SUMMARY REPORT

The 327th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 22 June 2011 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. **2010 Quinquennial Review of CEC**

   The NSW/ACT Bishops at their meeting on 9 June 2011 discussed the 2010 Quinquennial Review Report recommendations. The review had been undertaken by Sydney based independent consultant Dr Maureen Cleary and Mike Byrne Executive Director of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

   The Commission had considered the recommendations at their April and May 2011 meetings. The Commission categorised the recommendations into three groups. Category one comprised those recommendations that can be implemented immediately. Category two comprised those recommendations which require an implementation strategy. Category three comprises those recommendations that require additional consideration. The Commission has established a Working Party to process category two and three recommendations.

   The Bishops have endorsed the Commission’s categorisation. They agree to the immediate implementation of category one recommendations and have delegated approval to the Commission to implement category two recommendations. The Bishops have asked for options and advice in respect of category three recommendations. The Commission will present its final response to the Review Report to the 3 November 2011 meeting of the NSW/ACT Bishops.

2. **Overseas Students: Accreditation Entities and Management Services**

   Since October 2010 the NSW Board of Studies has had responsibility for oversight of the accreditation of schools for Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) purposes.

   CEC remains the approved CRICOS authority for NSW Catholic schools until 31 December 2011. From the beginning of 2012, the CRICOS authority for any systemic Catholic school will be each Diocesan Catholic Schools Authority while individual Congregational schools will need to be accredited separately.
CEC will maintain an active role in assisting Systems to administer their CRICOS obligations. CEC will also assist in training Systems’ personnel in the use of the Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). The continuing CEC role will include, as necessary, on-site Diocesan support visits.

The BOS website now includes advice on “Approval of School providers to deliver courses to Overseas Students”


A CEC forum is planned for September 2011 for Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools. This forum will provide advice on CRICOS Responsibilities and will support the transition of this function from the CEC Secretariat to each local Catholic school authority.

3. Higher School Certificate and School Certificate 2010 Analyses

Commissioners considered the annual report on datasets produced by Dr John DeCourcey. The 2010 HSC analysis included data of 16,435 students in 130 Catholic schools. The 2010 School Certificate analysis included data of 20,211 students in 153 Catholic schools.

Commissioners commended Dr. DeCourcey’s analysis of the 2010 Higher School Certificate and School Certificate. They were particularly pleased with his ability to match and analyse results from NAPLAN Year 9 results with both School Certificate (SC) and HSC results. Commissioners noted that NSW Catholic schools now have an excellent longitudinal dataset to inform Principals and Diocesan Directors on student performance issues.

The Commission adopted the report on 2010 HSC and School Certificate (SC) Data Analysis. It also approved the inclusion of the School Certificate analysis as part of the CEC Data Analysis project. There will be a limited publication of the 2010 HSC and SC Data Analysis Project Report on the CEC’s secure website. The Commission requested the CEC Secretariat to offer a briefing for senior officers of the NSW Board of Studies by Dr DeCourcy on the issues arising from the CEC analysis of the 2010 HSC and School Certificate. It was noted that a report will soon be available analysing Catholic sector HSC performance issues. This report is being prepared by Professor Gorge Cooney.

4. Appointment to the CEC’s Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Commission appointed Gary Daniels to its Audit and Risk Management Committee. Mr Daniels until recently was a senior assurance Partner with one of Australia’s Big Four Chartered Accounting Firms. The Commission welcomes his special expertise to the work of the CEC.

5. 2011 CEC WorkPlan

The Commission considered a half yearly report outlining CEC’s progress in carrying out its work program. Commissioners noted that key strategic tasks identified in the 2011 CEC WorkPlan were progressing well and on time.

Planning is underway to produce the CEC 2012 WorkPlan which will be presented to the 3 November 2011 meeting of the NSW/ACT Bishops.
6. **NCEC Religious Education Framework Options**

Commissioners noted linkages between the issues raised by the NCEC RE Framework options paper and the emerging outcomes of the 4 May 2011 CEC / CCRESS Forum.

It was agreed that the development of the Australian Curriculum by ACARA provides both an opportunity and an imperative to reconceptualise how the Catholic sector further develops RE curriculum.

Commissioners briefly discussed the substantive issues and options set out in the NCEC paper and indicated that a likely consensus exists for the development of a National RE “Approved Framework”. It was further noted that should such an “Approved Framework” be finalised then individual Dioceses would be able to maintain and /or develop curriculum consistent with this Framework.

7. **Emergency Notification System for NSW Catholic Schools**

CEC is the conduit for the transmission of catastrophic notices from the State Emergency Operations Centre to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities for both systemic and Congregational schools.

At the 20 April Commission meeting, Commissioners discussed the proposed NSW State wide emergency notification system. Commissioners expressed concerns about possible duplication of systems and requested the CEC Executive Director to determine the best way for these communications to occur. A Forum involving Diocesan emergency contacts was held on 3 June 2011.

Commissioners noted that work is underway in relation to making those necessary modifications to the current web based CEC Emergency Notification System which were identified by the 3 June 2011 CEC Forum. These modifications will allow Dioceses to record local incidents and provide feedback to the CEC on the outcomes of actions taken at the local level. The modifications are expected to be completed by the end of July 2011.

Having noted the Forum advice Commissioners agreed that Diocesan web based systems should be enhanced while remaining under local control and responsibility. It is likely that this enhancement will involve a CEC virtual PC that will allow Diocesan systems to communicate with the CEC central system. Systems analysis for this purpose will occur during July 2011, involving a site visit by a senior CEC officer to all Dioceses. Finalisation of the CEC system will occur over the August/September 2011 period.
8. **4 May 2011 CEC/CCRESS Forum Possible Outcomes**

Commissioners reviewed the initial synthesis of feedback from the 4 May 2011 CEC / CCRESS Forum.

It was noted that the project management group meets 30 June 2011 to review this feedback. The task for this group is to prioritize the feedback action items and identify achievable goals for recommendation to the NSW/ACT Bishops through CEC and CCRESS. A final forum report will be provided to the November 2011 Bishops meeting.

9. **NSW School Certificate Review**

On 7 June 2011, the President of the NSW Board of Studies, Tom Alegounarias, wrote to CEC forwarding the latest version of the Board of Studies School Certificate Discussion paper. At this meeting, Commissioners were asked:

- How well the Board Discussion Paper corresponds with CEC expectations for School Certificate reform?
- How the Discussion Paper might be improved through targeted amendments?
- How well the reform directions set out in Part 5 of the Discussion paper – *Future Directions* – match the School Certificate reform ambitions of the CEC?

Commissioners noted that a CSSA Forum on School Certificate issues will be held on 8 August 2011. This Forum will also consider the recently released BOS draft consultation syllabuses for K-10 which embed the Australian Curriculum.

Commissioners agreed that the Catholic sector reform goal of adapting the School Certificate into a flexible leaving credential should be pursued in the context of discussions around the BOS Consultation paper.

10. **Contracts Approved**

The following contracts were approved:

- Closing the Gap (CTG) Expanding Literacy and Numeracy Initiative 2011 Lismore, Maitland-Newcastle and Parramatta;
- VET in Schools Program Funding Agreement 2011;
- Deed of Variation for Funding Agreement under the Schools Assistance Act 2008; and,
- Three Year Scientific Licence for the use of Frogs and Tadpoles in Teaching.

11. **Launch of new e-learning resource on Eucharist for Catholic students**

On Wednesday 8 June 2011, a new web based learning and teaching resource on the Eucharist titled, *Together at One Altar* (TAOA), was launched ‘virtually’ at Parramatta Marist High School, Westmead. Sponsored by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and opened by the NCEC Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bill Griffiths. The resource was developed by a team of writers from Catholic Education Offices in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sale and Brisbane. The launch included a Year 10 Religious Education (RE) sample lesson with students from Parramatta Marist; Catherine McAuley Westmead; and Hennessy Catholic College, Young web streamed across Australia. *Together at One Altar* is designed to support the introduction of the new translation of the liturgy.
12. CEC NSW Anti Bullying Policy Working Party

The CEC Anti Bullying Policy Working Party has now been finalised. The members of the Working Party are:

Ian Baker – Director Policy and Programs CECNSW (Convenor);
Paul Mastronardi – State Coordinator – Student Welfare Programs CECNSW;
Debbie Buscall – Secondary Consultant, Inner Western Region, CEO Sydney;
Warren Frew – Schools Consultant CEO Bathurst;
Neil Graham – Human Resources Consultant, CEO Lismore;
Sue Lennox – Principal, St Patrick’s College, Campbelltown;
Andy Martin – Risk Manager, CSO Broken Bay;
Elizabeth Rowe – Team Leader – Student Services CEO Parramatta;
Gail Tarrant – Project Officer: Anti-Bullying and Cyber Safety CEO Wollongong.

The first meeting of the CEC NSW Anti Bullying Policy Working Party will convene at CEC on 8 July 2011.

13. New Special Education Funding for 2012 and 2013

At their 18 May 2011 meeting, Commissioners noted advice on the Commonwealth Budget initiative relating to additional Disability Funding for Years 2012 and 2013 (Minute 326.6.4). CEC, through NCEC, was advised that:

- Funding to States is based on a FTE share basis;
- Funding with States to sectors is based on SWD enrolment proportions; and,
- Funding will be granted to support approved Project Plans. Project Plans are required to focus on: provision of health specialists (e.g. occupational therapy); adapted curriculum; provision of assisted technology; and teacher capacity building.

Commissioners were advised that approximately $515 is likely to be available per SWD student. There remains a problem concerning the consistent identification of SWD across all NSW schools. The allocation to NSW Catholic schools is based upon the NSW State definition. CEC will receive about 17.6 per cent of funds compared with 19.2 per cent of enrolment share. Funding will be allocated to approved projects rather than as a per capita grant. It is uncertain at this stage whether the approved projects will be required to run for one or two years. Guidelines will be provided to the 20 July 2011 Commission meeting. A CEC consultation with DEEWR is to take place in July 2011. Projects must commence early 2012.


The Australian Government has confirmed its intention to consolidate all Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination legislation into a single Australian Equality Act. This applies the approach to anti-discrimination law adopted by the recent Labor Government in the UK (The UK Equality Act). Implementation of the UK Equality Act has caused the Bishops of England and Wales to raise a number of freedom of religion concerns with the UK’s Cameron Coalition Government. The Australian Government will soon release an Exposure Draft Australian Equality Bill for consultation. Commissioners will be kept advised on Equality Bill developments and issues.
15. Establishment of an Australian Network of Research in Education

At their 20 April 2011 meeting, Commissioners were advised of a meeting which was subsequently held on 30 May 2011 to explore the feasibility of establishing a Network of Research Approval Officers and involving all school sectors across Australia. The network is designed to cover the processes for approving and engaging in research involving schools, school students and staff. The 30 May meeting agreed that a “Research in Education Network” (Australian Cross-Jurisdictional Education Research Network) should be established. The proposed terms of reference for this Network are:

- To harmonise procedures and processes across jurisdictions to deliver consistency and quality;
- To influence a purposeful research agenda that aligns with jurisdictional and national needs;
- To promote the role of research in improving the wellbeing and educational outcomes of children and young people; and,
- To collaborate in research processes, strategies and capability development.

CEC will now liaise with NSW DEC (the host jurisdiction) to progress the establishment of this Network. CEC will brief NCEC on developments.
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

The application round closed on 27 April 2011. The CBGA received 23 applications: 5 for new schools or further stages of new schools; 18 for upgradings.

The State Priority Committee held its first meeting over 1-3 June to commence the assessment of applications. The SPC is conducting school project visits before meeting again at the end of July 2012.

**BER PROGRAM**

**P21 Program**

The status of the projects is as follows (previously reported figures from the 18 May 2011 Commission meeting are bracketed).

- 112 (74) at full acquittal status;
- 473 (493) at completed status; and,
- 131 (145) under construction.

Expenditure claims on BER projects is at 87%.

**Science and Language Centres**

The one SLC project that had extended its completion date beyond early 2011 (all projects were to be completed by end of 2010) will be fully completed by the end of June 2011. This completion finalises the SLC component apart from the provision of acquittal statements.

**NSW GOVERNMENT CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

$6.29 million has been made available under the NSW Government Building Grants Assistance Scheme for the 2010/11 fiscal year. Commissioners noted that the CBGA has submitted three projects for approval.

John Kitney

**Secretary to the Commission**

28 June 2011