The 315th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 21 April 2010 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. Corporate Governance

Commissioners approved the following governance documents:

- 2009 CEC Special Purpose Financial Report;
- Changes to the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Management Committee;
- Internal Audit Charter; and,
- 2010 Internal Audit Plan.

2. Indigenous Education Focus Schools

Commissioners noted that the Ministerial Council on Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs on 16 April 2010 approved the Indigenous Education Action Plan and confirmed a National funding pool of $25 million to 31 December 2012 for targeted Indigenous Students. Applications with DEEWR close on 11 June 2010. Advice on implementation issues has been circulated.

Commissioners confirmed St Mary’s School, Armidale as this sector’s priority proposed focus school. Commissioners are exploring the inclusion of other schools in this Program.
3. **Australian National Curriculum:K-10: Advice from Catholic Sector Forums**

The Catholic K-6 forum was held on 25 March 2010 and the Secondary schools (CSSA) 7-10 forum was held on 29 March 2010.

Commissioners noted that both forums were led by representatives of Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority and the NSW Board of studies. Preliminary briefings were provided by ACARA and NSW BOS Officers. As part of both forums, participants worked in small specialist groups and then were brought together to discuss outcomes.

Commissioners discussed the feedback provided to the ACARA Secretariat and to the NSW BOS. Commissioners were satisfied that the Catholic sector’s participants covered all aspects of the K – 10 curricula thoroughly and that the feedback was comprehensive.

4. **Chaplaincy Program Extension**

Commissioners noted that the Chaplaincy program is having a positive impact in participating schools and is being integrated positively with other programs. The Catholic Education and Social Welfare Co-ordinating Committee has endorsed the Program as has the Council of Catholic School Parents.

Commissioners consider that the National Schools Chaplaincy Program beyond 2011 should be refocused into a targeted program with emphasis on student wellbeing in a way which can also support the engagement of faith Ministers for the purpose of providing liturgical, pastoral and support functions, where appropriate. It was also agreed that a refocused program could support the revised National Safe Schools Framework (2010). Commissioners concluded that more secure, focused and ongoing funding will enable schools to provide coordinated support for student wellbeing along with a focus on support for families.

5. **2010 Quinquennial Review of CEC**

Commissioners welcomed the NSW/ACT Bishops’ appointment of Bishop David Walker DD to co-ordinate the Quinquennial review of CEC in conjunction with Bishop Anthony Fisher OP DD. Commissioners noted that the review will have a short timeframe. It is proposed that the review will commence in June and provide recommendations to the November 2010 meeting of the NSW/ACT Bishops.

Commissioners agreed that *Cross Roads* should feature prominently. It was also agreed that the relevance of the current CEC business model needs to be considered given that NSW Catholic schools are operating in an ever more complex environment. Commissioners suggested that a Commission self appraisal should be part of the review process.
6. **National Partnerships Implementation Update**

Commissioners noted the progress with the implementation of National Partnerships since the 10 February 2010 meeting.

Commissioners were advised that the Literacy and Numeracy Work Group has endorsed the Literacy and Numeracy Program Evaluation Scoping Study. A reference group will now be established to manage the project and this will include Catholic representation.

Commissioners noted that Minister Firth has endorsed a cross sectoral 2009 NSW performance report. This was recently provided to the Deputy Prime Minister.

CEC and DET have agreed on proposed cash flow arrangements for the Smarter Schools National Partnership. Under this proposal, Dioceses and Congregational schools will receive funding for initiatives in advance.

Factsheets on the four NSW Catholic Sector Centres of Excellence have been loaded on the NSW National partnership website. Dioceses have been requested to provide feedback to the CEC on the implementation of the New National Teaching Standards, given that the Standards are the Teacher Quality National Partnership Facilitation Reform requirement.

7. **Commonwealth Funding Review**

On 15 April 2010, the Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard gave a presentation to the Sydney Institute. Her speech covered the broadest parameters of the impending funding review. She made it clear that the Review will be a review of the funding of all Australian schools, government and non-government, including funding from all Australian Governments and will be undertaken by eminent Australians.

It is expected that by the end of April, the Deputy Prime Minister will release a discussion paper on school funding building on the broad, fundamental questions raised in her 15 April address. At the same time, draft terms of reference for the review will be released for discussion.

Commissioners welcomed the broadening of the Commonwealth review to cover all schools. Commissioners noted that the CEC will have opportunity to respond to all discussion papers. Government consultation with the education sectors will conclude in May 2010 and final terms of reference will then be announced.

Commissioners noted that the proposed review will examine the factors that increase school delivery costs including remoteness of location, disabilities and special needs and indigeneity. Commissioners also noted Minister Gillard’s view that the effects of disadvantage on student achievement can be overcome.

Commissioners observed that it can be anticipated that there will be some form of socio-economic score or index for each school and the links between resources and student / school outcomes examined and new funding established accordingly.

Finally, Commissioners discussed the fact that Minister Gillard has committed to a funding guarantee that will be transitional for those schools considered to be over funded whereby their current funding per student will not be increased by future cost movements until their new funding level reaches their current nominal level through movements in the AGSRC.
8. **AEDI 2010 Data Collection**

The 2009 AEDI checklist has been completed by teachers for 97.55% of the estimated five year old population. It was noted that five NSW Catholic schools for which there is insufficient 2009 AEDI data will be invited to participate in a special AEDI data collection in 2010. Commissioners were advised that these results will be added to the 2009 results, and provided there are more than 15 children and two teachers the community results will be released in 2010.

9. **2010 Federal Election**

Commissioners were advised that NCEC has been making preparations for the 2010 election for some time. An election package has been developed by NCEC Secretariat and will be made available to state and territory Catholic education directors after 22 April 2010.

The package will include:

- An Australian Catholic school data sheet;
- Information on marginal seats to be targeted;
- A Funding Data Pocket Guide; and,
- Positive Catholic message advice.

Separate State and Territory information sheets are to be developed locally. After the announcement of the election date, it is planned that meetings will be held with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition as well as other key personnel.

10. **VET in Schools Funding**

Commissioners have been repeatedly advised that under the new Commonwealth 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). 2010 TVET allocations were endorsed by the Commission at its 24 March 2010 meeting. CEC has now been advised that the 2010 VET in Schools allocation is based on the same criteria as for 2009.

The Commission endorsed the 2010 VET in Schools allocations to Dioceses totalling $1,711,591 for servicing both system and non-systems schools.

John Kitney

**Secretary to the Commission**
12 May 2010
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**Building the Education Revolution (Funding Program of $1.1 billion for CBGA over 2010 – 2012)**

**NSP Projects**: As at 15 April 2010, 1,000 projects are reported as completed. That is, 90% of the total approved projects. Of the total NSP allocation, $79.2million has been paid out, 93.8% of the allocation. Around 416 of the completed projects have been fully acquitted.

**P21 Projects**: Of the total of 732 projects, 378 (52%) have started actual construction and 32 (4.4%) are fully completed. Of the total allocation of $888.2million, $194.8million has been paid out in progress claims, 22% of the total.

**Science and Language Centres** Of the 29 projects approved under the CBGA administration, 17 have commenced construction, nil are completed. Of the total allocation of $49.3million, the CBGA has paid out $9.7million in progress claims, 19.6% of the total.

The SLC projects are required to be completed by end 2010.

**Other Matters**

**Federal BER Taskforce**

Deputy Prime Minister Gillard announced on 12 April 2010, the establishment of an independent Taskforce to investigate the operation of BER. It is understood that the Taskforce will focus on complaints, contractual arrangements and costs in the government sector.

NSW CBGA has been asked by NCEC to coordinate an initial national Catholic sector response to the announcement of the Taskforce. All Block Grant Authorities will contribute to the cost of the Taskforce from their administrative funds funded through the BER programs.

**NSW Upper House Inquiry**

The NSW Upper House has established an Inquiry into the Building the Education Revolution Program. The purpose is to establish whether fees and charges for projects are excessive, whether local builders are being used and whether good value is being achieved. The Inquiry is focusing on government schools and the NSW Department of Education and Training.
National Building Economic Stimulus Plan in NSW

The NSW Premier has established a review of the exercise of the NSW Coordinator General’s function, as required under the National Building and Jobs Plan Act 2009. The objective of the Act was to ensure the timely delivery in NSW of the infrastructure projects funded by the Commonwealth under the National Building and Jobs Plan.

This Review will decide whether to recommend a continuation of changed planning regulations implemented under the *NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan (State Infrastructure Delivery) Act 2009* [Infrastructure Taskforce Coordinator-General].

Submissions to the review are required by 14 May 2010. The Resources Policy Committee at its 6 April 2010 meeting discussed the Review and supported the continuation of the changed planning regulations operating under the Infrastructure Act as beneficial to schools.

The CEC/CBGA will prepare a submission. There will be liaison with the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities to provide content and practical examples for inclusion in the CEC submission.

John Kitney  
*Secretary to the Commission*  
12 May 2010