SUMMARY REPORT

The 329th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 31 August 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. **Aboriginal Education Focus Schools for Approval by DEEWR**

   Since March 2010, CEC has been liaising with DEEWR to clarify:
   
   - Indigenous Education Action Plan Implementation requirements;
   - Focus school opportunities and accountabilities; and
   - ‘Closing the Gap’ funding approvals for targeted schools.


   The Action Plan identifies six priority domains:
   
   - Readiness for school;
   - Engagement and connections;
   - Attendance;
   - Literacy and Numeracy;
   - Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and
   - Pathways to real post-school options.

   With respect to implementation strategies, the Action Plan envisages that: “A number of actions under the Action Plan will be undertaken by a key group of schools called “Focus Schools.”

   At this meeting, the Commission approved 23 schools for recommendation to DEEWR as NSW Catholic sector Focus schools.
2. **NSW Numeracy and Literacy Action Plan**

On 5 August 2011 Dr Ken Boston Chair of the NSW Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy wrote inviting CEC to give evidence to the Review Group on 19 August 2011. CEC Secretariat officers Ian Baker and Rosalie Nott together with CEO Sydney Assistant Director Teaching and Learning Mrs Kate O’Brien met with the Ministerial Advisory Group on 19 August 2011.

Commissioners reviewed the matters arising from the 19 August CEC consultation with Dr Boston’s Advisory Group. Attention was drawn to the next CEC input opportunities being 16 September 2011 for written advice and 11 October 2011 for further oral evidence.

Key matters identified for further consideration by the CEC Secretariat and the Education Policy Committee as they develop further input to the Review include:

- Essential linkages to the National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy and in particular the allocation of NP Reward Funds;
- The need to identify and explore successful “strategies” rather than exclusively focusing on a simplistic over reliance on programs based interventions;
- The need to identify and assess evaluative evidence relating to the efficacy of the Reading Recovery Program, noting that Reading Recovery was identified by the present State Government while it was in Opposition as its preferred remedial program; and
- The need to address teacher and school capacity issues, including school leadership as well as the role of school-based “Teacher Educators”.

The Commission requested that advice on relevant intervention “strategies” be sought from Dioceses. The Commission also requested that related National Partnership Literacy and Numeracy Reward funding issues be clarified with the NSW Minister. It was agreed that the Executive Director with the advice of the Education Policy Committee develop further advice for transmission to the Review. Commissioners advised that the Review be directed to a holistic, rather than a program based approach to school improvement.

3. **CEC / CCRESS Forum**

At its 22 June 2011 meeting, the Commission reviewed the initial synthesis of feedback from the 4 May 2011 CEC-CCRESS Forum and agreed that a focused strategic report be finalised through CEC and CCRESS for referral to the NSW ACT Bishops in November 2011.

The Project Management Committee met on 30 June and 17 August 2011 to develop the report and particular consideration was given to the advice arising from the 22 June 2011 Commission meeting. Interim versions of the report were provided to the CEC’s Education Policy Committee and to CCRESS networks for feedback. The draft report was considered by the Commission at this meeting.

The Commission requested that the “Background” section of the report be amended to accurately express the level of historical enrolment of Catholic children in government schools, that is the long term stability of this enrolment share around fifty per cent. The final report is being finalised and will be provided to the NSW / ACT Bishops at their 3 November 2011 meeting.
4. **CEC Sustainability Project**

Commissioners reviewed both the State Government funded Sustainability Project for schools and advice on the Commonwealth Government’s proposed Carbon Tax.

The role of Sydney CEO in hosting the Sustainability Project was identified as a best practice model of how Dioceses and CEC can co-operate to implement agreed programs.

With respect to the Carbon Tax proposals it was agreed that an impact statement for schools is necessary. The point was made that COAG and/or MCEECDYA may well have an impact statement process underway. However, it is necessary that the Catholic sector clarify the extent to which the impact of the proposed Carbon Tax on school costs is being assessed.

The Commission noted the progress being made with the State Sustainability Project and in particular the successful Diocesan based management model which is being implemented. It also agreed to seek through NCEC clarification of Carbon Tax implementation assessment processes involving schools.

5. **Copyright EUS Report Digital Copying**

Commissioners noted that this digital copying (use) report is separate and complementary to the photocopying report considered at the 20 July 2011 Commission meeting.

The following key usage issues arising from the Digital copying report were noted:

- Digital copying increased from 30 pages per student in 2005 to 105 pages per student in 2010;
- 81% of all copying is from web pages;
- 61% of teachers undertake no digital copying or communication; and,
- Remuneration liabilities for digital copying may increase for 2013 when the current licence agreement with CAL expires.

The attention of Commissioners was drawn to the developing MCEECDYA Copyright law management agenda for schools.

6. **CEC Bullying Working Party**

At its 18 May 2011 meeting, the Commission agreed to establish an Anti – bullying Working Party.

Through the Working Party’s deliberations and in particular as a consequence of legal advice, it has been identified that the critical issue for schools is the need for appropriate bullying response procedures and the effective implementation of such procedures. Legal advice has strongly indicated that while schools have a strong record in developing appropriate anti-bullying policies the common weakness in the cases which go to court is to be found in inadequate and/or poorly implemented response procedures.

A key matter for advice is whether anti-bullying policies and procedures should be “stand – alone” or generic.
The feedback arising from the first and second meetings of the Anti-Bullying Working Party were considered and supported.

Commissioners particularly supported:
- The focus on procedures; and,
- The development of a “Decision Tree” to assist school principals.

Attention was drawn to the possibility of a generic approach to Policy development, that is the drafting of a: “Personal Protection and Duty of Care Policy”.

Commissioners identified the need to be compliant with Board of Studies requirements relating to a range of specific policies for schools. The need to liaise with Board of Studies officers on policy development options was raised and agreed.

The Commission accepted the progress report and agreed that a further report be provided to the 15 November 2011 Commission meeting.

7. **HSC Analysis**

At its 22 June 2011 meeting, the Commission adopted Dr John DeCourcy’s report on 2010 HSC and School Certificate Data Analysis and noted that Professor George Cooney’s analysis was being finalised. Professor Cooney submitted his report, “Participation in High-level HSC Courses”, on 30 June 2011.

Commissioners identified Professor Cooney’s report as a most significant piece of strategic research for all NSW Catholic Schools. The tracking of student performance across NAPLAN, School Certificate and HSC tests was recognised as ground breaking and compelling.

The Commissioners’ discussion identified the following issues for further exploration and advice:
- the confirmed performance profile across all years of testing in Numeracy/Maths and Literacy/English;
- social justice understandings and imperatives; and
- school culture (both Primary and Secondary Schools);
- approaches to Gifted and Talented students, including organisational responses such as selective streams in schools; and
- expectations of rural communities.

In addition to these issues, Commissioners agreed on the need to maintain perspective when considering the Cooney research, that is, the fact that the total performance profile which emerges from the Cooney analysis is one of success for the vast majority of students in Catholic schools. In particular, the success which Catholic schools have in lifting outcomes for otherwise low performing students is clearly demonstrated. Catholic schools have “proportionally fewer students not meeting minimum standards.”
With respect to how the research should be progressed, Commissioners agreed that prior to approving any complementary qualitative school-based research; an issues paper should be developed.

The Commission deferred approval of further qualitative school-based research, while supporting it *in principle*. It was agreed that a concise issues paper based on Professor Cooney’s report should be developed. The Commission requested the Education Policy Committee to develop this “Issues Paper” based on Professor Cooney’s report for consideration by the Commission.

8. **Australian Government Programs for Schools: Terminations and Commencements**

Since the election of the Labor Government in November 2007, the CEC has coordinated the participation of NSW Catholic schools in the Australian Government’s set of National Partnerships for schools.

The NSW Ministerial State Steering Committee for National partnerships for schools recently considered the paper: “Expiring National Partnership Agreements. What happens to the Reform Agenda when Partnership funding ends?”

Issues identified by Commissioners included:

- the need for greater transparency in relation to NSW State Government decision making with respect to National Partnership Reward funding;
- the sustainability challenges facing school-based reforms as National Partnership funding terminates commencing 2012; and
- concerns about the appropriateness of the emerging Commonwealth initiatives for both “Empowering Local Schools” and “Rewards for Great Teachers.”

Response matters identified included the need:

- to pursue NP Reward funding with DEC and the Minister;
- to develop post NP sustainability strategies; and.
- to identify criteria to assess the case for participation in the emerging suite of new Commonwealth programs for schools.

The Commission agreed that there is an urgent need to clarify National Partnership Reward funding for NSW Catholic schools. The Commission also requested the Education Policy Committee to monitor and advise on the new Commonwealth initiatives for “Empowering Schools” and “Rewarding Teachers.”
9. NSW School Certificate

At its 9 February 2011 meeting, the Commission considered a paper on School Certificate Reform Priorities. Commissioners agreed that the current School Certificate model no longer fits the realities of secondary schooling.

On 4 August 2011, Minister Adrian Piccoli announced that the present School Certificate reference tests will be abolished from 2012 and shortly thereafter, a number of School Certificate reform issues were raised by Catholic school personnel who attended the CSSA Forum on 8 August 2011.

The following key School Certificate issues were identified for further advice:

- the urgent need for more detailed direction from BOS on reform directions, especially as these directions may impact students presently in Year 9;
- the need to immediately commence Year 10 2012 planning at all levels: BOS, School System, School;
- the particular needs/concerns of K-10 and 7-10 schools;
- school record/data management issues relating to the management of a cumulative, flexible credential (i.e. Maintaining and transferring student achievement records); and
- the concerns which schools have about moderation across schools of those outcomes that are to be credentialled.

The Commission requested that the reform issues as identified be explored with NSW Board of Studies staff and relevant advisory groups. The Commission also noted that a further CSSA Forum on School Certificate reform directions may be held in term four 2011.

10. 2010 Quinquennial Review

Under its Charter, CECNSW undergoes a five yearly review by independent consultants. The 2010 Review was undertaken by Dr Maureen Cleary, an independent consultant working in the Not For Profit Sector in conjunction with Mike Byrne, the Executive Director of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. They submitted their Report to Bishops Anthony Fisher op and David Walker in December 2010.

When considering the Review’s recommendations, the Commission categorised the recommendations into three groups:

- those that could readily be adopted in their entirety;
- those that were in principle agreed but needed some work to determine how they could be implemented; and
- those that needed substantial investigation before the Commission could decide whether or not to support them.
The Commission appointed a working Party comprising three Commissioners - Dr Brian Croke, Executive Director of CEC, NSW, Dr Berenice Kerr rsm, education consultant and Gregory B Whitby, Executive Director of Schools of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office. 

The Commission has now considered several progress reports from the Working Party. The Commission’s final report will be considered at its 19 October 2011 meeting and will then be forwarded to the 3 November 2011 meeting of the NSW / ACT Bishops.

11. Grant programs

The Commission approved the following:
- 2010 VET in Schools Accountability Report;
- 2011 VET in Schools Funding Allocations totalling $1.6 million; and
- National Partnerships Administration Grants.

12. NSW Review of Early Childhood Education Funding

On 15 August 2011, the NSW Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, launched the NSW Review of Early Childhood Education Funding, to be chaired by Professor Deborah Brennan. The review will make recommendations for a more evidence-based funding system that will help increase participation in early childhood education, particularly for disadvantaged children in New South Wales (see terms of reference: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/news-at-det/announcements/terms-of-reference.pdf).

A discussion paper has been posted at this site. The closing date for submissions is 30 October 2011. CEC is coordinating a response process in consultation with Catholic Social Services and CCER.

13. ACARA Health and Physical Education National Curriculum

The Health and Physical Education (HPE) national curriculum is considered a high priority by the Australian Bishops given inherent personal development issues. NCEC has formed a reference group to coincide with development of the HPE curriculum. Lee Herden (CSO Armidale) will be the NSW representative on the NCEC Group. Adrian Eussen (CEO Sydney) has been nominated as one of five NSW representatives to the ACARA HPE advisory panel. Paul Mastronardi (CEC Student Wellbeing Coordinator) will coordinate feedback and advice to both representatives through the diocesan student wellbeing network.
14. Emergency Management

The latest version of the Catholic Education Commission Emergency Management System (CECEMS) has been delivered and installed. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is in progress to identify any final issues for attention. Work has commenced to investigate the building of a Diocesan Emergency Management System (DEMS), reusing much of the CECEMS code.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) has provided CEC with a document defining protocols for the coming Bushfire season, which commences on 1 October 2011. This protocol includes the requirement that nominated CEC representatives are to take all reasonable steps to assist the transmission of Rural Fire Service advice, provided by the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC), to affected Principals at the earliest opportunity. CEC’s responsibility is to be the portal for the communication of ‘Catastrophic Notices’ between SEOC and Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities. It is then the Diocesan Offices’ responsibility to transmit notices to schools.

15. Institute of Teachers: Revocation of Teacher Accreditation Role for TAAs

The Institute of Teachers has recently advised that it intends to develop for Ministerial approval a Regulation to give effect to section 24 of the Institute of Teachers Act relating to “General Grounds for Revocation” of a teacher’s accreditation to teach. The grounds for revocation encompass a serious (criminal) offence, a repeated non-serious (criminal) offence or serious misconduct.

In each case the Teacher Accreditation Authority for the employer of the teacher will be responsible for making the revocation decision. A teacher who has their Teacher Accreditation revoked (or suspended) will be unable to seek employment as a teacher in any Australian School. Currently, once accreditation is revoked it cannot be re-instated.

The CEC Secretariat is liaising on matters arising with:
- CCER;
- CEC Education Policy Committee; and
- Diocesan Child Protection Practitioners.

Once the relevant Draft Regulation is available, it will be provided to both the Commission and CCER for comment.
16. **Recent Awards**

**Australian College of Educators, 5 August 2011**

On 5 August 2011, fellowships were presented to Andrew Fraser and Dr Berenice Kerr; service awards were given to Dr John DeCourcy, Janice Haydon and Natalie McNamara. The Wyndham Medal was presented to Dr Brian Croke.

**Goethe-Institut Scholarships 2011/12**

Lorraine Greig, Trinity Catholic College, Goulburn, has been awarded a Goethe-Institut Scholarships to enable her to study in Munich.

**NSW Training Awards**

*Mary-Rose Wigan* is a finalist for the 2011 NSW Trainee of the Year. She is studying Frontline Management Certificate IV and trained by the Catholic Education Office - Archdiocese of Sydney. *Madeleine Leigh* is a finalist for the 2011 NSW School Based Apprentice / Trainee of the Year. Madeleine is studying Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) Certificate III and is trained by Newman Senior Technical College, Port Macquarie.

John Kitney  
**Commission Secretary**  
27 September 2011
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

The State Priority Committee has completed its processing of 2011 applications and finalised a list of recommended projects in priority order.

The CBGA is in the process of writing to school authorities with Indicative Offers of grant and seeking authority commitment to local contribution and submission of a project Development Application by no later than two months after the Indicative Offer.

Once indicative Offers have been accepted, the CBGA will bring forward for Commission approval a list of projects to be recommended for funding under the Capital Grants Program 2011 schedule.

**NSW BUILDING GRANTS ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

The CBGA is awaiting confirmation from the NSW Government on the 2011-12 allocation under the Scheme and Guidelines.

At the 20 July Commission meeting, the Commission requested the Resources Policy Committee to consider the circumstances of the newly commencing Scheme and to bring advice and recommendations to the Commission. The Resources Policy Committee has given preliminary consideration to the request and developed some options. However, the Committee requires confirmation from the NSW Government on Scheme guidelines and budget allocations before firming up a position.

The Resources Policy Committee will report to a subsequent Commission meeting.

**BER PROGRAM**

**P21 Program**

The status of the projects is as follows (previously reported figures from the 20 July 2011 Commission meeting are bracketed).

- 178 (144) at full acquittal status;
- 450 (463) at completed status; and,
- 91 (112) under construction.

Expenditure claims on BER projects is at 93%. Almost all project construction will be completed by the end of 2011.
TRADE TRAINING CENTRES

The information presented on an impending Round 4 at the 20 July 2011 Commission meeting has not substantially changed. DEEWR is still in the process of finalising guidelines, budgets, sector allocations and a template for submitting a “sectoral plan.”

Whatever the final form of the TTC guidelines, the Round 4 conditions emphasized at the 20 July 2011 Commission meeting remain: substantially reduced budget; a requirement for project readiness, with contracts to be signed by April 2012 and construction to commence soon thereafter. The CBGA will need to prioritise projects under DEEWR specified criteria; not all schools will or can be funded to the maximum amount of $1.5 million. The CBGA has responded to draft guidelines and materials circulated by DEEWR.

At the July meeting, the Commission agreed that, in view of the reduced budget, the previously agreed strategy of a three year plan including notional allocations to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools needed to be amended. At the Commission’s request, the Resources Policy Committee and the Vocational Education Advisory Group considered the changed circumstances and agreed to recommend a priority application process based on the proportion of an Authority’s schools not funded in previous Funding Rounds, with an added rider of ‘readiness’ which is to be demonstrated by documentation and attested by the relevant school authority.

The recommended option means that in prioritising applications to go forward within the limited funding pool, with ineligible and non-conforming applications (such as not ‘ready’ or not meeting DEEWR guidelines) eliminated prior, first priority would be given to the Authority with the least level of support to date as measured by TTC projects funded. This option was seen as giving all schools not funded under previous Rounds an opportunity to be considered for grant funding at a level required to construct an appropriate TTC facility.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
27 September 2011