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Kildare Ministries Newsletter

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The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's 2026 Social Justice Statement, *Living the Gospel in Times of Social Division*, speaks to an increasingly visible reality in Australia and around the world. At a time when public discourse is often marked by polarisation, hostility and fear, the Bishops invite us to help build a society grounded in human dignity, encounter and love.

The Statement acknowledges the many forms of division affecting our communities, including racism, religious intolerance, hostility towards migrants and refugees, and the marginalisation of those regarded as “other”. It also draws attention to online communication, where anger, misinformation and prejudice can spread quickly.

The life and ministry of Jesus provide the inspiration for this response. Jesus crossed social and religious boundaries, drew close to those who were excluded, listened to their stories and restored people to relationship and community. His example challenges us to look beyond labels and differences, recognising every person as created in the image and likeness of God and possessing an inherent dignity that cannot be diminished.

This conviction is central to who we are as Kildare Ministries and is a consistent thread through the many statements our Trustees have offered over the years. While addressing different issues and circumstances, these statements affirm the inherent dignity of every person and call us to build relationships and communities characterised by trust and respect.

Among these, the 2017 statement *All Creation is Sacred* affirmed that each person brings gifts and talents to our communities. Drawing upon the Brigidine and Presentation heritage

of accepting people for who they are and welcoming diversity, the Trustees reminded us that

“the walls which divide us can be broken down only if we are prepared to listen and learn from one another”.

The Trustees' *Commitment to Inclusivity* similarly recognises that Kildare Ministries is enriched by the pluralist nature of its communities. It calls us to advocate for mutual respect, respectful dialogue and an end to persecution or discrimination based on religious or non-religious belief or practice.

In *Walking in Solidarity: A Gender Inclusivity Statement*, the Trustees affirm the goodness, complexity and inherent dignity of every person, recognising human diversity as part of the design and wonder of creation. It commits Kildare Ministries to fostering safe communities, safe dialogue and relationships characterised by trust and respect.

Together, these and the Trustees' other statements provide a clear foundation for responding to the Bishops' call to create a “culture of encounter”. This asks us to follow the example of Jesus by drawing close to people whose experiences may differ from our own, listening deeply to their stories, fears and hopes, and responding with compassion.

This call has particular significance as we continue our focus this year on Justice - *making the needs of the vulnerable paramount*. Justice asks us to view our communities from the perspective of those who experience exclusion, prejudice or disadvantage. It calls us to speak with courage, challenge injustice and create spaces in which every person feels welcomed, valued and safe.

Inspired by the life and ministry of Jesus, and by the courage of St Brigid and Nano Nagle, may we continue to build inclusive communities in which diversity is welcomed, every person's dignity is held sacred, and all are able to flourish.



Nicole Mangelsdorf
Executive Director

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Social Justice Statement, [*Living the Gospel in Times of Social Division*](#), is available to read online. The Trustees' statements can be found on the [Kildare Ministries website](#).



Congratulations to Rosemary Copeland

Congratulations to Rosemary Copeland, Co-Chair of the Trustees of Kildare Ministries, on being recognised as a Wisdom Leader at the recent Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Victorian Network (CRMV) Annual Gathering.

The award honours 'leaders, guides and advocates for RI/MPJP schools who have responded to the signs of the times, helped articulate a shared response to key education issues, and fostered collegiality, transparency and respectful dialogue across Catholic education in Victoria.'

This richly deserved recognition celebrates Rosemary's many years of dedicated and visionary leadership in Catholic education, Kildare Ministries and the wider Church. It was most fitting that her dissertation was read at the gathering by Erica Pegorer, the founding Executive Director of Kildare Ministries. We are delighted to share this tribute to Rosemary's leadership and service below.

Today we honour Rosemary Copeland, a Wisdom Leader whose long service has advanced the mission and identity of Catholic education with faith, vision and integrity. From teaching in Queensland and Victoria, Rosemary responded to changing times with optimism and tenacity, leading through the complex amalgamation of two Geelong schools and later embracing a collaborative and enriching co-principalship in Echuca.

As Secondary Consultant for the Diocese of Sale, Rosemary Copeland became a trusted guide, advocate and mentor to principals and leadership teams, fostering respectful dialogue, strong partnerships and a shared vision for Catholic education. She significantly shaped the culture of learning and teaching and promoted good governance across the seven secondary schools in the Diocese.

Service on the Brigidine Secondary Schools Council deepened this contribution to governance, leading to her appointment as a founding Trustee and later Co-Chair of Kildare Ministries. Across educational and community works, Rosemary has

exemplified ethical, servant leadership grounded in respect, justice, compassion and care.

Rosemary was also a founding member of AMPJP for six years, helping nurture it into a respected National body and significant voice in the Church for Catholic ministries. As well as representing Kildare Ministries as a Member of CRMV, she was the Chair for three years and worked hard to ensure an equitable voice for all Members around the table, as well as being an enormous support to the Board of CRMV.

For decades, Rosemary has generously volunteered in parish service further reflecting an enduring commitment to mission, synodality, formation and the flourishing of others.

And now a Leaders among Leaders, we thank Rosemary Copeland for her many years of commitment to Catholic Education and its emerging governance structures and congratulate her on her well-deserved Award.



Thank you and Farewell



Luci Quinn

Principal, Clonard College, Geelong

Luci Quinn has given outstanding leadership and service to Clonard College and across Kildare Ministries for almost eight years. We congratulate her on being appointed as Chief Executive Officer for Mercy Education, from the end of Term 3. No doubt, Luci will provide excellent

stewardship and support for the 13 Mercy schools in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

The heart of a Principal's role is faith leadership. Luci speaks, connects with and supports all in the community with the Gospel of Jesus as her compass. Therefore, the Mission, Vision and Values of Kildare Ministries inform every conversation and decision. She is the embodiment of 'strength and kindness', blended with humility and joy. Through her inspiring reflections at school assemblies, events and Masses, the Spirit warmed our souls and enriched our minds.

Luci is a strategic leader who clearly understands what makes people 'tick'. These qualities enable her to capably develop and empower staff to fulfil our shared Mission, and therefore to provide quality education. She has built leadership capacity, raised expectations and improved school culture to enable engagement, wellbeing and success for all learners.

To prepare Clonard's students for a complex and rapidly changing world, across the last five years, Luci and her Leadership Team developed and implemented the *New Narrative for Learning* project. This program now provides a rich education for all Year 7-10 students, with clearly evident benefits. Clonard students now receive university-verified credentialling for a range of vital 21st century competencies.

Also, after four years of planning and preparation, in 2027 Clonard will be one of the first Catholic schools in Australia to provide [Big Picture Learning](#). This innovative, flexible and highly engaging approach provides learners with scaffolded agency to harness their potential and to excel in diverse ways.

These trail-blazing initiatives, and others Luci enacted, cultivate lifelong learning, respond to the diverse needs of students and prepare them to make a difference in society. Under Luci's astute guidance, Clonard has become a beacon of quality and progressive education.

Among KEM Principals, Luci's sage advice and collegial support have been of immense value to her peers, who hold her in the highest regard. Across Kildare Ministries, Luci has held the lantern to the 'opening path'. For example, near the end of the 10th Anniversary Conference for Kildare Ministries, attended by all staff from all 13 ministries, Luci wisely discerned and profoundly communicated key insights from the three days. Kildare Ministries has been strengthened by her keen mind and kind heart, offered in the way of Brigid and Nano.

Her leadership roles also extend across Victoria (President of the Principals' Association of Victorian Catholic Secondary Schools) and Australia (Director on the Catholic Secondary Principals Australia Board).

If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader. (Dolly Parton)

Luci is indeed an excellent leader, honourable colleague and educational pathfinder. We offer sincere thanks for her generous service and exemplary leadership.

While we will miss Luci within Kildare Ministries, her judicious and Spirit-filled influence will keep enhancing Catholic education, alongside us. This is not farewell, but 'see you around'.

Luci, may our loving God continue to bless, inspire and sustain you.



Lisa Dwyer

Chair of the Star of the Sea College Board

Kildare Ministries extends its sincere thanks to Lisa Dwyer, who recently concluded nine years of service on the Star of the Sea College Board, including as Chair from June 2018. Throughout this time, Lisa made an outstanding contribution to the Board and the wider College community.

Lisa led the Board with skill, generosity and strategic vision. Her collaborative approach, sound decision-making and clear understanding of governance supported significant decisions for the College's long-term sustainability. The construction of new buildings and refurbishment of existing facilities form a visible part of her legacy, providing beautiful and engaging spaces that enrich learning and teaching for students and staff.

Guided by a deep commitment to faith and mission, Lisa also encouraged the Star community to support organisations working alongside people experiencing vulnerability, particularly the community works of Kildare Ministries. Through listening to the experiences of others, fundraising and practical involvement, students have deepened their understanding of compassion, justice and service. Lisa's leadership of the Board in supporting the Principal and College community to bring these values to life will be an enduring legacy.

We warmly thank Lisa for her dedicated leadership and generous service and wish her every blessing for the future.



Kildare Ministries Conference

From 26 - 28 August, members of the Kildare Ministries community gathered at St Joseph's College Echuca for our 2026 Biennial Conference, ***Kildare Ministries: Our Voice, Our Future – Listening. Responding. Transforming Together.***

Gathering on Yorta Yorta Country, the conference brought together Trustees, representatives of our founding congregations - the Brigidine Sisters and Presentation Sisters - and our Members Council, along with Principals and Community Work CEOs, Board Chairs and Directors, and colleagues from across our ministries.

Our time together began with a very special Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony, made all the more meaningful through the involvement of the St Joseph's College community. Staff member Narjiic Day-Burns led the ceremony, accompanied by Noah on the didgeridoo and a student choir singing in Yorta Yorta.

In her opening address, Rosemary Copeland, Co-Chair of the Trustees, invited us to set aside these days as a time to be together, to listen, reflect and discuss, and to *"listen to the heartbeat of Kildare Ministries"*. She encouraged us to listen deeply, discuss openly and imagine courageously the path ahead for our individual ministries and for Kildare Ministries as a whole.

That invitation to look forward was immediately connected with the story that has brought us to this point. Louise Cleary csb, Nola Vanderfeen pbvm, Rosemary Copeland and Erica Pegorer, in conversation with facilitator Annie Rosati, shared their experiences as people who imagined and brought Kildare Ministries into being. Their stories reminded us that the future we are now shaping is grounded in the courage, imagination and commitment of those who helped bring Kildare Ministries to life.

Later that afternoon, we gathered for a beautiful celebration of Eucharist in the historic Convent Chapel, built by the Brigidine Sisters in 1899. The beauty and history of the chapel connected us in a tangible way with the Brigidine story and legacy in Echuca. During the Mass, each ministry brought forward a blue cloth bearing words that expressed what they

valued most about being part of Kildare Ministries. Together, the cloths formed a centrepiece, representing our ministries as streams of God's living water, flowing together through Kildare Ministries to bring peace and justice into our world.

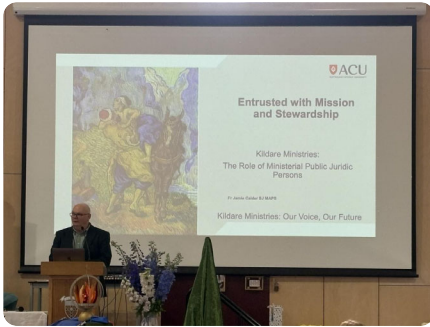


Across the three days, we heard many voices - voices that connected us with our story, challenged us to engage with the realities of today, and encouraged us to imagine how Kildare Ministries might respond to the future.

Rev Associate Professor Jamie Calder SJ explored the emergence of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Australia and the distinctive role they now play within the life of the Catholic Church. He invited us to think deeply about stewardship, synodality and what it means for us to carry forward the mission entrusted to Kildare Ministries.

Turning our attention to the changing Australian context, Professor Ruth Powell, Executive Director of the National Church Life Survey, explored how Catholic ministries can remain deeply faithful to their mission while responding to a changing social, cultural and religious landscape. Her presentation encouraged us to engage honestly with these realities while recognising the opportunities they offer to renew and express our mission in ways that are authentic, relevant and hope filled.

That challenge, to remain grounded in who we are while responding courageously to change, continued with the launch of the Trustees' Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Human Dignity. Facilitated by Rev Dr Michael Trainor AM, the session turned our attention to the rapidly developing world of artificial intelligence, exploring its possibilities and challenges and considering how human dignity and the common good can guide our choices and shape our response.



Some of the most powerful voices we heard came from people at the very heart of our mission. Participants in our community works and graduates of our schools generously shared their stories and experiences of hope, dignity and belonging. Their voices invited us to reflect on what enables people to feel valued and included, and what we might learn from their experiences as we look to the future together.

As we entered our final reflective session, we were privileged to hear Sr Brigid Arthur csb AO share her personal reflection on our conference theme, Listening. Responding. Transforming Together. Drawing on her own experiences and insights, Brigid challenged us to consider what we are called to do as we move forward, and how together we can continue to build communities that are inclusive, just and grounded in the dignity of every person.

Perhaps one of the greatest gifts of a conference such as this is simply the opportunity to gather. We come from different ministries, different places and different roles, but we are connected by something much larger than any one of us - our shared responsibility for the mission of Kildare Ministries. There was a wonderful energy in being together, reconnecting with those we know, forming new relationships, sharing experiences and learning from one another. Conversations over meals, around tables and between sessions were as important as the formal program, deepening our sense that, while our ministries are diverse, we are part of something shared.



In our beautiful closing liturgy, we returned once more to the well and to the Gospel story that had accompanied us during the conference. The Samaritan woman came seeking water.

She listened, questioned and encountered Jesus. Changed by that encounter, she did not remain at the well; she returned to her community and found her voice.

As we prepared to leave Echuca, her story brought us back to the heart of our conference theme. Like the woman at the well, our listening calls us beyond the encounter itself and towards response. We were left with questions to carry with us:

What will we carry?

What will we have the courage to change?

Whose voice will we hear differently?

Where will the Gospel ask us to go?

During the closing liturgy, Kathy McEvoy and Rosemary Copeland presented each ministry with a compass as a tangible reminder of the mission we carry with us as we return to our communities:

“The compass is offered as a sign of the mission entrusted to each of us - a call to remain attentive, to discern faithfully, and to walk forward in hope.”

From the streams of living water brought together in our Conference Mass to the compass carried home by each ministry, these symbols captured something of what we experienced together: distinct communities joined in shared mission, listening for where the Gospel is calling us and discerning the way forward together.

We left Echuca with gratitude for the story we have inherited, strengthened by our relationships and hopeful about what we can continue to become together. As Rosemary reminded us at the beginning of our gathering that transformation is often found not in grand gestures, but in the many small actions we take each day, inspired by Gospel values and strengthened by our togetherness. May we carry that spirit back into our ministries as we continue to listen deeply, respond courageously and work together to build communities of justice, dignity and belonging.

With Gratitude

A gathering such as this is made possible through the generosity and contribution of many people. On behalf of the Trustees, I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who shared their time, expertise, ideas and support - our presenters, panellists, facilitators and contributors;

those who so thoughtfully prepared and led our Mass and liturgies; and the many people who worked behind the scenes.

We are especially grateful to St Joseph's College Echuca for so generously hosting us. Our thanks go to the entire College community for their warm hospitality and for the considerable work undertaken to welcome and support us throughout our time together.

A particular thank you to the members of the Conference Planning Committee, Anne Marie Cairns, Rosemary Copeland, Angela Romano, Danielle Price, Jane Collopy, Monica Lang and Chris Shelly, whose creativity, commitment and care were invaluable in shaping a gathering that reflected the spirit and mission of Kildare Ministries.

To everyone who contributed, in ways both seen and unseen, thank you. Together, you helped create a wonderful opportunity for our Kildare Ministries community to gather, strengthen relationships, listen, learn and reflect together.

Nicole Mangelsdorf

Executive Director



From our Mission Leader

First Nations Network Gathering

The key staff who support our First Nations students and our community celebrations and learning about First Nations gathered from across our ministries for our third Network meeting in August. This group was a key part of the consultative process in the Trustees' development of their Statement on *First Nations Peoples: Living Justice* that was released last month, and we took time to reflect on how we could encourage authentic engagement with the Statement across our broader Kildare Ministries' communities.

Our Network's three primary goals are building relationships, creating cultural safety and ensuring our school students have the opportunity to explore, learn about and value the history, culture and understanding of First Nations Peoples. We are concerned by the dominating discourse in the media that projects our Australian society as a binary reality of "us" and "them". This kind of perspective dangerously closes our society's collective imagination off from wonder and curiosity about anyone who is different to ourselves. This leaves us as a society of individual pockets, locked into their own rigid view of the world, with no openings or pathways towards open, respectful dialogue. None of us grow or flourish, and we all lose by remaining ignorant of all that we don't yet know.

Australia has such a short history since colonisation, but this land has a much longer history – 250 times longer than the story that most of our country have been taught.

The Elders of this land have been patiently waiting and continuously inviting us to learn about them and Country all this time, and our First Nations Network of Kildare Ministries asks that we all listen deeply to each other - First Nations or not - and to approach the story of Australia's Indigenous people with courage, wonder and hope. We want to educate our First Nations students from a strengths-based approach, encouraging them to lean into their strengths, cultivating pride and confidence in their own learning journey.

The Elders – both our First Nations Elders and our Kildare Ministries Trustees - are asking us to see the beauty, strengths and realities of the First Peoples of this land with respect and an open-heart. May we all have the wonder and courage to prioritise this in our responses to the conversations we witness in every context, and celebrate the gift that First Nations Peoples are to our lives.

Kildare Ministries Ecology Alliance



Our Ecology Alliance gathered online recently to celebrate the wonder of *Living Water*, making the connection between the physical nourishment water offers us with the spiritual nourishment we gain by connecting to our local waterways. The official lyric video of Vika and Linda's recent song [This Is How I Pray](#) features beautiful photographs by Fiona Basile of people connecting with Port Phillip Bay. This was a beautiful introduction to *Living Water* as the theme of this year's Season of Creation, and a wonderful way to start the [Schools' Wetlands Challenge](#) launched by Catholic Religious Australia. Communities are invited to establish a conscious relationship to their nearest wetland, be it a bay, a stream, or a polluted creek bed. We are encouraged to increase our community's awareness and appreciation of our local wetlands, explore and understand their role in our local ecology, and research what interventions could support its thriving.

The Wetlands Challenge has its own [webpage](#) where we can upload our progress and explore the work of other communities on the interactive map of Australia. We have already added Balnarring Beach as a place where our schools and Saltbush celebrate the wonder of beach sunrises and swimming, and Saltbush staff member Amy Campion will write about the regeneration work and impact on wildlife of the Merricks Creek and billabong that run through the land at Saltbush.

Brigidine Sisters continue celebrating 140 years in Victoria!

The Brigidine Sisters continued celebrating their 140 years in Victoria with a beautiful ritual and lunch at Kilbreda College Mentone in July. The organising committee of Brigidines met fortnightly since the beginning of year, to plan and prepare the telling of their story through a beautiful ritual. Four of the key symbols for the Brigidines were used to draw together the threads of connection from the time of Brigid through to today:



- **Brigid's Lamp:** the fire of hope and learning, the presence of Christ, the warmth of wisdom, healing and hospitality and the flame of peace that Brigid of Kildare set alight over 1500 years ago.



- **Oak Tree Leaves:** the ancient land of Ireland and the young sapling that was the beginnings of the Brigidine ministry, in a time of great change for Ireland and the Catholic Church. Bishop Daniel Delany responded to the Catholic children and families who in the early 1800s were denied education, the right to practice their faith, and the capacity to earn a living to escape poverty. He saw the capacity of the young women around him, and empowered them by creating a formal religious congregation through which they could live their untamed passion for justice, faith-based education of the poor, and hospitality to all. The Oak Tree is also symbolic of the journey of each of those women, growing in their inner strength with each adaptation to changing circumstances, and together creating stable, life-giving communities to that welcomed all who came.



- **Brigid's Cloak:** the widening of the Brigidines' horizons as they responded to needs that took them to the other side of the world. Arriving in Coonamble in 1883, and Echuca in 1886, these women exemplified Brigid's courage not only by stretching their resources to start more and more schools, but also to look at how they lived and governed themselves. The Second Vatican Council called religious orders to respond to the needs of the changing world in ever more relevant and modern ways, and this included encouraging collaborative leadership with the laity. Videoed interviews with a range of Brigidine Sisters captured their moving personal stories of responding to such seismic change.



- **Brigid's Cross:** hung in homes throughout Ireland to protect families, it symbolises care, peace and the dreaming of a world renewed with hope. The Brigidines spoke of their courageous and deliberate choice to pass on their ministries, with hope for their future, despite the anxiety that accompany uncertainty and change. The gentle weaving of the Brigidines' story of gentleness and kindness through the symbols was a prayerful weaving together of memory, friendship and faith.

The generous dedication of all Brigidines, past and present, was acknowledged and celebrated with gratitude, and the celebration left us all light with joy and gratitude. The light of Brigid has shone in and through these women for over 140 years. We have been blessed to receive it through our relationships with you, and honour the responsibility and opportunity we have to share it with others as it lights our way now and into the future. Thank you for such a precious gift.

Learning to celebrate joy is one of the great practices of the spiritual life. It confirms our trust in God. It affirms the greatness of creation. It seals our dependence on God. It attests to the beauty of the present and asserts our confidence in the beauty of the future. It recognizes the mercy and love of God.

Joan Chittister



Jane Collopy
Mission Leader



Justice in Action at BASP

At the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project, justice is not a one-year theme. It is the quiet, steady work of welcoming people pushed to the margins and supporting them until they can stand independently. Justice is reflected in how we greet people at the door, listen to them, walk alongside them, and advocate when systems fail.

Every week, people arrive at BASP carrying stories of displacement, uncertainty and long years of waiting. Some come with nothing but a small bag. Some come after sleeping in cars or on couches. Some come after years without work rights, Medicare or safety. Justice begins in these moments, with welcome, with food, with housing, with someone saying, "You are not alone."

The Gospel offers a simple but radical invitation: *"I was a stranger and you welcomed me."* It is not a metaphor for us. It is the daily reality of our work. Justice begins with welcome, and welcome begins with seeing the person in front of us as worthy of care, dignity and hope. Another Gospel moment speaks directly to our mission: *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me."* In many ways, BASP's mission echoes the parable of the Good Samaritan, the outsider who stopped, who noticed, who acted. Justice is always found in the stopping, the noticing, the acting.

This is also what it means to be Church. Not simply a building or an institution, but a community that lives the Gospel through action, a Church that bends toward compassion, that chooses accompaniment over judgement, and that places dignity at the centre. BASP is

one of the places where Church becomes visible: in food parcels, in housing support, in advocacy, in shared meals, in the quiet dignity of welcome.

This spirit is the legacy of Saint Brigid, who gave away her father's sword, her food, her apples, her land, always choosing generosity over status, welcome over fear. Her flame still burns in our work today, a symbol of courage and hospitality for all who seek refuge. And it is the legacy of Nano Nagle, who walked the streets of Cork at night with her lantern, bringing education, hope and dignity to those who had none. Her lantern is a symbol of justice that does not wait for daylight - justice that goes out, seeks, and lifts. BASP carries that lantern today in every act of accompaniment.

BASP now houses more than 150 people each month and pays rent for a further 70–80 individuals and families. Our Foodbank continues to operate on a simple principle: no one is turned away. As Sr Brigid Arthur has said, *"We maintain a policy of not turning anyone away who requests access to our foodbank services."* Justice is sometimes as simple as a bag of groceries offered with dignity.

Housing remains one of the clearest expressions of justice. Marion, our Housing and Tenancy Support Officer, often says that the work is *"compassionate and centred on people's safety, wellbeing and pathways to independence."*

Justice is also found in the stories that shape our community.

This year, for our Housing and People Support Officer, Natarla Reid, that meant supporting one of our long-term residents, who had battled a brain tumour for years, get granted the highest level of care available - eight hours a day, seven days a week. This came after months of advocacy, medical evidence gathering, and persistence. He told us, "I feel safe now." Justice is dignity.

A young Iranian family, supported by BASP for more than a decade, finally received permanent residency after years of appeals, setbacks and deep hardship. Their message to us was simple: *"Thank you for always being kind and supportive."* Justice is perseverance.

Another person, who had been rejected repeatedly for jobs because of visa uncertainty, finally secured employment in construction after BASP advocated with the employer, helped him obtain safety tickets, and provided work boots and transport. He now supports his family and says, *"I feel proud again."* Justice is employment.

With the help of the Brigidines, BASP was able to secure a car for one of our people who needed reliable transport to secure work. That car changed everything, he could accept shifts, arrive on time, and support himself. Justice is opportunity.

Through St Dominic's *Welcome the Stranger* program, BASP supported a single mother who wanted to do delivery driving to support herself and her son. She had no car, no savings, and no safety net. Together, we purchased a vehicle for her. She now works, earns, and provides for her child. Justice is empowerment.

Julie Catalano spent months helping one of our people prepare his citizenship application - gathering documents, writing statements, navigating scrutiny that asylum seekers often face. When he finally became a citizen, he invited Julie to the ceremony. She said, "It was one of the proudest moments of my life." Justice is belonging.



In Woodend, MRRAR hosted a picnic for 20 asylum seekers, complete with a soccer match, Australian-themed desserts and posters explaining Aussie slang. And when Esther brought her newborn baby, Gershon, to BASP, she said, "*It feels calming to be here.*" Justice is welcome.

Our volunteers walk alongside people in countless ways - driving them to job interviews, helping them with applications, practising English, advocating with landlords, and celebrating every small victory. One volunteer recently said, "*I came to help, but I ended up learning what community really means.*"

Advocacy remains central to BASP's mission. This year, when we learned that the Federal Government was considering decreasing Australia's humanitarian visa intake, BASP acted immediately. CEO, Renee Mazloum wrote to Josh Burns MP urging the Government to

protect and expand humanitarian places, stating clearly that 20,000 should be the minimum intake for a country with Australia's capacity and responsibility. The letter emphasised that reducing the intake would deepen suffering for people already waiting years for safety, family reunion and stability.

This was one of several advocacy actions BASP undertook. We contributed to national submissions calling for fairer visa pathways, guaranteed work and study rights, and permanent solutions for people in long-term limbo. We raised concerns about the Migration Amendment (2026 Measures No. 1) Act, which granted broad discretionary powers to the Minister. We advocated for people denied Medicare, for families facing eviction, and for individuals whose work rights were suddenly removed. We worked closely with Refugee Legal to support people in the legacy caseload - many of whom arrived in 2012 and are still waiting for resolution.

Palm Sunday was another powerful moment of justice. BASP helped organise the Walk for Justice for Refugees, mobilising volunteers, supporting speakers and standing alongside thousands who gathered under the banner *"Stronger Together"* Sr Brigid interviewed Gipson, Rasha Abbas and Rathy Barthlote - voices that reminded us why justice must be persistent, public and courageous.



Justice is also joy. It is citizenship ceremonies, shared meals, DOXA camps, water safety programs, employment pathways, and babies passed gently from arm to arm in the BASP office. It is volunteers who say, *"I get more out of this than I give."* It is the flame of St Brigid and the lantern of Nano Nagle - symbols of welcome, hope and courage - still burning in the work we do today.

And justice is community. One of the ways we build that community each year is through the **St Mary's Hampton Online Trivia Night, returning on Friday 9 October, from 7:30 pm to 9:40 pm.** It is a night of fun, connection and generosity, with teams gathering in homes or online to support BASP's work. The suggested donation is \$30 per team member, and bookings can be made at [BASP Trivia night - 9 October 2026 Tickets | TryBooking Australia](https://trybooking.com.au/trivia) (cohdig.au/trivia). Enquiries: basptrivia@gmail.com.

Justice is not a theme for BASP, it is our identity. It is the courage of St Brigid, who welcomed the stranger without hesitation. It is the lantern of Nano Nagle, carried into the night for those who had been forgotten. It is the Gospel call to recognise the dignity of every person who knocks on our door. It is the work of being Church - a Church that welcomes, accompanies, advocates and loves without condition.

To all who stand with the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project - thank you.

Whether you donate, volunteer, advocate, partner with us, or work alongside people seeking asylum every day, you form the heart of this project. Your generosity fills homes with safety, fridges with food, and lives with dignity. Your advocacy ensures that voices too often ignored are heard. Your solidarity reminds people who have endured trauma, detention, and uncertainty that they are not alone.

You give us the ability to do what we do for the most vulnerable. You make justice real.

Thank you for walking with us.



Renee Mazloun
Chief Executive Officer
Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project



Living Justice: Turning Compassion into Action

At Brigidine College St Ives, the Kildare Ministries value of Justice has been more than a theme this year. It has been a lived experience that has invited our students, staff and wider community to respond to the needs of others with courage, compassion and action.

Justice, in the Kildare tradition, calls us to recognise the dignity of every person and to work towards a world where all can flourish. Throughout 2026, our community has embraced this invitation in meaningful ways, demonstrating that social justice is not simply something we learn about, but something we actively live.

One of the year's highlights was the Social Justice Forum hosted at Brigidine College in May. Students from a range of independent and public schools gathered to engage with contemporary social justice issues and explore how young people can become advocates for change. The event, led by our Social Justice Captains and coordinated by our Social Justice and Leadership team, brought together hundreds of students to hear from inspiring speakers, participate in workshops and consider practical ways to contribute to a more just society. It was a powerful reminder that young people are deeply committed to shaping a better future and that their voices matter.

Our partnership with Dignity has provided another significant expression of justice in action. Throughout the year, students, staff and families have supported Dignity Dishes, preparing meals for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. This practical response has enabled members of our community to contribute directly to the

wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable people in our local area. Beyond providing meals, these experiences have encouraged students to deepen their understanding of homelessness and to reflect on the structural inequalities that contribute to it.



National Homelessness Week in August became a focal point for our commitment to justice. The entire College community united behind initiatives supporting Dignity. Students collected school supplies for children living in crisis accommodation, helping ensure young people experiencing homelessness could continue their education with confidence and dignity. Other year groups prepared meals for families supported by Dignity, while awareness-raising presentations helped students understand both the realities of homelessness and the importance of advocacy and systemic change. Visits from organisations working directly with people experiencing homelessness further challenged students to think critically about justice, privilege and responsibility.



These initiatives have been complemented by the ongoing leadership of our students, who continue to create opportunities for service, awareness and advocacy within the College. Whether through Social Justice leadership programs, Community Involvement activities, fundraising efforts, or participation in broader Kildare Ministries networks, our young women are learning that justice requires both compassion and action. They are discovering that genuine leadership begins with listening to others, standing alongside those whose voices are often unheard, and having the courage to work for positive change.

As a Kildare Ministries school, we remain deeply committed to forming women of strength and gentleness who will contribute to a more just and compassionate world. This year has provided many examples of that vision coming to life. Through advocacy, service, education and solidarity, our community has continued to demonstrate that justice is not an abstract ideal. It is lived every day through the choices we make, the relationships we build, and the care we show for one another.

In doing so, we honour the rich Brigidine and Kildare tradition and continue to give expression to our shared hope for a world where every person is treated with dignity, respect and love.

Kate Quinane

Principal

Brigidine College St Ives



A Justice Focused Approach to Learning and Belonging at Marian College Ararat

Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support

Marian College's implementation of Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is far more than a behaviour initiative. It is a justice commitment grounded in our Brigidine tradition of *Fortiter et Suaviter*, strength and gentleness. At its heart, SWPBS ensures every student is treated with dignity, consistency and compassion, so that respectful, responsible and safe learning becomes possible for all.



Justice Through Fairness and Predictability

Students have told us that consequences can feel uncertain or inconsistent. Justice requires clarity. Our new behaviour flowchart provides a shared process for all staff, ensuring that responses to behaviour are aligned, proportionate and consistent. This predictability helps students feel safe, reduces anxiety, and ensures no young person is disadvantaged by inconsistent adult responses.



Justice Through Teaching, Not Blaming

SWPBS reminds us that students *“learn better ways of behaving by being taught directly & receiving positive feedback.”* Behaviour is a curriculum. SWPBS supports teachers to explicitly teach expectations, model them, practise them with students, and reinforce them, just as they would any academic skill. This is justice in action: ensuring every learner has access to the knowledge and routines needed to succeed, regardless of background or circumstance.



Justice Through Relationships and Positive Regard

Non-contingent attention and positive regard - a *“no strings attached”* connection, smiles, proximity, calm tone are central to SWPBS and deeply aligned with Kildare Ministries' values of compassion and hospitality. These practices affirm the inherent worth of each student and help dismantle shame, especially for those who have experienced trauma or inconsistency. When teachers respond quietly, respectfully and privately, they protect student dignity and strengthen trust.



Justice Through Restorative Practice

Consequences at Marian College are now framed around repair, not punishment. Our consequences promote restorative conversations, re-entry plans and follow-up with families. This approach helps students learn from mistakes, rebuild relationships and return to learning with confidence.



A Justice Lens for Our Community

SWPBS is Marian College living out Kildare Ministries' call to justice, compassion and hope. It ensures:

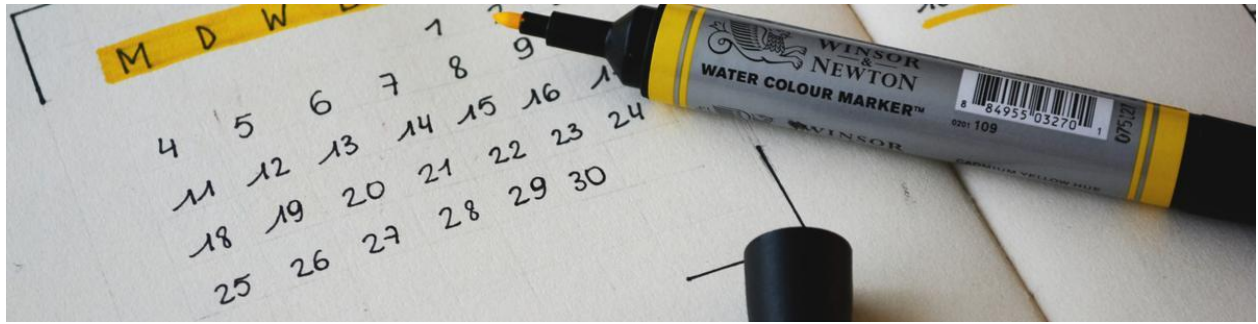
- every student is treated fairly
- expectations are clear and equitable
- behaviour is taught, not assumed
- relationships are strengthened
- mistakes become learning opportunities

This work is not theoretical - it is practical, relational and deeply aligned with our mission to pursue fullness of life for all. Now, in our second year of implementation, we are beginning to see the rewards of this hard work. Classrooms feel calmer, expectations are clearer, and students are responding positively to the consistency and care shown by staff. Small shifts such as more settled starts to lessons, stronger relationships, and increased engagement are signalling that our justice-focused approach is taking root. SWPBS is helping Marian

College become an even more predictable, fair and hope-filled community where every learner can flourish.



Catherine Howison
Principal
Marian College Ararat



2026 Calendar Dates

Network Meetings

KM Business Managers

6 November

KM Principals & Community Works Leaders

20 November

KM Risk Coordinators

29 October

Faith Leaders

17 November

Student Programs

Senior Leadership Retreat

7 to 9 December (Saltbush Balnarring Beach)