SUMMARY REPORT

The 317th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 23 June 2010 in the Clancy/ Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Bishop David Walker.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. **2010 Quinquennial Review of CEC**

Bishop David Walker advised the Commission that the NSW/ACT Bishops at their meeting on 3 June 2010 approved the Terms of Reference for the 2010 Quinquennial review of CEC. Bishop David has been delegated by the Bishops to appoint two consultant reviewers and oversee the review. It is expected that the Report of the Review will be presented to the Bishops in early 2011.

2. **Changes to the NSW Education Act**

Commissioners considered implementation of recent amendments to the NSW Education Act relating to attendance. Commissioners noted that non-government school Principals currently give approval for absences from school without delegation under the NSW Education Act. Commissioners agreed that Principals should be given delegation for approving absences up to fifty days and that a complementary structure needs to be put in place for approvals greater than fifty days.

Under the Education Act, the Education Minister now has authority to approve alternative forms of education in special circumstances. Commissioners discussed how a delegation could be exercised in respect of this power on behalf of NSW Catholic schools. It was formally agreed to recommend to the Minister that this power should be delegated to the NSW Board of Studies.

Commissioners noted that the NSW DET has drafted *Guidelines for Exemption from School*. Commissioners noted that Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools are providing feedback on attendance codes and the implications for changing current attendance register criteria.
3. Sustainability in Catholic schools

Commissioners approved a Heads of Agreement for a contract with the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW). DECCW has offered the NSW Catholic schools $180,000 over three years to assist NSW Catholic schools to continue their work on sustainability which began in March 2009 with the CEC *Our Footprint on Holy Ground* Forum.

Commissioners agreed that an existing officer of the Sydney CEO be the project officer required by the Agreement. CEC will provide project supervision. Year One will involve planning and the development of workshop materials for teachers. There will be considerable interaction with at least three Dioceses. Year Two involves conducting workshops. A Forum will be held in Year Three to showcase best practice.

Commissioners noted that due to the limited funds provided, not all Dioceses and Congregational schools can be reached during this three year period. However, the proposed Best Practice Forum planned for Year Three should provide good quality resources that will be made available to all NSW Catholic Schools.

4. NSW ICT Innovation Fund Application

For some time, the CEC Secretariat has been participating in the development of a cross sectoral NSW application for DEEWR ICT innovation funds. This application is in addition to CEC’s participation in the NCEC sponsored ICT application for all Australian Catholic schools.

Commissioners noted that both the NCEC submission and the NSW cross sectoral submission are complementary.

5. Students with Disabilities

Commissioners received a report on progress of the Working Party reviewing Special Education funding issues across Catholic Schools. The Commission reviewed progress with the implementation of Individual Plans for all Students with Disabilities. It was agreed that the final report of the Working Party will be tabled at the 18 August Commission meeting.

6. CEC/CCRESS Best Practice in Religious Education 27 September 2010 Forum

Commissioners noted progress in planning for the 27 September 2010 CEC/CCRESS Forum. The Program being planned involves:

- presentation of and responses to project research findings;
- workshops on research findings, including an opportunity for Diocesan based reactions and discussions; and,
- a Q & A final session.
The following actions have occurred:

- invitations have been distributed to Diocesan Education/Schools offices and to Heads of CCD
- the CEC Secretariat is to explore the availability of Bishops Anthony Fisher OP (for school education) and Peter Ingham (for SRE) to join the Forum.
- Sr Jan Barnett rsj is confirmed as facilitator of the 27 September 2010 Forum.
- A collection of brief, relevant readings will be compiled as background for forum participants.

The Workshop program will allow for a presentation of the research findings by Dr Shukri Sanber, discussion of those findings in mixed and diocesan groups as well as panel observations.

Commissioners noted that the Forum format will give maximum opportunity for participants to advise on future religious education planning options. The outcome of the Forum will be a report for the NSW/ACT Bishops on Catholic religious education issues.

7. **CEC / CSSNSW Keep Them Safe 17 August 2010 Implementation Forum**

Commissioners noted that planning for the Catholic Sector Keep Them Safe Forum is well underway for 17 August 2010. Minister Burney will address the Forum. Commissioners considered the Draft Program for the Forum.

Each Diocese will nominate participants including:

- Office based Child Protection Personnel;
- School Principals, including Congregational School Principals;
- School Counsellors; and,
- Centacare / Catholic Care Personnel.

Commissioners agreed with the proposed Program which includes:

- a key address by Sally Aves on change management specifically focusing on the theme of the Forum;
- presentations of three examples of current practices;
- small group discussions addressing key Keep Them Safe procedures;
- think tank to identify follow up issues for CESWCC; and,
- plenary session to identify ‘take away’ plans.

8. **Copyright Management**

Commissioners confirmed their resolve to ensure that all NSW Catholic schools comply with their copyright obligations. Commissioners appreciated CEC’s involvement in the development of two copyright compliance manuals by MCEECDYA’s Copyright Advisory Group (CAG). These two manuals will be available on the MCEECDYA SMARTCOPYING web site by early Third Term 2010. Commissioners noted that the CEC website will include a link to these manuals.
Commissioners noted that CEC had provided Dioceses and Congregational schools on 22 June 2010 with CEC eBulletin Vol 1 Issue 1 which included Compliance Advice on a new system being put in place by NSW DET to assist intranet developers to comply with copyright obligations. It is called Media Library. Media Library provides valuable prompts to resource developers on Copyright issues. NSW Catholic schools do not have access to this type of media tool but can follow the screen dumps.

Commissioners noted that there is a possible move away from annual copyright sampling surveys to “automatic data capture.” All new copying machines keep full records of what has been copied. Technology is available to download these records into a central repository for more accurate monitoring of the copying undertaken by schools.

Commissioners agreed that Dioceses and Congregational schools should be encouraged to identify key staff to take local responsibility for copyright compliance. Commissioners also agreed that this matter should be discussed with Catholic Network Australia.

9. SMART 2 Group Reports

Commissioners noted that two training sessions on SMART are planned for 13 and 20 August 2010 for NSW Catholic Schools. Principals and one other School Executive can register for access to their school’s reports.

Commissioners noted that the 2010 MySchool update is planned for release on 3 December 2010. On 18 June 2010, CEC Secretariat staff met with NSW DET officials to convey the Commission’s view that any revised ICSEA methodology must meet principles of completeness, validity and reliability for all schools.

Commissioners appreciated the new features in 2010 MySchool. They were disappointed that NSW DET advised that it was too late to include two group functions for Catholic schools for 2010. However, additional groups will be available in 2011.

10. 320th Commission Meeting in Lismore Diocese

Each year, the Commission plans for a meeting to be hosted by one of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities in conjunction with its local Bishop. This year the Lismore Diocese and Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett are hosting the Commission and the 22 September 2010 meeting will be held at the John Paul II College in Coffs Harbour. This will give Commissioners the opportunity to view first hand innovative Catholic school education occurring in Lismore. In 2009, the Parramatta Diocese hosted the Commission.

11. Financial Reporting and Accounting in NSW Catholic Schools

Commissioners received reports from Diocesan Finance staff on the financial viability of Catholic schools as well as a proposal to adopt full accrual accounting from 2013 and the imminent reporting of financial data on My School by ACARA.

12. Federal and NSW State Elections

Both the Federal and NSW Parliamentary elections are imminent. The Commission received reports from its Public Policy Committee, National Catholic Education Commission and the NSW Council of Catholic School Parents concerning planning for the dissemination of information about the funding of Catholic schools.
13. **NSW Upper House Inquiry into Students with Special Needs**

Following questions raised at the Legislative Council Inquiry about the cost of providing services to Special Needs Students in NSW Catholic schools the CEC Secretariat has provided additional financial and resource data as requested.

14. **Cyber Bullying**

In 2009 Commissioners approved a submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into “Bullying of Children and Young People.”

The NSW Government has just released its response to the Legislative Council’s report on Bullying. This response has been circulated to both the Education Policy Committee and to the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee for advice.

Meanwhile the Australian Parliament has established a joint select committee to inquire into Cyber-Safety. Catholic Network Australia has been advised of Cyber-Safety Inquiry developments.

The CEC Secretariat will continue to engage with both the NSW and Australian Parliamentary inquiries into bullying and cyber-safety. Commissioners will be updated on developments.

Commissioners noted previous advice provided to NSW Catholic schools about specific sections of the NSW Crimes Act that deal with harassment and intimidation at school.

CEC Secretariat Officers are reviewing the 17 June 2010 NSW Coroner’s findings in the case of “Wildman.”

15. **Un-flued Heaters**

Commissioners received reports from the CEC Secretariat on the OH&S dangers of using un-flued gas heaters in the classroom and details of past advice to Dioceses and Congregational schools.

Commissioners also noted the recent call in the NSW Legislative Assembly for NSW DET to release a study on the use of un-flued gas heaters by the Woolcock Institute. On 10 June 2010, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Minister Firth has decided to begin replacing government school un-flued gas heaters in areas of the State where cross ventilation is difficult because of low winter temperatures. CEC has sent Memo 125/10 to Diocesan Directors, Principals of Congregational Schools and Council of Catholic School Parents apprising them of the situation.
16. **Federal Funding Review**

Commissioners noted that the National Review of funding for schooling is undertaking a preliminary Australia-wide consultation process in July 2010. Consultation with the NSW Catholic Schools Sector is planned for 9 July 2010.

Senior CEC Secretariat staff and Peter Turner, Chair of the Commission’s Resources Policy Committee will represent the sector.

It is understood that this first exploratory meeting with the review committee will focus on:

- Role of CECNSW
- NCEC funding principles (election commitments)
- Expectations of the Review Committee in relation to CEC input.

John Kitney
*Secretary to the Commission*
9 July 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:** This program is due to be fully completed by 30 June 2010. It will be very close to 100% complete by the due date, with a very small number of special cases approved for a limited extension. Of the $84.2m allocation, 97.2% has been paid out in claims by mid-June.

**P21 Projects:** Of the total of 732 approved projects, over 60% have commenced construction with 60 (8.2%) fully completed at the end of May 2010. Over $306m has been claimed in progress payments, that being 34% of the total allocation of $888m.

**Science and Language Centres:** The majority of the 29 approved projects have commenced construction. The completion date for all is the end of 2010 (the original completion date required at application time was 30 June 2010). Close to 40% of the $49.3m total allocation has been claimed in progress payments.

**Digital Education Revolution:** No further information since the 19 May 2010 report.

**Trade Training Centres** Applications for Round 3 closed on 4 June 2010. From an original eleven Expressions of Interest, four applications have gone forward from NSW Catholic schools. The four are:

- Marist College, Pagewood (Ngalangiil Ngarandhii TTC, $3.2m);
- Kildare Catholic College, Wagga with McAuley Catholic Central School, Tumut (Riverina Catholic TTC, $2.2m);
- La Salle Academy, Lithgow with St Matthew’s Catholic School, Mudgee (The Mines District – Metals and Construction TTC, $2.2m);
- La Salle College, Bankstown, with Holy Spirit College, Lakemba, Casimir College, Marrickville, De La Salle College, Revesby Heights, Trinity Catholic College, Auburn (La Salle Catholic TTC, Bankstown, $7.0m).

The Round has been heavily oversubscribed with 72 applications received by DEEWR for $242m. With $112m available in grant funds, around half of the applications will be funded. For the NSW CBGA, grant requests total $11.4m (there are additional local contributions); the ‘notional allocation’ for NSW Catholic schools is $7.52m.

**Federal BER Taskforce**

William Walsh and Kevin Morrison had a long briefing session with Brad Orgill, Chair of the BER Implementation Taskforce. The Taskforce at very short notice has recently requested visits to be arranged to a nominated sample of twelve schools with P21 projects and very detailed costs breakdowns of the projects. DEEWR is similarly requesting very detailed information.

Commissioners noted that the CBGA has negotiated with the Taskforce to provide detailed information on twenty completed projects with a delivery date as convenient to the CBGA and the schools/offices that will be approached to provide the information.
NSW Upper House Inquiry into BER

Dr Dan White, Margaret Hogan (Principal of St Christopher’s Primary School, Holsworthy) and William Walsh attended the Inquiry Hearing on 18 June 2010. The representation covering state wide overview, diocesan education office view and principal/school level experience gave a good coverage of the BER operations in Catholic schools.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

The CBGA received on 21 June 2010 a significant information request from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) requiring the name of each firm involved in project management and/or construction for all BER projects, and a contact name and details for each firm. The information was required by 2 July 2010.

The Commission noted that the CBGA is negotiating with the ACCC for a later date for meeting its request in light of other extensive data requests from DEEWR and the BER Implementation Taskforce.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission

9 July 2010