The 313th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 10 February 2010 in the Clancy/Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Peter Turner.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. **NSW Legislative Council Inquiry: students with a Disability or Special Needs**

On the 7 December 2009, the NSW Legislative Council launched an Inquiry into the provision of education to Students with a disability or special needs. The Commission at this meeting considered a draft submission.

Commissioners noted that the CEC Secretariat is collating costs across the NSW Catholic schools sector to demonstrate the resources currently available to support special needs students enrolled in NSW Catholic schools. The NSW Catholic schools sector enrols a significantly high percentage of special needs students who need to be appropriately supported.

Commissioners considered that the submission should argue for at least the continuation of existing services. Skilling up teachers is most important. In relation to VET courses, the breaking down of barriers between Education and TAFE that result in expensive duplication of support services is a priority need. Early intervention also needs particular emphasis.

The Commission will approve the submission at its meeting on 24 March 2010.

It is anticipated that CEO Officers will attend an Inquiry public hearing on 22 March 2010.

2. **2010 Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP)**

The Commission approved the allocation of the 2010 AGQTP funds of $1.4 million across the Dioceses and Congregational schools. These funds will be distributed in Term One 2010. Commissioners noted that the new guidelines have some alignment with Teacher Quality National Partnership reform requirements. It is likely that the AGQTP funding and priorities will be rolled into the Teacher Quality National Partnership from 2011 onwards.
3. **Commission Positions**

Bishop David Walker was re-appointed as Deputy Chairman for 2010. Dr. Anne Wenham was elected as Chair of the Education Policy Committee. Peter Turner was re-appointed as Chair of the Resources Policy Committee. Danielle Cronin was elected as Chair of the Vocational Education Advisory Group.

4. **Keep Them Safe Update**

Commissioners considered an update on the implementation of the Keep Them Safe Program.

The CEC Secretariat has provided some preliminary advice to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools on implementation and privacy matters. Centacare Broken Bay is preparing five training modules for the sector: Using the Mandatory Reporter Guide; Role Clarification; Communication with Families; Supporting Families; and Maintaining Confidentiality and Privacy. The CEC Privacy Manual for Schools and the CEC Child Protection Guidelines for Catholic School Personnel are also in the process of being revised.

Commissioners noted that the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee (CESWCC) is scheduled to meet on 11 February 2010. The Catholic Keep Them Safe Forum will be held in July/August 2010.

The Commission approved correspondence for submission to the NSW Government on key Keep Them Safe implementation issues.

5. **Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Outcomes**

Commissioners supported the AEDI reports as providing key information in understanding the developmental needs of children entering the school environment for the first time. Commissioners noted that twenty three per cent of children in their first year of school are developmentally vulnerable in one or more of the five domain areas. This information is a helpful input to school curriculum implementation and early intervention strategies.

Commissioners supported early childhood activities as part of the continuum of schooling and endorsed the transfer of responsibility for early childhood matters from Community Services to Education. It was noted that individual schools are able to access profiles of the strengths and vulnerabilities of their student population across each of the five developmental domains. Commissioners observed that the Australian Government may allocate new early childhood centres based upon priorities arising from AEDI profiling of communities.

Commissioners have requested AEDI data based upon particular Local Government Areas to aid in strategic planning.
6. **Bushfire Management and Catholic Schools**

Commissioners expressed concerns about the new system of fire alerts. Commissioners noted that there is confusion about what is to be done when a catastrophic notice is declared in a region. Commissioners discussed what happened with the alerts in December 2009 and January 2010.

Commissioners requested that the CEC Secretariat:

- obtains clarification on the legal implications of catastrophic declarations and notices;
- develops necessary communications protocols for the Catholic schools sector; and,
- obtains advice on insurance consequences from Catholic Church Insurances.

7. **National Partnerships Update**

Commissioners noted that the NSW State Government’s National Partnerships Evaluation Committee includes Catholic representation and is undertaking a formative evaluation of the first stages of the National Partnership implementation process. The key focus is on the learning experiences of the first targeted schools in order to improve NPA implementation. The evaluation is being conducted by independent consultants ARTD.

A response methodology has been developed for the first NSW Smarter Schools National Partnership report. Diocesan NPA Coordinators have until 19 February 2010 to finalise their inputs. The 2009 NSW Report is due with DEEWR in April 2010. The third tranche payment for National Partnerships is linked to the acceptance of this Report by DEEWR. In future, reporting each year will trigger payments against program Key Performance Indicators.

The Teacher Quality National Partnership ParaProfessionals in Schools guidelines have been referred to Catholic Church Employment Relations for advice. Commissioners raised concerns about terminology, preferring to use established position award titles.

Commissioners noted that the CEC Secretariat is collating information on Diocesan Plans for Centres of Excellence. This information will be posted to the NSW Smarter Schools National Partnerships website.

8. **CEC / CCRESS Best Practice in Religious Education: Research Project**

The first CEC/CCRESS Forum was held in 2007 and was facilitated by Sr. Jan Barnett rsj. Because of her previous success in this role, Sr. Jan has been asked by the Planning Committee to facilitate the 27 September 2010 Forum.

The Planning Committee through Australian Catholic University is conducting a series of project surveys with RE staff and catechists. Commissioners expressed their appreciation of the high quality of the survey material that has been developed. Commissioners did request some clarification of Teacher Professional Development issues.

100 participants will attend the 27 September 2010 Forum. Forum attendees will be drawn from religious education specialists, educationists, academics, parents, administrators and clergy. The Forum will consider the findings of the survey and develop strategic recommendations for the Commission and CCRESS. Both bodies will consider the findings and then report to the NSW/ACT Bishops, with recommendations, to improve Catholic religious education in Catholic and government schools.
9. **Australian National Curriculum and My School Update**

At the time of the meeting, ACARA was finalising the broad outline, scope and sequence for the details for the curriculum for English, mathematics, the sciences and history, K-12. Draft curriculum documents were noted as becoming available from late February 2010.

Feedback can be provided on the draft Australian national curriculum documents through the ACARA websites. Two NSW Catholic sector forums on Australian curriculum issues are planned:

- K-6 Diocesan Advisors forum on 25-26 March 2010; and,
- CSSA 7-12 Forum on 29 March 2010.

Both activities will be workshop-focused, enabling discussion and feedback on the draft K-10 curriculum documents (English, Mathematics, the Sciences and History) and will involve ACARA and NSW BOS Officers.

*My School* data was released on 29 January 2010 as scheduled.

Commissioners noted that there were over nine million hits on the ACARA website on 28 January 2010 which was the first day that My School data became available. Commissioners also noted the publication by the Sydney Morning Herald on 29 January 2010 of NAPLAN results based on the ranking of schools by ICSEA scores.

Commissioners shared some public concerns about the validity of similar school groupings. The 2009 NAPLAN results had already resulted in some additional schools being added to the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership agreement. My School publication of financial data will occur in January 2011. Year 12 outcomes data is also to be published.

10. **Quinquennial Review of CEC**

The NSW/ACT Bishops require an external evaluation of the Catholic Education Commission to be undertaken every five years. The next review is scheduled for 2010. The Bishops have been advised that the review would be conducted in the course of 2010 and that a brief for the Review would be provided for their meeting on 4 March 2010.

Commissioners noted that a broad consultation process will occur during both the evaluation stage and determination of recommendations stage. Commissioners agreed that a full review was not required because of the considerable reform that has occurred consequent to the past two reviews.

Commissioners advised that the 2010 Quinquennial Review should cover:

- effectiveness of the Commission as a strategic voice for NSW Catholic schools;
- relationship to the National Catholic Education Commission;
- changing environment for Catholic schooling; and,
- possible expansion of the mandate of the CEC in relation to both higher education and early childhood services.

The Commission approved the proposed submission to the 4 March 2010 NSW/ACT Bishops meeting outlining a proposed brief and process for the 2010 Quinquennial Review of the CEC.
11. **Crossroads Review**

Commissioners affirmed that the 2007 NSW/ACT Bishops Statement *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads* is a most important statement on Catholic schooling and one that is at the forefront of both Catholic education strategic planning and the management of Catholic schools in New South Wales. Commissioners agreed that a review of progress being made across the Dioceses in implementing the Bishops’ statement should be undertaken. Commissioners agreed that a “focus group” methodology would be most appropriate. It is intended that the review should be managed by the CEC Secretariat in conjunction with Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education over 2010. It was further agreed that the actual review process would best be carried out by a researcher appointed from one of the Catholic Universities.

12. **2010 Road Safety/Drug Education and Student Wellbeing Program Funding**

Commissioners considered a proposal to restructure the CEC student wellbeing program funding for 2010. This proposal was discussed with Diocesan Officers at special meetings dealing with both Road Safety/Drug Education and Student Wellbeing Advisers held during 2009.

The Commission also agreed to simplify accountability and reporting processes by combining all programs into one targeted CEC program titled Student Wellbeing. The Commission also approved the 2010 Diocesan funding allocations totalling:

a) $400,000 for Road Safety;

b) $280,000 for Road Safety Professional Development;

c) $220,000 for State Drug Education; and,

d) $358,108 for Student Wellbeing programs.

13. **Music Copyright**

The Commission considered and approved proposed revised APRA and AMCOS music licenses for 2010 and beyond. New remuneration rates will be as follows:

(a) **Australasian Performing Right Association Limited (APRA)**

- A 7 year licence agreement for public performances of musical works in and by schools. - Rates: $0.22 (primary) and $0.32 (secondary) per FTE student for 2010 with annual CPI adjustments for the following 6 years (by comparison for 2009 a flat rate of $0.15 per FTE student applied).

(b) **Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (AMCOS)**

- A 5 year agreement for both photocopying and limited digital copying of musical works by schools with new rates as follows: 2010 $0.65; 2011 $0.75; 2012 $0.80; then 2012 and 2013 plus CPI (by comparison for 2009 a rate of $0.54 per student applied).

John Kitney  
**Secretary to the Commission**  
16 March 2010
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

Building the Education Revolution

Summary of BER projects to end January 2010:

(i) **NSP Projects:** all 1,111 approved projects have commenced of which 815 projects (76%) are reported as completed. $69.3m has been paid out or 82% of the total allocation.

(ii) **P21 Projects:** of the 734 approved projects, 732 have proceeded to post-design phase and eligible to claim expenditure; the other two projects are special cases where a delayed commencement has been approved by DEEWR. Actual construction has commenced on 251 projects (34%) with a further 10 projects fully completed. $125.8m has been paid out or 14% of the total allocation.

(iii) **Science & Language Centres:** of the 29 approved projects, 9 have commenced construction. The original completion date of 30 June 2010 has been extended to the end of 2010. $3.9m has been paid out or 8% of the allocation.

Maintenance of Effort for BER

Planned system capital expenditure forecasts for 2009 – 2012 to demonstrate maintenance of effort are to be provided to DEEWR by 19 March 2010.

Trade Training Centres

14 TTC projects with Catholic schools as lead schools have had funding approval over Rounds 1 and 2. Close to $43m has been allocated. The first TTC approved, Southern Cross Catholic Vocational College, Burwood, has finished stage one and has taken its first Year 11 intake of 141 students in 2010.

The TTC Program has been well received among the Catholic secondary schools and 11 Expressions of Interest involving 20 schools (including 5 cluster projects) and $26.6m in grants have been made for Round 3, including the 2 unsuccessful applicants from Round 2. The CBGA TTC support officer is assisting schools with their Round 3 applications and approved projects with their contract arrangements.

Round 3 will be extremely competitive as DEEWR has received nationally EOIIs to the value of $723m with only $103.4m available in grants.
General Capital Grants Program

Guidelines and electronic application forms for the 2010 application round are being finalised. Applications close with the CBGA on 27 April 2010. The application process is essentially the same as for previous years with only some minor variations.

The 23 projects recommended in the 2009 for $42m in grants and subsequently approved by the Minister were made Initial Offers late in 2009 and all are proceeding to tender stage before requesting Final Offer from the CBGA.

Commissioners noted that the CBGA has not determined the amount of grant funds available for the 2010 application round as the matter of a 2013 funding allocation has not yet been finalised between DEEWR and the non-government education authorities.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission
16 March 2010