1. **Wollongong Diocesan Visit**

   Each year, one of the Commission’s meetings is held in a Diocese and it is held over two days allowing Commissioners to visit local Catholic schools. This year the Diocesan visit was hosted by Bishop Peter Ingham DD, Bishop of Wollongong.

   Bishop Anthony thanked Bishop Peter Ingham and Commissioner Peter Turner who is also the Wollongong Director of Catholic Schools, for hosting the 2014 Diocesan visit. Commissioners agreed that the visit was informative for their work as Commissioners and that a great deal was learnt about the progress in Catholic education being made in the Wollongong Diocese.

2. **Great Teaching Inspired Learning (GTIL) mid-year report: Issues and next implementation priorities**

   NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli MP aims to publish a GTIL progress report by October 2014. This report will focus on:

   - Entry to Teacher Education;
     - Specialist Primary teaching degrees;
   - The professional experience, practicum; and
   - Accreditation of all teachers by 2017.

   Commissioners authorised the finalisation of the CECNSW section of the Ministerial mid-year GTIL report and noted the linkages with the proposed amendment of the Teacher Accreditation Act.

3. **Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) Replacement Options: Catholic Sector Advice**

   Commissioners endorsed the ACNC replacement options advice as provided and noted associated advice on related Accrual Accounting implementation by Schools.

   Both CECNSW and NCEC advice is based on the reality that schools are already the subject of significant public reporting through both BOSTES and ACARA, including MySchool.

   Discussion focused on:

   - existing public reporting by schools;
   - transitional arrangements under the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (Consequential and Transitional Act) 2012; and
   - compliance options should the Government’s ACNC Repeal Bill fail to pass the Senate.

   It was noted that the existing exemption for schools in respect of financial reporting to ACNC can be extended by Regulation beyond 2015.
4. **Not-for-Profit Compliance: NSW Education Act Section 21A Amendment and related matters**

Commissioners noted that the forthcoming amending Bill to Section 21A of the NSW Education Act will:

(i) establish a Not for Profit Ministerial Advisory Committee, including representatives nominated by AIS and CECNSW. The draft bill is likely to be amended to specify CECNSW and AIS membership or alternatively this will be dealt with by Regulation;

(ii) clarify the definition of “Operate for Profit”. It should be noted that the reasonable market value test will now apply to all payments made to all parties including previously exempt related parties;

(iii) clarify the consequences / penalties which will apply to a non-government school that operates for profit;

(iv) provide for “Investigations”; and

(v) establish an Appeals process.

It was also noted the provisions of the amending Bill will come into force from 1 January 2015. From that day, the key obligation will be to ensure that all transactions are at reasonable market value, including transactions involving related parties including Church Agencies. Entities will need to maintain a Register of “Related Party transactions”.

Commissioners noted the need to manage conflicts of interest. “Responsible persons” will need to be identified. There will also need to be full documentation of delegations. There is a full prohibition on School Board Directors fees with possible implications for some existing and emerging governance arrangements.

The point was made that those Congregational schools that are entities regulated by the Commonwealth Corporations Act provide models of the required governance standards.

Commissioners requested that when the new Section 21A requirements are clearer CECNSW should organise a Section 21A implementation forum involving both Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools. It was also noted that as the required Section 21A Guidelines are drafted the Commission will be consulted.

5. **School Demography and School Planning**

Commissioners requested a presentation at the 17 September 2014 meeting on CECNSW’s recent and current work with respect to its capacity to provide socio-demographic services support to the Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and to Congregational schools.
6. **CECNSW Capital and Facilities Management Review**

All Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes were consulted about the need for a Capital review. Commissioners considered that a review is timely because the last substantive review occurred almost twenty years ago. Commissioners noted that this review will commence early 2015.

7. **Accreditation of Pre-2004 Teachers: Teacher Accreditation Act Amendments**

Shortly, the NSW Parliament will consider amendments to the Teacher Accreditation Act to enable accreditation of current teachers who commenced before 2004.

Key Teacher Accreditation Bill issues reviewed by Commissioners included:

- All pre-2004 school teachers being required to meet the teaching standards and accreditation requirements of the Teacher Accreditation Act;
- Better defining the requirements for mandatory and voluntary accreditation under the Teacher Accreditation Act;
- Early childhood teachers being required to meet the teaching standards and accreditation requirements of the Teacher Accreditation act;
- BOSTES oversight of initial and continuing teacher accreditation courses and programs and providers as approved by the Minister; and
- The Revocation of a Teacher’s Accreditation by a Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA).

Commissioners reviewed:

- The legal relationship between TAAs and BOSTES noting that final authority with respect to Teacher Accreditation resides with BOSTES. TAAs operate by delegation and this is clarified in the Bill;
- Potential appeal avenues for teachers against adverse TAA Accreditation decisions;
- The resourcing demands of Teacher Accreditation and associated workload issues together with need to keep these manageable;
- The need to clarify the implementation timeline, noting that this will be done by Ministerial Regulation. 31 December 2017 is likely to be the final compliance date for the Accreditation of all pre-2004 teachers by each TAA; and
- Implementation of associated Working with Children Check reform requirements.
8. CECNSW Submission to the Productivity Commission Early Childcare and Early Learning Draft Report

The Productivity Commission has been seeking submissions for its Inquiry into Early Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.

Commissioners reviewed advice relating to ten ECEC reform areas being:

- Families using mainstream services – improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability;
- Additional needs children and services - improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability;
- Preschool – supporting universal access;
- Outside school hours care (OSHC) - improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability;
- possible removal of ECEC assistance to some providers;
- Workforce participation;
- Quality assurance processes and regulation of ECEC;
- Ongoing support for evaluation and program assessment;
- Required modelling and costings of preferred models; and
- Capital issues related to establishment of new centres.

Commissioners focused their discussion on the need to align pre-schooling with schooling whilst maintaining the integrity of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Commissioners agreed about the importance of maintaining and increasing direct Commonwealth funding for pre-schooling. Maintaining existing taxation concessions for not-for-profit ECEC providers was identified as being critical to success.

Commissioners considered it most important to have minimum Out of School and Holiday Care (OSHC) staff qualifications subject to that flexibility for OSHC providers necessary to the maintenance of OSHC service provision especially for low SES communities where staffing costs could become a barrier to service provision.

With respect to ECEC service provision involving nannies, Commissioners agreed not to participate in this aspect of the emerging policy debate.

The Commission endorsed the draft CECNSW submission subject to clarifying advice relating to both the alignment of pre-schooling to schooling and the maintenance of provider tax concessions for not-for-profit entities. The CECNSW Executive Director will finalise the submission and submit it to the Productivity Commission by 5 September 2014. Commissioners agreed to further consider ECEC issues at their November 2014 meeting, following publication of the final Productivity Commission report.
9. **NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan: Priorities for 2015**

The NSW government made a commitment to implement the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan with funding of $261 million over 2012 to 2016, focused on years K-2. CECNSW indicative funding levels and annual targets are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocations ($m)</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTE teachers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commissioners noted that the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan has the following key implementation elements for 2012 - 2016:

- personalized learning including the use of tiered interventions according to need;
- diagnostic assessment, tracking and reporting student performance; and
- teacher professional development in the classroom under the direction of an instructional leader.

In addition, annual priorities are drafted by the Minister’s Advisory Group and submitted for his approval. Commissioners noted that the Minister’s Advisory Group is finalizing its advice to the Minister for the 2015-2016 priorities.

Commissioners noted that from 2015, there will be an increased focus on numeracy.

Commissioners concurred with the four proposed priorities for 2015-2016:

- strengthened whole school instructional leadership and support for teacher professional development;
- diagnostic assessment, personalized learning and the use of tiered interventions;
- continued and increased focus on mathematics; and
- School communities supporting literacy and numeracy.

10. **CECNSW PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION**

CECNSW will host a stand-up cocktail function at NSW Parliament for Commissioners, NSW Bishops and key Catholic education staff to meet state MPs and MLCs on the evening of 22 October 2014. With a state election required in March 2015, the reception is an opportune time for MPs and Catholic education leaders to meet and discuss relevant issues in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Diocesan Directors and Bishops may use the event to further build relationships with their local MPs, the Minister and possibly both the Premier and Opposition Leader.
11. NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

The most recent meeting of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) took place in Brisbane on 31 July 2014. The main item on the agenda was a consideration of Australian Government education policy, initiatives and funding. These included the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI), the Minister’s Roundtable on Students with Dyslexia and an update on the Chaplaincy Program. Regarding funding, Commissioners were briefed on funding reviews in relation to the Australian Education Act and Regulations, Indexation, Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) loading, Students with Disability (SWD) loading and the low English Language Proficiency (ELP) loading. NCEC also received a briefing on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission and the White Paper on Reform of the Federation for which Terms of Reference were released on 28 June 2014: http://www.pm.gov.au/media/2014-06-28/white-paper-reform-federation.

12. ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

At the meeting of the Association of Catholic School Principals (ACSP) on 15 August 2014, the principals were briefed on Government Grants Distribution for 2015, the Not for Profit Amendment to Section 21A of the Education Act, Amendments for the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004, the Mission and Identity Project and the Students with Disabilities (SWD) data collection. Principals were also briefed on the value of establishing and maintaining good working relationships with members of parliament and the opportunities provided by the Brother John Taylor Fellowship.

13. PRESENTATION TO PRINCIPALS FROM BATHURST AND MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

On 7 August 2014, a conference for principals from the Dioceses of Bathurst and Maitland-Newcastle was held in Bathurst. The focus of the presentation was on leadership and emerging challenges for principals. Brian Croke conducted a session which looked out twenty years. Consideration was given to the impact of changes on Australia, changes in the Church particularly those inspired by Pope Francis. Participants were left with pointers to the pathway to 2034.

14. BROTHER JOHN TAYLOR FELLOWSHIP

Memos 94/14 and 155/14 requested Diocesan Directors and Principals of Congregational Schools to publicise the Brother John Taylor Fellowship. As the Commission agreed, the Brother John Taylor Fellowship will be awarded annually to one person who can demonstrate the capacity to make a valuable contribution towards Catholic education. The Fellowship provides up to $25,000 to cover a Fellow’s costs including travel. Additionally, CECNSW will pay up to $20,000 to the Fellow’s school to support their release from classes to undertake the Fellowship. The Fellowship provides a wonderful opportunity for professional development of individuals and for NSW Catholic schools to benefit from their work. Currently no applications have been received. Applications will close on 29 September 2014.
15. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: UPDATE

On 15 August 2014, CECNSW conducted a workshop with representatives from the dioceses to assess the feasibility of redeveloping Catholic Education Commission Victoria (CECV) documents supporting schools in their preparation for emergencies of all kinds. The consensus on the day was that the CECV documents provide a valuable resource and could be of considerable value to dioceses and schools. The documents need to be reviewed in the light of NSW legislation, procedures and practices and Diocesan Directors will be consulted.

Due to the time of year it was recommended that versions will be developed which focus on bushfire preparation with later more comprehensive versions to follow.

Recently the Secretariat has contacted Diocesan Directors to ensure that the emergency contact lists are up to date. A test of the CEC Emergency Management System (CECEMS) will be conducted on Friday 22 August 2014 in preparation for the state-wide declaration of the Bushfire Danger Period (fire season).

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has a number of applications which run on a variety of platforms. Fires Near Me ([https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/fires-near-me-nsw/id370891827?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/fires-near-me-nsw/id370891827?mt=8)) is a useful application which provides up to date information fire activity. The link refers to the iPhone version but the application is also available for Android phones. The information is also available directly from the RFS: [http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me).

16. CHRISTINE SMITH, RIP

CECNSW was informed of the death of Christine Smith, formerly the Head of Special Education in the CSO Maitland-Newcastle. Christine was heavily involved with CECNSW committees during her time in the CSO where she distinguished herself for her passion for students with disabilities and special learning needs. She was the backbone of the enterprise in Maitland for a long time. She brought great commitment and knowledge to the SWD area when it was a Christian ideal rather than a legal obligation. Christine had in later years been a Learning Support Teacher in two schools.

For a number of years now she had been battling cancer. Typical of Christine, she never complained and her only concern was for those around her, particularly her family and the staff and students of her schools. She died in Perth where she was visiting family members and was buried there. A memorial mass will be held on 4 September 2014 at which Brian Croke will provide a tribute to her life and work for Catholic schools in NSW.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
8 September 2014
BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY

CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM

The second State Priority Committee (SPC) was held in mid-July 2014 to consider the 39 applications that had been submitted to the NSW Catholic Block Grant Authority (CBGA) for funding.

Based on the applications submitted in April 2014, the total cost of work proposed was $132.7 M which, based on the CBGA guidelines would result in a total grant amount of $85.8M. However, the amount of funds available for allocation to these 39 applications was $34.7M made up from funds from the Australian and New South Wales Governments.

Following the site visit to each of the applicant schools, SPC members prioritised all applications, as well as considering the possibility of staging projects, or parts of projects, so as to maximise the distribution of the limited funding. This process was carried out in accordance with the CBGA guidelines.

Based on the recommendations of the SPC, the CBGA reviewed the applications to recalculate the funding required for each project and to develop a list of applications for funding as determined by the SPC up to the funds available.

This has resulted in 18 Indicative offers of a grant being sent to Diocesan Priority Committees for their consideration and agreement to fund the 30% contribution required.

Confirmation of Indicative Offers is required to be returned to the CBGA by 29 August 2014.

Following this step, the final list of recommended applications will be submitted to the 17 September 2014 Commission meeting for confirmation and final submission to the Ministers for Education for approval.

TRADE SKILLS CENTRE

The Trades Skills Centres program continues through the capital works process for Round Five approved projects. All but two projects have commenced construction. The two projects will commence in time for the completion of the works and the delivery of the trade qualifications in early 2015.

The CBGA/CEC has been also involved in the Review of the Trade Training (Skills) Program by the Australian Government. A site visit by the reviewer, Ms Patricia Scott, was arranged at Loyola Senior Campus, Mt Druitt on 8 August 2014 and for Mater Dei College, Wagga on 10 September 2014.

Based on the visit to Loyola Senior College, the questions centred on the vocational outcomes for students and the impact of the Trade Training Centres in assisting those outcomes. There was also a focus on the question of value for money in relation and comparison to TTC provision by other education authorities.
BIENNIAL CONFERENCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL AND FACILITY MANAGERS

An Australian and New Zealand Catholic Schools Capital and Facility Management conference, co-hosted by NSW CBGA and Maitland Newcastle Diocese, will be held in Newcastle late October 2014. The themes are Catholic identity, demography and sharing insights.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
8 September 2014