SUMMARY REPORT

The 312th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 17 November 2009 in the Clancy/ Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP DD.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. NSW/ACT Bishops Meeting of 5 November 2009

The Chairman reported on outcomes of the Bishops’ meeting of 5 November 2009:

- CEC 2010 Budget was approved;
- CEC 2010 WorkPlan was approved;
- Bishops’ five yearly review of Commission to commence in 2010;
- Bishops also discussed and noted the following reports:
  - Students with Disabilities;
  - Early childhood education;
  - National Partnerships;
  - Building the Education Revolution;
  - ‘Keep Them Safe’ implementation strategies; and,
  - New Information Requirements for Principals.

2. CEC Risk Management Plan

The Commission approved the CEC Risk Management Plan. This is an internal management document initiated by the Commission’s Audit and Risk Management Committee. CEC’s exposure to risk was evaluated by the Committee and senior staff of the CEC Secretariat. Risks and mitigation strategies were evaluated according to processes in keeping with the AS/NZS 4360:2004 Risk Management standard and other applicable standards and codes of ‘better’ practice. CEC management will undertake a half yearly risk update process and undertake a full assessment annually and report to the Committee.

3. 2010 Country Areas Program

The Commission approved the 2010 Country Areas Program allocations to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities totalling $1.4 million.

CAP aims to help rural schools and their communities improve the educational outcomes and opportunities of students who are educationally disadvantaged because of their geographical isolation. Eligibility to the CAP is confirmed by the Australian Government
while the NSW Minister for Education and Training manages the CAP school declaration process.

The CEC is represented on the NSW Ministerial Country Areas Program State Advisory Council. This Council has developed criteria for the identification of isolated, CAP-funded schools in NSW government and Catholic sectors. The criteria relate to population of town, distance from a major population centre and the density (number) of schools in the local area.

Total 2009 CAP enrolments were reduced by 171 students compared to 2008. NSW Catholic schools identified under the declaration process are located in the Armidale, Bathurst, Canberra and Goulburn, Wagga Wagga and Wilcannia/Forbes Dioceses. No Congregational schools have been declared under this Program.

4. **2010 School Languages Program**

The Commission approved the 2010 School Languages Program allocations to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities totalling $1.7 million and to Congregational schools totalling $300,000.

This Program supports initiatives to improve the learning outcomes of students who are learning languages other than English. Non English languages supported under this Program are Italian, French, Japanese, Indonesian, German, Arabic, Chinese, Indigenous languages, Spanish and Vietnamese.

This Program is separate from the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program, which supports the study of four Asian languages – Mandarin, Korean, Indonesian and Japanese – and their respective cultures.

5. **Special Education**

The Commission in 2008 resolved to improve its funding allocations methodology in support of students with disabilities (SWD). The Commission established the Special Education Working Party to develop a methodology for the implementation of the SWD Individual Profiling Strategy.

As part of its consultation process, on 14 October 2009 the Special Education Working Party hosted a State-wide Individual Profiling Forum involving participants from all Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and from the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes NSW.

Once the Individual Profiling Strategy is implemented, the Commission will build this data into its funding formulae for the 2013 Quadrennium.

6. **2010 Student Welfare Programs**

The Commission approved the 2010 Student Welfare Funding allocations to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities, namely, $199,600 from NSW Drug Education funds and $333,750 from RTA Road Safety funds.
7. **2010 Indigenous Education Allocations**

The Commission approved the 2010 Indigenous Education allocations to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities totalling $8.1 million. This targeted program is funded from the Commonwealth’s General Recurrent Grant for systemic schools. Indigenous education funding for Congregational schools from 2009 has been embedded into their respective General Recurrent Grant. The Commission also considered Aboriginal education accountability issues, see item 12 of these Summary Minutes.

8. **Vocational Education Advisory Group (VEAG)**

The Commission approved new terms of Reference for VEAG, which will now meet once a quarter rather than once a month but for a whole day.

Government VET funding for 2010 is still uncertain. It is subject to agreement with NSW DET through COAG processes. It is understood that 2010 funding will be similar to 2009 but that is not confirmed in a funding agreement as yet. It is anticipated that a VET funding agreement will be signed with the NSW Government by early 2010.

9. **Bushfire Management and Catholic Schools**

Commissioners noted that New South Wales is implementing new bush fire management systems in the light of the findings of the Inquiry into the 2009 Victorian bush fires. The NSW approach involves establishing quick and effective communication systems. Schools will be categorised based upon risk and a communications network set up. Commissioners noted the social and legal responsibilities associated with this NSW initiative. The Rural Fire Service is currently assessing the risk in bushfire prone areas of fire damage to community facilities, including schools. Previous safe exposure distances have been significantly decreased. Effective and prompt communications systems will need to be put into place. Any additional costs will have to be met by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and schools targeted. CEC continues to train with State emergency response authorities on all issues arising.

10. **‘Keep Them Safe’ Reforms**

Commissioners noted that the $60,000 Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Keep Them Safe Implementation grant has been confirmed. Diocesan Child Protection Coordinators have reviewed all Keep Them Safe implementation issues. Chapter 16A information Exchange requirements have commenced. CEC/AIS have briefed lawyers to amend the Privacy Manual for NSW non government schools. Minister Firth has been asked to clarify the enhanced helpline offered. Commissioners have also requested that Helpline and Child Wellbeing Unit support issues be explored with the NSW Premier.

11. **National Partnerships**

The NSW State Implementation Plan for National Partnerships was received by the CEC Secretariat following the Commission meeting. The Plan is a State wide document and outlines how NSW will implement National Partnerships across all school sectors.
12. Aboriginal Education Accountability Framework

The Commission considered the draft CEC Aboriginal Education Accountability Framework, which was agreed in principle.

Commissioners noted that on 6 November 2009, MCEECDYA agreed on a draft Indigenous Action Plan that will be shortly released for consultation.

Work has commenced on the development of state-based Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy growth targets to guide the achievement of the COAG-agreed national target to halve the performance gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (2018).

Given the continuing developments in this area, the Commission requested that the CEC Aboriginal Education Accountability Framework be resubmitted for approval following COAG’s finalisation of targets for Indigenous education.

13. State Low SES Schools

At its 21 October 2009 meeting, the Commission discussed the allocation of additional Low SES National Partnership funding totalling $14,922,710 from the NSW Government. This funding will be applied over the period 2011 to 2015.

The Commission decided to include schools which are not already targeted by the Commonwealth and which are below the median SES score (96) for General Recurrent Grants funding.

Dioceses advised the CEC Secretariat of the school/s selected for targeting within their diocesan funding envelope and any preferred phasing sequence. Twenty-three schools have been identified for inclusion in the State Implementation Plan for National Partnerships. The NSW Government has agreed to the Commission’s recommendations.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission
8 December 2009
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

- The CBGA made submissions to the Senate Inquiry into the BER and to the Australian National Audit Office;
- Round Two applications for Trade Training for Trade Training Centres were approved by the Australian Government and announced on 5 November by the Deputy Prime Minister. Seven CBGA member applications were approved with a total value of $38.5 million. Round Three applications close on 17 December 2009.
- The Round Two successful applications were:
  - St Peter’s Catholic College, Tuggerah (with MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale; and Central Coast School for Children with Autism, Tuggerah), Tuggerah-Warnervale Industry Pathways Project - $4 million.
  - St John’s College, Dubbo (with St Mary’s Central School, Wellington; Dubbo Christian School; and Macquarie Anglican Grammar), Orana Trade Training Centre - $6 million.
  - St Francis Xavier College, Hamilton (with St Pius X High School, Adamstown; St Paul’s High School, Booragul; St Mary’s High School, Gateshead; San Clemente High School, Mayfield), Newcastle Catholic Schools Trade Training Centre - $6.8 million.
  - All Saints College, Maitland (three campuses), Maitland Catholic Schools Trade Training Centre - $4.3 million.
  - St Clare’s High School, Taree, Manning Valley Trade Training Centre - $1.4 million.
  - Loyola Senior High School, Mt Druitt (with St Agnes Catholic High School, Rooty Hill; Clare Catholic High School, Hassall Grove; St Andrew’s College, Marayong; Terra Sancta College, Schofields; Emmaus Catholic College, Kemps Creek), Blacktown Catholic Vocational Training Centre - $9 million.
  - Edmund Rice College, Wollongong, Metal/Engineering Trade Training Centre - $1.3 million.
- On 16 November 2009, the Deputy Prime Minister approved the 23 general capital projects recommended by the CBGA from the 2009 application round.
- DEEWR has approved CBGA members in receipt of Capital Program funding to use, for a period of two years, tender methods consistent with BER procurement processes. This will allow CBGA members to go to tender on a consistent basis for both BER and general capital projects over this period.
- The CBGA held its annual consultation/forum on 12 November 2009 with State Priority Committee members, Diocesan Priority Committee executive officers, and
other interested facilities officers. The object of the forum was to review the past year’s operation, the SPC assessment process, resolve issues of policy and to finalise guidelines for applicants for 2010.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission

8 December 2009