THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIRST MEETING
20 October 2010

SUMMARY REPORT

The 321st meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 20 October 2010 in the Clancy/ Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Peter Turner.

The meeting commenced with a reflection on the canonisation of Mary MacKillop.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. 2011 Targeted Program Allocations

The Commission approved estimated allocations for 2011 in the following Programs based upon preliminary estimates:

Program Estimates: $  

- Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) 37,735,055  
- School Languages Program 2,201,394  
- Country Areas (CAP) 1,476,213  

The LNSLN allocation funds the following Programs:

(i) the Literacy and Numeracy Program;  
(ii) Special Learning Needs Program including Special Schools; and  
(iii) Students with Disabilities [SWD] per capita funding.  

The School Languages Program supports initiatives to improve the learning outcomes of students who are learning languages other than English. Non-English languages typically taught at NSW Catholic schools in 2009 were: Italian, French, Japanese, Indonesian, German, Arabic, Chinese, Indigenous languages, Spanish and Vietnamese.  

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. CAP eligibility is confirmed by the Australian Government while the NSW Minister for Education and Training manages the CAP school declaration process.
2. Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee (CESWCC)

CESWCC is a joint Committee of CEC and Catholic Social Welfare. The CEC has four representatives on the Committee. All terms of members cease as at 31 December 2012. Current members are eligible for reappointment. The Commission agreed on a process for calling for nominations from Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities, the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI), the Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP) and the Association of Catholic School Principals (ACSP) for appointment to the Committee from 1 January 2011.

The Catholic Welfare Sector will manage a complementary process for the appointment of Welfare Sector members.

3. CEC Planning Documents, 2011

The Commission approved the 2011 CEC Secretariat Budget and 2011 CEC WorkPlan. These important planning documents will shortly be forwarded to the NSW/ACT Bishops for their approval.

4. New Commonwealth Funding Arrangements

Commissioners discussed the Australian government’s additional National Partnership initiatives for schools as enunciated during the recent Federal elections. A key concern is how Reward payments will be allocated and managed in New South Wales including the proposal for Reward payments for individual teachers.

Commissioners noted that legislation has been drafted to extend the 2009 – 2012 Quadrennium for one year. Commissioners also noted that the detail of the proposed legislation is not known as yet. It was also noted that the NCEC has recently raised National Partnership issues with DEEWR.

5. 2007 Bishops’ Statement Crossroads and Related CEC Study of Enrolment Trends

At the request of the NSW/ACT Bishops, in 2004 a Report was prepared by CEC on Catholic and Non-Catholic students in NSW Catholic Schools 1988-2004. It was this Report and the Bishops’ subsequent deliberations on it which gave rise to the Episcopal statement in 2007, Catholic Schools at a Crossroads. The Statement has itself promoted widespread reflection in Catholic schools and Catholic Schools Authorities on the challenges it identified.

The Commission in principle approved an update on that Report to include 2005 – 2010 enrolments. This is part of a review of the implementation of the Bishops’ Statement Crossroads. The Commission also agreed a survey document to be issued to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and CLRI to capture feedback on Crossroads outcomes.
6. NSW School Certificate Review

Commissioners discussed options for reforming the NSW School Certificate. The point was made that the CEC will need to have a clear policy position on School Certificate reform for communication in the context of the March 2011 NSW State election.

Commissioners raised concerns for the credentialing of students who reach 17 years of age and leave school before attaining the NSW Higher School Certificate. Any new credentialing process must address the needs of these students. The particular needs of rural 7 – 10 schools need also to be considered.

7. Trade Training Centres (TTCs)

Commissioners noted that under current arrangements, schools were able to apply for TTC funds up to $1.5 million on an individual school basis. However, the total funds available only average $900,000 per secondary school. Two funding rounds have been completed and a number of grants have been awarded. If additional funds are not made available for this rolling Program, this means that tighter rationing of approvals must occur for rounds 3 to 6 than was the case for rounds 1, 1.2 and 2.

DEEWR has signalled a possible change to the funding system which will involve making fixed annual contributions to Block Grant Authorities for Trade Training Centres based upon the number of schools in each sector. DEEWR is also offering BGAs more flexibility in allocating TTC funds within their sector.

The Commission gave advice to the CBGA Delegate on options available to manage any CBGA allocation for TTCs.

8. Photocopying and digital copying by Schools

Commissioners reviewed issues arising from both the 2009:

- Photocopying survey; and
- EUS digital uses survey.

Commissioners noted that school photocopying and digital copying needs to be managed more closely.

Commissioners noted the need to:

- Educate “key users” to undertake non remunerable copying whenever possible. “Key users” may include librarians, Intranet managers, music and art coordinators and print room managers; and
- Manage copyright issues raised by Learning Management Systems and system Intranets, including Catholic Network Australia.

The move from traditional school survey processes to “automatic data capture methodologies” was also noted.

9. CEC Accreditation as an Animal Research Establishment

That Commission agreed to CEC renewing its Accreditation as an Animal Research Establishment under the NSW Animal Research Act 1988. The Commission also noted the role and funding for the Schools Animal Care and Ethics Committee – a joint Committee of NSW DET, CEC and AIS.
10. NSW State 2011 National Partnerships Implementation Plan

CEC has been actively involved in developing the 2011 State Plan which is cross sectoral. The Commission endorsed the document and it now will be forwarded to the Commonwealth Minister for school Education. The State Plan is a precondition for National partnership funding for 2011.

11. CEC Emergency Communications Guidelines

In response to the Victorian bushfire findings, the NSW State Emergency Services has implemented an emergency communications system that uses CEC as the portal to communicate with NSW Catholic schools. CEC is now ready to launch a communications system to transmit emergency notices to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities. Relevant emergencies may include, but are not confined to, bushfires, floods, pandemic events and major transport disruptions.

The CEC held a forum on 8 September 2010 with key Diocesan representatives to discuss an overall communications system. Since that time the CEC has built a communications system using emails and SMSs to communicate with Diocesan representatives. Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities need to implement complementary systems to communicate with all Systemic and Congregational schools in each Diocese.

Commissioners agreed with the communications system being put into place between the CEC and Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities. Commissioners noted the responsibilities of Diocesan Directors to implement communications systems within their Dioceses that comply with the guidelines agreed. Commissioners noted the need for training and periodic testing of systems. Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities are required to ensure that Congregational schools are part of communication processes implemented locally.

12. 2010 MCEECDYA Biennial Forum

On 15 October, the 2010 Australian Education Ministers’ 2010 Biennial Forum was held at Parliament House, Canberra, with CEC represented by Brian Croke, Rosalie Nott and Paul Rodney. Entitled ‘Education for the future, Improving student learning and school performance’, the forum comprised introductory input from the nine current Australian, State and Territory Ministers for Education followed by presentations on individual sectoral projects. The compact schedule covered a range of new programs, many being developed under the National Partnership framework. NSW Catholic schools featured in presentations on ‘Successful Language Learners’ (with Kate O’Brien, CEO Sydney) and ‘Centres of Excellence/Highly Accomplished Teachers’, including the innovative project developed by the Council of Catholic School Parents together with other NSW parent organisations.

13. Australian National Curriculum

The K-10 Phase 1 (English, Mathematics, Science and History) curriculum will be submitted for endorsement to all Education Ministers in December. On 7 October 2010, the President of the Board of Studies and senior officers briefed Secretariat officers (Ian Baker and Rosalie Nott) on work being undertaken by Board officers, in collaboration with ACARA officers, to address issues raised by the Board. In general, these curriculum issues relate to (i) wording, (ii) sequencing and timing, and (iii) insufficient detail. Secretariat officers also raised the need to improve the capacity of the curriculum to address Students with Special Needs and to provide advice on how the proposed ACARA Cadetships will relate to current HSC VET courses. Meanwhile, Work is proceeding on the senior years’ Australian National Curriculum, with significant conceptual and planning issues still to be finalised.
14. Implementing NSW Education Act Attendance Reforms

The cross sectoral Ministerial Working party established to co-ordinate implementation of the new school attendance requirements is progressing. CEC will shortly advise Diocesan Directors and Principals of Congregational Schools of the following initiatives:

- A Ministerial delegation for all School principals to approve up to 50 school days per pupil for exemption from school attendance;
- A Ministerial delegation for all secondary school principals to exempt a young person from attending secondary school if the young person has been accepted to undertake a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship as an alternative to completing Year 10 at school; and
- Catholic school principals will be able to access DET legal processes for the purposes of (a) Securing Compulsory Schooling Orders; and/or (b) Prosecutions of parents/guardians, when a child habitually fails to attend school.

In addition, a subcommittee of the Working Party, meeting under the auspices of the Board of Studies, is developing Guidelines for the approval of alternative education programs for children unable to participate in formal schooling. CEC is also clarifying how Education Act attendance requirements and Keep Them Safe risk indicators interrelate.

15. Before and After School Care: Amendment to NSW Children’s Services Regulation

The NSW Government is progressing a limited package of amendments to the Children’s Services Regulation 2004, prior to the introduction of the National Quality Framework (NQF) in January 2012. The NQF will establish a jointly governed, unified national approach to early childhood education and care that will apply to long day care, preschools, family day care and outside school hours care from 1 January 2012. The Amendment Regulation, the Regulatory Impact Statement and a Feedback Form for comments are available on the Community Services website: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/for_agencies_that_work_with_us/childrens_services/regulation/review_of_the_regulation.html

Commissioners were advised of the current consultation process regarding these reforms to the regulation of children’s services, including pre-schools and before and after school care.

It was noted that existing Regulation requirements will stay in place for 2011. Commissioners were asked to bring any reform issues to the attention of Ian Baker or Rosalie Nott.

The Education Policy Committee and CESWCC are monitoring developments.

16. Awards – Australian Council of Educational leaders (ACEL)

Commissioners congratulated the seven prominent NSW Catholic school leaders recognised by the ACEL at its National Conference on 30 September 2010. The seven Catholic education leaders recognised were Br Kelvin Canavan fms, Dr Brian Croke, John DeCourcy, Moira Najdecki, Elizabeth O’Carrigan, Mark Turkington and Peter Turner.

John Kitney
Secretary to the Commission
22 October 2010
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

2010 Capital Application Round

Commissioners considered the listing of recommended projects and agreed with the priorities set by the State Priority Committee. Commissioners noted that for both new places and existing places approximately 30 per cent of project costs will be privately sourced. The CBGA Delegate will now forward the recommended projects to DEEWR for Ministerial approval, after which they will be made public.

Ministerial Responsibility for BER Program

A recent meeting with DEEWR has confirmed that all capital programs apart from BER will be under the authority of the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth (Hon Peter Garrett AM). The Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations (Senator Hon Chris Evans) is, however, the Minister responsible for the BER. There will be little change in practical terms as the structure of DEEWR remains intact and the Department continues its pre-election functions with minor internal adjustments.

Federal Funding Review

As part of its submission to the Gonski Funding Review, the NCEC is focusing on future capital needs arising from the demand for new Catholic schools in population growth areas up to the year 2020. The CEC has issued a pro-forma table to each Diocesan Catholic Schools Authority, requesting information on the number of new schools, their locations and the cost and number of new students to be enrolled.

Solar Schools Program

Commissioners noted that DEEWR has advised the Department of Climate Change that BGAs are the best placed authorities to administer the Solar Schools Program. Negotiations are at a preliminary stage; any decision within the Catholic sector will be on a national basis under the auspices of the NCEC. Currently solar grants are in the order of $50,000 per school.

BER Implementation Review

The Interim Report of the BER Implementation Taskforce (BERIT) is moving to a second phase with a final report scheduled for November 2010. The CBGA has been asked to provide detailed costing data on a sample of 80 NSW Catholic school P21 projects.

BER PROGRAM

The National School Pride Program of 84,375,000 is complete but for one work site which will finish this month.

The P21 Program has an approved 725 project components and grant funding of $888.2 million for projects. At the end of September 2010: 134 components were completed (18%); On-site construction had commenced on 621 projects (86%); and payments of $463,820,000 were made (52% of total funding).

The CBGA has recently issued a memorandum to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities requesting attention to the return of project completion certificates. Completion returns are...
monitored by DEEWR on a monthly basis. The CBGA has reported completions below the rates for other BGAs and has drawn DEEWR criticism.

Of the 29 approved Science and Language Centres projects, 5 projects are complete and site construction has commenced on all others. All but 3 projects are forecast to be completed by the end of December 2010 as required. The CBGA will have to seek extensions for several projects; a serious case will have to be made as the SLC projects were approved competitively and with strict deadlines. Progress payments of $31.1m have been made (62% of available funding).

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

The CBGA is waiting on DEEWR advice on the four applications submitted for Round 3 which closed on 4 June 2010. The CBGA has had 16 TTCs with Catholic schools as lead schools approved since the commencement of the Program.

John Kitney  
**Secretary to the Commission**  
22 October 2010