



Dear Friends,

A happy new year to you all. Unfortunately not a very happy start to 2020 for many in our Diocese with the tragic bushfire events over the last few weeks.

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and indeed many other regions have been, and continue to be, under threat. The Bushfires are of such a magnitude that most will likely know of people who have lost homes and in some cases livelihood. Our flora and fauna, already under stress due to the drought, have suffered yet again. Some good news is that at this stage there has been no significant damage to the twelve schools in our diocese in the Bushfire zones.

As part of the Catholic education system, in collaboration with other relevant agencies Holy Trinity will be supporting those impacted by the bushfires. I have been in contact with Principals from schools in the affected areas and with CE staff in regards to how best support these communities. For now it has been recommended that the best support for those affected by the fires is to provide financial assistance through a donation to one of the following:

- [St Vincent de Paul Society](#)
- [NSW Rural Fire Service](#)
- [Australian Red Cross](#)

Please note that in Term 1, Holy Trinity will be focusing all fund raising efforts to financially support the bushfire communities. Catholic Mission, which is usually our focus for Term 1, has also committed to raising funds for St Vincent De Paul bush fire appeals, instead of the usual international mission projects.

I have heard from some families that their children are anxious and nervous as a result of the fires. This is understandable and you may be unsure of how best to respond. The following documents may be of assistance:

- [Bushfire Fact Sheet for Parents](#)
- [Advice from Beyond Blue](#)
- [Headspace Mental Health](#)
- [Helping Children Affected by Disasters](#)

If any family in our community is needing support, please contact me directly and we will provide appropriate support. Our commitment to providing quality Catholic education for all those who seek it remains unwavering. Additional counselling services will be available for staff, students and families who need additional support. The NSW Government has published the [Bushfire Recovery Assistance](#). This document details a range of assistance measures available also.

Thank you to all those who have been actively working to fight fires across our region, or providing services to those impacted by fires. Thank you for your service, dedication and commitment to our community.

I look forward to welcoming your family back to school in the coming weeks.

Warmest wishes,

Philippa

philippa.brearley@cg.catholic.edu.au

