CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, NEW SOUTH WALES

THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY FORTH MEETING
20 March 2013

SUMMARY REPORT

The 344th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 20 March 2013 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. **Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)**

Commissioners noted that currently ACNC is considering numerous requests by charities and not-for-profit organisations to clarify and modify the interpretation of ACNC proposed regulations regarding Corporate Governance and Reporting.

It was noted that ACNC confirmation of registration forms are returnable to ACNC by 2 June 2013. All charities “registered” with the ATO are receiving these forms. In respect of Catholic schools, this means that every school and school related entity which has its own ABN will receive an ACNC form. The immediate issue is “how should schools and school related entities respond to these forms?”

Issues arising include identification of:
- each entity’s legal name; and
- responsible persons.

With respect to schools, it was noted that whilst schools are subject to all ACNC Governance requirements they enjoy the benefit of ACNC financial reporting moratorium until December 2015.

2. **Commonwealth Funding of Schools**

Commissioners noted progress with development of the new national schools funding model arising from the 2011 Gonski report, namely:

- System funding remains essential, including a single total grant inclusive of base plus loadings, rather than just the aggregate of all the individual school amounts. A system weighted student average should drive the generation of the system grant;
- Concerns remain about the requirement re private income (fees), noting that Catholic schools need to be able to enrol students who cannot pay fees;
- An agreed Indexation methodology which preserves the real value of grants over time is an unresolved key issue;
- The Government’s overly-strict Gonski confidentiality requirements, and their enforcement, are causing great internal strain. Too much secrecy is the common view about the process;
• The final funding model may be not so much a single unified model but a series of bilateral agreements negotiated by the Prime Minister with Premiers, ISCA and NCEC; and
• Since the Prime Minister is determined to make ‘funding reform’ the focus of the 19 April 2013 COAG meeting, a public announcement on the new model is likely the weekend before, so CEC and Dioceses will need to be prepared to respond quickly.

3. **Great Teaching Inspired Learning**

On 6 March 2013 Premier Barry O’Farrell released the NSW Government’s policy response as set out in the document “Great Teaching Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action” (GTIL). The NSW Government has announced that a three month Great Teaching Inspired Learning implementation planning process has now commenced and will end 30 June 2013. Minister Piccoli is likely to delegate GTIL implementation coordination to the NSW Schools Advisory Council and the NSW Institute of Teachers.

At its meeting held on 6 March 2013, the CEC Education Policy Committee identified six GTIL policy directions which require immediate engagement by the NSW Catholic schools sector. The CEC GTIL Working Party was established following the 27 August 2012 Commission meeting.

Commissioners reviewed the Great Teaching Inspired Learning (GTIL) blueprint for Action. Discussion focused on:

• Action 1.1 Entry to undergraduate programs. Commissioners expressed a range of views on this matter. The impact on Universities such as ACU and UWS was noted. There was general support for public policy action to raise the standard of teachers and teaching. In association with this, the Commission also expressed concern that any entry requirements be administered flexibly so as not to arbitrarily exclude suitable persons from teaching.

• Resourcing Implications. The possibility of using National Partnership Teacher Quality Reward funding to support GTIL implementation was noted. The point was made that GTIL implementation needs to be progressed in a manner which is consistent with existing Diocesan Teacher development priorities and plans.

• Developing a Catholic sector GTIL response implementation plan. It was noted that a formal Ministerial invitation for the CEC to develop a response plan is anticipated. Plans will likely be required by 30 June. It was agreed that the existing CEC GTIL Working Party should be reconvened for this purpose with some modification to its membership.

4. **NSW Catholic Schools Mission and Identity**

At its meeting on 6 February 2013, the CEC Education Policy Committee discussed the relationship between the proposed Crossroads research project, as requested by the Bishops, and the request to form a Mission and Identity Working Party. It was agreed to advise the Commission that the work should be staged. The first action would be conduct of the research project. The second stage would be to use the outcomes of the research project to progress the Crossroads agenda. It was agreed that the CEC Mission and Identity Working Party will be formed for these purposes.

Commissioners reviewed the history of Crossroads implementation monitoring. Discussion focused on the merits and challenges of both:

• qualitative; and
• quantitative

activities relating to monitoring and evaluation.

Commissioners then reviewed seven cited possibilities for future work. In this context the following current Diocesan based research projects were identified:

• Quality of teaching of RE in Secondary Schools (Maitland – Newcastle);
• Religious formation of New Scheme Teachers (Sydney); and
• Outcomes of the Family Educators initiative (Sydney)

In this context it was noted that a key service which CEC could provide would be a “Clearing House (Website) of Key Current Crossroads Related Research / Evaluations”. The point was made that this would promote access to “What Works with Respect to new Evangelisation” in schools.

Commissioners advised that a targeted and achievable goal should be set for any CEC research project. The point was also made that the foreshadowed Mission and Identity Working Party should be established and given the task of selecting a target.

5. NSW Catholic Schools Annual Report

CEC publishes an annual statistical report, NSW Catholic Schools Statistics, which provides detailed tabular information on schools, students and staff. The scope and format of this annual Statistics report has remained largely unchanged for twenty years, and it uses school Census data collected by CEC and a little ABS data.

Also the NCEC publishes an Annual Report on Australian Catholic Schools which provides information on funding of schools, as well as information on schools, students and staff. The data for the NCEC report is derived from several sources and largely prepared by CEC.

The Commission agreed in 2012 to explore the preparation of an annual report for NSW Catholic schools more in line with the NCEC report in terms of narrative, variety of data and presentation.

To begin the development of this report (using 2012 as a trial report) CEC will prepare an overview of the potential purpose, nature, scope and style of a NSW Catholic Schools Annual Report, with reference to the NCEC report.

This overview will be used as the basis of a survey of Dioceses and Congregational Schools to obtain their input on the nature, scope and format of a preferred annual NSW Report on Catholic schools.

Commissioners considered that having an annual report for New South Wales similar to that available from the NCEC on Australian Catholic schools is worthwhile. Commissioners agreed for the CEC to produce a prototype on 2012 data and then following consideration of the document, the Commission would decide whether to make it an annual production.

6. CEC Brother John Taylor CFC Fellowship

At their May 2012 meeting, Commissioners agreed that it was time to change the nature of The Brother John Taylor Award for Excellence, established in 1995. It was agreed to transform the Award into a fellowship for professional development, along the lines of the Fulbright or Churchill Fellowships.

Commissioners reaffirmed the proposal for a Brother John Taylor Fellowship to be awarded annually from 2013 to the value of $25,000 with the following elements:

• The Fellowship will be available to any Catholic educationist, regardless of age, who can demonstrate the capacity to make a valuable contribution towards Catholic education in the future;
• An interview process will be used to select the Fellow from among a group of applicants;
• The Fellowship will be a developmental process and will require a mentor for the Fellow; and
• Employers, not CEC, will carry the costs associated with releasing the applicant from their normal work in order to undertake the fellowship.

The CEC will call for nominations for the Fellowship by July 2013 with a decision likely by December 2013.
7. **Commission Decisions**

The Commission:

- approved the allocation of $4.902 million in State funding to support new K-10 syllabus implementation to Dioceses and Congregational schools on the basis of teacher FTE;
- endorsed the CEC Special Education Learning modules for uploading to the MyCEC website;
- endorsed the renewal of the Accreditation of CEC, NSW as an Animal Research Establishment under the NSW Animal Research Act 1985 on behalf of all NSW Catholic schools;
- agreed to the continuing role of the NSW Schools Animal Care and Ethics Committee and approved the 2013 CEC SACEC funding contribution of $54,955; and
- endorsed the draft Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership NSW Implementation Plan.

8. **Keep Them Safe Senior Officers Group**

The *Keep them Safe Senior Officers Group* was established under the auspices of the Premier’s Department to coordinate all *Keep them Safe* (Child Protection) policy matters. Premier O’Farrell extended membership to AIS and CEC in 2012. The inaugural CEC nominee, Deidre Cheers, Catholic Care Broken Bay, has stepped down from the position and Margaret Chittick, Child Protection Officer, CEO Wollongong and Chair of the Diocesan Directors Child Protection Group, is now the CEC member. Margaret Chittick’s nomination was made by the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee.

9. **2012 Brother John Taylor Award**

On 7 March 2013, the presentation of the Br John Taylor Award was made at St Patrick’s Church, Allawah Street, Blacktown. The Award was presented by the Chairman of the Commission, Bishop Fisher to Dr John DeCourcy, Director of Strategic Accountabilities Services CEO Parramatta, during the 2013 Education mass commissioning new teachers and principals in the Diocese of Parramatta. From 2013, the Br John Taylor Award is replaced by the Br John Taylor Fellowship.

10. **Rural Fire Service**

On 5 March 2013, the Hawkesbury Road Project workshop was conducted at Winmalee Rural Fire Brigade station. This project arose from the emphasis placed on principals’ decision-making in response to bushfire emergencies by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in their sectoral briefing in July 2012. The workshop was attended by local AIS and Catholic schools and representatives from RFS, NSW Police, State Emergency Service, Transport for NSW and NSW Health. The workshop was a “proof of concept” for an exercise to provide school leadership teams with the kind of information needed to be able to respond to the RFS’s emergency management expectations. CEC will be discussing with RFS how the model can be extended to other areas of the state.
11. **CEC State Coordinator Aboriginal Education**

*Mary Senj* has been appointed to the position of State Coordinator for Aboriginal Education at the Catholic Education Commission, NSW. Mary comes to the position with extensive knowledge and experience gained from working in three Dioceses – Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay. In addition, she has worked in Aboriginal Education positions with both the Australian Catholic University and Mundarra Aboriginal Youth Services Mt Druitt. Mary is a trained Primary School teacher holding both Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Education. In addition, she has a Diploma in Aboriginal Family and Community Counselling.

John Kitney  
*Commission Secretary*  
15 April 2013
Catholic Block Grant Authority NSW (CBGA) Briefing to the Commission

The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**GENERAL CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

**2013 Commonwealth General Capital Program**

The CBGA Secretariat is preparing for the 2013 Capital Program of about $29.5 million and has posted the milestones on the CEC website.

- Closing Date for Applications: 8 April 2013;
- State Priority Committee Meeting: 22 May to 24 May 2013;
- School Visits: 3 June to 28 June 2013;
- State Priority Committee Meeting: 17 July to 19 July 2013; and
- Annual General Meeting: 7 November 2013.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

In February 2013, the NSW Minister of Education complained in writing to Minister Garret about the delay in DEEWR paying the 2012 DER funding for NSW government and non-government schools. DEEWR swiftly responded and paid 2012 DER funding on 7 March 2013. CBGA will forward the 2012 DER funding to all schools quickly. A second, equal DER payment is now due.

John Kitney
**Commission Secretary**
15 April 2013