Summary Report of the 364th Commission Meeting

HELD WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015
CLANCY/GILROY ROOMS, LEVEL 5, POLDING CENTRE, SYDNEY

1. NSW State Election

The NSW State election will be held on Saturday 28 March 2015.

The focus areas for NSW Catholic schools and Catholic schools communities are as follows:

- increased capital funding from the NSW Government
  Substantial growth in population is expected in Sydney in particular. This means that Catholic schools will experience the same increased demand for places as government schools. Substantial capital funds are required to build new schools and expand existing schools to meet this demand.

- a fairer planning and approval process for school developments
  Catholic school developments do not follow the same Council approval processes as similar developments in government schools. This situation results in considerable and unnecessary costs to the Catholic sector and hampers growth to meet increased demands from communities.

Representations are being made to the government and to local members and candidates. The Council of Catholic School Parents has issued election kits to school communities and new materials will be issued closer to the election.

2. Students First Support Fund: 2014 CECNSW Accountabilities

Students First Support Fund Accountabilities are a subset of requirements under the “Representative Body” provisions of the Australian Education Act 2013 and Regulation 2013. This Act is the means by which Commonwealth school grants flow to all Australian non-government schools, including NSW Catholic schools.

Commissioners noted the proposed 12 February 2015 planning workshop which will draft the 2014 activity under this program for submission to the Australian Department of Education due by 31 March 2015.

The possibility of an enhanced set of accountability requirements over the life of the SFSF to December 2017 was noted. Diocesan planning for such a contingency is being explored.
3. NSW Education Act Section 83C Not-for-Profit Guidelines

Minister Piccoli has established the membership of the NSW non-government schools Not-for-Profit Advisory Committee and authorised its inaugural meeting for 18 February 2015. Catholic School Authorities are awaiting publication of the required implementation Guidelines. A CECNSW implementation forum will be organised once draft Guidelines are available. New complementary school Governance requirements have commenced and are set out in the revised BOSTES School / System Registration Manuals.

Commissioners reviewed the “three tests” being: “payments meet market value, are required for the running of the school and are reasonable”:

Issues considered included:

- School and Parish joint services on shared sites;
- The principle of “Materiality”;
- Rent at market value for an educational purpose;
- The religious purposes of the school and support services;
- Church joint purchasing arrangements;
- The prohibition on payments to members of school governing bodies; and
- The test of “reasonableness”.

The overlaps between Not-for-Profit requirements and the new BOSTES school Governance requirements were explored.

Commissioners specifically discussed issues relating to goods and services purchased from CatholicCare, CCI, CDFs and PJPs. In each case it was noted that the three step test must be applied: namely, the nature of the goods and services being purchased for the running of the school, market value and reasonableness.

Commissioners noted that identifying related entities was the most challenging issue arising from these legislative changes.

4. 2014 Students with Disabilities Consistent Collection of Data: CECNSW Report for Review

To date the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD_SWD) has been implemented in three stages in Catholic schools throughout NSW with participation as follows:

- Stage One (2013) - approximately 30% of Catholic schools;
- Stage Two (2014) – 74% of Catholic schools; and
- Stage Three (2015) – 100% of Catholic schools (subject to Ministerial direction).

Commissioners were provided with the purpose, description and analysis of results of the 2013 CECNSW data collection at their 20 November 2013 meeting.

The related MSSD National Partnership for support of NCCD implementation terminated on 31 December 2014.

Commissioners discussed:

- related DDA and Disability Standards for Education legal compliance uses of the NCCD data;
- workload pressures on teachers and support staff; and
- rising parent expectations for student support triggered by the NCCD process.

It was noted that the data arising is still not robust enough across Australia to support a SWD funding loading model. Commissioners were advised that CECNSW is actively involved in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers review of NCCD processes and outcomes to date initiated by the Australian Government Department of Education.
5. Aboriginal Education Priorities for 2015

Commissioners accepted the 2014 Annual Report of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and noted the Aboriginal Education Work Plan 2015 and its priorities. Commissioners requested the Committee to review learnings from the 2014 World Indigenous Conference for applicability in Australia. Commissioners also noted that at the 18 March 2015 Commission meeting, the AEAC will present an issues paper relating to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

6. Reform of the Federation: Education Issues Papers

The Commonwealth has commenced the process to produce a White Paper on the Reform of the Federation and the responsibilities of different governments. The White Paper will focus on specific areas, including education. It will consider ways to:

• Reduce and end, as far as possible, the waste, duplication and second guessing between different levels of government;
• Achieve a more efficient and effective federation and, in so doing, improve national productivity;
• Make interacting with government simpler for citizens;
• Ensure our federal system:
  o Is better understood and valued by Australians (and the case for reform supported);
  o Has clearer allocation of roles and responsibilities;
  o Enhances governments’ autonomy, flexibility and political accountability; and
  o Supports Australia’s economic growth and international competitiveness.

A Green paper setting out options for reform will be published in the second half of 2015. There will be an opportunity at that point to make written submission on the proposals.

7. Catholic Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee: CECNSW Appointments

Commissioners approved the following nominations to be the education members of CESWCC for 2015-17:

• Margaret Chittick;
• Dr Kristin Johnson rsj;
• Stephen Said; and
• Joyce Snedden; and

approved the co-opting of two additional nominations:

• Cathy McClellan; and
• Linda McNeil.
8. Other Decisions

Commissioners:

a) endorsed the CECNSW NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan Report on Progress 2014;

b) endorsed the VET challenges papers subject to certain further amendments relating to industrial issues;

c) noted the terms and conditions of renewal of insurance cover for students undertaking work placement and work experience and the requirements for confirmation of participation in the employer liability cover purchased by CECNSW on behalf of Dioceses and schools; and

d) endorsed the appointments of:

i. Elizabeth Burke as Sydney CEO representative on the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee; and

ii. Kelly Humphrey as a member of the Education Policy Committee, for three years to 31 December 2017; and

e) approved the list of Catholic schools participating in the 2015 National School Chaplains Program which is identical to the 2014 list.

9. TRANSPORT FOR NSW: REFORM OF THE SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT SCHEME (SSTS)

Commissioners were briefed on and discussed the Transport for NSW proposal to convert student travel passes to the Opal Card system. It was noted that this is being done in the context of the current $550 million per year cost of the scheme.

It was noted that this Commission has in response to past reviews of the scheme recommended that payments to transport providers be directly linked to actual student journeys.

Commissioners requested that the potential impact of the proposed new Opal Card system on the viability of rural school bus services be clarified with Transport for NSW.

10. NSW STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO GALLIPOLI FOR CENTENARY


From a secret ballot of nominating schools, four Catholic schools were selected: Delany College Granville, De La Salle Catholic College Caringbah, Holy Cross College, Ryde and Stella Maris College Manly. The students were selected by their schools through a rigorous process. Travel, accommodation and meal costs will be met by the NSW government. Additionally students will be provided with suitable uniform. The students and staff will fly out in 19 April and return to Australia on 27 April 2015. The students and staff will visit the Gallipoli battlefields including Cape Helles and Suvla Bay. The students will camp at Anzac Cove on the night of 24-25 April. Additionally the students will visit the site of ancient Troy and key sites in Istanbul. Dr Tony McArthur, CECNSW Secretariat, will accompany the tour as one of three tour directors with colleagues from DEC.
11. NCEC AND ACNC CONSULTATION 19 FEBRUARY 2015

The National Catholic Education Commission is hosting an inter-Diocesan forum with ACNC in Melbourne on 19 February 2015. Members of the CECNSW Resources Policy Committee will be in attendance. Issues for discussion include:

- The nature of the proposed schools’ financial data sharing arrangement between ACNC and the Department of Education;
- The extent of Catholic schools’ financial information that would be published on the ACNC website and the intended description of the context of this data given that it will be different to that disclosed for other charities;
- Details and likely timing of an extension of the ACNC’s transition arrangements for non-government schools;
- The option of Catholic schools being treated outside of the ACNC legislation;
- The 2014 Annual Information Statement (including for Catholic Education Commissions/Offices);
- The different governance arrangements operating across Catholic education and CEC/CEO obligations with respect to ACNC reporting and registration;
- Cash/accrual accounting (upcoming requirements of the ACNC and the Department);
- Progress of the ACNC Repeal Bills;
- Relationship between ACNC and State based Not-for-Profit Regulators.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
20 February 2015
BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY

CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM

The Annual General Meeting of the State Priority Committee (SPC) was held on 6 November 2014 with a number of proposed changes to the CBGA Application guidelines document.

The changes consisted of the clarification of a number of matters that arose from applications in the two SPC meetings held throughout 2014.

The approved dates for Application and Assessment process for the 2015 application round are as follows:

- Opening of Application Round: 9 December, 2014
- Closing Date for Applications: 13 April, 2015

SPC Activities and Meeting Dates

- First Meeting 13, 14 and 15 May 2015
- School Visits 1 June to 26 June 2015
- Second Meeting 15,16 and 17 July 2015
- 2015 SPC AGM 5 November, 2015

TRADE SKILLS CENTRE

Independent Review of Trade Training Centres

The independent review of the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program was released on 3 February 2015 by the Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham. The report indicates that tow critical success factors are:

- Strong School leadership (the Principal and the head teacher)
- and local employer engagement.

The Independent reviewer, Ms Patricia Scott, thanked the participants for engaging in the review and providing their frank assessment of the issues.


John Kitney
Commission Secretary
20 February 2015