



26/4/24

## Catholic schools prepare to celebrate

Catholic Education Week (29 April - 3 May) is an annual opportunity for Catholic schools across the Diocese of Ballarat to celebrate their distinctive ethos and mission with their school and wider communities.

In 2024, 52 primary schools and 11 secondary Colleges, educate more than 18,500 students and employ over 2,500 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south, and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

‘Catholic schools offer a high-quality, faith-based, holistic education choice for families across Western Victoria, and currently educate around 25% of all students,’ Executive Director, Tom Sexton said.

‘There is a wonderful array of school and community activities planned across the diocese, and the week takes on special significance this year as our community of schools recognise the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat.

‘We also especially acknowledge our oldest school in the Diocese - All Saints, Portland - and we offer best wishes to the school community as they celebrate a remarkable 175 years of service this year,’ he said.

Mr Sexton said 17 teachers and staff nominated for a Spirit of Catholic Education Award will be recognised for outstanding contribution to Catholic education at a Diocesan Catholic Education Week Mass and Dinner in Ballarat next Friday (3 May), along with a remarkable 34 teachers and staff who have given 30 years of dedicated service.

‘Three of the 17 nominees will be announced at the dinner as our Spirit of Catholic Education Award recipients for 2024.

‘In addition, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat, and in recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers who have educated their people on this land for thousands of years, four Message Sticks will be commissioned at the Mass, and will simultaneously begin a journey to every Catholic school across the four education zones of the Diocese,’ Tom Sexton said.

### Nominees for the 2024 Spirit of Catholic Education Awards are:

- **Christina Sofis** (Loreto College, Ballarat) – *Fostering Inspiring Leadership*
- **Sharon Dwyer** (OLHC Warrnambool) – *Empowering all to Flourish*
- **Kevin Brodie** (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – *Empowering all to Flourish*
- **Finance and Compliance Team** (St Brigid’s College, Horsham) – *Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship*
- **Cynthia Maiden** (St Joseph’s School, Hopetoun) – *Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship*
- **Olga Lyons** (St Patrick’s School, Port Fairy) – *Fostering Inspiring Leadership*
- **Breeana Wade** (DOBCEL Mildura Office) – *Empowering all to Flourish*



- **Caitee Carter** (St Alipius School, Ballarat) – *Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship*
- **Simone Jans & Sarah Goodburn**, Da Capo Instrumental Music Program (Loreto College, Ballarat)– *Achieving Best Practice*
- **Eliza Dwyer** (St Patrick’s School, Port Fairy) – *Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities*
- **Brooke Nester** (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – *Empowering all to Flourish*
- **Bernadette Lynch** (St Aloysius’ School, Ballarat) – *Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities*
- **Mark Vanderkley** (SIMON) – *Empowering all to Flourish*
- **Tony Haintz** (Damascus College, Ballarat) – *Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities*
- **Lindy Crowe-Procaccino** (Loreto College, Ballarat) – *Empowering all to Flourish*
- **Religious Education Curriculum Team** (DOBCEL) – *Achieving Best Practice* (Bernie Tolan, Justin, McInerney, Jo-anne Van der Voort, Kim Hawkes, Bernadette Luckman)
- **Cathy Prunty** (Damascus College) – *Empowering all to Flourish*

**Ends ....**

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