THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY SIXTH MEETING

22 May 2013

SUMMARY REPORT

The 346th meeting of the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales was held on 22 May 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. Promoting Co-operative Support Services across Dioceses

On various occasions recently the Commission has discussed the desirability and possibility of more cooperation in relation to the delivery of services to support Catholic schools in NSW.

Commissioners noted that the NSW Bishops have requested that more cooperation occur between Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities, with the view to improving efficiency and reducing duplication. Commissioners also noted that the establishment of shared services was widely practiced in Governments, at all levels, to drive efficiencies. It was also noted that such initiatives are successful in some but not all circumstances. It was agreed that School Authorities should learn from these experiences.

Commissioners noted that shared services have been successful where:

- Organisations have fully understood their work practices, and then if advantageous for the common good have modified those work practices to achieve synergies and improved performance.
- The quality and cost of shared services can easily and cheaply be monitored.
- There is a compelling analysis of both economies of scope and economies of scale.

Commissioners considered that identifying and exploring possible candidates for shared services is a high priority, both to satisfy the Bishops’ request and in doing so to demonstrate to Governments, schools and the general community a commitment to drive structural change in the NSW Catholic schools sector for the purpose of allocations scarce resources more efficiently.

Commissioners endorsed the following action steps:

- Request the Resources Policy Committee to discuss shared services with the Working Party of the Diocesan Directors Group in order to:
  - identify potential shared services candidates;
  - determine the best way of surveying NSW Catholic Schools Authorities on implementation options.
- Survey NSW Catholic Schools Authorities and confirm likely shared services.
• Convene a Forum of Diocesan and Congregational school staff to benchmark and report on likely candidates.
• Direct the Resources Policy Committee to prepare a report for the Commission following appropriate consultation with Diocesan Directors and Congregational School Principals.

2. **Great Teaching Inspired Learning (GTIL)**

Commissioners were advised that CCER is updating its complimentary advice on GTIL implementation issues.

The advice arising from both the Education Policy Committee and the GTIL Working Party was discussed.

Attention was drawn to action responses relating to teacher education and how Catholic universities might be impacted.

It was agreed to further consider Catholic university issues in the light of advice already provided by their members on the CEC Working Party.

Commissioners endorsed the recommended CEC GTIL implementation plan, subject to the clear transmission to the NSW Minister of caveats around resourcing and timelines.

Concern was expressed that timelines must be realistic and resourcing implications addressed in the context of staged rollout of “Gonski” funding

3. **National Schools Funding Model Developments**

Commissioners were updated on current National Funding Model developments.

Key current developments have included:

• NCEC funding allocation discussions with DEEWR. These negotiations have proved most frustrating. They have resulted in a direct request to the Prime Minister for clarification of 2014 funding for Diocesan systems and schools.
• Background briefings on a new Bill for an Education Act. Commissioners were advised that there will be a confidential national briefing on the Bill on Thursday, 23 May. NCEC will participate.
• Clarification of the termination of all targeted programs and most National Partnerships on 31 December 2013. The implications for the National Funding Model for 2014 grant outcomes for schools were discussed.

Discussion focussed on the probability that the Bill for the Education Act will be considered by the Commonwealth Parliament in the week beginning 27 May, or 3 June at the latest.

This Bill will legislate the National Funding Model with the consequence that the funding trajectory for 2014 will be set by mid-June. In this context, Commissioners discussed the urgent need for the 2014 actual funding outcomes of the National Funding Model to be clarified before the Bill is enacted.

Two late papers were tabled:

• A schedule of 2013 and 2014 targeted and National Partnership funding for CEC. A decline from some $133m to $12m was noted and discussed.
• A draft action letter for Diocesan Directors and Principals of Congregational Schools advising immediate national funding policy issues, together with advice that should be raised with all NSW Federal Members of Parliament.
In relation to the recommended letter for Federal Members, discussion focussed on:

- Consistency with NCEC policy and authorisations in respect of National Funding Model issues.
- The need for political neutrality, and how to also engage with Coalition policy, issues and members.

Given the urgency driven by the anticipated introduction of the Bill to the Commonwealth Parliament it was agreed to action the draft advice for Diocesan Directors and the Principals of Congregational Schools. It was also agreed to directly advise NSW Federal Members of CEC funding model issues/questions. Commissioners also noted the continuing need to consult NCEC on all issues and actions.

With respect to Coalition policy and issues it was agreed to address Coalition policy issues in collaboration with NCEC.

4. Catholic Mission and Identity

Commissioners received a progress report from its Working Party and concurred with the approach proposed. Namely, focusing on the following issues:

- Crossroads Critical Indicators of progress: identifying and responding to response gaps.
- Liaison with the “Sanber” survey of priests, school families and parishes.
- Meaning and application of “Catholic Literacy” in the context of Catholic schools.
- What does “New Evangelisation” mean in a Catholic school context and what can it achieve?
- Impact of RE teacher accreditation and possible next steps.

5. Early Childhood Education

Commissioners reviewed the Early Childhood Working Party’s progress report and agreed that it provides the basis for the drafting of the final report expected in July 2013.

Specifically, Commissioners agreed that key issues to be emphasised in the report are:

- The Church’s purpose in providing early childhood and out of school hours care services. This will include any evidence from studies that describe the extent to which practices have been successful in involving parents and families in the process of evangelising and catechising their children (refer to Catholic Schools at a Crossroads, page 14).
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service provision, governance arrangements and models of practice.
- Workforce remuneration and related IR issues, the range of existing arrangements and salary schedules to be included.

In regard to the issue of OHSC provision, Commissioners noted that the topic will be covered in the report to the extent that OSHC services are included in the same legislative framework as Early Childhood services. In addition, it was agreed that a supplementary paper will provide substantial advice on issues related to OSHC provision, including models of governance.
6. **2013/14 Federal Budget**

Members reviewed the Budget advice as tabled. Particular attention was given to school and student funding estimates for 2014. It was noted that, depending on certain State and Federal indexation assumptions, per student funding for 2014 may increase by 2% to 3% in comparison with 2013.

Discussion then focused on National Funding Model calculations for program years 2014 to 2019 inclusive, which are in progress involving both NCEC and DEEWR.

The Commission noted the 2014 school funding estimates cited in the paper.

7. **National Plan for School Improvement**

Commissioners considered the tabled National Education Reform agreement (NERA) inclusive of the National Plan for School Improvement (NPSI). It was noted that NSW has adopted NERA and NPSI.

Discussion focused on:
- Is CEC is now bound by NERA and NPSI?
- The intention of the Commonwealth to require CEC to enter into a NERA and NPSI implementation MOU as a pre-condition to Gonski funding.

The observation was made that, by virtue of the intergovernmental agreement signed by the NSW Premier, all NSW school authorities will have to engage with NERA. In this context the foreshadowed MOU will give CEC the opportunity to set its own implementation strategies and milestones within the NERA framework.

Discussion then focussed on
- implementation costs
- compliance burden
- opportunities.

The point was made that many NERA and NPSI requirements are already addressed by NSW Catholic Schools.

It was noted that the Great Teaching Inspired Learning plan is itself a NERA compliance strategy.

8. **ACNC Registration**

Commissioners reviewed the proposed 2 June 2013 Confirmation of Registration advice. Discussion focused on Question 4 and the dominant purpose of Catholic schools. The need to address both ACNC requirements and possible section 116 of the Commonwealth Constitution issues was noted.

With respect to ACNC compliance there is concern that the Canadian and English models of Charity compliance might be applied whereby religious purpose is read down to worship only.

In respect of emerging ACNC compliance matters attention was drawn to:
- The Bill to define Charity, currently before Parliament.
- The Annual Information Statement requirement for schools and other charities.
- The need to clarify the reporting obligations of CEC and Diocesan Catholic Education Offices.

Links with emerging DEEWR (Australian Education Act) Not for Profit requirements were raised.
9. Commission Decisions

The Commission:

• Approved the 2012 CEC Special Purposes Financial Report.
• Authorised the Commission Secretary to forward the Catholic sector’s nominations for possible membership of the NSW Board of Studies.
• Clarified the format for the August 2013 Commission’s strategy discussion day.

10. NSW Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC)

On Thursday, 9 May 2013, Minister Piccoli held a portfolio briefing on SCSEEC agenda items. The Minister both advised and sought feedback, on the following matters:

• The National Funding Model (Gonski)—Minister advised that the Commonwealth has withdrawn this item from the SCSEEC agenda. Discussion focused on the future of National Partnerships for 2014 in the context of the Prime Minister’s not one dollar less promise. The Minister advised that this is a Commonwealth, not a State promise.
• ACARA and Geography—it was advised that ACARA’s work in relation to Geography curriculum is to be endorsed.
• Harmonization of the Regulation of Non-Government schools—the challenge presented by ACNC was noted; including the fact it is managed outside the remit of SCSEEC.
• Disability Data for the National Funding Model Loading—concerns relating to the timing and validity of both the current 2013 and planned 2014 data collections were raised.
• The National Architecture for Schools—in the context of the proposal to establish a National “Schools Performance Entity” a national review of the schools’ architecture is to be undertaken. That is, a review of ACARA, DEEWR, AITSL, and ESA. There was a general view that the case for a National “School Performance Entity” has not been made. Specific matters relating to data ownership were raised.
• Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Program—NSW is seeking national consistency on this matter. NSW is recommending that AITSL, not TEQSA, take carriage of this matter so as to provide a schools’ focus for the work
• Rural and Regional Education—NSW is promoting this focus as a national priority. A National Research Plan is proposed.

The briefing provided a valuable opportunity for Minister Piccoli to converse with the range of NSW Schooling stakeholders, including Unions and Parents.

11. Global Education Leaders Program

The Global Education Leaders Program (GELP) which brings together senior education officials from a range of nations met in Sydney from 6-9 May 2013. As part of the program, multi-national teams visited particular Sydney schools, including Loyola College Mt Druitt. A local panel that considered and responded to reports on the Australian learnings from the various national groups consisted of NSW Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli, Director General Michele Bruniges and Brian Croke (CEC).
12. **National Catholic Education Commission Leadership Announced**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has recently confirmed its appointments of the new Chief Executive Office and Chair of the NCEC. The new CEO is Ross Fox, currently with the Archdiocese of Melbourne. An engineer by profession, Ross brings considerable policy, business and government experience to the role. The new Chair of the NCEC is Greg Crafter AO. Greg is a former Minister for Education in South Australia and Director of the International Baccalaureate organisation in Geneva. He has been a member of the NCEC since 2009.

13. **Senate NAPLAN Inquiry**

On 15 May 2013, the Senate referred “the effectiveness of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)” to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committees for inquiry and report, with specific reference to:

- Whether the evidence suggests that NAPLAN is achieving its stated objectives.
- Unintended consequences of NAPLAN's introduction.
- NAPLAN's impact on teaching and student learning practices.
- The impact on teaching and student learning practices of publishing NAPLAN test results on the MySchool website.
- Potential improvements to the program, to improve student learning and assessment.
- International best practice for standardised testing, and international case studies about the introduction of standardised testing.
- Other relevant matters.

Submissions should be received by **7 June 2013**. The reporting date is **27 June 2013**. Commissioners are invited to bring relevant diocesan and school research to the attention of Rosalie Nott: rosalie.nott@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au. The Secretariat will assess how the Commission may be involved in the Inquiry.

14. **ACARA Draft National Curriculum: Health and Physical Education Foundation to Year 10**

On Tuesday, 21 May, the NSW Board of Studies considered a consultation report on ACARA’s draft Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education Foundation to Year 10. The draft curriculum aligns closely with the current NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education K–10 curriculum. It provides a sound basis for any future development of a NSW K–10 syllabus in this learning area.

The report noted that the draft curriculum must acknowledge the diversity of schools and be inclusive of differing ethics and values. The content descriptions need to be developed with flexibility for schools in the non-government sector to address issues in a manner reflective of their ethos and specific community needs. In addition, it was noted that greater prominence needs to be given to the role of religious traditions, families and parents in both ethical formation and as a source of values and knowledge to support children and young people to make healthy and safe life choices.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
5 June 2013
The Commission noted the briefing from the CBGA:

**GENERAL CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

**2013 Commonwealth General Capital Program**

Preparations are continuing for the first of the two State Priority Committee meetings. The first meeting is to be held from 22–24 May 2013.

Preliminary analysis of the 35 applications has been conducted by CBGA officers, and where necessary clarification sought from applicants in relation to certain aspects to bring them in line with CBGA guidelines and consistent with other applications.

Following this meeting, visits to each of the applicant schools will be scheduled to assess the educational drivers leading to the need for the project.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

The CBGA is continually contacting DEEWR seeking the release of the sustainment funding held. DEEWR indicate that they have yet to analyse all six-monthly reports and make recommendations to the Minister relating to payment.

*All Dioceses must acquit all their DER related expenses to CBGA well before 30 September 2013* when the DER program will end.

**TRADE TRAINING CENTRES**

Since the submission of the eight applications to DEEWR, the CBGA has not been requested for any additional information relating to the proposals. Discussions with DEEWR officers suggest that the process of evaluation by DEEWR is continuing, and should additional information be required applicants will be contacted as necessary.

Verbal advice indicates that the Minister will possibly announce the list of successful applications in early July. Should further information become available the CBGA will advise applicants accordingly.

John Kitney

**Commission Secretary**

5 June 2013