SUMMARY REPORT

The 322nd meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 16 November 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. Core Committees

The Commission approved the following appointments to Core Committees for three years from 1 January 2011:

Education Policy Committee

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<th>Chair</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Anne Wenham Commissioner</td>
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<td>Anne Marie Creenaune Wollongong CEO</td>
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<td>Kathryn Fox Maitland-Newcastle CSO</td>
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<td>Lee Herden Armidale CSO</td>
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<td>Michael Hopkinson Wagga Wagga CSO</td>
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Resources Policy Committee

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<td>Peter Turner Commissioner</td>
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<td>John Barker Canberra &amp; Goulburn CEO</td>
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<td>Helen Bentham Broken Bay CSO</td>
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<td>John Sheridan Armidale CSO</td>
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<td>William Walker Sydney CEO</td>
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Audit and Risk Management Committee

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<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Reappointment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brother Tony Whelan cfc Commissioner</td>
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<td>Danielle Cronin Commissioner</td>
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<td>Brian Goodacre Financial expert</td>
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<td>John Mula Commissioner</td>
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CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, NEW SOUTH WALES

THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIRST MEETING

16 November 2010
2. CEC Aboriginal Student Assistance Program (CASAP)

CASAP is a CEC program for systemic schools only since Congregational schools receive their Indigenous support funding with their General Recurrent Grant directly from DEEWR. The August 2010 census shows growth of 7.2 per cent in Indigenous enrolments in systemic schools.

Commissioners noted that in the past Indigenous Program supplementation was applied evenly across Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities, irrespective of where growth in Indigenous enrolments had occurred. Commissioners agreed to apply supplementation for growth in Indigenous enrolments following the August 2010 census enrolment pattern. Commissioners also agreed to apply AGSRC supplementation to adjusted CASAP funding for 2010 on a proportional enrolment basis.

Commissioners confirmed their commitment to the COAG “Closing the Gap” targets for Australian schools. Commissioners are committed to implementing the CASAP Accountability Framework as a tool for guiding efforts towards meeting those targets. Commissioners noted that the CASAP Accountability Framework is intended to be implemented by the end of November 2010. The implementation of the Framework is still subject to resolving the following matters:

- assessment of Indigenous and non Indigenous children on entry to Kindergarten;
- proportion of Indigenous students with personalised learning strategies in place; and,
- professional development of Principals and teachers in Indigenous cultural and linguistic competence.

The Commission approved the estimated allocation of supplementation totalling about $929,335 for 2010 across Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities (comprising both enrolment growth funds and AGSRC indexation) applying August 2010 census data. The Commission also approved the 2011 estimated initial allocations of CASAP totalling $9,339,610. In approving the amended CASAP Accountability Framework, the Commission noted that it will be issued by late November 2010 when finalised. The Commission requested the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and Education Policy Committee to develop progressive targets for NSW Catholic schools towards the achievement of COAG “Closing the Gap” longer term targets.

3. Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP)

The Commission approved AGQTP provisional allocations for 2011, namely, $1,139,000 for Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and $203,749 for Congregational schools, based upon student numbers. The Commission noted that 25 per cent of total funds must be expended in support of the Australian National Curriculum, National Professional Standards for Teachers and Student Wellbeing Programs (including strategies in relation to bullying).
4. **2010 CEC WorkPlan Outcomes**

Commissioners considered progress made on key initiatives targetted in the 2010 WorkPlan. Commissioners congratulated the CEC Secretariat on managing competing and emerging priorities while at the same time ensuring that key issues important to the Commission are being progressed.

Commissioners noted that this was the second progress report on the implementation of the 2010 WorkPlan. Commentary on final outcomes will be reported in the 2010 CEC Annual Report.

5. **Australian Government Funding Review**

Commissioners noted that the NCEC has forwarded the Australian Catholic schools sector submission to the Australian Government’s review of school funding. The submission was drafted by an international firm of financial consultants under the editorial control of the NCEC. The submission includes basic data on Catholic schools, together with advice on how they are organised and how they deliver “value for money.”

6. **2011 NSW State Election**

Commissioners agreed on five policy matters relevant for the 2011 NSW State Election. Commissioners agreed that information on the education platforms of the three main political parties needs to be obtained. Each of the main political parties will be requested to provide their policies on the five agreed policy issues. In addition, a summary document will be prepared to inform Catholic Educators, Parents, Principals and the general community in the lead up to the 26 March 2011 NSW State election.

7. **Overseas Students**

Currently CEC is the accredited provider under the “Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)” for most NSW Catholic schools. On 1 October 2010, the Board of Studies assumed State level CRICOS responsibilities from VETAB and is embedding CRICOS compliance requirements in existing BOS school registration processes. Because the CEC has no direct involvement in student enrolment processes and is therefore not well placed to meet enhanced CRICOS compliance requirements, the BOS has signalled that CRICOS responsibilities should transfer to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities for system schools and to individual Congregational schools. Such a change may occur from 1 January 2012.

The Commission requested the CEC Secretariat to explore the possibility of maintaining the existing role of CEC as the CRICOS accredited provider for the enrolment of full fee paying overseas students from January 2012. Commissioners consider that the current approach is more efficient, is cost effective for NSW Catholic schools and allows NSW Catholic schools to access central support which is the situation for NSW government schools.
Commissioners also considered the matter of the eligibility of non-full fee paying student visa holders for GRG and Targeted funding. Commissioners were briefed on identified anomalies noting that currently there are some 2,950 non full fee paying “visa students” in NSW Catholic schools who attract government funding while there are at least 60 visa students who while eligible for schooling, and who are not liable for full fees, are also ineligible for any government funding.

It was noted that as more refugees are granted the right to live in the community, this group of visa students is destined to grow. The Commission requested that the eligibility of “visa students” for the government funding should be further pursued with DEEWR and DIAC.

8. **CEC Special Education Working Party**

Commissioners again noted that there is a disconnection between the positive nature of Catholic School achievements/service provision for students with disabilities or special needs compared with negative public perceptions and parent complaints. Commissioners agreed that a communications strategy needs to be developed to publicise NSW Catholic schools support for students with special needs.

Commissioners affirmed DEEWR’s national model for defining students with a disability which is based on the following elements:

- definition within the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*;
- functional level of need; and,
- student disability descriptor.

It was noted that this approach is fully consistent with the evolving CEC Individual Planning (IP) model.

Commissioners noted that adoption of the DEEWR model will allow for improved, transparent and nationally comparable data collection. Each jurisdiction will be asked to nominate a small number of schools to participate in a trial commencing in early 2011.

The Commission agreed to establish a “CEC Special Education Project Steering Group” early in 2011 to provide advice on the following:

- implementation of the CEC IP process by all Dioceses and Congregational schools;
- development of a CEC IP validation process for the purpose of ensuring the consistency of IP assessments across Dioceses and Congregational schools;
- initial modelling of Special Education funding formula options applying IP data, noting that any new CEC formula arising will not be implemented by CEC before 2013; and,
- development of a Catholic sector Special Needs initiatives information strategy.

The Commission requested the Executive Director to identify a small group of schools to participate in the DEEWR “definitions” study.
9. **MySchool Launch**

Commissioners were advised that ACARA plans to launch the new *MySchool Website* on 3 December 2010 and that this will involve publishing financial data for every school for the first time. It was noted that some technical problems and financial comparison issues across the school sectors remain to be resolved. Since 1 November 2010, schools have had access to their ICSEA scores and financial data on a secure site. Some modifications to ICSEA have occurred making comparisons problematic. ACARA’s financial consultants are working through financial data comparison queries. All data will be available to schools a few days before the planned 3 December 2010 *MySchool* go live date.

Commissioners reconfirmed their concern about the publication of financial data and ICSEA indices that may not be comparable across school sectors. Commissioners noted the current roll-out of communications packages from the CEC Secretariat and the offer of briefings to ensure that Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities, Systemic schools, Congregational schools, and other Catholic agencies are able to answer questions about *Myschool* data.

10. **DEEWR ICT Innovation Fund**

At the 23 June 2010 meeting, Commissioners approved NSW Catholic Sector participation in the “NSW ICT Fund – Round One 2010 Application” coordinated by NSW DET. On 20 October 2010, Minister Garrett announced the successful projects under the “Information Communication Technology Innovation Fund” (ICTIF), including the NSW DET’s “Anywhere, Anytime Teacher Professional Learning” ICT Innovation Fund Project. NSW Catholic schools are participants in this Project. CEC has been invited to attend cross sectoral project implementation planning meetings, commencing 22 November 2010.

The Commission authorised the Executive Director to progress Catholic sector engagement with the NSW “Anywhere, Anytime Teacher Professional Learning” project implementation. The Education Policy Committee was asked to monitor project implementation. A report on project implementation is be provided to a Commission meeting in early 2011.


The CEC monitors developments in Anti-Discrimination Law which may impact the identity and purpose of Catholic schools. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is currently conducting a targeted consultation regarding Federal protection from discrimination on the basis of sexuality and sex and / or gender identity.

To date, Australian Anti-Discrimination law, as the Discussion Paper acknowledges, has generally attempted to balance potentially competing rights through the mechanism of exemptions and exceptions. As the current NSW Wesley Mission case illustrates, the intent and application of these exemptions and exceptions is itself the subject of a developing jurisprudence. It is noted that in recent years the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act went through a phase when it contained no exemptions relevant to the purposes of Religious schools.
A preliminary meeting has been held involving CEC, CCER, the Archdiocesan Life, Marriage and Family Centre and the Archdiocesan Chancery to identify both response issues and a response process. A joint CEC, CCER and Life, Marriage and Family Centre meeting is scheduled for 17 November 2010 to further develop a Catholic sector response to the AHRC discussion paper. The Commission noted the progress report.

12. **NSW Centre for Effective Reading.**

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading will commence operation from the start of 2011. The Centre will strengthen services previously provided by the joint health and education facilities known as Dalwood Assessment Centre and Palm Avenue School. The NSW Centre for Effective Reading will support primary school aged students with complex reading difficulties enrolled in rural and remote areas of NSW. The direct specialist health and related educational diagnostic/assessment service will be conducted from three locations: Tolland Public School in Wagga Wagga, Buninyong Public School in Dubbo and Royal Far West School in Manly.

Schools, both government and non-government, located outside the metropolitan areas of Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong and Tweed Heads will be eligible to refer students with complex reading difficulties to the NSW Centre for Effective Reading. Diocesan Directors of rural Dioceses where eligible schools exist have facilitated the transfer of referral information. The Commission has budgeted $110,000 for the service for 2011 to support access by eligible Catholic schools. Information about the Centre can be accessed using the link below


13. **4 November 2010 Meeting of NSW/ACT Bishops**

The Chairman reported that the NSW/ACT Bishops approved the levy of $8.75 per student be maintained for 2011. The 2011 CEC Secretariat budget and the 2011 CEC WorkPlan were also approved.

The Bishops approved the reappointments to the Commission of Moira Najdecki and Peter Turner as well as the appointment of Tricia Maidens, nominated by the Association of Catholic School Principals. The Bishops considered progress reports on enrolments in NSW Catholic schools, the Ethics program trial in NSW government schools, Commonwealth school funding review and the Australian National Curriculum. Catholic education priorities for the impending 2011 NSW State election were also considered.

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

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

Capital Program

The CBGA held its annual consultation/forum on 11 November 2010 with State Priority Committee members, Diocesan Priority Committee Executive Officers and other interested facilities officers. The object of the forum was to review the past year’s operation, the SPC assessment process, resolve issues of policy and to finalise guidelines for applicants for 2011.

It is expected that there will be a resolution by the Government of the extension of the Schools Assistance Act (2008) to include 2013 Capital Program funding in time to allow a regular application round in 2011.

BER PROGRAM

The full grant for the National School Pride Program (NSP) of $84,375,000 has now been paid out to schools as all projects are now complete.

The P21 Program has an approved 725 project components and grant funding of $888.2 million. At the end of October 2010:

- 189 components were completed (26%);
- Payments of $511,239,737 made (58% of total funding);
- 644 components (88%) have started onsite;
- $485,609 of interest funding has been allocated for projects;
- Recognition ceremonies have been held at 57 schools.

A number of projects have been re-phased for completion in the 2011/12 financial year in response to Government requirements. This month, the CBGA will release a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document containing guidance on P21 and SLC finalisation processes.

Of the 29 approved Science and Language Centres projects with total funding of $49,383,188, 11 projects (38%) are complete and site construction has commenced on all others. All but 5 projects are forecast to be completed by the end of December 2010. Progress payments of $35,096,814 have been made (71% of available funding).

TRADE TRAINING CENTRES

The NSW Catholic sector was successful with three of its four applications approved in Round Three for a total of $7.99 million.
The successful Catholic schools are:

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<th>School Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>Ngalangiil Ngarandahii Trade Training Centre</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>Marist College, Pagewood</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Mines District Metals and Construction Trade Training Centre</td>
<td>$1,989,137</td>
<td>La Salle Academy, Lithgow and St Matthew’s Catholic School, Mudgee</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Salle Catholic Trade Training Centre, Bankstown</td>
<td>$5,000,000</td>
<td>La Salle College, Bankstown, De la Salle College, Revesby, Holy Spirit College, Lakemba, Trinity Catholic College, Auburn</td>
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The application not approved will be advised by DEEWR of the grounds for non-approval and will be eligible to apply in a subsequent round. It is expected that Round 4 applications will open in February 2011.

The CBGA meet with the Commission’s VEAG Committee on 15 November 2010 to discuss information previously presented to the Commission on the proposed changes in the administration of Trade Training Centres and the assessment of and funding allocations for projects.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

Over $19m of the 1:1 funding has been spent by schools under the National Secondary Schools Computer Fund (NSSCF). DEEWR has just released the latest reporting requirements for the NSSCF, this will require a substantial upgrade of the NSSCF website prior to the next report on 30 December 2010. Training for schools and dioceses will take place once the new system has been developed.

John Kitney
**Secretary to the Commission**
16 December 2010