1. Review of BOSTES – Report and Implications

Commissioners considered the report of the independent panel entitled, ‘Review of The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards’. Key reform directions cited included:

- A renaming of BOSTES as the NSW Education Standards Authority;
- A smaller, representative governance board (from 23 currently to a maximum of 14 members) that will focus on strategy, regulation, finance, governance and meeting the Minister’s annual priorities;
- Separating the roles of Chair and Chief Executive, with a part-time Chair to be appointed;
- Five new Regulatory Committees to focus on Quality Teaching, Curriculum, Assessment, School Registration and Initial Teacher Education, as well as two board committees to provide financial and technical advice; and
- Streamlined processes for curriculum development as well as for school registration and teacher accreditation.

Commissioners were advised that a Bill to repeal and replace the current ‘Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards Act 2013’ is anticipated to be introduced to the NSW Parliament shortly. When this Bill becomes available for analysis, the following matters will arise for priority attention:

i) CECNSW representation on the new Board, refer Recommendation 2.6(b);
ii) Membership of the Regulatory Committees, refer Recommendation 3.1;
iii) Appeal rights and mechanisms regarding Committee decisions, refer Recommendation 3.2;
iv) How the new ‘risk-based’ approach to School Registration will be operationalised, refer Recommendations 4.1 and 4.2;

v) How random and ‘risk based’ audits of schools will be implemented (including the role of inspections without notice), Recommendations 4.3 and 4.4;

vi) How the effectiveness of TAAs will be improved, refer Recommendation 5;

vii) How a reduction in curriculum overcrowding will be achieved, refer Recommendations 8.1 and 8.2;

viii) How to avoid duplication of effort between the Australian Curriculum process and the NSW process, refer Report at page 69 paragraph 3. And how to better engage with the Australian curriculum, also page 69 and Refer Recommendations 7.1 and 7.2.
1. **Review of BOSTES – Report and Implications Cont.**

Commissioners were briefed on key draft Bill issues including:

- Membership of the Board of the Authority;
- Functions of the Authority, including with respect to Initial Teacher Education;
- Inspections without notice and control of Inspections by the Board;
- Minister’s powers and functions;
- Disclosure of interests by Board and Committee members;
- Establishment of committees including the QTC;
- New School Registration requirements relating to: financial viability, standard of teaching and student engagement;
- Conditional school Registration options for the NSW ESA; and
- Registration and the role of risk assessment.

The point was made that the Regulation of schooling in NSW will still be governed by three Acts:
1. NSW Education Act 1990 (as amended);
2. NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (as amended); and
3. NSW Education Standards Authority Act 2016.

2. **Catholic and Non-Catholic Students in NSW Catholic Schools**

This was the second of the agreed socio-demographic presentations to the Commission for 2016; the first being *Maintaining Catholic Sector Growth 2017-2027* presented in May 2016.

In 2005 a detailed analysis and report *Catholic and Non-Catholic Students in NSW Catholic Schools 1988-2004*, a report from the CECNSW to the 2 June 2005 NSW bishops meeting, with a follow up report in 2006, gave rise to *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads* (Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT) published in August 2007. Signatory Bishops identified “progress towards an increase in the proportion of students in our schools who are Catholic” as being a Critical Indicator of Progress (Crossroads, p.18). A key question then is: what progress has there been since 2007?”

The presentation focused on enrolment patterns which have occurred since 2006, particularly referencing:

- enrolment changes in the decade since the genesis of Crossroads;
- implications for potential future enrolment change, discussed at the 18 May 2016 Commission meeting (Maintaining Catholic Sector Growth 2017-2027);
- patterns of change in Dioceses, school types and size, socio-economics, new and established schools, and remoteness; and
- other spatial patterns within Sydney metropolitan area and NSW.

It was agreed that the Catholic character of Catholic schools is a high priority for all bishops. Strategies and implementation plans need to be developed in order to meet the bishops’ joint objective of increasing Catholic enrolments in NSW Catholic schools.
2. **Recurrent Funding Prospects – 2018 - 2028**

Commissioners noted the various criteria and methods of funding of NSW Catholic schools since 1974, namely:

- relative resources of schools from 1974 to 2000;
- SES –based model measured by parental potential to pay from 2001 to 2005;
- by school SES with funding maintenance from 2005 to 2013;
- new federalism with National Partnerships in 2009 to 2013;
- commencing in 2010 an Australia-wide all funding sources review of school funding (the ‘Gonski Review’);
- bilateral agreements between the Australian and some State governments including NSW, in 2013;
- Australian Education Act 2013 and Regulation 2013; and
- for 2014 to 2017:
  - by student weighted average SES against the school resourcing standard;
  - funding delivered with a base and specific loadings to address defined student disadvantage;
  - driven by the national review of school funding; and
  - with a higher level of mandatory reporting.

Unresolved issues in 2016 are as follows:

- complexity of AEA model and artificiality of base and loadings;
- imbalance between base and loadings;
- potential for implementation of school improvement plans;
- widening NRIPS gap between Catholic and government schools mainly created by differential Commonwealth and State indexation levels;
- national affordability debate; and
- limitations of indexation.

Increased sophistication of government funding models is well advanced towards creating a paradigm shift in the articulation and method of delivering school funding resulting in student, not school, based funding at some stage.

Commissioners noted that many of the potential direct and indirect drivers of decisions for the future funding of Catholic schools are already identifiable, namely:

- Royal Commission governance recommendations (2017/2018);
- decline of religious identity in Australia (ABS Census 2016, 2021);
- articulating/defending ‘freedom of religion’ for schools; and
- optimum targeting of school funding to meet students’ individual needs.
3. **Students with Disabilities Working Party Update and Legislative Council Inquiry**

The Working Party has been focusing its activity on Terms of Reference 1, being:

> ‘State (NSW) criteria for the recognition of SWD, in context with the current NSW Department of Education Review of State Criteria’

The SWD state criteria is that critical August census data collection which currently determines the funding made available to CECNSW pursuant to the *Australian Education Act* 2013, refer to the online Guide to the *Australian Education Act* 2013 at B.2.1.1. The Guide directs readers to *Australian Education Regulation* 2013 at 16(2) being:

> (2) For the definition of student with student with disability in section 6 of the Act, a student at school is a student with a disability if the student meets the requirements of the State or Territory in which the school is located for financial assistance to be provided in relation to the student as a student with disability.

On 24 August 2016, the NSW Legislative Council announced an Inquiry into the provision of education to students with disability or special needs in government and non-government schools in NSW. The Terms of Reference for this Inquiry are set out below.

(a) equitable access to resources for students with a disability or special needs in regional and metropolitan areas

(b) the impact of the Government’s ‘Every Student Every School’ policy on the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales public schools

(c) developments since the 2010 inquiry by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs and the implementation of its recommendations

(d) complaint and review mechanisms within the school systems in New South Wales for parents and carers, and

(e) any other related matters.

The Working Party particularly advised that the CECNSW submission to this Inquiry should be framed by an introductory section dealing with:

1. Reference to the 2010 CECNSW advice to the previous Legislative Council Special Needs Inquiry; and

2. 2016 CECNSW SWD data and NCCD data in order to frame CECNSW’s policy advice in the context of the expanding students with disability and special needs NSW Catholic schools’ populations.

Discussion issues raised included:

- Likely hearing matters;
- SWD Criteria implementation compliance costs for schools;
- The consideration of parent and student complaints by the Inquiry; and
- Inquiry access to AGDET financial reports.

Commissioners agreed to agenda consideration of a draft CECNSW Inquiry Submission for the November meeting. Commissioners were advised that feedback from Diocesan Directors and Congregational School Principals has been requested by 31 October 2016 where possible.

Commissioners noted the consolidated minutes of the last two meetings of the Mission and Identity Working Party held Wednesday 29 June 2016 and Tuesday 6 September 2016. Commissioners reviewed:

a) Establishment of the Towards Wholeness Review Project Officer as a part-time Diocesan based position for one year;

b) Marriage debate briefing advice for Principals.; and

c) The proposed ‘Mission Forum’ was identified as requiring careful coordinated planning with Diocesan Education Offices. It was noted that, to date, no substantive planning has taken place.

Commissioners endorsed the Working Party report noting that a further report will be provided at the 30 November 2016 Commission meeting.

5. BOSTES Languages Education Review – CECNSW Engagement

The NSW Languages Advisory Panel, established by the NSW Minister for Education in 2015, is tasked with overseeing actions to boost the number of students studying languages in NSW schools. As part of the work program overseen by the Advisory Panel, BOSTES sought a contribution from the NSW Catholic sector on two aspects of languages learning. Findings of the research will be developed into a 2016 Panel report with recommendations regarding languages education for the Minister for Education.

BOSTES has invited direct CECNSW engagement in the first research aspect which focuses on the Languages teaching workforce and includes investigating:

a) the preparation of graduate languages teachers;

b) the provision of continuing professional learning opportunities for languages teachers; and

c) the enhancement of languages teachers’ career pathways.

Dioceses and Congregational schools were invited to submit their responses to certain stimulus questions to CECNSW for collation into one Catholic sector response. The collated Catholic sector responses to the stimulus questions are due to BOSTES by end term 3.

BOSTES directly invited Principals of primary and secondary schools in NSW to contribute to the second aspect of the research by completing an online survey during the period 22 August to 9 September 2016. Information collected includes:

- Demographics – position of person completing survey, school email address, school postcode, school sector;

- School Language Program – type of program, mode of delivery, time allocation, language/s offered, student participation, assessment and reporting strategies, supports for/barriers to offering languages programs, opportunities for engagement outside of class time, timetabling; and

- Languages Teachers – number of teachers, employment status.

The survey is intended to provide a full picture of the current state of languages education. Diocesan authorities were asked to encourage schools to complete the online survey.

6. Commission Endorsements

The Commission:

1) agreed to encourage Catholic schools funded under the NSCP to engage with the upcoming Evaluation of the National Schools Chaplaincy Program by TNS Australia for AGDET;

1) noted CECNSW Secretariat engagement with the Legislative Council’s Childhood Obesity Inquiry; and

2) endorsed the 2015 CECNSW Compliance Certificate pursuant to the Australian Education Act 2013.
7. NSW MINISTER’S EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM, OCTOBER 2016

NSW Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, will host a high profile, international symposium on enhancing excellence in education in Sydney on 27-28 October 2016. The stated intention is to bring together locally and internationally recognised experts from academia, school education and business to foster new insights and signal future, possible change directions to drive excellence in education in New South Wales. Key themes of the symposium relate to school and system improvement, enhancing teacher quality, personalised learning and curriculum and assessment. NSW Catholic sector engagement, all still being finalised, will occur through attendance of 35 principals or aspiring leaders as well as four sector representatives; two showcases of good school practice and voices of students from a small number of Catholic primary and secondary schools. Further details are available from Rosalie Nott (Rosalie.Nott@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au).

8. CONSULTATION WITH THE CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

The most recent consultation with the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI) took place at Rosebery on 16 September 2016. Discussions focused on the recommendations of the Review of BOSTES and on the draft Independent Pricing and Regulatory (IPART) tribunal report into council rates and the potential impact on schools. Additionally, matters revolved around three current NSW State parliamentary inquiries: Students with Disability and Special Needs, Childhood Overweight and Obesity, Child Protection (FACS). Attention was also given to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the CECNSW Students with Disability Working Group and the Revised Privacy Compliance Manual.

9. NATIONAL DIRECTORS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION FORUM

On 15-16 September 2016, a national forum for the State/Territory and Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education in Australia was held in Sydney. The forum addressed key policy issues facing Australian Catholic schools operationally. Beginning with the new Federal government’s Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes document (https://docs.education.gov.au/node/40671), the Productivity Commission’s draft report on the evidence base for the quality of Australian schooling (http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/education-evidence/draft/education-evidence-draft-overview.pdf) noted that while there has been a 14 per cent real increase in spending per student over the last ten years, student performance remains broadly static and in some areas has decreased. This raises substantial issues in relation to school funding and accountability. Inconsistent enrolment growth across the country is a compounding factor. National collaboration was addressed both through NCEC’s work and specifically in relation to NAPLAN Online. A key presentation was from Jennifer Buckingham (Institute of Public Affairs) on measuring literacy standards and the likely shape of the Australian Government’s “Phonics Check”. Other presentations involved projects on researching school choice by parents in Sydney and Armidale.

10. NSW DIGITAL ROUNDTABLE

On 31 August 2016 a forum was conducted with school education system leaders to explore how digital technology might more effectively deliver on some of the big challenges and opportunities for school education in NSW. Matters considered included improving student engagement in STEM subjects particularly, learning and assessment, improving student learning outcomes, meeting growth and demand and Investing in system and school leadership to get the right balance between autonomy, consistency of performance and engagement. The roundtable is part of a series of similar forums which have been held in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia and will lead into a national forum for participating jurisdictions, where reform, policy challenges and technology implications will be major themes. The roundtable series explores the enabling and disruptive impact of digital technology on system change, new models of teaching and learning and better outcomes for students and communities. The series has been developed and co-hosted by Cisco and BrightBytes (http://brightbytes.net/). Dr Brian Croke and Peter Grace attended the forum for CECNSW.
11. ANGLICAN SCHOOLS CORPORATION: FAREWELL TO CEO

On 30 August 2016 a cocktail reception was conducted at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Circular Quay, by the Board of the Anglican Schools Corporation in honour of Dr Laurie Scandrett, who is retiring from his role as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation after 17 years of service. The Corporation currently operates 19 schools in metropolitan Sydney area, the south coast and regional NSW with approximately 11,000 students spread from preschool to Year 12 including two stand-alone DOCS registered pre-schools. CECNSW Secretariat maintains close relations with the Anglican Schools Corporation and was represented at the farewell function by Dr Brian Croke, Ian Baker, Brian McDonald and Kevin Morrison. The new Executive Director, Ross Smith, is being welcomed to CEC NSW on 22 September 2016.

12. NEW SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The incoming Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Mark Scott commenced in the position on 10 September 2016, meeting with Dr Brian Croke the same day. Mark was previously Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). He is well known to NSW education having been previously Policy Adviser to two Ministers for Education in the 1990s, then Education Writer and later Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald. It is intended to invite Mark to a Commission meeting as early as practicable in 2017.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary
11 October 2016
BRIEFING BY THE CATHOLIC BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY WITH BGA DELEGATE

CAPITAL GRANTS

The schedule of all recommended projects was previously reported to the Commission. The CBGA has now issued indicative offers of grant to NSW Diocesan Catholic Schools Authorities and Congregational schools as applicable.

The grants have been split into two schedules, New and Existing Places. Due to the uncertainty of acceptance by the Proprietor on one of the recommended projects, and the likely return of a grant from a project that will not commence, the CBGA have included three projects in the schedule as “reserve” projects. Two reserve projects are listed in the New Places schedule and one reserve project is listed in the Existing Places schedule.

All projects are to be considered to be ‘recommended only’ until formal advice that approval has been provided by the Commonwealth and State Ministers of Education.

John Kitney
Commission Secretary

11 October 2016