Summary Report of the 358th Commission Meeting

HELD 18 JUNE 2014
AT THE POLDING CENTRE, 5TH FLOOR, 133 LIVERPOOL STREET, SYDNEY

1) 2014 Commission Strategy Day

Commissioners agreed the run sheet for the July 2014 Commission Strategy meeting. Commissioners confirmed the engagement of the facilitator and speakers. Commissioners agreed the focus question for the 2014 Strategy Day, namely, **How effective are NSW Catholic schools and how do we know?** Commissioners confirmed that the Focus Question will determine the direction of the Strategy Day.

2) NSW Advocate for Children

Commissioners discussed the NSW Advocate for Children Bill. The Advocate will replace the NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People. The need for further sector briefings was raised. Possible linkages to anticipated recommendations arising from the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse were cited. The need to renew the remit of the Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee (CESWCC) was raised. The point was made that the “architecture” of child protection/wellbeing is being progressively redesigned and that Catholic agencies need to be aware of new agencies and resulting sector responsibilities.

3) 2015 State Election: Progress Report

Commissioners confirmed CECNSW’s key objective for the 2015 election is to secure a commitment to increase capital funding to non-government schools in the next parliament. To this end, the Public Policy Committee endorsed the drafting of a joint proposal with AISNSW, outlining the arguments for increased public funding to non-government schools.

Commonwealth enrolment projections predict NSW schools will need to accommodate 153,435 more students by 2025 - a 13.4 per cent increase on 2014.

Non-government schools will need to create space for more than 52,000 additional students, requiring development of at least 15 new schools (at a 2013 cost of $20 million for a new 350-student primary school and $35 million for a 750-student secondary school).
4) **Aboriginal Education**

Current Aboriginal policy issues include:

- More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attendance Challenges;
- Possible Funding contribution to BOSTES for Aboriginal Education programs; and
- Extension of the Remit of the NSW Ombudsman to include oversight of programs for Aboriginal Students.

Commissioners focused their discussion on attendance targets and reporting and the desirability of a CEC forum to explore issues arising for Dioceses and Schools, The new role for the NSW Ombudsman; and CEC partnerships with BOSTES in the absence of both Targeted Programs and National Partnerships.

The importance of the impending revised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan for 2015 – 2018 was considered. Commissioners also noted that rising Aboriginal enrolments is a current Catholic sector trend which is to be celebrated and enhanced. The need to address the lack of Aboriginal Teachers in NSW Catholic schools was identified as a matter for action.

Commissioners requested that further advice on implementation issues for Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and schools be developed by the Education Policy Committee working with the Aboriginal Education Advisory Group.

5) **NSW State Budget 2014 – 15**

The NSW State Budget was handed down in Parliament on Tuesday, 17 June 2014. The budget papers are available from the NSW Treasury website.

Commissioners noted that total funding for non-government schools has been increased by $39.8 million or 4.0% to $1.04 billion (from a revised $999.1 million in 2013-14). However, Budget Papers do not identify the amounts for recurrent and capital expenditure.

The Budget confirms the NSW Government’s commitment to lift recurrent funding to all schools in line with the 2013 bilateral agreement signed with the Commonwealth. But this commitment is based upon the continuation of the Government’s 2012 freeze on capital funding to all non-government schools.

Commissioners noted CECNSW’s media release welcoming confirmation that the NSW Government will honour its recurrent funding obligations, despite the Commonwealth Government’s decision to abandon the agreement in its final two years when the most substantial investments were due to be made in all schools. The Media Release also stated its disappointment that the NSW Government’s freeze on capital funding remains in place.
6) Mission and Identity: Projects for approval and the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education request for Advice

Commissioners considered the update on two of the Mission and Identity projects. The Congregation for Catholic Education paper Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Study Guide and the Crossroads Implementation Case Studies, were re-presented to this meeting for finalisation.

Since the 21 May 2014 Commission meeting, the most recent Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education document, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, became available. Feedback to a set of four response questions is sought from Commissioners by the end of July 2014.

With respect to the new Vatican draft document *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, it was agreed that this is a timely and useful document. It both synthesises relevant Vatican documents and raises key questions / challenges for consideration. The point was made that local use of the document is already underway as a stimulus paper for Principals, Priests and other like meetings.

Commissioners noted that feedback has been sought from both Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools. Feedback to CEC will be processed through the Education Policy Committee with the advice of the Mission and Identity Working Party. A draft response will be tabled to the 24 July 2014 Commission meeting.

7) Commonwealth Teacher Education Review: Strategic Input

Since 2012, CECNSW has been engaged with both the State and National Teacher Education and Teacher Standards reform agendas. This work has been progressed:

(i) at the State level by the former NSW Institute of Teachers (now BOSTES): Refer paper 13.6 below being BOSTES GTIL implementation advice).

(ii) at the National level by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL); and

(iii) more recently Minister Pyne has, as part of the Commonwealth Government’s Student First reform agenda, established the “Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group” with Professor Gregory Craven Vice Chancellor of ACU as its Chair.

Minister Pyne’s Advisory Group is currently conducting a consultation on Teacher Education issues and priorities. Responses to the Review are now due.

The draft CEC submission presented for Commission approval was developed with input from:

- The Inter-Diocesan TAA Group;
- The CSSA 2 June Forum; and
- The Education Policy Committee.
Commissioners were advised of both DEC/BOSTES and NCEC input to the Commonwealth Review.

In addition to specific amendments, Commissioners noted the adverse impact of the recent Australian Government budget decisions in respect of raising University fees for ITE on the recruitment of trainee teachers. Commissioners requested that the matter of increased University fees for trainee teachers be actively pursued through NCEC as a National issue. This is seen as an access/equity issue.

8) Capital & Facilities Management Review

Commissioners at their meeting of 23 April 2014 noted the interest by both the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools for a comprehensive review of Capital and Facility Management to improve advocacy and grant administration. Commissioners at this meeting confirmed their commitment to advocate for the support of capital as part of the 2015 NSW election communication strategy.

Commissioners agreed that capital and facility management is an essential component of a well-functioning school, but noted that often capital and facility management flies under the radar of policy makers and educationalists. For example, the Gonski Panel took only a perfunctory assessment of capital funding.

Furthermore, capital expenditure is often the poor cousin in budgeting, largely because capital expenditure can be postponed without immediate dire results, unlike recurrent expenditure where the results are felt immediately.

Capital funding of secondary schools has either stagnated or fallen in real terms, while recurrent funding per capita funding growing in real terms over the last twenty years. The exception was the Building the Education Revolution (BER) – whose major policy intent was macroeconomic stimulus, not education and had a very narrow focus.

Commissioners noted the review proposal but agreed that more urgent attention is required for a more comprehensive review focusing primarily on school planning, demography and identifying capital needs. Catholic schools are facing a higher demand due to increased population forecast over the next ten years. Additional capital funds are required for new schools and extending the capacity of established schools.

9) Commission Decisions

The Commission:

1) endorsed the CEC Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools Program 2013 accountability report;

2) the amended CEC 2014 Students First Support Fund Statement.

3) endorsed and adopted Variation No. 2 to the 2014 Special Education: MSSD Funding Agreement.
10) Consultation with the Reviewers of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Government is currently conducting a review of the Australian Curriculum. The CEC contributed to the NCEC submission to the Review in February 2014 and provided its own submission. On 22 May 2014, members of the Secretariat were joined by Drs Andrew Fraser and Michael Bezzina from the Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Sydney and Mrs Anne-Marie Creenane from the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Wollongong to discuss the CECNSW submission and respond to questions from the reviewers, Prof Ken Wiltshire and Dr Kevin Donnelly. The reviewers provided a preliminary report to the Commonwealth Minister for Education by 31 March 2014 about the future process. The Panel will provide its final report to the Commonwealth Minister for Education by the 31 July 2014.


At its most recent meeting on 6 June 2014, the Advisory Group discussed possible priorities for the final two years of the initiative. Sector representatives were unanimous that the focus should be on consolidation but with recognition that the funds provide an opportunity for continued and increased focus on mathematics. Discussion on the Advisory Group will continue before advice to the Minister is finalised in July. In 2014 the NSW Catholic sector was resourced with 66 additional FTE positions. In both 2015 and 2016 the CEC allocation is for 99 FTE positions.

12) Meeting between Police, Rural Fire Service and Education Sectors

On 13 June 2014, a meeting was held between NSW Police, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the three school education sectors to develop policy responses to the 2013 Lower Blue Mountains bushfires. It was agreed that police Local Area Commanders (LACs), who are currently required to have bi-annual meetings with school principals under an MOU, would be approached to include an item briefing school leaders on local emergency threats and procedures. As a priority, LACs in bushfire prone areas would be approached first but over time, the measure would be expanded to an “all hazards approach”. Additionally, it was agreed that more detailed local support for school preparations will be rolled out later; noting that the 2014-15 Bushfire Season is only some months away and the current weather forecasts are worrying.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
24 June 2014
DECISIONS

The Commission noted the progress report.

CBGA Executive Officer

**Capital Grants Program**

The 2014 process for prioritising and selecting the capital projects to receive Government funding is on track, and all proposed projects will have been inspected by members of the State Prioritisation Committee by the end of June 2014.

**Trade Skills Centre Program**

The CBGA will send to the Government reports on the use of Trade Training Centres by end of June 2014.

**BIENNIAL CONFERENCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL AND FACILITY MANAGERS**

CBGA NSW and Newcastle-Maitland Diocese are preparing to host jointly the Biennial Conference for Australian Catholic School Capital and Facility Managers which will be held in late 2014.

**REVIEW OF CAPITAL MANAGEMENT**

A literature search is being conducted on school capital and facility management to prepare for the Strategic and Operational Review of the Facility and Capital Management of NSW Catholic Schools.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary

24 June 2014