THREE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH MEETING
24 March 2010

SUMMARY REPORT

The 314th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 24 March 2010 in the Clancy/ Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. NSW Education Act: Implementing Attendance Requirements

Commissioners noted the changes to the NSW Education Act and the new requirements in place to approve absences from compulsory education for a student between the ages of six and seventeen. Under this legislation, no one has authority to approve that a student can opt out of compulsory education for any reason.

Commissioners considered the proposed delegation thresholds being put in place in government schools. Commissioners agreed that the structures in the NSW Catholic schools Diocesan systems are similar to those in the NSW Government school system; however, the position titles are different. Commissioners agreed that a comparable delegations structure to Government schools is acceptable for Systemic schools in respect of school attendance exemptions.

The authority structures in Congregational schools are different to Systemic schools. The delegations structure for Congregational schools will need to be different. Commissioners suggested that the Executive Director discuss this matter with the Conference of leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI). Commissioners noted that the system of delegations for Congregational schools will, however, need to be consistent for the purposes of Parliamentary drafting.
2. Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL): National Teaching Standards

Commissioners noted the recent establishment of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), which has responsibility for implementing National Teaching Standards.

A forum, hosted by the NSW Institute of Teachers, will be held on 21 April 2010 with key stakeholders from across the sectors. Dioceses and Congregational schools as employers of teachers may provide individual responses to the consultation process by 7 May 2010.

Commissioners noted that all State responses will be considered by an expert group established by AITSL. Final endorsement will be a matter between AITSL and the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). Implementation of the National Teaching Standards is a requirement of the National Partnership for Teacher Quality.

Commissioners noted that the National Standards will be compatible with existing State standards.

3. Public Policy Committee: Appointment of Member

Paul Holman was elected to the vacant position on the Public Policy Committee. Paul is Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of the Armidale Catholic Schools Office and for a number of years has been the Chair of the State Priority Committee for the Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW.

4. DEEWR ICT Innovation Fund

The Australian Government recently launched its “Digital Strategy for Teachers and School Leaders”. This strategy has two implementation strands: The ICT Proficiency Project, improving the ICT proficiency of teachers and school leaders; and The ICT Innovation Fund ($20m).

DEEWR has invited submissions from consortia involving school authorities and universities under the ‘Innovation Fund’.

Commissioners agreed that a National Catholic Education Sector submission is the most appropriate way of engaging with this program. Commissioners agreed that a small expert group be established immediately to develop NSW input to the National Catholic Education Sector submission. This input will be provided to the National Catholic Education Commission. The other consortium partners should be Catholic Network Australia and the two Catholic universities.

Commissioners considered that the National Catholic Education proposal should be focused on the classroom and not be an over arching IT strategy. Commissioners also noted the DEEWR guidelines that successful proposals will be developmental, scalable, sustainable, linked to the National School Education reform agenda and capable of demonstrating the use of ICT for improving pedagogy.
5. **Public Policy Committee: Election Material**

The Australian election is due in late 2010. The NSW State election is due in early 2011. The Commission considered it timely to commence planning for its educative and advocacy programs in the lead up to both elections. The Public Policy Committee is the Commission’s forum for planning the NSW Catholic Schools Sector’s interaction with the political processes.

A range of material has been developed by the Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP). All items will shortly be uploaded to the CCSP website and be included on all eleven diocesan schools websites.

These include:

- Election brochures — 1 x family;
- Kindergarten and year 7 flyers - for enrolment and school prospectus; and,
- 21 items for school newsletters — in PDF format and jpg for ease of modification at local school level.

Delivery to all NSW Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities will shortly be underway. This material will be available to Parents for their information and to School and Diocesan Parent Groups for wider distribution.

6. **National Partnerships Update**

Commissioners noted that the Deputy Prime Minister has authorised the second facilitation payment of $53.635 million to New South Wales upon receipt of the Bilateral Agreements and Implementation Plan. The DPM has requested the agreement of NSW to report against the *Smarter Schools* National Partnership Reporting Framework. The DPM has also advised that further quantified milestones need to be provided for each facilitation and reward reform in the revised Implementation Plan.

Commissioners noted the Incentives Menu. NSW Department of Education and Training’s objective is to trial and to evaluate a number of different approaches to determine whether they improve student learning outcomes. Incentives are designed to attract and retain high quality teachers and improve the capacity of existing staff. Commissioners also noted that incentives are temporary for the life of the school’s National Partnership funding.

Commissioners also considered a progress report on the forum, planned for 31 March 2010, to be held in conjunction with Catholic Social Welfare. The object of this forum is to plan how the NSW Catholic sector can position itself for the 2011 commencement of the Early Childhood National Partnership in NSW.
7. National Australian Curriculum Update

The draft Australian Curriculum documents for English, mathematics, history and science K-10 were released on 1 March 2010. The consultation period closes on 23 May 2010. Structured consultation activities will take place during the consultation period, including stakeholder forums, public information sessions, school trials, and on-line evaluation surveys. Catholic schools and teachers are fully involved in the various consultation processes, co-ordinated thorough CEC and the NSW Board of Studies.

Commissioners noted that the NSW Board of Studies is coordinating consultation meetings on national Australian curriculum documents. Commissioners also noted that five forums are planned over late March to mid April that are open to NSW Catholic sector participants. These forums are being convened by ACARA, CEC and CSSA.

The consultation period for English, mathematics, history and the sciences K-10 closes on 23 May 2010. The CEC Secretariat will consolidate the views of the NSW Catholic schools sector.

8. COAG Indigenous Education Action Plan

Commissioners noted the development of the draft Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010-2014. It focuses on six areas: readiness for school; engagement and connections; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and pathways to real post-school options. Drivers are General Recurrent Grant and National Partnership agreements and the emerging COAG National Aboriginal Education Plan.

Commissioners noted there may not be any additional funding for Focus schools but that funding needs to be clarified with DEEWR. Recognising Focus schools increases reporting substantially. Commissioners did not agree with developing Individual Learning Plans for all indigenous students in schools but only those students below minimum standards in literacy or numeracy.

9. School Safety Management, Bullying, Knives in Schools

Commissioners noted that DEEWR is finalising a revised version of the National Safe Schools Framework. This Framework will focus on strategies to eliminate bullying in schools, including cyber bullying. Specifically Commissioners noted possible new compliance requirements in relation to the monitoring of school playground behaviour and electronic reporting. There may also be a future requirement to report bullying incidents on MySchool.

The CEC Secretariat has reissued memoranda to remind both Systemic and Congregational school Principals about existing protocols. Commissioners noted support available from Police Youth Liaison Officers.
10. **CEC 2009 HSC Analysis: Key Issues**

The 2009 HSC analysis includes data of 16,162 students in 130 Catholic schools. Issues covered by Dr DeCourcy in the 2009 HSC report include:

- Slight increase in number and percentage of students in Year 12 at Catholic schools from 2008;
- Overall trends 2003-2009, including continuing positive trend in comparison between Catholic sector and whole of state results;
- Improved web-based delivery of results and management of security issues;
- English – Standard and Advanced course bands 5 and 6 results;
- Bands 5 or 6 in Sciences compared to other courses;
- Below-state performance of Catholic sector schools in extension courses related to below-average participation in these courses; and,
- Continuing notable discrepancy in overall results between boys and girls (with girls achieving better results than boys).

Commissioners discussed the 2009 HSC analysis, focussing on the problem of below–state participation and performance of NSW Catholic schools in extension and other high outcomes courses. The relationship of School Certificate results with NAPLAN results is now also being explored.

11. **Reporting School Financial Data to ACARA**

The public reporting on schools on the MySchool website is to be extended by the provision of individual government and non-government school financial data later in 2010 based upon the 2009 school year. The financial data is to be available for ACARA by June 2010. All schools will report government grants, private income and capital expenditure and will have to allocate actual costs and accurately apportion Head Office type costs.

12. **Draft NSW Public Health Bill 2010: Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Primary Schools**

Under the NSW Public Health Act 1991 Primary School Principals have certain obligations with respect to the management of Vaccine preventable diseases. The 1991 Act is currently under review and CEC has been asked to comment on those matters which impact Primary schools, refer attachment.

Following discussions, it was agreed to:

- support the inclusion of chicken pox as a scheduled disease; and,
- not support any new non – compliance penalties for parents. Rather it was agreed that an educative approach is required.

13. **2010 NSW DET Agreement: NAPLAN Testing**

Since the introduction of NAPLAN testing in 2008, NSW DET’s Educational Measurement Directorate has been the NAPLAN Test Administration Authority for NSW Catholic schools (systemic and Congregational). The Commission agreed to continue this arrangement for 2010.
14. **Roadshow Copyright Agreement**

The Commission endorsed and adopted the executed CECNSW and Roadshow Copyright Licence for NSW Catholic Schools.

15. **2010 VET Funding Allocations**

Commissioners have been repeatedly advised that under the new Australian and State VET funding arrangements funding for VET in Schools ceased to be guaranteed at the end of 2008. On 10 February 2010 CEC was advised that the 2010 TVET grant is $2,341,622 (excluding GST). The 2009 grant was $2,327,146. CEC still has not been advised of the VET in schools RTO support funding for 2010. In 2009 this funding amounted to $1,583,938. The Commission approved the 2010 allocation of TVET support grants for Dioceses and Congregational Schools.

16. **CEC Special Needs Submission to NSW Legislative Council Inquiry**

Ian Baker the CEC Director of Education Policy and Programs, Geraldine Gray the CEC State Coordinator Special Needs, Danny Rankin the Special Needs Advisor of the Broken Bay Diocese and Anthony Weir the Principal of St Brendan’s Catholic Primary School Lake Munmorah attended a public hearing of the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry on 22 March 2010. Evidence was given about funding of special needs, number of special needs students and methods of delivering services to special needs students.

Supplementary CEC advice will be provided in respect of:

- autism satellite classes and the concomitant costs; and,
- deployment of school counselling services for and by NSW Catholic schools.

The Commission endorsed the CEC Special Learning Needs Inquiry Submission and requested feedback on the outcomes of the Inquiry.

17. **2010 Services Agreement for Literacy and Numeracy online Data Analysis between CEC and NSW DET**

The Catholic Education Commission and the NSW Department of Education have entered into an agreement to enable provision of new online services, which were developed in 2009 for use by Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership schools. These resources are now available to schools other than Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership schools.

The three new services are:

- SMART eLearning Modules
- Data Analysis Skills Assessment (DASA)
- Surveys Online

The eLearning modules and DASA are available free of charge to the 26 Catholic National Partnerships for Literacy and Numeracy schools. Availability to all other schools, including Low SES National Partnership schools is at a cost.

John Kitney

**Secretary to the Commission**

31 March 2010
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

Building the Education Revolution

National School Pride Projects: As at the end of February, 989 projects were reported as ‘completed’, namely, 89% of all projects. Of the total NSP allocation, $77.9m has been paid out, 92% of the total allocation.

DEEWR has approved the extensions sought for 122 projects as ‘special cases’ to be completed between the original final completion date of 2 February 2010 and 30 June 2010.

Around 300 of the completed projects have been totally acquitted.

Primary Schools 21st Century:

Of the total of 732 project components, 346 (47%) have started actual construction and 23 (3%) are fully completed.

Other Matters

Commissioners noted that the CBGA was originally invited to present to a hearing of the Senate Inquiry into the BER on 16 February 2010. The CBGA now has a 45 minute hearing time scheduled for 18 May 2010.

Since their 10 February 2010 meeting, Commissioners noted that a pro-forma to collect the necessary financial data on Maintenance of Effort had been issued to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities. The CBGA submitted the aggregated data to DEEWR by the closing date of 19 March 2010 as scheduled.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission
31 March 2010