



13 August 2024

Catholic Education Ballarat leader recognised in Commonwealth commemorative publication

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) Executive Director Tom Sexton has been recognised as a thought-leader in education in Australia and invited to participate in the British Parliament Trust's commemorative book marking the 75th anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth.

The publication celebrates examples of leadership, innovation and development across the 56 nations of the Commonwealth. It will be published in October this year and distributed to more than 400,000 individuals and organisations across the Commonwealth.

King Charles' biographer Robert Jobson is overseeing the project, and royal correspondent Russell Myers conducted an interview with Mr Sexton about the work of Catholic education across the western Victorian diocese last month.

With 40 years' experience in regional Victoria as a teacher, Principal and system leader, Mr Sexton said it was pleasing that a regional education leader should be included in the publication.

'Education changes lives, and this publication is an opportunity to shine a light on the importance of education right across the Commonwealth, but particularly in rural and regional communities like ours, which face unique challenges,' he said.

Stretching from the Murray River in the north, to the Great Ocean Road in the south, and west to the world-renowned Grampians National Park and South Australian border, Catholic education in the Diocese of Ballarat supports 52 primary and 11 secondary schools, educating more than 18,500 students and employing over 2,500 teachers and staff.

At the heart of Catholic education in the diocese is seeking the *'fullness of life for all'*.

'We strive to be a progressive system of schools, offering a high-quality, faith-based, holistic education, and responding to the latest evidence to ensure our students have every opportunity to flourish fully in their learning,' Mr Sexton said.

'We aim to attract and support the best Principals, teachers and staff, and provide access to a distinctly Catholic education for as many families as possible.

'This means operating everything from large secondary schools in regional cities to primary schools with as few as 15 students in small country towns.'

Mr Sexton said globally recognised Finnish educator Professor Pasi Sahlberg and Director of Future Schools Dave Runge are currently working with Catholic education in the diocese to advise, guide and co-design a strategic plan to shape future directions.

'This is an exciting chapter in the history of the diocese, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, as collectively we seek to ensure our young people, families, and communities are provided with world-class education opportunities into the future.



'We hope this work, in the context of further developing the capability of a regional system of schooling, will also be of interest to education authorities and policymakers, both nationally and internationally,' Tom Sexton said.

Mr Sexton and DOBCEL Board Chair Terry Harney will attend the official launch of the publication at Westminster Abbey, London, on 9 October enroute to working with leading education thinkers and systems in Canada, including the Ottawa Catholic Education System.

Ends

Media contact: Gerard Delaney on 0413 274 176 gdelaney@dobcel.catholic.edu.au