The 337th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 20 June 2012 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. **Rewarding Great Teachers**

Commissioners noted that all three NSW schools sectors have agreed to the DEEWR Rewards for Great Teachers Funding Agreement. Key elements of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework are required to commence from 2013. All Australian Education Ministers will finalise the endorsement of the Performance Framework at the August 2012 meeting of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC).

Minister Piccoli is responsible for finalising the form of the Framework for New South Wales. CEC has until the end of August 2012 to make representations to Minister Piccoli about the form of the Framework and formulate a Catholic sector implementation plan. Framework implementation in NSW will be driven by the NSW Institute of Teachers.

2. **Anti-Bullying**

Commissioners reaffirmed their commitment to NSW Catholic schools implementing consistent and effective anti-bullying policies. Commissioners expressed a preference for a consistent definition of bullying across NSW Catholic schools. Commissioners requested that the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee (CESWCC) review Working Party Report bullying definitions and identify a definition for the Commission to recommend for adoption by Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools.
Commissioners agreed that a CEC School Counsellor Issues Working Party be established to review practices surrounding School Counsellors, including matters relating to record keeping and information exchange. A CEC Working Party to review School Counsellor practice issues is to be established with a report of findings to be provided to the 20 March 2013 Commission meeting.

3. **Keep Them Safe Interim Review**

Commissioners noted that the NSW Premier’s Department has written to CEC inviting Catholic representation on the *Keep Them Safe* Joint Senior Officers Group. This Group commenced in 2009 with the remit to monitor the implementation of the NSW Government’s action plan *Keep Them Safe: A shared Approach to Child Wellbeing*. This invitation is being extended because it is recognised the Group will benefit from non-government sector membership when monitoring important aspects of the KTS change management process. Commissioners welcomed this approach, recalling that the CEC made representations to the NSW Government in 2009 for a cross sectoral approach to KTS implementation.

Commissioners discussed the three key issues identified by the Dioceses relating to *Keep Them Safe* implementation review matters.

These three key Catholic sector KTS review issues are:

- mandatory Reporter Guide implementation;
- responding to cumulative harm; and
- responding to educational neglect.

Commissioners also noted the high level of dissatisfaction with Community Services in relation to its capacity to respond appropriately.

The factors of concern are:

- unsatisfactory communication, and allocation of cases;
- lack of engagement with other agencies; and
- inaction /lengthy response times.

Commissioners agreed that Catholic sector representation on the *Keep Them Safe* Joint Senior Officers Group may help improve *Keep Them Safe* implementation in NSW Catholic schools.

After deliberation, the Commission decided to offer the role to Deidre Cheers, Executive Director of Centacare Broken Bay.

4. **NSW Schools Advisory Council**

The most recent meeting of the NSW Schools Advisory Council was held on 1 June 2012. Arising from the previous meeting, the Council considered the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission’s impact on schools and Assessment of Pre-Service Teachers. There was also discussion of education in science and mathematics, as national issues, and assessment of the quality of the NSW education system. In relation to priority issues, the Council identified the implementation of the new national curriculum as most critical.
5. **Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) Management in Catholic Schools**

Commissioners noted that six Dioceses including Sydney, Lismore and Parramatta are working with the Board of Studies (BOS) to finalise the documentation required for CRICOS registration. The major Congregational schools in terms of the enrolment of Visa 571 students are all pursuing independent CRICOS registration.

CEC is monitoring changes in the Tuition Protection Scheme that take effect from 1 July 2012. Under the previous Tuition Assurance Scheme schools in receipt of Government funding were exempt from participation but this exemption has been removed.

Commissioners noted that CRICOS responsibilities cannot be delegated to an agent for a fee. Further, transition arrangements only apply to existing CRICOS Registered Providers. The CEC transition role is now due to expire 31 December 2012.

6. **Early Childhood Education and Care**

Commissioners noted advice from the Education Policy Committee that the “nature and scope” of CEC engagement in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) cannot be settled without consideration of the current “landscape” including:

- Church engagement in ECEC;
- The current interface of families with other Church agencies;
- Where the Church can best engage;
- New Evangelisation and the opportunity of ECEC;
- The nature of children (0-8 years); and
- Outcomes of the current NSW Government’s Funding Review

Commissioners concurred that these identified issues must be explored and also agreed that the appropriate means to do this is an ECEC Forum hosted by CEC. 30 appropriately qualified people will be convened in September or October 2012 to explore ECEC issues and map response options.

7. **Gonski Report: Update on Recent Developments**

Commissioners noted the issues being addressed by the Ministerial Reference Group (NCEC represented by Therese Temby):

- the Gonski model requires schools to meet certain minimum thresholds and thereafter different threshold levels. The NCEC’s clear preference is for a more “tapered” approach based upon actual numbers and an increase for density;
- the Gonski model allows for a low SES loading for those students in the bottom, quartile whereas the NCEC prefers a loading for the bottom two quartiles; and
- NCEC argues for a national definition for English language proficiency rather than ‘disadvantaged LBOTE.’

Commissioners also noted the work of the Strategic Policy Working Group and NCEC Research and Analysis activities.

Commissioners noted that there are fundamental concerns surrounding the design of the Schools Resourcing Standard model. The Commonwealth and States are currently unwilling to commit the extra funding required to make the model work.
8. **Record of School Attainment (RoSA) Implementation**

Commissioners noted that on 21 May 2012, the Catholic Secondary Schools Association held its RoSA implementation forum. This forum identified the following issues requiring further BOS consideration and advice:

- managing student record exchange between schools given that RoSA is a cumulative credential;
- defining “completion of Year 10”;
- exploring implications for commencement of Year 11;
- addressing the authenticity of extracurricular information (and access for students to extra-curricular experiences);
- moderating grading advice within and between schools;
- supporting the implementation of A to E grading by Stage 6 teachers, especially in standalone 11 and 12 schools;
- implementing the optional Literacy and Numeracy test for RoSA candidates;
- managing implementation workload for schools/teachers;
- clarifying disability support / provisions for ROSA candidates;
- assessing how VET courses fit into ROSA. Exploring the possible application of A to E grades to VET;
- reviewing RoSA programming requirements; and
- clarifying how stand-alone Year 11 and 12 schools will award the RoSA given their existing BOS Accreditation only relates to the HSC.

Commissioners agreed with the above list of issues as identified by the forum. Commissioners noted that in order to deal with the question of how RoSA will be implemented by stand-alone year 11 and Year 12 schools, which to date have only ever been Registered and Accredited to deliver the HSC, BOS will amend its School Registration Manual. Commissioners noted the confidential draft BOS advice on Registration issues.

9. **NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Ethics Classes**

On 30 May 2012 the NSW Parliamentary General Purpose Standing Committee released its “Education Amendment (Ethics Classes Repeal) Bill” Report.

This report has been well received by the Catholic SRE Community (cf. Catholic Weekly, 12 June 2012). The Report sets out fourteen (14) Recommendations. Key recommendations include:

- Rec 1 There will be no repeal of the Ethics Classes section of the Education Act.
- Rec 2 There will be no direct financial support for Ethics education, nor for SRE.
- Rec 6 Enhanced DEC data collection on both Ethics and SRE Student participation.
- Rec 14 DEC to commission an independent review of both SRE and Ethics implementation.

In addition, the Report concludes that pursuant to Section 19 of the Education Act the NSW Minister for Education has the power to oversee both SRE and Ethics classes in Government Schools. CEC will continue to liaise with CCRESS on all Ethics Classes Report response matters.
10. **Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission**

The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) Taskforce has released its June 2012 “Implementation Report”. The Report maps ACNC implementation issues and priorities for the period 1 July 2012 to 1 July 2014 which are the Ministerially approved phase-in years for ACNC responsibilities and functions. The ACNC will begin operation 1 October 2012. Full ACNC operations are required to be in place by 1 July 2014. A modernised definition of charity will be finalised and applied. The ACNC will have responsibility for the determination of charitable status, the ATO will retain responsibility for administering tax concessions for the Not for profit sector. In addition, the ACNC will:

- Register all charities
- Develop a reporting framework, including “activity – based” financial reporting
- Establish a public information portal and website.

In summary ACNC aims, over time, to become a one-stop-shop for both Charity Regulation and public information on charities. CEC is liaising with other Catholic bodies for the purpose of clarifying ACNC compliance requirements, especially for schools, across the 2012 – 2014 phase-in period.

11. **NSW State Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan**

The NSW Minister has accepted the CEC’s 2012 Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Plan and the list of 98 schools to be targeted to receive additional teaching positions from the beginning of term 3 2012. It is expected that the 2012 funds ($7.02 million) will be released to the CEC shortly.

Some conditions, mostly related to collecting baseline data, monitoring progress with quantitative and qualitative measures and engaging in the independent cross sector evaluation, will apply. A member of the Ministerial Advisory Group Secretariat will brief members of the CEC’s National Partnership Coordinating Group on accountability requirements at their meeting in August 2012. It is expected that dioceses will incorporate the Minister’s requirements into their own implementation plans. A CEC 2012 implementation grant of approximately $7.4 million will be available for distribution by the commencement of Term 3 2012.

John Kitney  
**Commission Secretary**  
16 July 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.

The status of the P21 projects as at 31 May 2012 is as follows (figures presented to the 23 May 2012 Commission meeting for April are bracketed):

- 576 (536) at full acquitted status
- 141 (176) at completed status;
- 4 (6) under construction.

99% of projects are fully acquitted by value.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

DEEWR has issued eight of the nine Round 4 contracts for signature. DEEWR will pay the CBGA initial funding in June. Subsequently, the CBGA will pay all parties according to their agreements.

In May 2012, two new facilities reached practical completion and one commenced construction.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

DEEWR are reviewing the effectiveness of the Digital Education Revolution (DER) program, the CBGA has contacted a number of dioceses and congregational schools to ask for their assistance. The next DER progress report is due to be with DEEWR by 15 July 2012. The CBGA has received the new template and is making the necessary changes to the DER online reporting system, to be open from 18 June 2012. All Diocese and Schools should input data before 6 July 2012. The CBGA will collate the information in time for the DEEWR deadline. Following DEEWR’s acceptance of this progress report, schools and diocese will be able to access funding for sustainment. Sustainability funding is likely to be allocated on the basis of $750 per replacement computer.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
16 July 2012