CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, NEW SOUTH WALES

THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY EIGHTH MEETING

20 July 2011

SUMMARY REPORT

The 328th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 20 July 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. Additional Special Education Funds

The Australian Government is allocating an additional $200 million nationally for Students with a Disability funding for the 2012 and 2013 school years, but as project-based funding.

Currently no DEEWR Program Guidelines are available. Given that at least some funded projects will be required to commence Term One 2012, CEC will need to commence its planning process quickly once DEEWR Guidelines become available.

The Commission empowered the CEC Special Education Steering Group to act as the reference group for this Program in collaboration with the Education Policy Committee. Recommendations on projects to be put forward to DEEWR would be finalised by the Education Policy Committee then provided to the Commission prior to submission.

Current background briefings indicate that the following program structure may apply:

- Funding to States will be based on a FTE share basis;
- Funding within States to sectors will be based on SWD enrolment proportions;
- Funding will be granted to support approved Project Plans. Project Plans will be required to focus on: provision of health specialists (e.g. occupational therapy); adapted curriculum; provision of assisted technology and teacher capacity building;
- Funding may equate to a notional $515 per SWD student per year;
- Funds will be granted for expenditure in the 2012 and 2013 school years;
- Funding for CEC will amount to 17.6% of available NSW funds; and
- DEEWR may give a weighting to the needs of non-urban communities when approving final project grants.
Commissioners noted that individual Dioceses and Congregational schools will be able to collaborate on project development including sharing funding as they may determine.

The Commonwealth has provided a three page overview with four “menu” items for projects which focus on the provision of:

- Specialist services;
- Specialist technologies;
- Additional hours of in-class support; and,
- Adapted curriculum.

An overarching DEEWR priority will be “capacity building” especially the capacity of school staff. Capacity building is itself seen as a sustainability strategy given that funding ceases at the end of the 2013 program year.

2. NCEC RE Framework

At its 22 June 2011 meeting, the Commission gave in-principle support to the concept of an “Approved Framework” and requested the Education Policy Committee to prepare a CEC response to the NCEC Position Paper on an Australian Framework for Religious Education.

At its meeting on 6 July 2011, the Education Policy Committee agreed to advise the CEC to endorse the Approved Framework as a minimum position and to encourage the NCEC to move beyond this middle-ground position towards the development of an Approved Curriculum, aligning with Australian Curriculum processes and developments.

Commissioners noted that once the NCEC processes for the development of Religious Education curriculum have been clarified, the CEC may need to seek the authority of the NSW/ACT Bishops to develop a NSW position on RE curriculum parameters.

Commissioners discussed whether or not religious education was emerging as a topic with ACARA for the National Curriculum and were advised that ACARA had been consulting with the NCEC RE Committee. It was understood that ACARA had it on its radar. Principals in the Wollongong Diocese had expressed support for RE being considered for inclusion under the National Curriculum. There had been discussion with the NSW Board of Studies on the possibility of advancing Studies of Religion into the National Curriculum.

The Commission endorsed the Approved Framework as a minimum approach to a national Religious Education curriculum and requested the Executive Director to advise the NCEC of the Commission’s support for the Approved Framework and additionally encouraging the NCEC to move towards the development of an Approved Curriculum aligning with National Curriculum processes and developments.
3. Copyright 2010 Australian Schools Photocopy Survey and Related Issues

CEC manages all MCEECDYA Copyright Licences for NSW Catholic students. In 2010 these licences attracted combined fees of $5,106,317 or $21.33 per FTE. A condition of all Copyright Licence agreements is that school authorities will participate in Sampling Surveys.

In summary, the 2010 Survey Report reveals that:

1. Copying trend issues include:
   a. One to two pages of Artistic works and Poems (High value) - 26.32% of copies;
   b. 1 copy of work only (Fair dealing?: no cost) - 0.88% of copies;
   c. Orphan works (no owner to remunerate but still costed) - 11.27% of copies;
   d. NEALS (not remunerable) - 5.47% of copies;

2. Individual per student school copying rates are still high;

3. Estimated weighted page rate 2009/2010 was 234.56 (243.06 in 2008/2009); and,

4. Rates show a gradual increase over time but there is volatility year to year.

Commissioners noted the progress report and that the current CAL Licence and remuneration agreement will expire on 31 December 2012.

4. Aboriginal Education Issues

At their 24 March 2010 meeting, Commissioners considered a paper on “COAG Indigenous Education Action Plan” and more recently at their 9 February 2011 meeting, a paper on Aboriginal Education Focus Schools.

In May 2011, COAG gave final approval to the “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan 2010 – 2014”, refer MCEECDYA Statement at http://www.mceecdya.edu.au

In early July 2011, the CEC Education Policy Committee met with DEEWR Indigenous Education Officers. Arising from this discussion with DEEWR Officers, it is now possible to for Catholic schools to adopt the COAG Action Plan and for the Commission to identify additional Focus schools on an opt-in basis.

Commissioners discussed the identification of ‘Focus Schools’. The Australian Government has incorporated its Indigenous funding into GRG funding and National Partnership grants. The Commission has for the present delineated the Aboriginal GRG funding through the continuation of an Indigenous Education targeted program.

Commissioners considered the possibility of more Indigenous Education funding being channelled by the Government through the ‘Focus Schools’ mechanism. The Commission had previously identified one school in the Armidale Diocese as a focus School. Consequential to changes made by the Commonwealth under the Program, Commissioners considered a new list of schools that could fit the criteria as Focus Schools.
The Commission agreed that the CEC should participate on a voluntary basis in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan. It decided to recommend to DEEWR that Catholic schools with significant Aboriginal enrolments and funded under the ‘Closing the Gap’ and National Partnership programs be recognised as ‘Focus Schools.’ The Education Policy Committee was requested to bring to the 31 August 2011 Commission, meeting a decision paper on both Action Plan participation and the declaration of additional ‘Focus Schools.’

5. NSW Literacy and Numeracy Plan

At their 23 March 2011 meeting, Commissioners considered a paper on “NSW State Election: Party Policies and CEC Responses”. One of the Coalition policies identified at that time was the then Opposition’s “Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan”.

Since the March 2011 NSW State election Minister Piccoli has:
- integrated responsibility for preschools into the Education Portfolio; and,
- established a Ministerial Advisory Group to progress the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.

As the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan is developed, CEC is likely to be required to provide advice to the Minister on the following matters:

(i) Allocation of NSW National Partnership Literacy and Numeracy Reward funds;
(ii) NSW Catholic sector priorities for K-2 literacy and numeracy intervention; and,
(iii) Preferred reading remediation strategies, including “Reading Recovery”.

Commissioners noted the progress of the Action Plan to date and expressed satisfaction with developments. Whilst acknowledging the Plan was at a formative stage, there was a wish not to see the proposal confused with existing and ongoing activities in Literacy and Numeracy.

The Plan’s Terms of Reference were unclear at present; they were to be clarified by the Ministerial Advisory Group. The Education Policy Committee is the reference point for the Plan.

The Commission agreed to refer related National Partnership Reward Funding matters to the CEC National Partnerships Group for advice to the Commission through the Education Policy Committee.

6. Sustainability Project: Additional State Funding

CEC has received funding to support the implementation of sustainability in NSW Catholic schools from the former NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW). Most of the functions of DECCW have been transferred to the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. Recently, CEC has been provided with an additional $20,000 to support the production of learning materials to support CEC’s Sustainability Project.
7. **Director General of NSW Department of Education and Communities**

On 11 July 2011 NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli announced the appointment of Dr Michele Bruniges as the new Director General of the Department of Education and Communities and Managing Director of TAFE NSW. Dr Bruniges has been overseeing the national school reform agenda as an associate secretary in the schools cluster of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Dr Bruniges was Chief Executive of the ACT Department of Education and Training from 2005 to 2008. She had previously held senior management positions in the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Dr Bruniges started her career in 1980 as a primary teacher at Leppington Public School before switching to secondary Mathematics and Computing Studies’ teaching at St Johns Park High School and Ingleburn High School. She has also worked as a teacher for TAFE and the Adult Migrant Education Service.

Dr Bruniges has a PhD in educational measurement, a Master's degree in education from the University of New South Wales, a Graduate Diploma in educational studies and a Diploma in teaching from Goulburn College of Advanced Education.

Commissioners formally congratulated Dr Bruniges on her appointment.

8. **New Expert Committee on Digital Education**

On 16 July 2011 School Education Minister Peter Garrett announced the establishment of a new national advisory group of leading education and IT experts to provide the Australian Government with advice on the next steps towards transforming teaching and learning through technology. Commissioners noted the members of the Digital Education Advisory Group:

- Professor Shirley Alexander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Technology Sydney – Chair;
- Mr David Barnett, Chief Executive Officer, Pearson Australia;
- Dr Richard Eden, Associate Director-General, Department of Education and Training, Queensland;
- Mr Tony Mackay, Chair, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and Deputy Chair, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority;
- Ms Susan Mann, Chief Executive Officer, Education Services Australia;
- Dr Michelle Selinger, Director, Education Practice, Cisco Systems;
- Mr Greg Whitby, Executive Director, Schools, Diocese of Parramatta; and
- An Australian Government representative, to be determined.
9. Memorandum of Understanding: NSW Police

A cross-sectoral meeting was held on 20 July 2011 to finalise details of the new MOU between schools and the NSW Police Force. Following the meeting, details of the implementation of the new MOU will be provided to dioceses and schools.

10. Anti-Bullying Working Party Progress Report

Commissioners noted that the Anti – Bullying Working Party had held its first meeting and mapped out an activity program for itself. The Working Party was in phase one of two months of work after which time it would report to the Commission.

William Walsh
Acting Commission Secretary
12 August 2011
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

The 2012 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 is meeting over 27 to 29 July 2011 to finalise its priorities to the Catholic Block Grant Authority for 2012. The Commission will be given an update at its meeting on 31 August 2011.

**NSW BUILDING GRANTS ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

The NSW Building Grants Assistance Scheme (BGAS) was announced in June 2007 concurrently with the cessation of the NSW Government Interest Subsidy Scheme.

The Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) was advised in mid-June 2011 by the NSW Department of Education and Communities that an amount of $6.29 million was available in the 2010-2011 fiscal year for building grants. The CBGA was requested to submit funding recommendations by 22 June if possible to take advantage of the funding before a 30 June closure of Government accounts. The CBGA recommendations were approved and the full allocation paid to the CBGA on 28 June 2012.

The NSW Government expects the Scheme to be managed by the CBGA under similar conditions as for the Commonwealth Capital Grants Program.

The first funding available under the NSW Building Grants Assistance Scheme in the 2010-11 financial year had been allocated to three projects from the CBGA 2010 list of recommended projects with a small funding balance allocated for an out-of-round project for facilities for Students with a Disability.

The CEC Resources Committee will provide advice to the CBGA on how the program could be managed in the future.

**BER PROGRAM**

**P21 Program**

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

- 144 (112) at full acquittal status;
- 463 (473) at completed status; and,
- 112 (131) under construction.

Expenditure claims on BER projects is at 89%. Almost all project construction will be completed by the end of 2011.
The final report of the BER Implementation Taskforce (BERIT) was released on 8 July 2011 by the Chairman Brad Orgill. Commissioners noted the favourable reporting on Catholic schools by way of management structures, construction costs and quality of buildings in the final report of the BER Implementation Taskforce. The ten complaints received on the NSW Catholic operation were of a minor nature and fully resolved.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

The Australian Government in the May 2011 Federal Budget revised the rollout of the Program over the next four years by re-scheduling $102.8 million to future years.

Funding of Rounds 4-6 for the NSW Catholic schools sector have been revised with $7.27 million for Round 4 and estimates for future rounds not yet specified. Round 4 has $100 million allocated nationally.

Key Dates (DEEWR) for Round 4 are:

- **End of August 2011** Minister announces Round 4 open Guidelines yet to be finalised from redraft of existing guidelines and require Cabinet approval.

- **Mid October 2011** Education authorities develop and submit Sectoral Plans (Strategic Plan) including Round 4 project proposals.

- **From mid-October 2011** DEEWR assesses sectoral plans and makes recommendations to Minister.

- **End November 2011** Minister announces approved Sectoral Plans and in-principle project funding for Round 4 projects.

- **End March 2012** Schools in conjunction with their education authorities provide supporting documentation to facilitate the preparation and execution of funding agreements for Round 4 projects.

Although the Government is still speakingoptimistically about a ten year expenditure commitment for TTC’s, with original 2011-2014 allocations moved into the 2015-2017 fiscal years, the realistic expectation for strategic purposes is the life of the present Government, that is, to the end of 2013. Within that span there are currently no annual budget specifications beyond Round 4.

The Commission requested the Resources Policy Committee and the Vocational Education Advisory Group (VEAG) to consider the changes circumstances of the TTC Program with a view to developing a strategic Commission response to the Program’s revised arrangements. The Commission will consider recommendations at its August meeting.

William Walsh

*Acting Commission Secretary*

12 August 2011