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Catholic education leader recognised in commemorative publication launched at Westminster Abbey today

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) Executive Director Tom Sexton has been recognised as a thought-leader in education in Australia in a publication marking the 75th anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth launched at Westminster Abbey, London today (9 Oct in UK).

The British Parliament Trust's publication – *The Commonwealth at 75* - celebrates examples of leadership, innovation and development across the 56 nations of the Commonwealth and will be distributed to more than 400,000 individuals and organisations.

With 40 years' experience as a teacher, Principal and system leader in regional Victoria, 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 18,600 students and employing over 2,900 teachers and staff.

'At the heart of Catholic education in the diocese is seeking the 'fullness of life for all', Mr Sexton said.

'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 world-class opportunities to flourish fully in their learning.

'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 large secondary colleges in the bigger regional centres 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 and guide the co-design of a strategy - DOBCEL 2035 - to shape future directions for the system.

'This is an exciting chapter in the history of the diocese, as collectively we seek to ensure our young people, families, and communities are provided with the best possible education opportunities into the future and not disadvantaged by our regional and rural location.

'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.



King Charles' biographer Robert Jobson has overseen the commemorative publication project and royal correspondent Russell Myers conducted an interview with Mr Sexton about the work of Catholic education across the western Victorian region earlier this year.

Mr Sexton and DOBCEL Board Chair Terry Harney attended the official launch of the publication at Westminster Abbey, London today, following ten days in Canada engaging with education leaders and authorities.

Ends

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