SUMMARY REPORT

The 339th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 23 August 2012 in the Board Room at Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP. The meeting followed a day of informative schools visits hosted by the Diocese of Broken Bay which took place on Wednesday 22 August 2012.

A Summary Report of the Commission meeting is provided below:

1. School Counsellor Working Party

The Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee (CESWCC) met on 2 August 2012 and considered both Anti-Bullying definition issues and the establishment of the Working Party on School Counsellors Issues. Commissioners received a report from CESWCC and decided on a definition of bullying to be recommended to NSW Catholic Schools Authorities.

Commissioners requested the School Counsellor Working Party to provide a progress report to the 21 November 2012 Commission meeting and final report to the 20 March 2013 Commission meeting. Commissioners requested advice on:

- scope of the school counsellor role;
- professional qualifications for the role;
- application to the role of privacy law and confidentiality expectations;
- student expectations of the role;
- parent expectations of the role;
- counselling in a Catholic context, with regard to the role of the family and controversial issues eg. student pregnancy and drug taking;
- record keeping;
- record ownership; and
- record sharing.
2. **NSW Great Teaching, Inspired Learning Discussion Paper**

Commissioners expressed general agreement with the direction of the Ministerial Discussion Paper *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning*. Commissioners recalled that Minister Piccoli at his presentation to the 23 May 2012 Commission meeting had foreshadowed a NSW Government commitment to improving teacher quality particularly *inter alia* by influencing teacher education and professional development.

In issuing the Discussion Paper, the Minister has the objective of commencing a dialogue with the view to improving teaching standards. He has posted this Paper on the DEC website and is encouraging feedback from students, teachers, administrators, parents, employers and the general community.

Commissioners resolved to make a substantial submission to the Ministerial Discussion paper process on *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning*. It was also agreed to involve key Catholic sector stakeholders in the submission development process.

Among other things, the CEC submission is likely to highlight the need for:
- addressing teaching as ‘whole of life’ activity;
- focusing on professional life of teachers;
- a broader and deeper process of selecting students for teacher education programs;
- using a range of data and judgments in assessing suitability of applicants for teaching;
- ensuring that teacher education programs are better balanced and integrated in terms of theory and practice; and
- the practicum in teacher education to be both more substantial and better supported by both universities and schools.

Commissioners are not likely to support the isolated use of a minimum ATAR score for teacher education courses, nor specifying subject prerequisites for primary teacher education beyond the rules of the current HSC (mandatory 2U English). It was also noted that there are particular challenges regarding teachers from rural backgrounds, trained in rural universities, who return to teach in rural schools. In addition, Commissioners would like to see a more detailed and up-to-date analysis of:
- statements about the extent of over-supply of new teachers and student teachers; and
- research on the validity of the ATAR as a predictor of tertiary education performance.

3. **CEC Public Policy Committee**

Commissioners confirmed the Terms of Reference of the Public Policy Committee, noting that the main role of the Public Policy Committee is to prepare documents that draw together the political commitments of all parties and then to analyse and articulate the implications for NSW Catholic schools. Having done this, the Committee is also tasked to develop strategies to inform Catholic school communities and parents of key social and political developments impacting NSW Catholic schools. The Commission approved the new Terms of Reference for the Public Policy Committee and agreed to call for nominations for the eight positions on the Public Policy Committee.
4. **Mission and Identity of Catholic Schools**

Commissioners noted that the NSW Bishops, arising out of their consideration of the surveys undertaken by CEC to gauge the activity of diocesan and school personnel in responding to the four Crossroads challenges, requested a more detailed analysis. In considering the Bishops’ request, Commissioners agreed that an external consultant would be more appropriate to carry out this further more in-depth research.

Commissioners recommended that a Working party be established to develop the brief for the external consultant. This brief is to take into consideration the findings of the existing CEC surveys and the request from the NSW Bishops for a more in-depth Crossroads implementation study.

5. **Gonski Report Update**

Commissioners noted the conflicting political messages about the Gonski review recommendations. Commissioners considered that a consistent Catholic message needs to be maintained. To this end, Commissioners agreed to establish a small Communications Working Party drawing on the work of the Victorian CEC Communications Working Party. This is particularly important because parents and the general community do not understand how a System approach moderates funding allocations from government. Catholic parents relate to the concept of a “Community of Catholic Schools” but do not understand the “System” concept easily. The Working Party would comprise the CEC Executive Director, Commissioner Danielle Cronin and Mark Rix (CEO Sydney).

Commissioners noted that the Resources Policy Committee had carriage of both modelling and understanding the implications of the Gonski model for the funding of NSW Catholic Schools System. Commissioners considered that the implications of the Gonski recommendations were broader than funding allocations and involved a wider agenda. This wider agenda includes possible governance issues arising from the expanded accountability requirements. It was also agreed that a Forum comprising Diocesan Directors and diocesan finance managers plus CLRI nominees be convened for these issues.

6. **Charities & Not for Profit Commission**

Commissioners noted that legislation to establish the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission had been introduced to the Australian Parliament. Consultation has taken place with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Commissioners noted that, on behalf of the Commission, Messrs Baker, Flynn and Kitney will be attending a Round Table on 27 August 2012 hosted by the Archdiocese of Sydney. The responsible Minister the Hon David Bradbury MP and Shadow Minister Kevin Andrews will be available during the meeting to answer questions.

Commissioners noted that there is likely to be new and increased reporting requirements as well as possible inconsistencies with existing ACARA reporting requirements for MySchool.

The issue of “Compliance burden” was discussed including costs and liability exposure.
7. **Agreements Endorsed**

The Commission endorsed the following:

- *Second Quarterly Report on Road Safety Education for NSW Catholic Schools 2012*;
- the first Progress Report for the *More Support for Students with Disabilities* Initiative;
- the funding allocations under the *Investing in Focus Schools* National Partnership; and
- participation in the agreement for the Australian Research Council research project on “Innovative partnerships for youth engagement in education and work”.

8. **2011 Australian Vocational Student Prize**

Each year schools are invited to nominate students for the Australian Vocational Student Prize (AVSP) which promotes the value of gaining vocational skills while at school and recognises the important role vocational education plays in preparing students for further training and employment. The nominated students are those who have chosen to pursue a practical training pathway while completing their senior secondary studies and demonstrated outstanding vocational and employability skills while undertaking a Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools program or an Australian School-based Apprenticeship. The winners of the 2011 Australian Vocational Student Prize and Prime Minister’s award for Skills Excellence in School include 41 students from NSW Catholic schools.

9. **Non-Government Schools Advisory Council**

The most recent Non-Government Schools Advisory Council meeting was held on 26 July 2012. The main topic on the Council’s Agenda was the SCSEEC Meeting on 3 August 2012. Discussion focused on the NSW Government’s approach which attempts to advance reforms within a strategic framework. Among the items discussed was a proposal from Minister Garrett for “Harmonisation of Regulatory Frameworks for Non-Government Schools” across Australia.

10. **Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders**


11. **NSW Review of Tertiary Pathways**

12. Goulburn: 50th Anniversary

In July 1962, a meeting of Catholic parents in Goulburn voted to close the doors of all schools in the parish as part of a funding dispute with the State Government and enroll the students in local Government schools. Some 50 Years later an anniversary dinner of past students, clergy, educators and community leaders was held at the Great Hall at Trinity Catholic College on 26 July 2012. Brian Croke was the Guest speaker for the evening, advising his audience that “the legacy of Goulburn is to remind us not to lose sight of the underpinning principles of fairness, justice and parental rights. They must never be taken for granted”.

A number of guests participated in a panel discussion about the historic events, hosted by ABC 666 Canberra radio presenter, Genevieve Jacobs. Panel members included Sr Kerrie Cusack, congregational leader of St Joseph’s Convent, Goulburn, Catholic Education Office staff member Sr Frances Fitzpatrick, Mary Queen of Apostles Parish Priest, Fr Dermid McDermott, former Catholic Education Commission chair, Ray Storrier, current Principal in the Archdiocese Mr Mick Lowe, Mrs Mary Haigh (Mother of 5 children attending Catholic schools in Goulburn at the time) and Trinity Catholic College captain, Nicholas Campton-Smith.

John Kitney  
Commission Secretary  
29 August 2012
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**GENERAL CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

All capital bids for CBGA capital funding in 2013 were evaluated and ranked in order of priority at the second and final meeting of the State Priority Committee (SPC) - Wednesday 25 July to Friday 27 July. CBGA will inform each Diocesan Priority Committee or Congregational School of their successful bids and the amount the CBGA will fund and the amount that their Diocese or Congregational School will need to fund. The agreement of the Bishop or the Congregational Superior and the endorsement of the Commission will be sought before CBGA submits the formal applications to DEEWR and DEC.

The SPC uses a thorough, professional and collegial method to evaluate and prioritise capital funding, and before the meeting members of the SPC visited all 27 schools with a capital funding application, taking particular note of issues discussed at the first SPC meeting. CEC NSW then collated the site visit reports of the SPC members and the original applications amended where necessary.

**BER P21 PROGRAM**

All P21 Projects must be fully acquitted by 31 December 2012. 99% of projects are fully acquitted or 92% by value.

The status of the P21 projects as at 31 July 2012 is as follows (figures presented to the 18 July 2012 Commission meeting for June are bracketed):

- 662 (635) at full acquitted status;
- 58 (84) at completed status;
- 1 (2) under construction.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

DEEWR has paid $8,171,604 to the CBGA for all Round 4 TTC project funding due during the 2012/13 financial year. Two Round 4 TTC project started construction in July - St Patrick’s College, Campbelltown and Trinity Goulburn.

CBGA have informed the relevant project leaders of DEEWR’s recent changes to reporting and budgeting guidelines for TTC projects. CBGA is continuing to help negotiate contract variations, and assist in the final acquittal of completed projects.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

CBGA proposed several administrative improvements about DER funding, and DEEWR has now formally accepted these improvements for the additional $17 m in DER funding to sustain the number of computers in schools.

CBGA will soon advise Diocesan Directors and Principals of Congregational Schools of the amount they will receive for the sustainment of computers.

John Kitney  
Commission Secretary  
29 August 2012