sense of belonging and engagement in school
- Declining student and staff wellbeing
- Eroding economic efficiencies in education

DOBCEL Strategy 2035

5 strategic pillars

- Building collaborative cultures
- Building cultures of engagement and belonging
- Building strong communities
- Developing rich pedagogical practices for deep learning and wellbeing
- Promoting sustainable stewardship

How might we—those of us who work in Catholic Education Systems—be and be witness to tangible signs of hope?

Walking dialogues

What has resonated with you?
What has challenged you?
What is being asked of you now?
Tomorrow?
Into the future?
Where do you find hope?

What we have been contemplating so far....

Community
Remember *Revitalise*
Hope

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer

Romans 12:12

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Going forward in Hope.....



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*As partners in
Catholic education
and open to God's presence,
we pursue fullness of life for all.*

Principles of strategy development

- Co-design
- Lived experience through school visits and conversations
- Global and National evidence
- Context of our Catholic ethos
- Purpose to inspire thinking and action

Strategy Development so far....



PRINCIPALS

3

DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP GATHERINGS

1 x Colac Primary Principals
1 x Warrnambool Primary Principals



DOBCEL BOARD

5

MEETINGS / WORKSHOPS WITH
BOARD AND CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEES



CEB STAFF & LEADERSHIP

11

MEETINGS



SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

20

SCHOOL
VISITS



DOBCEL Strategy 2035

“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full” John 10:10

Our vision is *as partners in Catholic education and open to God’s presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.*

We will accomplish that vision by having a high performing system of Catholic schools.

DOBCEL Strategy 2035

A **Strategy** document

.....to be read as a strategy for the DOBCEL system of schools – not as an action plan for schools or an implementation plan with detailed procedures.....

....the main purpose of which is to inspire the whole system to commit to and move towards *a high performing system of Catholic schools*.....

It outlines general directions and strategic priorities....

..”In educating a balance must be maintained, your steps must be well balanced, one step on the cornice of safety but the other into the zone of risk. And when the risk becomes safe, the next step must venture into another area of risk..”

..”Always go a step further and never be satisfied with conventional things. Seek new forms in accordance with the places, times and people. I encourage you to do this..” Pope Francis 2013

Global Change Forces

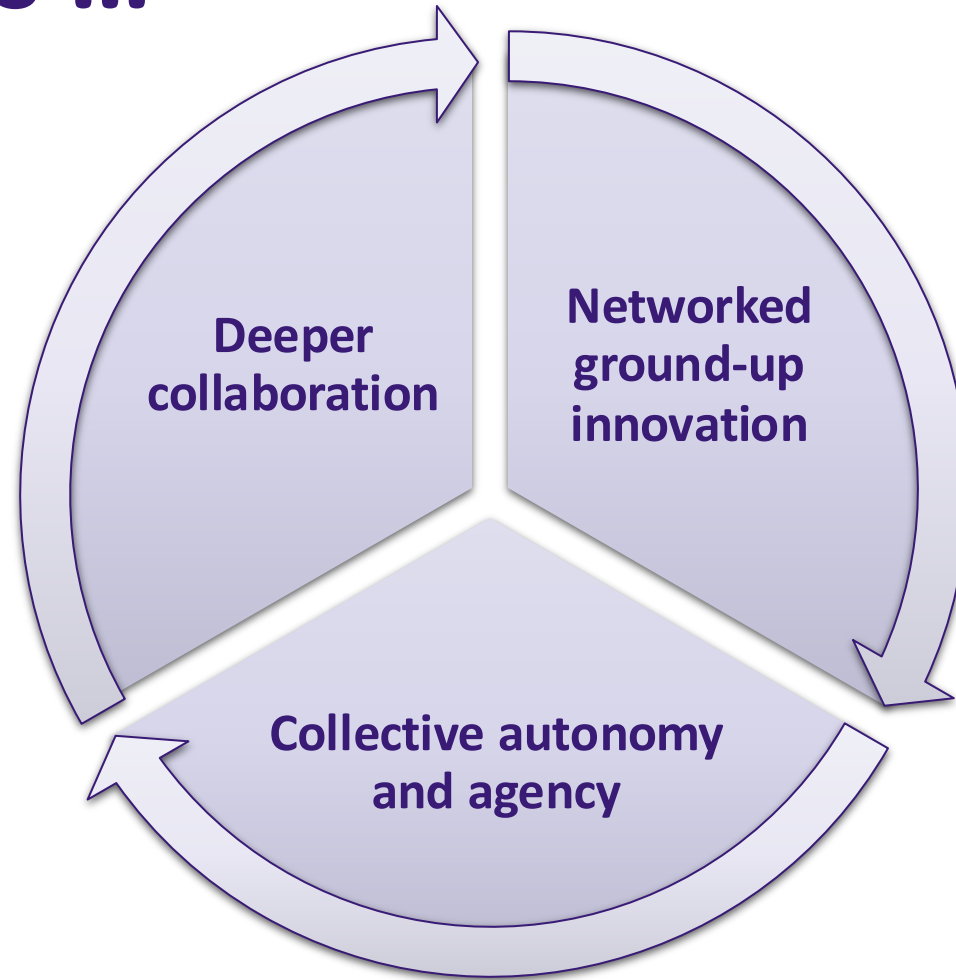
- Climate Change
- Growing inequalities
- Demographic shifts
- Technological advancement
- The nature of work, learning and living

Trends in school education

- Stagnating or declining student learning outcomes
- Widening educational inequities
- Student sense of belonging and engagement in school are in decline
- Student and Staff wellbeing are in jeopardy
- Eroding economic efficiencies in education

The Strategy outlines ...

We will move towards the pillars and agreed intentions through three practical principles:



Strategic Pillars

Foundation for all: Living Catholic Identity

- **Pillar 1:** Collaborative cultures
- **Pillar 2:** Engagement and belonging
- **Pillar 3:** School as community
- **Pillar 4:** Rich pedagogical practices for deeper learning and wellbeing
- **Pillar 5:** Sustainable Stewardship

Pillar 1: Collaborative cultures

Intention 2035: Collaboration is the driving principle of planning and action at all levels of the DOBCEL system of Catholic schools.

Pillar 2: Engagement and belonging

Intention 2035: Productive teaching and learning in all DOBCEL schools is defined by strong parental/guardian/carer engagement, active student agency, and professional autonomy and mastery.

Pillar 3: School as community

Intention 2035: All DOBCEL schools operate in some shape or form as active places in their own communities.

Pillar 4: Rich Pedagogical Practices for Deeper Learning and Wellbeing

Intention 2035: Teaching and Learning in DOBCEL schools are based on research-informed and practically verified rich pedagogical practices for deeper learning and wellbeing

Pillar 5: Sustainable Stewardship

Intention 2035: Sustainable stewardship at all levels of the system aims to serve the interests of young people, support overall wellbeing, and fulfil the DOBCEL vision. This approach is justified by principles that prioritise the interests of children and benefit schools in the system, ensuring transparency and guiding DOBCEL towards its preferred future.

Activating the Plan: 2025

- ❖ Sensemaking: Building engagement and understanding
 - ❖ Commence changing mindsets
 - ❖ Inspiring action
- ❖ Integrate the theory of change into practice and processes

Initial focus on Collaboration: 2025

- Discover and exhibit examples of best practice from across the system
- Create inter/intra-system connections
- Action practices and process at all levels that reflect and progress system strategy

Through:

- Catholic Identity initiatives
 - ECSI
 - School and Parish relationship
- School Improvement Program (David Hopkins)
- Leading Impactful Change (Andy Hargraves)
- Inside Out Initiatives
- The Small Schools Initiative
- Agents of Change forums (Student forum)



Deliverables for 2025

- Collaboration initiatives
- Implementation Plan for 2026 and beyond
- Portfolio Plans
- Sharing best practice to and across schools
- Networked Innovation opportunities
- Create opportunities for **students to lead and action** system evolution
- Communications Plan

How might our work be reflected across the five pillars?

How can our Catholic Identity be reflected in our work?

What changes do we need to think about?

How will we know we are thriving?

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Commissioning

Welcoming New Catholic Education Staff

Let us pray....

Megan:

God of All Light,

We pray that your light will shine ever more brightly in our lives.

As a community we recommit to bringing this light to those we serve by recommitting to our vision:

All:

“As partners in Catholic Education and open to God’s presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.”

Megan:

We journey towards this vision through:

Proclaiming and witnessing to The Good News of Jesus Christ.

Ensuring quality learning that promotes excellence and fosters the authentic human development of all.

Living justly in the world, in relationship with each other and in harmony with God's creation.

Exploring, deepening and expressing Catholic Identity in diverse ways.

Enabling each one of us to reflect more fully the Image of God.

Welcome....

Chris Mitchell

Education Consultant
Northern Zone



Emma Baldwin

Organisational
Development Advisor



Tina Phillips

Manager - Employee
Relations



Tara Lupus

Marketing and
Communications Officer



Thomas Kernick

Emergency and Risk
Management Advisor



Let us pray...

Megan:

God of Light,

May we feel the warmth of your love, and may others see your light, in our actions and in the way we lead our communities.

Help us share the light of Christ with others as we share the Good News. May the light of Christ, signified in this candle, always burn in our hearts and minds. Guide the work of our hands as we all work to transform the world through God's love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son,

All: Amen.

Final blessing



Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light

Blessed are you who bear the light
in unbearable times,

***Who testify to its endurance amid
the unendurable,***

Who bear witness to its persistence
when everything seems in shadow
and grief.

***Blessed are you in whom the light
lives,***

In whom the brightness blazes—
your heart a chapel,

***An altar where in the deepest
night can be seen the fire that
shines forth in you.***

In unaccountable faith, in stubborn
hope, in love that illumines every
broken thing it finds.

AMEN

Jan Richardson , "Blessed Are You Who Bear the
Light", *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for
the Seasons*, Wanton: Gospeller Press, 2015.

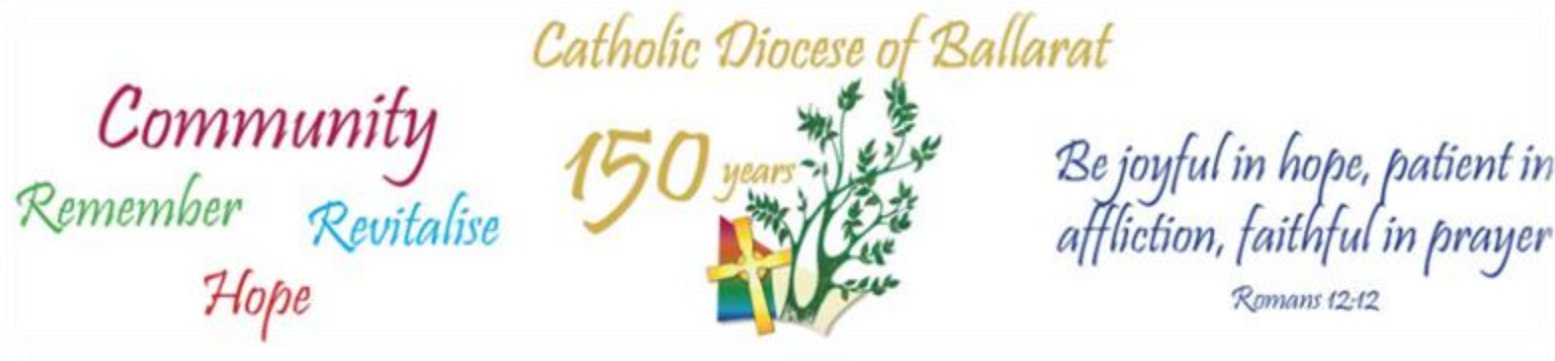
Together We Build Our Place

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As partners in
Catholic education
and open to God's presence,
we pursue fullness of life for all.

We are called to be your hands
We are called to be your feet
Called to reach out with your love
To everyone we meet
Be strength to all the broken
Light to all who seek your face
To walk your ways
To live each day together
We build our place



Each of us has come to share our story
To share our gifts
Our wisdom faith and love
To celebrate the work we do together
Linked with others
Journeying in faith

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We build our place



Each of us is called
to work for justice
And walk together
in God's light and love
To recognise God's face
in every person
And work to build your kingdom
Here on earth



We are called to be your hands
We are called to be your feet
Called to reach out with your love
To everyone we meet
Be strength to all the broken
Light to all who seek your face
To walk your ways
To live each day together
We build our place
Together we build our place

