HELD 23 APRIL 2014

The meeting was held in the Polding Centre Sydney and was chaired by Commissioner Peter Turner.

1) Grants Distribution Model for 2015: Progress Report

At their 12 February 2014 meeting, Commissioners requested the CEC Resources Committee recommend a new grants distribution model for implementation in 2015, consistent with the five agreed Resourcing Principles and consistent with the Commonwealth model. Commissioners also agreed that the new funding model needed to be developed promptly in order to be considered by the NSW/ACT Bishops at their 12 June 2014 meeting.

Commissioners noted that the likely recommendation coming will be a model based upon the Commonwealth model but with simpler loadings and with a capacity to include any Congregational school seeking to join the NSW Catholic Schools System for grant purposes.

2) Capital Grants Review: Update

Commissioners noted that the Capital and Facility Management community in NSW Catholic schools performs well. The management of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) demonstrated that the Catholic Sector provides excellent value for money in building school facilities in a timely manner, while also tailoring the buildings and facilities to meet the needs of the local School community.

Notwithstanding this proven track-record, it is over two decades since CBGA strategy and policies, especially the allocation of Government Capital funding, have been strategically reviewed. Furthermore, while there is sharing of insights between the Dioceses and Congregational schools, there may be an opportunity to standardise some processes or take a more coordinated approach between Dioceses, Congregational schools, and the non-Government schools sector more broadly.

Commissioners agreed that it is timely for such a review of capital funding and facilities management. The review will commence later in 2014 calendar year.

3) Early Childhood Services: Productivity Commission Engagement Propositions

At their meeting on 19 March 2014, Commissioners accepted advice on Out of School Hours Care Services and requested it be forwarded to Dioceses and Congregational Schools. Also, Commissioners agreed to keep abreast of developments in the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning. Following release of the draft report scheduled from early July 2014, Commissioners requested advice on strategic input into the consultation process. The CEC Early Childhood Working Party will develop a set of Engagement Propositions.

Commissioners discussed the 10 Engagement Propositions and agreed that they give clear direction for future CEC engagement in Early Childhood developments including the outcome of the Productivity Commission Inquiry.

Commissioners noted the need to continue to locate this and future work in Early Childhood Education and Care in the context of the Church’s overall purpose for mission and evangelisation.
4) MOU for 2014 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability Project

At their meeting on 22 August 2013, Commissioners authorised the Executive Director to execute the MOU between CECNSW and DEEWR in order to agree to the first “Nationally consistent data collection of data on school students with disability 2013 – 2015”

Seed funding of $400 per school has been distributed to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools. A web based application has been built by CECNSW from its Reserves and is in the process of final testing and roll out.

5) Students First Support Fund CEC Accountability Framework

The CECNSW is the approved system authority for the NSW Catholic Schools System. The Executive Director signed a letter of agreement on 11 December 2013 confirming the CECNSW’s understanding of its responsibilities as an approved system authority. Minister Pyne recognised the CECNSW as an approved system authority being satisfied that the CECNSW complies with requirements relating to needs-based funding arrangements and implementation plans as provided for under the Australian Education Act 2013.

The CECNSW is also the Non – Government Representative Body for NSW Catholic schools. All NSW Congregational schools were asked to nominate their representative body. Through CLRI, the Religious Institutes instructed their schools to nominate CECNSW not the AISNSW.

Commissioners noted that the Students First Support Fund MOU was signed by the CECNSW and AGDoE in December 2013. The CECNSW is required to present a report to the Commonwealth Minister for Education in early 2014 containing a summary of current activities which support the objectives outlined in the MOU. From 31 March 2015 and thereafter annually, a report is required to be submitted to the Minister outlining a summary of outcomes and work undertaken for the prior year against objectives and milestones included in the MOU which the AGDoE advises should be project based.

Commissioners noted that on 2 April 2014 an inter-diocesan workshop was held involving representatives of CECNSW, each Diocesan Education Authority and CLRI to address the first report requirements. The CEC Education Policy Committee will progress planning for project based reporting.

Commissioners noted the proposed CEC Representative Body Students First Support Fund Accountability Framework.

6) Commission Decisions

The Commission:

1) endorsed the Annual Report on Road Safety Education for NSW Catholic Schools 2013 and noted the increased funding to $580,000 in 2014 and the increased program delivery and reporting expectations;

2) approved the 2014 Commission Strategy Day for July 2014;

3) noted the quarterly CEC financial statements;

4) endorsed membership of the CEC Public Policy Committee as follows:
   a) Commissioner Peter Hamill (Chair);
   b) Julian Lesor – Director Government, Policy and strategy ACU;
   c) the Hon John Della Bosca;
   d) Danielle Cronin – Executive Director – Association of Catholic School Principals;
   e) Dr Brian Croke – Executive Director – CECNSW; and
   f) Annette Loughlin-Smith – Communications Manager – CSO Parramatta
7) **NCEC Submission to Commonwealth Minister to reduce regulatory burden**

Minister Pyne has written to NCEC regarding consultation on possible legislative amendments to reduce legislative burden on schools and systems in 2014. The Minister has invited NCEC to identify specific sections of the Australian Education Act 2013 which require attention to remove what the Minister describes as “command and control features” which “overreach” Commonwealth powers and involve unnecessary reporting. CEC is working with NCEC to meet a submission deadline of 9 May 2014.

8) **CEC VET funding for 2014**

The newly formed NSW Skills Board, which replaced BVET, has authorised funding for the first six months of 2014 (1st Jan – 31st June). The funding for the six month period is $852,716, i.e. at much the same level as the first six months in 2013. Information on funding for the second six months of 2014 cannot be provided until the Federal Budget is released on 13 May 2014.

9) **Meeting with the Conference of the Leaders of Religious Institutes**

The most recent meeting with the Conference of the Leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI) took place at Rosebery on 21 March 2014. Representatives of the Commission briefed CLRI on the establishment by the Bishops of the “Catholic Schools Systems Working Party”. Considerable attention was given new National School Funding Model which came into effect in January, the Grant Distribution model for the NSW Catholic system from 2015 and the Schools First Support Fund Memorandum of Understanding. Information was also provided on the CEC Mission and Identity Working Party, the Commonwealth Minister’s Review of the Australian Curriculum, new COAG student attendance and reporting requirements and the accreditation of Pre-2004 teachers.

10) **Briefing for the Association of Catholic School Principals**

A briefing was provided to the Association of Catholic School Principals on 27 March 2014. The key items discussed were the new National School Funding Model 2014 and the Grant Distribution Model for the NSW Catholic System 2015+. Additional items included the progress of the Bishops’ Catholic School Systems Working Party, the work of the CEC’s Mission and Identity Working Party, the Commonwealth Minister’s Review of the Australian Curriculum, the new COAG student attendance reporting requirements and the accreditation of pre-2004 teachers.

11) **Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood**

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) had its first 2014 meeting in Canberra on 11 April 2014. Prior to the meeting, Minister Piccoli briefed stakeholders on issues raised by the agenda. The Communique released on 11 April 2014 reported on:

- Agreement, subject to further advice, to an approach to assist implementation of a COAG decision to establish minimum school attendance benchmarks and the twice-yearly publication of school attendance data.
- Agreement on changes to decrease the turnaround time of NAPLAN results and noted that further work was required.
- With regard to online assessment for NAPLAN (currently scheduled for implementation in 2016), agreement that further work was required “to identify costs and benefits of alternative implementation models”.
- A number of agreed reforms to the Education and Care Services National Regulation related to staffing arrangements, physical environment and workforce shortages and preview of further amendments in the context of the Productivity Commission Inquiry.
- Discussion concerning how states and territories can work together to explore opportunities for cross-border sharing of resources.
- Agreement to promote two Australian War Memorial projects for the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War.
12) **BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY**

**Capital Grants Program**

**2014 Application Round**

Applications for the 2014 Round of the Capital Grants Program closed on 7 April 2014. Based on the 40 applications submitted the total estimated project cost is $141.2M. In accordance with the CBGA guidelines the estimated grant amount would be $87.5M. For the 2014 round the base provided by the Australian Government is $27.0M for projects with an additional base funding amount of $7.0M provided by the NSW Government. This means that total base funding of $34.0M for projects. This year 12 applications have been categorised as “New Places” category, while 28 applications have been categorised as “Existing Places”.

**2013 Application Round Projects**

The three projects submitted to the NSW Minister for Education for approval under the Building Grants Assistance Scheme were formerly announced on 7 April 2014. Initial Offers for projects at Catherine McAuley School, Orange and St Benedict’s College, Oran Park have been issued. Due to the project at Terra Sancta College, Schofields being in an advanced stage of tendering a Final Offer was issued.

**Trade Skills Centre Program**

The School Project Agreements for the seven *Trades Skills Centres* (formerly the *Trade Training Centre*) managed through the Catholic Sector, have been executed by the Australian Government Department of Education. For the project that is managed through a cluster arrangement through the NSW Department of Education and Communities advice has been received that the cluster agreement has also been executed.

The CBGA has also made the first Milestone payment, arising from the execution of the School Project Agreement.

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John Kitney  
Commission Secretary  
23 May 2014