Summary Report of the 359th Commission Meeting

HELD 24 JULY 2014
AT MARY MACKILLOP PLACE, 7 – 11 MOUNT STREET, NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

1) Chaplains Program: Recent developments

Issues arising from the 19 June 2014 High Court Chaplains Case decision as discussed by Commissioners included:

- Prime Minister’s guarantee (no enforcement of the Commonwealth’s refund power) for continued Chaplains program funding for 2014;
- possible post 2014 Chaplains Program scenarios;
- participation in the Chaplains Program by NSW Catholic schools is a matter for local decision; and
- implications for School funding generally.

Commissioners canvassed both immediate consequences for the Chaplains program in Catholic schools and implications for the long term involvement of the Commonwealth Government in schools funding, the section 96 issue.

Linkages to both the Report of the recent Senate Inquiry Into School Funding and the recently established Australian Government Review of Federation Responsibilities (Section 51 matters) were noted.

The Commission agreed that funded Catholic sector “Chaplains” positions will continue for 2014. The Commission requested that NCEC advocate for the continuation of the Chaplains program for 2015 and beyond and advised that the broader and long term consequences of the High Court’s decision for the ongoing funding of Catholic schools be monitored in collaboration with the NCEC.

2) CECNSW Work Plan 2014: Half Yearly Progress Review

Commissioners noted the wide range of activities undertaken by the CECNSW Secretariat and asked that this be acknowledged in the Commission minutes. Commissioners considered that progress against objectives has been satisfactory. Commissioners requested that the outcomes of the 2014 Commission Strategy Day be integrated with the development of the 2015 CECNSW Strategic Directions and Work Plan for approval by the NSW/ACT Bishops.
3) **Emergency Management in NSW Schools: Recent Developments**

Since 2009, the Commission has been required to act as a conduit for State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) emergency notifications for all NSW Catholic schools. On 17 October 2013, a bushfire ignited in bush near Linksvieth Avenue, Springwood at approximately 1.30 pm. St Columba’s College was cut off and locked down. St Thomas Aquinas Primary School was evacuated. Lessons learnt from these events have resulted in the development of a series of strategies to improve the capacity of NSW Catholic schools to handle emergency situations. CECNSW conducted a Bushfire Preparation Forum on 9 May 2014 to brief diocesan emergency managers.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for CECNSW’s work in establishing the emergency communication system between the State Emergency Operation Centre and Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and noted that regional response forums are being planned. Commissioners also noted that a template emergency procedures document is to be developed based on CEC Victoria advice.

4) **Senate Select Committee on School Funding: Key Issues**

On 12 December 2013, the Australian Senate established a select Committee on School Funding with specific Terms of Reference. NCEC participated in this Senate Inquiry by way of both a written submission, 21 March 2014 and through a public hearing appearance on 13 March 2014.

Commissioners considered a CECNSW summary of the Senate Report and noted that all of the compliance requirements of the Australian Education Act and Regulation 2013 remain in force despite the Government’s desire to reduce red tape and this has reporting implications for NSW Catholic schools. Commissioners agreed that the Senate majority and minority reports are significant for the Catholic sector.

Commissioners requested strategic advices from the Public Policy, Resources Policy and Education Policy Committees.

5) **Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership: Final (2013) Reward Funding**

At its 21 October 2009 meeting, the Commission adopted the ‘National Partnership for Teacher Quality: CEC Plan’ for the 2009 to 2012 school years inclusive. Based upon the assessed performance of the Catholic sector against this 2009 – 2012 Plan the Australian Government made available Teacher Quality reward funding to all education sectors. The Teacher Quality National Partnership (TQNP) reward funds were attracted upon achievement of key performance indicators and are paid to the State and in turn distributed at the sole discretion of the NSW Government. The funds have been released in two tranches. The first release of TQNP reward funds occurred in 2012. The second release occurred recently.

At this meeting the Commission agreed that the second grant of $11.13 million in Teacher Quality National Partnership reward funds be allocated proportional to the distribution of 2013 FTE teachers across NSW Catholic schools. An amount of $100,000 was retained in support of BOSTES GTIL priorities.
6) **CECNSW response to “Educating Today and Tomorrow”: A Renewing Passion**


The Commission endorsed the draft response for submission to the NCEC subject to some clarifying changes. The Commission also noted that individual Dioceses and Congregational schools may also respond to the NCEC. Australian Catholic Schools Authorities may be invited to participate in the November 2015 Global Convention on Catholic Education which will be held in Rome and which the *Instrumentum laboris* is intended to help shape.

7) **Commission Decisions**

The Commission endorsed:

1) the itinerary for the Wollongong Diocesan School Visit and Commission meeting to be held 19 to 21 August 2014.

2) the variation to Vocational Education and Training (VETiS) in Schools Program Funding Agreement 2014. The Agreement provides $866,544 (excluding GST) in funding for the period 1st July – 31st December 2014;

3) the external provision of HSC VET funding of $1,212,539 (excluding GST) for the period 1 July to 31 December 2014;

4) the CECNSW submission to the Commonwealth Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group; and

5) the *First and Second Quarterly Reports on Road Safety Education for NSW Catholic Schools 2014*.

8) **Australian Vocational Student Prizes 2013**

The Australian Vocational Student Prize (AVSP) recognises students who have demonstrated outstanding skills while completing vocational training in senior secondary years. Each year schools are invited to nominate students who have chosen to do practical, vocational training while completing their senior secondary studies. On 23 June 2014 Assistant Minister for Education Sussan Ley announced the winners of the Prime Minister’s Award for Skills Excellence in School (PM’s Award), with a total of 20 prizes handed out to the top-performing student across a variety of categories. Of 45 prizes awarded to students from NSW, students from NSW Catholic schools received 22.

9) **Mary Senj**

Mary Senj, CECNSW Secretariat *State Coordinator – Aboriginal Education* was nominated to be the NCEC representative on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, now the Education Council ([http://www.scseec.edu.au/](http://www.scseec.edu.au/)). Mary has now been appointed.
10) **Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission: Replacement Arrangements**

CECNSW is in consultation with the ACBC and the NCEC on Catholic sector ACNC replacement policy options. The CECNSW Audit and Risk Committee has been asked to provide advice. In addition, the Ministerial ACNC Replacement options discussion paper has been circulated to Diocesan Directors and Principals of Congregational schools for feedback. Submissions are due 20 August 2014.

The focus of CECNSW policy advice is to exempt registered non-government schools from ACNC compliance obligations in recognition of their public regulation and reporting requirements pursuant to both BOSTES and ACARA statutory requirements, including MySchool public reporting. A formal position paper will be provided to the 20 August 2014 Commission meeting.

11) **Great Teaching and Inspired Learning: Accreditation of All Teachers**


In relation to the **accreditation of all teachers** in NSW (GTIL Reform 10.1), the Workgroup has prepared a detailed paper which is awaiting endorsement from the Minister prior to release. The draft paper has been discussed and a response provided through the CECNSW Education Policy Committee. The Minister’s office is aware that the CECNSW encourages the release of information on this important issue. The need for clarity and transparency in relation to this issue has been emphasised through the CECNSW GTIL response paper (November 2013). It has been made clear that it is unsatisfactory that clarification and structural detail is still unavailable to systems and schools.

Meanwhile, the CSSA meeting on 2 June 2014 has provided a rich and detailed source of feedback on the current views and expectations of Catholic secondary schools which will be useful for informing the ongoing GTIL agenda.

12) **BOSTES Recommendation on Language Education**

On 23 June 2014, Minister Piccoli announced his response to the recommendations on language learning provided by BOSTES at the Minister’s request. An expert Languages Advisory Panel will be appointed to consider proposals including:

- cultivating the existing language potential of more than 350,000 NSW students who speak another language at home;
- using online delivery to extend both the reach and range of languages being taught especially for the priority Asian languages;
- retraining bilingual primary school teachers as language teachers; and
- fostering collaboration between schools and community language providers.
13) **Dr John DeCourcy**

At a farewell gathering on 24 June from the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, Dr John DeCourcy was announced as the recipient of the prestigious 2014 Sir Harold Wyndham Medal Award. Bestowed by the Australian College of Educators (ACE) NSW, John is the fourth Catholic Education medallist in the award’s 20-year history. With nearly 45 years of service to Catholic Education including 13 years as a Principal, John has been Director of Strategic Accountabilities Service for Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta since 2007. John will be moving to a private consultancy role supporting schools and universities. His current commitment to the HSC Data Project for CECNSW is continuing for 2014.

14) **Congregational Schools Support Services Working Party**

The Working Party brings together representatives of CECNSW, CCER, CCD, CLRI, Marist Education and ERA.

The focus of current activity is the organisation of a Forum to be held on 8 September 2014. Commissioners seeking further advice can contact Br Paul or Ian Baker.

John Kitney  
Commission Secretary  
11 August 2014
BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY

DECISIONS

The Commission noted the progress report.

CBGA Executive Officer

CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Following the completion of the State Priority Committee's (SPC) site visits the meeting to prioritise applications was held from 16 to 18 July 2014. The proposal from the SPC needs to be considered following adjustments to applications as agreed in the SPC meeting.

Indicative offers will be offered to applicants in priority order subject to the level of funding available.

TRADE SKILLS CENTRE

The Australian Government has engaged Ms Patricia Scott to undertake a review of the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program (now Trades Skills Centres) to identify what has actually been delivered under the program and how the infrastructure is being utilised.

The review will involve analysis of Program documentation including the activity reports, Program guidelines, funding proposals, funding agreements and other reports.

Lead School Principals have been contacted directly by the Australian Government Department of Education informing them about the review and their possible involvement in the review process.

The CBGA or the CECNSW will carry out a coordinating role in the carrying out of this review.

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 on school capital and facility management is underway to prepare for the Strategic and Operational Review of the Facility and Capital Management of NSW Catholic Schools.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
11 August 2014