Summary Report of the 367th Meeting

HELD WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2015
CLANCY/GILROY ROOMS, LEVEL 5, POLDING CENTRE, SYDNEY

1) Accreditation of pre-2004 Teachers: BOSTES requirements

BOSTES is currently finalising the implementation of GTIL requirements relating to the accreditation of all NSW teachers. In this context BOSTES is currently finalising:

- The timeline for the accreditation of pre-2004 school teachers;
- A schedule of accreditation elements and processes for various categories of the teaching workforce.

BOSTES will finalise its policies for teacher accreditation on 23 June 2015.

Commissioners identified three teacher accreditation matters which still require further clarification:

- a workable process for casual teachers;
- an enabling process for teachers working in Catholic education offices; and
- an agreed process for Principals of Congregational schools where the Principal is the recognised TAA.

Commissioners also addressed:

- identifying a TAA(s) for Congregational schools for both the purpose of Accreditation at the higher levels and for the accreditation of Principals of Congregational schools. The point was made that access to Diocesan TAAs needs to be clarified. In this context it was noted that a TAA that accredits at the higher levels must have at least 20 member schools. Also, the scope for CECNSW involvement should be considered; and
- the need to develop processes for managing adverse Working with Children Check findings in respect of current non-accredited staff.

It was agreed that the Education Policy Committee should further consider the above cited issues.

The current DDA Education Standards Review was contextualised with respect to:

- the 2002 Senate Inquiry and Report ‘Education of Students with Disabilities’;
- the 2010/11 DDA Education Standards Review;
- the ongoing NCCD processes and outcomes; and
- the implementation of the DDA Standards e-Learning modules for teachers.

Commissioners noted the uncertainty pertaining to the implementation of the ‘reasonable adjustments’ test of compliance. It was agreed that more guidance through the Standards is required as to how reasonable and unreasonable adjustments are to be distinguished.

In relation to the matter of compliance costs it was agreed that the current review is not a suitable forum to raise the costs and funding issues. In this context, Commissioners were reminded that ‘capacity to fund’ is assessed against the resources of each school’s proprietor, which for most Catholic schools means the assets of the Diocesan Trust Corporation.

With the exception of the issue of compliance costs Commissioners endorsed the other review engagement issues identified in the paper.

Attention was also drawn to:

- Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s plan for a Senate Inquiry into disability provisions in schools; and
- Minister Pyne’s recent announcement about using NCCD adjustment levels data for the purpose of funding students from 2016 by ‘levels of adjustment needed’.

3) Identifying Responsible Persons for School Governance: BOSTES requirements

Pursuant to amendments to Sections 47 and 83(c) of the NSW Education Act, all NSW Catholic Schools Authorities are required to address the following Governance compliance matters:

- criteria for identifying each school(s) ‘Governing Body’;
- criteria for identifying ‘Responsible Persons’;
- criteria for identifying ‘Related Parties’ and the maintenance of a ‘Related Party Transactions Register’;
- criteria for identifying ‘Conflicts of Interest’;
- provision of four hours of annual mandatory ‘Professional Learning for Responsible Persons’; and
- provision of an ‘Induction Process’ for ‘Responsible Persons’.

Commissioners discussed these related matters:

- BOSTES Governance requirements;
- Education Act Not-for-Profit requirements; and
- ACNC compliance.

The point was made that the matter of principle arising is the right of school owners (proprietors) to determine the governance structure for their school or system of schools. ‘Responsible Persons’ should then be identified as a consequence of any such determined structure.
4) NSW State Election: Follow up

At this stage, as part of its follow-up from the NSW State election, CECNSW is planning a series of introductory meetings with 25 new Members of Parliament and a presentation on capital funding to Christian Democrats leader the Rev. Fred Nile, who holds the balance of power in the Legislative Council.

At the NSW state election on 28 March 2015, 25 new Members were elected to the Legislative Assembly. This represents a renewal of more than a quarter of MPs in the lower house.

The NSW State Budget for 2015/2016 is due to be brought down in late June 2015. The CECNSW, in conjunction with the Association of Independent Schools (AIS), is finalising a submission on capital funding for the next State budget. The Budget provides an opportunity to keep before the NSW Government the details of the non-government sector’s submission made before the State election in respect of:

- restoring and increasing the funding for the Building Grants Assistance Scheme; and
- dealing with the various state and council costs imposed on school building projects by local councils.

Commissioners noted that CECNSW will write to each new Member (by post, not email) to congratulate them on their election and to offer a briefing to help them engage more positively with their local Catholic schools. The briefing will:

- explain the separate and distinct roles of CECNSW, the 11 NSW Catholic schools authorities and congregational schools;
- outline the various sources of recurrent and capital school funding;
- summarise the diverse student profile; and
- highlight the key issues facing Catholic schools.

5) NAPLAN ONLINE UPDATE

Ministers have agreed that NAPLAN will be delivered online from 2017. Ministers have committed to the development of a national, centralised platform, including adaptive tests with enhanced items and scoring and marking capability.

Catholic Education Commission NSW is engaging with the move to online testing via representation on various groups including the cross sector NSW Delivery of Online Testing Working Group (DOTWG) and the NCEC Online Assessment Working Group (NCEC OAWG). These groups meet monthly and communication processes have been established to ensure collaboration and dissemination of key information.

Recently, all Dioceses provided technical information regarding their capacity to engage with the NAPLAN online assessment. Further consultations regarding Diocesan capacity will occur from late May. Similar communication with Congregational schools will follow.

Priority issues to be progressed through the NSW forum include (i) costs/resourcing for start-up, transition and ongoing implementation; (ii) timeline for transition by NSW schools; (iii) functionality of the online system; (iv) communications (what, to whom and when); and (v) reporting at student, school, sector and state levels.
6) Commission Decisions

The Commission:

1) adopted the recommended approach to the allocation of 2016–18 Catholic sector Chaplains Program funds;

2) noted that implementation of the CECNSW approach is contingent on the proposal being endorsed by the State Committee responsible for the oversight of the program;

3) requested that a progress report on 2016–18 Chaplains Program management issues be provided to the 22 July 2015 Commission meeting;

4) approved the 2014 CECNSW Special Purpose Financial Report;

5) endorsed and adopted the 8 May 2015 Catholic Primary School sexual abuse prevention policy and curriculum advice as forwarded to TJHC.

6) noted the ongoing Animal Research and Welfare role of the Commission; and

7) endorsed the 2015 SACEC budget including the CECNSW contribution of $54,952.

8) endorsed and adopted the 2015 VET in Schools Funding Agreement for $1,732,135 and associated accountabilities.

7) RSL AND SCHOOLS REMEMBER ANZAC COMMEMORATION SERVICE

On Thursday 23 April, the 2015 RSL and Schools Remember Anzac Commemoration Service was held at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney. The cross-sectoral ceremony is entirely conducted by the students. This year being the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli the service had special significance and was attended by more than 130 schools, including some 30 Catholic schools.

The Catholic schools provided the MC, Nathan Hedges from Patrician Brothers’ College, Fairfield and Bugler, Sergio Barca from St Mary’s Cathedral College. Music was provided by the Catholic Schools Performing Arts (CaSPA) Sydney Chamber Orchestra and Choir under the direction of Mr James Long. The Honourable Adrian Piccoli MP, Minister for Education addressed the gathering and Guests of Honour included Dr Brian Croke, Executive Director of the Catholic Education Commission NSW.

8) GALLIPOLI TOUR 2015

On 19 April 2015, following on orientation briefing and speeches by the State President of the RSL and the NSW Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliot, a touring party of 128 students and teachers left Sydney for Turkey to participate in the commemoration of the centenary of the ANZAC landings in 1915. The party consisted of 25 groups of four students and a Supervising Teacher drawn in a ballot from schools from all sectors, across NSW. The party was led by three Tour Directors, one of which was Dr Tony McArthur from the CECNSW Secretariat.

The touring party visited the battlefields at Anzac Cove, Cape Helles, Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair and the remains of ancient Troy. After camping south of Anzac overnight, the students and teachers attended the Dawn Service at Anzac Cove and the ceremony later at Lone Pine. The students visited Haggia Sophia and the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and flew back into Sydney at 2200 hours on Monday 27 April. The tour was probably the most complex ever undertaken by NSW schools however the response of students and teachers fully justified the effort for such a significant event.
9) CECNSW ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TEACHERS’ FORUM 4-5 MAY 2015

On 4 and 5 May 2015, the Inaugural CECNSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Forum was held in Sydney. This event was held with funding provided by the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative Tier 2 project. The twenty five Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander teachers that attended the Forum were drawn from ten of the eleven Catholic School Authorities across NSW. The atmosphere was positive and, when asked, most participants responded that the Forum was both engaging and useful. Many of these teachers are the sole Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander teacher in their school and so participants named having opportunities to network with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as an important element of the Forum.

The themes that ran throughout the program were the duality of leadership: Teachers are seeking to develop their own leadership and need mentors to be available to them but they also have a responsibility to mentor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and assist them to develop as leaders. It is hoped that these gatherings continue biennially.

10) OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE: A NEW STATE PROGRAM

In the lead up to the 2015 NSW election the Coalition, the continuing NSW Government, promised to provide $20M to establish 1,000 new Out of School Hours Care Sites in NSW. This funding is a once-off funding pool to provide up to $20,000 per site to assist with establishment costs. The funds cannot be used to actually provide the care nor to fund existing sites.

The joint schools sectors management committee, of which CECNSW is a member, is in discussions about how to determine the need for places and this may require some form of survey of schools. A project discussion paper will be provided to the 17 June 2015 Commission meeting.

11) CONSULTATION WITH THE NSW ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN

On Tuesday 5 May Catholic Education and Social Services Coordinating Committee members met with the new NSW Advocate for Children Mr Andrew Johnson.

Discussion focused on the Advocate’s priorities for 2015. These include:

- Consultation with Children and Young People
- Identifying and addressing systemic challenges relating to service delivery for children and young people

Dialogue with the Advocate will be maintained by CESSCC.

12) NSW EDUCATION ACT NOT FOR-PROFIT SECTION 83(c) IMPLEMENTATION

A draft information newsletter prepared by the Ministerial Not-for-Profit Section 83(C) Advisory Committee for all non-government schools was tabled. Commissioners were advised that:

- the draft Guidelines are being reviewed by CECNSW’s Resources Policy Committee and Audit and Risk Committee respectively;
- The finalised Guidelines will be published in July 2015; and
- 83(c) audits will commence in term 4 2015.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
9 June 2015
CAPITAL GRANTS 2015 APPLICATION ROUND

The first meeting of the State Priority Committee (SPC) was held between 13 and 15 May 2015 to consider the 43 applications received by the 13 April, 2015.

Funding of approximately $35M will be available to 2015 round applications. The 43 applications received totalled approximately $125M in assessed cost, which if funded, would require approximately $84M in capital grant assistance.

CECNSW Secretariat officers supported SPC members in a review and initial assessment of applications. This review and assessment contributed to the clarification of matters to be addressed at schools site visits.

School site visits have been scheduled in the last four weeks of second term. Diocesan Priority Committee (DPC) members will arrange these visits in consultation with parish and schools communities.

The second meeting of the SPC, to consider the information provided at the site visits, will be held on 15 to 17 July 2015, when all projects will be placed in a priority order.

It is anticipated that Indicative Offer letters will be issued in early August 2015 to those applicants that are to be recommended to the Commonwealth and NSW State Ministers of Education for capital grant assistance.

TRADE SKILLS CENTRE – UTILISATION REPORTING

Under the Trades Training/Skills Program successful applicants are required to complete a utilisation report each year. The 2014 Utilisation Report has been sent direct to coordinators of Vocational Education Training (VET).

These reports are due for return to the Australian Government on 30 June 2015. As these reports need to be checked prior to their submission to the Australian Government, the Coordinator Capital Grant Programs has requested that these reports are returned no later than 14 June 2015.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
9 June 2015