SUMMARY REPORT

The 331st meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 19 October 2011 in the Clancy/Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Peter Turner.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. 2012 Grant Program Allocations

The Commission approved the following Commonwealth grant allocations for 2012:

- Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs:
  - $23.8 million for Literacy and Numeracy including $1.6 million for participating Congregational schools; and
  - $15.9 million for Special Needs made up of:
    - $3.7 million for Special Schools; and,
    - $12.2 million for Regular Schools, including $1.1 million for participating Congregational schools;
  - $11.4 million for Students with Disabilities per capita, including $1.3 million for participating Congregational schools.

- Schools Languages Program including:
  - $2.0 million to the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities;
  - $0.4 million to participating Congregational schools; and
  - $75,000 for the support of Aboriginal languages in the Armidale and Lismore dioceses.

- Country Areas Program:
  - $1.6 million to participating dioceses – Armidale, Bathurst, Canberra/Goulburn, Wagga Wagga and Wilcannia/Forbes.
2. Early Childhood Funding Inquiry

As noted at the 31 August 2011 Commission meeting, the NSW Minister for Education and Communities has established a Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Funding. Both the CEC Education Policy Committee and the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee are advising on issues arising. Submissions to the Review are required to be submitted by 18 November 2011.

The CEC Secretariat has convened a response Ad Hoc Advisory Group. Commissioners reviewed and discussed the 11 response issues as identified by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group. The involvement of CCER and Catholic Social Services NSW in the Ad Hoc Advisory Group was noted.

Commissioners were informed of early childhood initiatives currently being undertaken by the Parramatta, Broken Bay and Canberra/Goulburn Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities. In the case of Broken Bay, it was noted that management of early childhood services is vested with Centacare.

Commissioners noted issues identified at an NCEC Early Childhood Network meeting held on 13 October 2011. Key National issues of relevance to the NSW Review include:

- access to National Partnership funding (noting that in NSW Catholic Education has been excluded);
- implementation of the new National Quality Framework and Regulations from 2012; and
- start-up of the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.

The Commission endorsed the review response issues as identified. It also requested the CEC Executive Director to finalise a review submission, with the advice of the Ad Hoc Group, CEC Education Policy Committee and CESWCC.

3. Matters for NSW/ACT Bishops

Commissioners noted that the NSW/ACT Bishops are next to meet on 3 November 2011. The Commission considered the following matters for transmission to the Bishops:

- 2012 CEC WorkPlan;
- 2012 CEC Budget; and
- Final recommendations arising from consideration of the matters raised in the 2010 Quinquennial review of the CEC.

The Commission approved the 2012 CEC WorkPlan and Budget and resolved to recommend their adoption by the Bishops, including an increase of 25 cents in the student levy that contributes towards the funding of the CEC to $9 per student in 2012.

The Bishops have been progressively considering recommendations arising from the 2010 Quinquennial review. Commissioners consider that there may be currently activities at the diocesan level that would be more efficiently undertaken collectively State wide. Diocesan Directors will recommend to the Commission Terms of Reference for a Commissioner Forum to be held in the early part of 2012. The Forum will address areas for the co-operative delivery of services to support Catholic schools across NSW.
4. **CRICOS**

Commissioners reviewed the outcomes of the 16 September 2011 inter-diocesan forum on CRICOS matters. The action by the NSW Board of Studies to extend the CEC’s CRICOS Accreditation to 30 June 2012 was acknowledged as a positive transitional step which will allow more time for Dioceses and Congregational schools to finalise their own CRICOS Accreditation planning. Commissioners agreed that the transition from CEC to Diocesan level CRICOS accreditation needs to be monitored and supported by CEC.

Attention then focused on the related but separate matter of refugee and asylum category students who have a visa entitlement to schooling but for whom no government funding to support their schooling is available. The recent Australian Government decision relating to refugees will exacerbate this issue. Commissioners were reminded that both NCEC and ISCA jointly wrote to DEEWR about this matter in April 2011 but there has not been a reply as yet.

5. **NCEC Response to Gonski Research**

On 31 August 2010, the Gonski Panel released a Paper on Commissioned Research and four research reports, seeking feedback from the general public and emphasising that the reports were not to be taken as being endorsed by the Panel. The research reports were considered in detail by the CEC School Resources Committee with separate advice provided by Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and other individuals. NCEC considered this feedback in preparing a national response. While the publically available responses cover a range of matters, the NCEC response concentrated on:

- each report’s use of limited data and reliance on questionable assumptions;
- a lack of attention to indexation in developing a funding standard;
- a lack of attention to the impact of socio-economic status on student learning outcomes;

6. **NCEC National Conference**

Commissioners considered that the NCEC Convention was a worthwhile event of immense importance to Catholic education. There were significant issues raised by key speakers which will provide thought provoking agendas going into the futures. In particular, the following matters for analysis were identified:

- Parent/ School Partnerships;
- Continuous improvement in school governance arrangements;
- Changing Australian culture and the New Evangelisation; and
- Continuous improvement in the quality of NSW Catholic schools, particularly in respect of Catholic mission and identity.

The Commission requested the CEC Executive Director to include key issues arising from the NCEC Conference in the Commission’s strategic discussions during 2012.
7. **National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program Guidelines**

Since the inception of the School Chaplaincy Program CEC has had no direct role with its administration. CEC has, however, monitored the program and during 2009-2010 participated in a DEEWR consultation process on Chaplains Programs issues. From 2012 the Program offers support for either Chaplains or Welfare Workers.

The revised Guidelines for the refocused “National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program” were released 7 October 2011. The new Guidelines address implementation concerns identified by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and expand the program to include “welfare support” and “student wellbeing.”

Commissioners discussed the renewal and broadening of this program. Two Guidelines issues for CEC follow-up were identified:

- Possible IR / Award issues re classification of “Chaplains” and “Student Welfare Workers”; and
- The timeline for implementing the new minimum qualifications for appointees.

8. **Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership**

At the 2011 Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership ceremony held in Melbourne on 13 October, Karen Ryce, Head of Mission and Year 12 Coordinator at Emmaus Catholic College, Diocese of Parramatta, was announced as the New South Wales finalist in the Australian Secondary Teacher of the Year category. Karen was recognised, along with 38 other finalists, as one of the country’s most outstanding teachers and school leaders. The event was hosted by the Hon Peter Garrett MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, who presented the awards to the national winners, and by State and Territory Education Ministers. Award winners received a national and/or international sabbatical to work with leading educators in an area of professional interest.

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

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**BER P21 PROGRAM**

The status of the P21 projects is that the proportion of projects at acquitted or completed status is 92% and expenditure at 95%.

**NSW Government BER Taskforce**

All projects with Taskforce planning approval have to provide documentation that completed projects are in accord with the terms of planning conditions before the projects can be transitioned to development consent under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Commissioners noted that the NSW Government Taskforce will be fully wound up by the end of 2011. The Taskforce Secretariat has set 31 October 2011 as the date it expects all relevant information to be provided.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

The Round 4 TTC application process was opened on 29 September 2011 with a closing date for applications of 11 November 2011. Final guidelines and other material from DEEWR became available from the beginning of October.

Applications from Catholic schools will go forward to DEEWR through the CBGA under an Education Authority Sectoral Plan. The CBGA has a Round 4 allocation of $10.39 million. The CBGA is required to assess and prioritise the applications received.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
10 November 2011