



17 June 2025

Diocesan Formation Support Plan

Dear Fathers, Principals, Parish Council members,
and staff of Parishes, Chancery and Catholic Education Sandhurst:

In November last year, I published the Sandhurst Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals. These Goals are the fruit of deep listening, dialogue and discernment over the last three years, and have been developed to guide, encourage and inform our personal and collective response to Jesus' great commission to 'Go, make disciples' (cf. Matt 28:19).

There are ten goals in total, and three of them focus explicitly on "life giving and empowering formation" (Strategic Direction 3), as formation is a key tool to pursue our mission as expressed in the Goals. In this context, "formation" refers to practices, activities and learning experiences that help each one of us live as disciples of Jesus Christ, grow in our discipleship, and discover what it means for us to be "missionary disciples" for our world today (see Goal 1.1). Importantly, formation was also the key focus of Decree 6 of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia (2022) and Part V of the Final Document of the Sixteenth Ordinary Synod of Bishops "For a Synodal Church" (2024).

Considering the above, and in consultation with the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council and the Council of Priests, I am today releasing a Diocesan Formation Support Plan to outline how we will support the implementation of the Sandhurst Strategic Mission and Pastoral Goals. The plan has ten projects: five commencing this year and five commencing in 2026. An outline of the Plan is attached.

I draw your attention to Projects 1–3, which include **Goals Familiarisation Workshops** and **Parish-based planning Processes** for implementing the Goals. Preparations for these will commence shortly and are an ideal opportunity for leaders in our parishes and school faith communities to come together in the spirit of our Shared Mission Agreements. A member of the Mission and Pastoral Life Team will be in touch soon to identify suitable dates for a **Workshop** and the follow-up **Planning Process** activities in your parish.

I also highlight the **Diocesan Formation Gathering** (Project 4), which will take place on Saturday 11 October at Notre Dame College, Shepparton. The day will focus on practical ways to grow our capacity to build belonging and a sense of community (Strategic Direction 2) in parishes, our broader Church ministries and faith communities. A date claimer for the Diocesan Formation Gathering will be issued shortly by the Office of Mission and Pastoral Life.

MOST REV. SHANE MACKINLAY
BISHOP OF SANDHURST





The present time is both challenging and exciting, both in our Church and more widely. I am confident that our efforts to engage in formation across the Diocese – both as individuals and in our parishes, schools and ministry groups – will inform, encourage, and inspire us to walk more closely with Jesus as his disciples and to respond purposefully to his great commission: ‘Go, make disciples’.

Yours sincerely,

+ Shane Mackinlay

MOST REV. SHANE MACKINLAY
BISHOP OF SANDHURST

Att. Outline of Diocesan Formation Support Plan