The 301st meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 19 November 2008 in the Taylor/Barlow Rooms, Polding Centre, Level 8, 133 Liverpool Street Sydney. The meeting was chaired by Bishop David Walker DD.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. **NSW/ACT Bishops Meeting**

The Bishops met on 6 November 2008 and approved the following on behalf of the CEC:

- 2009 CEC WorkPlan;
- 2009 CEC Budget;
- Minor changes to the CEC Charter;
- Second term appointments of Commissioners Danielle Cronin, Mary Kenyon and Gregory B Whitby from 1 January 2009; and,
- New appointments as Commissioners:
  - Sharon Cooke as the Indigenous Commissioner – effective immediately; and,

Susan MacLeod retires as Commissioner on 31 December 2008 after two terms totalling eight years. Anne MacLean replaces Susan MacLeod as Country CCSP representative.

Bishop Patrick Dougherty DD retired as Bishop of Bathurst on 11 November 2008. His membership of the Commission also ceased on that day. Commissioners warmly thanked Bishop Patrick for his valuable contribution to the work of the CEC and wished him well for his retirement.

The 2009 CEC WorkPlan will be placed on the CEC public website shortly. The CEC Charter on the website will also be updated with the changes approved by the Bishops.
2. **CEC Sustainability Forums 2009**

The CEC Working Party on Environmental Issues is in the process of inviting Bishops, Diocesan Directors, representatives of CLRI, parents, senior diocesan staff and principals to the 16 March 2009 CEC Sustainability Forum. The aim of the forum is to adopt a strategic approach to the implementation of sustainability by Catholic schools and education offices. Following the March forum, Dioceses will be invited to submit funding requests for Diocesan activities to implement sustainability practices. Funding for the March forum and Diocesan forums has been provided by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC).

3. **NSW Education Act: School Audits of Not for Profit Status**

Section 21A of the NSW Education Act deals with “for profit” schools. In early September 2008, the CEC advised all Catholic schools of the Compliance Audit Program under the Act and the auditing in 2008 of a sample of schools by the DET appointed firm, Oakton Services.

Oakton has conducted a sample audit of five schools – three Catholic systemic, one independent Catholic, one other independent school. The results of the audits have been reported to the Section 21A Steering Committee.

To ensure that accounting policies and procedures within Catholic schools are adequate to meet the requirements of Section 21A, the CEC has organised a seminar for Congregational schools (business managers, bursars) on 27 November 2008 and for System schools (education office finance managers, internal audit officers) on 1 December 2008. A representative from Oakton will present at the seminars.

4. **National Curriculum Standards and BOS Work Samples**

The Office of the NSW Board of Studies has re-convened the cross sector K-10 Work Samples Task Force with the intention of reviewing work completed and to provide advice on standards as part of the National Curriculum process. The group met on a regular basis during 2006 and 2007 to develop work samples to assist teachers implement the A to E grading scale. The work samples are available on the BOS Assessment Resource Centre (ARC) website - http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au CEC representatives on the committee are Anne-Maree Creenaune (CEO Wollongong) and Kate O’Brien (CEO Sydney). The group will have its next meeting on 21 November 2008.

5. **Australian Early Development Index Staffing: CEC Cross Sector Co-ordinator**

To enable the national roll-out of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in 2009, the Australian government has made available funds for a Co-ordinator to oversee the preparation for the roll-out and the implementation of the AEDI (May 2009 to July 2009) across the three school sectors. It has been agreed that Karen Ferrante will fill that cross sector position, which will be based in DET’s offices, for the period February 2009 to October 2009. Ms. Ferrante has been the Catholic sector officer supporting implementation of the 2007 and 2008 Australian Government-funded tuition assistance programs.
6. **Local Schools Working Together Program**

Applications for the LSWT Program closed on 21 October 2008. Applications were made directly to DEEWR and were not assessed by the CBGA, AIS or DET other than the requirement that the relevant authority was aware of an application being made. In the Catholic sector, applicant diocesan schools were required to liaise with the relevant education office. The three sectors established a good working relationship around the Program and kept each other informed of projects from the lead school sector. DEEWR has issued CEC with a list of the 34 NSW applications. Catholic schools are involved in 24 of the applications, either as lead school or partner school. It was the expectation of the three sectors in NSW that they would receive copies of the applications and provide for the information of DEEWR a suggested priority listing of projects. The DEEWR decision is to manage the assessment process directly with no involvement from state education authorities. DEEWR has established an assessment panel including outside persons experience in capital projects. Local Councils appear regularly in joint applications with schools for community halls, swimming pools and athletic tracks.

7. **Program Allocations**

The Commission approved preliminary allocations for 2009 for the following programs:

- LNSLN: 2009 Literacy Funding Allocations - $23.9 million;
- LNSLN: 2009 Special Education Funding Allocations - $11.0 million;
- ISA: 2009 Indigenous Education Funding Allocations (Estimates) for Diocesan Education/Schools Offices - $7.1 million;
- Country Area Program - $1.5 million; and,
- School Languages Program - $1.9 million.

These allocations are subject to confirmation of funding by DEEWR.

8. **300th COMMISSION Meeting Celebrations**

The Commission’s 300th meeting occurred on 15 October 2008. It had been intended that a celebration involving current and previous Commissioners would be held on that day. For various reasons, the celebration could not be held on that day.

Discussions have been held with Diocesan Directors to co host the 300th celebration with the opening of NSW Catholic schools week in March 2009. This approach has been agreed and planning for the joint event is well underway.
9. **Institute of Teachers: Amendment Bill**

The NSW government is proposing to amend the Institute of Teachers Act. The Bill before the Parliament clarifies procedures for the accreditation of teachers to teach in New South Wales and for the revocation and suspension of accreditation.

Under these changes, DOCS will no longer accredit Pre School Teachers; that responsibility will fall upon the Institute under its expanded role. This change will make co-location of Pre Schools with Primary schools administratively easier.

While VET Teachers do not come under the jurisdiction of the Institute, negotiations continue on this issue.

CEC and CCER are discussing possible industrial implications of the amendments as they are known at this point.

The Commission will discuss this matter again when further details are known.

10. **NSW Board of Studies: Fine Tuning the HSC**

The NSW BOS is proposing changes to streamline the HSC, particularly in testing and assessments. This review is welcomed by the Commission because current arrangements put too much stress on students and teachers. CEC is however considering the appropriateness of the review timetable. Further discussions are planned.

11. **NSW Government Mini-Budget: Issues for Schools**

The NSW Mini Budget proposes the withdrawal of the Back to School Allowance and the levying of a co-payment of up to $180 per family per annum for the School Student Transport Scheme. These reforms have confused Parents and the public generally. Very little information is known of these changes and of the concomitant administrative arrangements. The Commission confirmed as reasonable the actions taken by the CEC Secretariat and the Council of Catholic School Parents in advising Parents to consult their Local Member of Parliament should they require details of the government’s proposals.

The Commission agreed that a school transport co-payment is both inappropriate and inequitable. With respect of the abolition of the Back to School Allowance, Commissioners noted that some $2.9 million will be made available to support ‘needy’ Catholic schools.

12. **Trade Training Centres**

The administration of funding for Trade Training Centres rests with the Catholic Block Grant Authority (CBGA) and at this time Bishop David Walker is the CBGA delegate.

The Commission discussed an update on the program. The Burwood TTC was approved in Round One Phase One. Phase Two applications are currently being evaluated by DEEWR. The CBGA through the CEC Secretariat has been given full transparency to comment on all applications in New South Wales – government and non government. This improvement in transparency was welcomed by the Commission. In Phase two, there are seven Catholic applications and several others involve collaboration between the Catholic school sector and third parties.
Commissioners discussed the requirement by DEEWR for a Ten year Plan for NSW Catholic Schools TTC implementation. The CBGA proposed and Commissioners agreed to engage a central co-ordinator to assist Dioceses and Congregational schools meet this planning requirement.

13. Local Government Planning

The AIS and the CEC have put a submission to the NSW government to improve processing of development applications for all NSW schools – government and non-government. NSW Catholic schools suffer delays through current planning arrangements, which results in cost over runs and facilities not being ready on time. Discussions were held with the AIS and it was decided to forward a joint submission to the NSW Premier, the strategy of which was endorsed by the Commission.

14. National Partnership Agreements

The Australian government is changing the way in which it funds both State government and non-government schools. Some programs will be funded through National Partnership Agreements. The Commission sees it as important that all schools sectors are consulted along the way. Commissioners heard a progress report on this matter. The Commission has agreed to convene an extra meeting in December to consider and finalise funding arrangements for the 2009 to 2012 Quadrennium.


The Commission endorsed the submission to the NCEC giving feedback on MCEETYA’s Draft National Goals Action Plan. It was noted that the National Goals Action Plan will be launched in Melbourne on 5 December 2008.

MYCEETYA in its 2008 National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians will place young people at the centre of its declaration and make a commitment to supporting them to become:

• successful and creative learners;

• confident learners; and,

• active and informed citizens.

MYCEETYA has committed to taking co – operative action to achieve these educational goals for young Australians.

MYCEETYA commits to a new level of collaboration in eight important areas. The National Declaration is to be supported by a four year Action Plan that outlines the activities and initiatives that will be undertaken to support the achievement of the educational goals for young people. The Action Plan is to be reviewed and renewed every four years.

This first MCEETYA Action Plan has been developed in parallel with work undertaken through COAG and closely aligns with COAG activities where relevant.
16. **AGQTP NSW State Plan for 2009**

The Department of Education and Training has finalised the Draft AGQTP Cross Sectoral NSW Activity Plan for 2009. This Plan needs to be read in conjunction with the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme NSW Strategic Plan 2006 – 09. This Plan applies to all school sectors in NSW.

The Australian government also announced in December 2007 that the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme would be a source of funding for teacher professional development to implement the Digital Education Revolution.

The Commission endorsed the NSW Cross sectoral AGQTP 2009 State Plan as finalised by DET for submission to DEEWR.

John Kitney

**Secretary to the Commission**

25 November 2008