SUMMARY REPORT

The 334th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 21 March 2012 in the Clancy/Gilroy Rooms of the Polding Centre. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP and then by Commissioner Peter Turner.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. New Commissioners in 2012

The NSW/ACT Bishops have approved new Commissioners as follows:

- Jenny Allen, Executive Director of Schools as the nominee of the Bishop of Bathurst;
- Peter Hamill, Director of Schools as the nominee of the Bishop of Broken Bay;
- Kay Herse, Education Consultant as the nominee of the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes NSW; and
- Bishop Michael Kennedy, Bishop of Armidale as the second Bishop Member.

Jenny Allen replaced Peter Hill who took up a leadership role in the Brisbane Catholic Education Office. Peter Hamill took over from Brother Tony Whelan cfc who retired as Director of Schools for the Broken Bay Diocese. Kay Herse replaced Dr Berenice Kerr rsm who took up a senior leadership role for the Sisters of Mercy in Ballarat. Bishop Michael Kennedy replaced Bishop David Walker as the second Bishop member of the Commission.

2. Anti-Bullying Program

The 18 May 2011 Commission meeting authorised the establishment of a CEC Working Party to provide advice on anti-bullying policy and procedures for NSW Catholic Schools Authorities. Commissioners at this meeting considered eleven recommendations from the Working Party and accepted that there is now a heightened responsibility for schools to provide a safe environment for students. Principals and staff are required to act in a situation of foreseeable events and not just be responsive.

Commissioners agreed in general with the Working Party’s recommendations, particularly in promoting the Wollongong CEO Anti Bullying Model.
The CEC Executive Director was requested to organise Forums for Dioceses and Congregational schools both to improve their understanding of their Catholic, legal and social responsibilities to safeguard the environment in NSW Catholic schools and to encourage adoption of appropriate policies and procedures to combat bullying practices in all forms. It was agreed that a Working Party be established to advise on related school counsellor issues, especially record management issues.

3. NSW Literacy and Numeracy Plan

At their 8 February 2012 meeting, Commissioners discussed NSW State Literacy and Numeracy Plan developments. The draft final report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the outcomes of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan consultations was provided to the CEC on 27 February 2012.

On 2 March 2012, the CEC received verbal advice from Minister Piccoli’s Office that:

- the CEC will receive a minimum $7.02m per annum for five years to support implementation of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Plan;
- the Government’s intention is that the funds be used to help fulfil its election promise to provide up to 900 additional positions for literacy and numeracy intervention;
- CEC will be required to use the funds to support 60 FTE additional positions in 2012 and
- the positions are required to support students in lowest-quartile schools based on NAPLAN results.

It was noted that the report has adopted Catholic sector language relating to:

- Instructional Leaders and their role; and
- Personalised learning.

Commissioners discussed the following implementation issues:

(i) The Plan’s three reform steps being: “Kindergarten Assessment”; “Change teaching practice”; and “Tiered remediation including common but not mandatory intervention programs”;

(ii) CEC’s three continuing policy matters being: “Annual review of targeted schools identification”; “Extension of the scope of the five year plan beyond K-2”; and “Review of the deficit model for targeting schools”; and

(iii) Allocation of available funds ($7.02m pa for five years) across up to 108 Catholic sector targeted schools, including possible funding options.

Commissioners accepted the tabled final Ministerial Report, noting the “A Way Forward” action statements and endorsed the CEC high level implementation plan for referral to the Minister together with the associated targeted school strategy inclusive of the 108 listed schools. Commissioners requested the CEC Secretariat to provide advice on implementation actions, including advice on how the AIS and DEC are progressing implementation.

A further paper on implementation steps will be provided to the 18 April 2012 Commission meeting.
4. **Gonski Report on School Funding**

The much anticipated Gonski report on the future of the funding of Australian Schools was released by the Australian Government on 20 February 2012. It has received widespread recognition as a substantial report and generally positive media commentary about its goals and aspirations. The centrepiece of the report is a proposed national funding standard derived from the cost of the highest performing schools (‘Reference Schools) combined with loadings for particular student characteristics (indigenous, disability, size, location, ESL etc.).

No serious evaluation of the proposed funding model can be offered until a considerable amount of technical work has been undertaken. To this end the Australian Government has established a Ministerial Reference Group and the Strategic Policy Working Group is establishing a range of expert groups to investigate and report on various aspects of the model. In addition, NCEC has identified its own program of research and analysis.

Commissioners noted the list of major strategic issues for Catholic schools arising from the Gonski Review, especially the main-streaming of all targeted programs. Key issues of concern highlighted by Commissioners were:

- no detail on how to deal with demands for growth and concomitant capital funding;
- how will “capacity to pay” be implemented ?;
- what will happen to the commitment that “no school will be worse off” should there be no additional Government funding; and
- how will the Catholic sector engage with the changes that will arise from Gonski?

Commissioners noted that the ACBC has charged the NCEC with being responsible for the Catholic sector’s engagement with the Gonski funding Review and Government decisions that follow. Commissioners confirmed areas of concern and requested the Executive Director of the CECNSW to raise these with the NCEC. Commissioners requested the CEC Executive Director and CEC Resources Policy Committee to assess both funding impacts and possible communications strategies.

5. **NSW Record of School Achievement (ROSA)**

Commissioners noted that BOS ROSA implementation advice is to be provided to all secondary schools by end Term One 2012. BOS will clarify ROSA Accreditation requirements for standalone Year 11 and 12 Schools, that is, schools which have no pre-existing Accreditation for the School Certificate. BOS will establish ROSA state-wide moderation criteria and processes. The CSSA will hold a ROSA implementation Forum on 21 May 2012. BOS will provide input to this Forum. CEC will advertise this Forum in its eBulletin.

6. **Aboriginal Education State and COAG Developments**

Commissioners noted that a condition of the 2009 – 2013 General Recurrent Grant (GRG) Funding Agreement between CEC and DEEWR is that NSW Catholic Schools Authorities will halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018.

To give effect to this requirement the Commission has established the CEC Aboriginal Student Assistance Program (CASAP) by quarantining identified recurrent funds provided by the Commonwealth.
Commissioners endorsed the following CEC identified Aboriginal Education policy issues for 2012:

- Clarification of DEEWR Focus School requirements;
- Implementation of “Personalised Learning Plans”; and
- Possible participation in the NSW “Connected Communities” initiative.

Commissioners noted that both the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and the Education Policy Committee are currently considering these matters.

Commissioners also agreed that the Aboriginal Education Framework is a means of monitoring the progress of Catholic schools towards achieving the COAG objective of halving the performance gap between Indigenous and Non Indigenous students. CEC is developing a web based system to collect information from Dioceses and Congregational schools on progress being made. At the individual student level, personal learning plans or strategies are being put in place to assist individual Aboriginal students.

7. Using Students Materials in Publications

Commissioners noted that the MCEECDYA Copyright Agency Group is reviewing both Privacy and Copyright compliance issues relating to the inclusion of student images and works in digital repositories created either by schools or school authorities. The CEO Western Australia has been working with MCEECDYA CAG to finalise a “Standard Consent Form / Release for Use of a Student’s Image and/or Work.”

Commissioners noted that the same rules of copyright and privacy apply to all forms of media and technology. Students of any age enjoy the same privacy privileges as any other persons. They also own the copyright of their creativity. Commissioners agreed that policies and procedures need to be developed consistently across the State to ensure that these fundamental rights are addressed by all NSW Catholic schools.

Commissioners requested the CEC Secretariat to clarify at what age it is appropriate for parents to give consent on behalf of the student, at what age is the student’s own consent also advisable and how often consents should be obtained during a student’s progress through schooling K to 12. Guidelines are to be developed on copyright and privacy rights for students, including a model consent form.

8. CEC Special Education Project

At the 23 March 2011 Commission meeting, Commissioners agreed that a renewed “CEC Special Education Project Steering Group” be established. At the meeting of the Steering Group held on 22 February 2012 the Findings and Recommendations of the Gonski Report relevant to Students with Disabilities were discussed.

Part of the Steering Group’s current task is to develop a SWD funding model that is consistent with the direction mapped by Gonski while also providing a rationale for maintaining school system involvement in the funding of individual student’s with a disability.

CEC will host an inter-Diocesan moderation/validation workshop on 24 May 2012 so that Diocesan Special Education practitioners can discuss and review existing interpretations of student adjustment levels as well as advice on the best process for moving the CEC project forward. Congregational school representatives will also attend this workshop. CEC will advertise this Forum in its eBulletin.
9. **Keep Them Safe: Child Protection in NSW**

Commissioners noted that the Keep Them Safe (KTS) Coordination group which is based in the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet has initiated two KTS strategic activities for 2012:

- Interim Review of KTS implementation; and
- State Government KTS support projects.

CEC was briefed on planning for these projects on 28 February 2012 through the Education Portfolio KTS Coordination Group.

Commissioners considered the key sections of the “Keep Them Safe – A Shared approach to Child Wellbeing Interim Review Plan.” Commissioners noted the objectives of the interim Review:

- report progress to date;
- achievement of goals so far;
- impact of KTS implementation;
- identify inhibitors of change and progress;
- identify areas requiring targeted action;
- identify whether required conditions are in place; and
- develop baseline indicators against which future change can be measured.

Commissioners welcomed the intention that the review to examine the differential effects that KTS is having on specific population groups.

Commissioners agreed to Catholic sector involvement in both the KTS review and implementation projects. The Commission also requested Catholic Education Social Welfare Coordinating Committee to monitor progress and continue engaging with the KTS Strategy on behalf of NSW Catholic schools and to report to the Commission on KTS issues regularly.

10. **Endorsements**

Commissioners:

- endorsed the estimated allocations of **2012 VET in Schools Program** funding to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities;
- endorsed and adopted the CCRESS “Ethics” submission as provided to the NSW Legislative Council;
- endorsed and adopted the Accountability Report for the expenditure of State Drug Education funds for 2011; and
- agreed to the execution of the new AMCOS, APRA and ARIA Copyright licence for NSW Catholic schools for the period 2012 – 2016 inclusive.
11. NSW Schools Advisory Council

The inaugural meeting of the new NSW Schools Advisory Council, which is chaired by CEC Executive Director Dr Brian Croke, took place in Sydney on 13 March 2012. The Council agreed on its strategic directions arising from its terms of reference. There was also discussion of issues surrounding implementation of national curriculum in NSW and outcomes of the Gonski Report: Funding for Schooling in Australia. Other matters addressed included preparations for the meeting of the COAG Ministerial Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood and the Schools’ Advisory Council’s contribution to the NSW Government’s Committee of Review of Tertiary Pathways.

12. NCEC and Diocesan Directors Conference

The most recent meeting of the NCEC was held in Canberra on 29 February 2012 following the Conference with all Australian Diocesan Directors of Education / Schools. The meeting opened with a discussion with the panel for the Review of the NCEC. The major focus of the meeting was the NCEC response to the Gonski Report: Funding for Schooling in Australia. There was also discussion of the Australian government’s proposed changes to both anti-discrimination laws and not-for-profit / charitable status. The meeting also considered the MySchool 3.0 and AITSL’s consultation paper on the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers including a briefing from the CEO of AITSL, Margery Evans.

13. Emergency Events Threatening Schools: CEC Early Warning System

CEC has been supporting Dioceses affected by the floods in north western and southern NSW. This task has become a real-life test for the newly developed CEC Emergency Management System. CEC has attended meetings and teleconferences hosted by the State Emergency Operations Centre. These meetings have assisted rapid transmission of information to dioceses. While local SES Authorities manage situations directly, having access to SEOC through CEC has enabled Dioceses to receive the most up-to-date State level emergency response advice. Dioceses remain responsible for all local responses to emergencies.

14. MySchool 3.0

The third release of MySchool by ACARA took place on 24 February 2012. This version contains data from 2009 to 2011 with the school’s financial data tracked from 2010. The new version has been developed in response to concerns identified from previous releases. It offers a number of improvements and additional features including year-on-year student gain in NAPLAN performance. There has been far less media comment and much lower traffic to the MySchool site compared with the previous two years. The Sydney Morning Herald has published a list of all NSW schools using a range of data from MySchool, especially ICSEA together with its own ranking of schools based on average of NAPLAN scores.
15. **AEDI Implementation**

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) will be implemented for the second time across Australia in the period 1st May – 31st July 2012. This follows the first national AEDI data collection in 2009. The AEDI involves teachers of children in the first year of full-time school completing an online checklist for each child in their class. The AEDI Checklist includes around 100 questions across five areas of early childhood development. It is expected that, by the end of March, a package will be sent to Primary School Principals inclusive of an implementation guide for Kindergarten teachers.

16. **Consolidation of Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation**

Over the past twelve months, Commissioners have received progress reports about the policy intention of the Australian Government to consolidate all Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination laws into a single Act. The model for this reform is the UK Equality Act.

Over recent months and weeks the CEC Secretariat has contributed to both National and NSW Church submissions on anti-discrimination consolidation issues for NSW Catholic schools.

Most recently input was provided to the Catholic Arch Diocese of Sydney submission to the State Attorney – General Hon Greg Smith. The State of NSW is making a submission to the Australian Government on likely impacts of the Commonwealth anti-discrimination law review process on NSW State law.

17. **“Rewards for Great Teachers” National Partnership: A Funding Agreement for 2012 and 2013**

At the 2010 Federal Election, the Australian Labor Party committed the Gillard Government to fund a Rewards for Great Teachers National Partnership. There has been much uncertainty and some controversy since the election about how such a program might be made to work and a clear decision has now been made to proceed with it. During March and April 2012, a meeting will be held to discuss NSW preparations for re-activation of planning for this National Partnership. A funding agreement will need to be signed by 28 May 2012 to ensure NSW obtains its share of the $60 million implementation funding from the Commonwealth during the 2011-12 financial year.

John Kitney  
*Commission Secretary*  
11 April 2012
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**BER P21 PROGRAM**

All P21 Projects must be completed by 30 June 2012, and must be fully acquitted by 31 December 2012. There are still 13 projects under construction. Two have been withdrawn.

The status of the P21 projects as at 29 February 2012 is as follows (figures presented to the 8 February 2012 Commission meeting are bracketed):

- 468 (421) at full acquitted status
- 240 (270) at completed status;
- 13 (33) under construction.

**NSW BUILDING GRANTS SCHEME**

The first BGAS funding became available in mid-2011. The first funding was $6.29 million to the CBGA. As a once off, four high priority projects that were unable to be fitted into the 2011 Commonwealth Capital Program were funded by the revamped NSW State Program.

The Resources Policy Committee considered a number of options about how to manage this new Program into the future, particularly as the State Program is likely to grow to a larger Program than the Commonwealth Capital Program. Commissioners agreed that the most appropriate mechanism is to extend the current application / approval scheme by adding the State funds into a Funding Pool with Commonwealth funds but this mechanism would only apply for 2012 and 2013. For 2014 onwards, a substantial review will be undertaken.

**CAPITAL GRANT APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

To ensure prompt commencement of projects after approval, Commissioners authorised the CBGA to introduce a guideline that annual Capital Grants Program applications to the CBGA must in general be accompanied by evidence of a DA approval. Commissioners also agreed that where a DA approval is imminent and likely to be approved then the project can be brought forward to the State Priority Committee along with other DA approved projects. This new requirement will be introduced from the 2013 application round. Commissioners exhort applicants in 2012 to make every effort to have a DA at least submitted, not necessarily approved, at time of application to the CBGA.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

The CBGA will send to DEEWR by early April 2012 the detailed plans and budgets for the nine Round 4 TTC schools approved-in-principle at a cost of $11.15 million. DEEWR wants schools to start construction by the end of this financial year.

The CBGA will call for Expressions of Interest for Round 5 TCC in April 2012 as it is likely the Minister will announce the budget allocation for Round 5 TTC in early May 2012, and require applications by early July 2012. The CBGA anticipates that it may be eligible for between $15m to $22m in Round 5 TTC grants. DEEWR will give strong preference to TTCs that serve low SES areas.

Round 6 TTC applications are likely to be called in early 2013 to allow the Minister to announce the successful applications before the 2013 Federal General Election.
DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Since the 8 February 2012 Commission meeting, there has been no material change in the progress on DER issues, and there are no issues of concern for the Commission.

All secondary schools have achieved the 1:1 ratio. The funding in Round Three of the program has provided 50,170 computers at a total cost of $47 million. Payments equalling 99% of the funding provided to get schools to 1:1 have been made; there is just 1% of residual funding $452,487 remaining to be spent before 31 March 2012.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
11 April 2012