

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2003

Members:

Sr Eleanor Carter csb
Br Tony D'Arbon fms
Sr Juliana Drobik op
Mr Geoff George
Mrs Fay Gurr
Sr Judith Hill rscj
Mr Shane Hogan
Ms Michele Hugonnet
Sr Kristin Johnston rsj
Sr Angela Jordan rsm
Sr Marilyn Kelleher sgs
Br Paul Oakley cfc
Br Jeff Regan cfc
Br Anthony Robinson fms **CHAIR**
Mr Fred Stubenrauch
Sr Sharon Price rsm: Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Education Committee began the year with a joint meeting with the Social Justice Committee to consider issues related to the State Election of March 2003. One issue of concern was that different committees of CLRI could have different and adversarial opinions regarding the policies of political parties in the lead up to the election. In particular, it was considered that the Greens policy on refugees and the environment was appealing, but concern had been expressed about their written education policy which was not supportive of the continuance of government funding in its current form to Catholic schools. The joint meeting agreed to promote consideration of

- election issues in terms of the core values of the Social Justice Committee;
- all issues of the election, all policies of all parties;
- of key issues – law and order, refugees and those in detention, education for all.

At this joint meeting we also discussed some aspects regarding Catholic education that we agreed to forward to Mixed Commission meetings and the meeting with Metropolitan CEO Directors, namely

1. concern that Mass attendance and planned giving participation as requisites for entry to Catholic schools may bar the poor;
2. that Catholic education appears to have a preferential option for the middle class, not the poor, which would bear exploring.

The Education Committee pursued these issues in the April meeting with CEO Directors.

The Education Committee of CLRI (NSW) exists to provide information and advice to CLRI's Executive Committee, to provide support and a forum for the principals of congregational schools, to represent and pursue the interests of congregational schools and to liaise on behalf of congregational schools and CLRI with the Catholic Education Commission, the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations and the Directors of the Metropolitan Catholic Education Offices.

MEMBERSHIP

Committee members are appointed on the basis of their expertise and experience in the field of education. Seven of the fifteen members are at present principals of congregational schools and bring that current experience to the committee. The committee has been extended in 2003 to welcome the lay principal of a co-educational non-metropolitan school, the lay principal of a regional girls' school, the religious principal of a regional boys' school, and the lay principal of a city boys' boarding school. They join the lay principal of a special school, the lay principal of a city girls' boarding school and the religious principal of a congregational primary school. Two committee members are Commissioners of the Catholic Education Commission and each chair a CEC Standing Committee, while another member is the chair of the CEC Congregational Schools Equity Programs Committee. The diverse experience and the commitment brought to the Committee by its members are of great assistance in the work for congregational schools.

MEETINGS 2003

The Committee has met on 5 occasions throughout 2002 [11 March, 13 May, 24 June, 12 August, 14 October].

COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee communicates via a group email system distributing meeting agendas/minutes, while meeting material received at CLRI in printed form is posted out two weeks prior to each meeting.

There is a List Serve maintained by the CEC to communicate with congregational schools, as well as the group email of congregational principals created and maintained by CLRI. The use of e-communication provides fast and efficient contact between the Executive Director and committee members and congregational school principals and staff in positions of special responsibility. We also have efficient and effective e-communication with members of the CEC, CCER and the metropolitan CEO Directors.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In February 2002, the Executive Committee delegated to the Education Committee responsibility for

1. Managing the process of representative / nominee nomination.

2. Managing the liaising with the Catholic Education Commission and the Directors of metropolitan Catholic Education Offices.

In consequence, the Executive Director, for the Education Committee, has developed a database for CLRI Representatives and Nominees (a list is attached for you information) and a process of nomination and appointment.

Written reports from representatives and nominees after each meeting attended are received by the Education Committee and during the year each representative/nominee is expected to attend one Education Committee meeting. This process of written and in-person reporting has improved the quality of representative/nominee reporting, has better informed the membership of the Education Committee and will lead to better representation of the interests of congregational schools.

Our representatives attend Education Committee meetings on a rotational basis: at our March meeting Judith Lawson and Catherine Pinnington reported; in May, Bill Rowan and Diane Brook reported; in June, Eve Nairn reported and in August, Janet Freeman, Barbara Bochat and Pam Meyn reported; in October, Mary-Ellen O'Donoghue reported. The Committee invited Paul Davies and Michael McDonald of CCER to the August meeting to discuss some issues.

During 2003 we have negotiated the attendance of staff representatives from congregational schools at a number of CEC forums for diocesan representatives, particularly regarding the HSC and other BOS issues. We will continue to expand this representative attendance in 2004 to the benefit of congregational schools.

If you have a congregational member who would be available to make a contribution to

- the Education Committee of CLRI and/or
- one of the listed committees on which CLRI has representatives/nominees,

please inform the Executive Director.

Four times per year the Education Committee meets with the representatives of the Catholic Education Commission: Brian Croke, Paul Crombie, Ian Baker, and Bill Walsh. CLRI, contributes to the creation of the agenda and receives a briefing paper from the CEC prior to the meeting. All meetings are summarised for leaders in *News in Brief*.

Twice a year the Education Committee and leaders with congregational schools meet with the directors of the metropolitan Catholic Education Offices – Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay. Again there is a negotiated agenda, a pre-meeting briefing session for Education Committee members and a report of the meeting circulated to all leaders in *News in Brief*.

PRINCIPALS' DAY

Principals from many of the 52 congregational schools attended a Principals' Seminar Day at Glebe on May 27. Our aim on this day is to provide congregational principals with a respite from the work day, an opportunity for personal spiritual development and time

to share with colleagues over morning tea and lunch. This year Father Richard Lennan was our keynote speaker, addressing *communio* in a school setting. During the afternoon principals recently returned from sabbatical spoke about their experiences and ways to go about organising a sabbatical. As more of our principals are lay principals they require more assistance to discover the resources for sabbaticals to which religious have long had access.

2003 ISSUES

The Committee through its members, representatives and meetings with the CEC and CEO Directors, continues to monitor the following issues:

1. Catholic education vis-à-vis government policies, especially with regard to funding;
2. The HSC Studies of Religion course;
3. The Grimshaw Report, especially as the implications become clearer;
4. Transitional issues: unchurched students entering Kindergarten and Year 7 – challenges for congregational schools and the Stage 1 Religion Forum, April 2004;
5. The School Copyright Issue, including emerging digital copy issues;
6. Employer Liability Insurance and implications for Work Experience (major issues for country schools) and Work Placement for VET courses;
7. Technical and pedagogical issues surrounding Information and Communication Technology;
8. The Senate Inquiry into Students with Disabilities and funding for Catholic special schools;
9. The process by which CLRI(NSW) representatives on various CEC and other committees can canvass opinion from our congregational schools on important issues;
10. Many other crucial issues.

GROUP FUNDING REFERENCE GROUP

Until 2003 the Group Funding Task Force was a sub-committee of the Education Committee created by the Executive Committee in 2000 to investigate the possibilities of group funding for congregational schools. Most particularly the GFTF was asked to:

- a) explore the Commonwealth requirements for funding and their implications for us
- b) continue gathering data regarding funding models and contractual arrangements
- c) identify the non negotiable in this area
- d) affirm the need for dioceses and congregations to move together on these issues so as not to be divisive and counter productive and,
- e) propose a strategy to move forward.

As a result of work completed in 2002, Bishops Geoff Robinson and David Walker agreed to take a request from CLRI(NSW) to the NSW Bishops' Meeting in November 2002.

Bishop Robinson stated that there will be a recommendation put to the next NSW Bishop's meeting that a feasibility study be undertaken to investigate the possibility of NSW becoming one system for the purposes of funding.

The CLRI Executive Committee requested that Bishops Robinson and Walker recommend to the next NSW Bishops' meeting that, in addition to the above issue, the feasibility study also investigate the possibilities of integrating congregational schools into the funding model.

Mixed Commission Meeting Record, October, 2002

The NSW Bishops accepted that recommendation and the issue of pursuing group funding for congregational schools in NSW was handed over to a new committee called the Group Funding Reference Group. The report of the work of that group in 2003 follows later in this booklet.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

The dates for Education Committee meetings, CEC-CLRI meetings and CEO Directors – CLRI meetings will be listed on the 2004 CLRI Calendar.

Please contact the Executive Director if you wish to:

- add an item to the agenda of any of these meetings;
- attend CEC-CLRI or CEO-CLRI meetings (CEO-CLRI meetings will be advertised in 2004);
- nominate a congregational member who would be able to make a contribution to the Education Committee or as a representative on one of the CEC committees;
- make any suggestions about how the Education Committee can better serve the interests of congregational schools.

**Anthony Robinson fms
Chair
Education Committee**