Summary Report of the 361st Commission Meeting

HELD WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2014
CLANCY/GILROY ROOMS, LEVEL 5, POLDING CENTRE, SYDNEY

1) CECNSW Strategic Directions 2015

Following the Commission’s Strategy Day on 22-23 July 2014, the CECNSW Secretariat Directors conducted a Planning Day on 4 August 2014. On the basis of discussion on that day, and informed by the Commission’s Strategy Day, a draft CECNSW Strategic Directions document was developed by the Secretariat which Commissioners considered at this meeting. It was agreed that further refinement is necessary before it is submitted to the 13 November 2014 NSW/ACT Bishops meeting for endorsement.

2) CECNSW Socio-Demographic Capacity

At their meeting on 21 August 2014, Commissioners discussed demographic services sourced by each NSW Diocesan Catholic Schools Authority. Various types and levels of support are sourced.

Commissioners at this meeting considered a presentation of the work of Crichton Smith, Principal Research Officer, CECNSW, in particular the strategic socio-demographic resources currently available to NSW and interstate Catholic Schools Authorities as well as individual schools to assist with contemporary and future strategic planning.

Commissioners considered that this work is particularly valuable and comprehensive but that it would be useful to Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and others if it was progressed in a more co-ordinated way. Commissioners requested that this proposal be discussed with CENet in order to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and maximum benefits are achieved. Commissioners also noted that completing an inventory of existing education information systems in the Dioceses is critical to the success of this service.

3) CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOLS FORUM 8 SEPTEMBER 2014

On 8 September 2014, 85 representatives of NSW Congregational schools, their founding Religious bodies and Governing councils met with representatives of CECNSW, the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (CCER) and the Conference of NSW Diocesan Directors to explore “Navigating Our Future”. This gathering heard addresses from Peter Turner and Dr Brian Croke on the current policy landscape for funding and governance as well as Desiree Blackett CCER on Industrial changes. The meeting endorsed a set of Operational Principles to guide understanding and cooperation between NSW Catholic schools and their governing entities. In addition, the meeting identified a set of “Collective Priorities” for ongoing cooperation. These priorities are currently being documented and an advisory paper will be circulated by late October 2014.
4) **2014 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data of Students with Disability - Update**

Commissioners noted that from 2015, all government and non-government schools in Australia will be required to participate annually in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD_SWD) is being implemented in three stages in Catholic schools throughout NSW. This data collection work has been supported by the MSSD funding agreement with the Australian Government.

Commissioners noted that there are currently 259 students who require the most extensive and costly adjustments; 1418 students who have substantial needs and costs; 21,124 students with some needs and costs and 1287 students who require no additional support or costs.

CECNSW will complete data quality control and submit finalised data to the Australian Government Department of Education before the due date of 31 October 2014. A meeting of Diocesan Heads of Service for students with disability will be held in Term 4 2014 in order to ensure agreed NCCD SWD data collection processes are in place for 2015.

A further report on NCCD –SWD implementation will be provided early in 2015.

5) **Australian Government’s Indigenous Advancement Strategy: Issues for the Catholic Sector**


IAS guidelines assume that Regional and Community based initiatives will be developed for funding approval. Given this it is unlikely that individual school-based IAS applications will be successful. IAS projects need to be developed to involve either a Diocese, a partnership of Dioceses, or at a State level. CECNSW through its Aboriginal Education Advisory Group could prepare an IAS funding submission.

Commissioners discussed how to best engage with the IAS. It was agreed that Regional footprint applications appear to be required by the Australian Government. In this context Diocesan based projects, or projects involving a cluster of Dioceses, were identified as being highly appropriate.

It was also noted that IAS funding will be required to sustain existing school-based projects and personnel funded under either or both of the terminating programs identified below.

Terminating programs are:

- Community Employment Development Program (CEDP); and
- Parent and Community Engagement (PACE).

The critical importance of student attendance support programs was discussed. In this context the point was made that IAS funding might enable a Catholic Sector Home School Liaison Service to be established at a regional (Diocesan) level.

Commissioners discussed a possible State-wide IAS project and agreed that the Executive Director should develop a project focused on “Attendance, engagement and retention K-12”.
**6) Launch of the Early Childhood Transition to School Statement**

Mid-September 2014, the Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli launched a new Transition to School Statement ([http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/funding/funding-projects/transition-to-school](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/funding/funding-projects/transition-to-school)). This voluntary Statement is for preschools, long day care centres and families to use in communicating information to schools, including Catholic schools, in order to assist each child’s transition from early childhood to school based education. The Statement is a child focussed, practical tool designed in consultation with professionals from the early childhood and schools sectors. It summarises the child’s strengths, identifies their interests and approaches to learning, and suggests ways these can be supported.

**7) Ministerial Trade Training Centre Review – Visits to Catholic Schools**

On 11 July 2014, the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Commonwealth Assistant Minister for Education announced an independent review into the Trade Training Centres (TTCs) in Schools Program. The purpose of the review is to inform the Government on ways to optimise use of the TTC expenditure and improve the delivery and quality of Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS).

The review of operational TTCs will assess:

- effective use of the TTC;
- training provided, particularly in terms of industry and employer engagement; and
- whether training outcomes are meeting industry and employer needs.

The Department has engaged Ms Patricia Scott to conduct the review. Ms Scott has extensive policy, advisory and implementation experience as a senior policy adviser and former Departmental Secretary. Two Catholic Trade Training Centres, Loyola Catholic TTC in the Diocese of Parramatta and Mater Dei Catholic TTC on the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, were selected for site visits by Ms Scott. Trade Training Centres were selected based on their 2012 Activity Reports and the features below were identified by the Department of Education. Ms Scott attended Loyola Catholic Trade Training Centre on the 8 August 2014 and Mater Dei Catholic College on 3 September and discussed key issues with the key school and Diocesan personnel, students and CECNSW staff.

**8) REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION ACT 2013 SEPTEMBER 12TH CONSULTATION**

Commissioners were provided with the NCEC submission to the Review of the Australian Education Act 2013 at their 21 May 2014 meeting. On 12 September 2014, CECNSW through NCEC participated in an Australian Education Act legislative review consultation. This consultation discussed: reducing the complexity of the Act, removing intrusion into school operations, addressing excessive Ministerial powers to act on “own initiative”, streamlining data reporting and collection, increasing flexibility for “Approved System Authorities” with respect to the implementation of the National Funding Model and Special schools funding anomalies.

A draft amendment Bill will become available during November 2014. During 2015, a separate consultative process will address National Funding Model matters. With respect to school funding, a Bill to address Special Schools funding anomalies is to be circulated before November 2014.
9) **BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY**

**CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

The NSW Catholic Block Grant Authority (CBGA) has now received responses from those Diocesan Bishops and Leaders of Congregational schools, confirming the level of local contribution toward recommended projects for grant funding.

Commissioners reviewed the list of projects as recommended by the State Priority Committee (SPC). Ratified projects will be submitted to the Australian and New South Wales Government Ministers for Education for approval. The deadline for submissions to the Ministers for Education is 30 September, 2014.

**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
15 October 2014