

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Members:

Br Robert Aitken fms **DEPUTY CHAIR**

Mr Terry Blanchard

Br Tony D'Arbon fms

Sr Marion Gambin rsj

Mrs Fay Gurr

Mr Shane Hogan

Sr Mary-Clare Holland op

Ms Michele Hugonnet

Sr Kristin Johnston rsj

Ms Jo Karaolis

Sr Marilyn Kelleher sgs

Dr Berenice Kerr rsm

Sr Ailsa McKinnon rsm

Br Paul Oakley cfc

Br Jeff Regan cfc **CHAIR**

Mr Fred Stubenrauch

Sr Sharon Price rsm Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Education Committee of CLRI(NSW) exists to provide information and advice to CLRI(NSW)'s Executive Committee in relation to current educational issues, changes and needs. The Committee is appointed to represent the interests of all religious involved in education, to which congregations continue to make a very significant contribution in NSW.

In 2007 the issues addressed by the Education Committee have been important to all congregational schools. Support for congregational schools has taken the form of providing some professional learning and a forum for the principals of congregational schools, representing and pursuing the interests of congregational schools and liaison on behalf of congregational schools and CLRI(NSW) with the Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations and the Directors of the metropolitan Catholic Education Offices.

At a time when governance of institutions has become more complex, the demands of governments greater and succession planning a greater challenge for congregations, there are 48 schools owned and operated by congregations: the Christian Brothers have ten schools (including two special schools), the Sisters of the Good Samaritan have seven (including one special school), and the Marist Brothers five (including one special school). The remaining twenty-six are owned and run by twenty-one different religious congregations and include two congregations with a special school. Congregational

schools are largely concentrated in the three metropolitan dioceses (a total of thirty-five), with seven in the Wollongong Diocese, three in the ACT and only three further afield.

MEMBERSHIP

Committee members are appointed on the basis of their expertise and experience in the field of education. Of the sixteen members:

- six are members of congregational leadership teams with a special interest in education –one is an educational consultant in private practice;
- six are principals of congregational schools and bring that current experience to the committee [the lay principal of a co-educational non-metropolitan school, the lay principal of a regional girls' school, the religious principal of an outer-metropolitan boys' school, the lay principal of a city boys' boarding school, the lay principal of a special school and the lay principal of a city girls' boarding 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;
- one member is a university academic in the field of educational leadership;
- one member is the Executive Director of the NSW Association of Catholic School Principals.

The diverse experience and the commitment brought to the Committee by its members are of great assistance in the work for congregational schools.

The Committee farewelled Angela Jordan rsm at the end of 2006. Angela had been an esteemed member of the Committee for many years and Chair for two years. Angela faithfully attended all meetings, travelling to Rosebery from Yass, putting her own indelible stamp on proceedings. CLRI(NSW) is indebted to Angela for the wisdom and experience she brought to the Committee's deliberations: wisdom gathered over a long ministry in education and experience garnered from a wide range of educational settings in urban and rural settings.

MEETINGS 2007

The Committee met on 5 occasions throughout 2007 [February 27, May 25, July 31, September 14, and November 16].

RESPONSIBILITIES

Since 2002, the Executive Committee has delegated to the Education Committee responsibility for:

1. managing the process of representative / nominee nomination.
2. managing the liaison 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(NSW) Representatives and Nominees (a list is attached for your information) and a process of nomination and appointment.

Written reports to the Executive Director have been requested from representatives and nominees after each meeting attended and during the year representatives/nominees may be invited to attend an Education Committee meeting depending on the issues being dealt with at the time. 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 leads to better representation of the interests of congregational schools.

Four times per year the Education Committee and leaders, or leaders' representatives who are able to attend, meet with the representatives of the Catholic Education Commission: Brian Croke, Paul Crombie, Ian Baker, and Bill Walsh. CLRI(NSW) contributes to the creation of the agenda and receives a briefing paper from the CEC prior to the meeting. All briefing reports are emailed to leaders/representatives with a congregational school.

On September 14, 2007 the Education Committee and leaders/representatives with congregational schools met with the directors or representatives of the metropolitan Catholic Education Offices – Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay. There was a varied agenda and this meeting is an important way of keeping communication channels open between CLRI(NSW) and the Dioceses in which such a significant number of religious work in education.

PRINCIPALS' DAYS

One of the functions of the Committee is to provide a focus network for and with principals of congregational schools. The Principals' Seminar Day was held at Glebe on May 15, led by Christine Manning sgs with a theme of On Being a Congregational School Principal: A Day of Reflection on the Unique Character, Benefits and Challenges of Leading a Congregational School. Our aim on this day, now an annual event, 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.

One of the major ongoing educational concerns of congregations is providing appropriate professional support for principals of congregational schools, especially newly appointed principals. In the great majority of cases there is good induction and ongoing formation in the areas of Catholic Ethos and Charism of the Founder(s) but, while some congregations have well developed structures for the support of principals in their schools, what is lacking in many cases is the type of professional and managerial support that can be gained from membership of, for example, the Association of Independent Schools. The Education Committee raised possible ways of meeting this need with CEC NSW at their combined meeting in May 2006. While, within its mandate from the NSW Bishops, CEC provides considerable support for principals, it cannot provide them with regular professional development because direct involvement in the operation of any schools is

outside its terms of reference. CLRI(NSW) negotiated with CEC to offer an induction to newly appointed principals including an introduction to CCER (Catholic Church Employment Relations) in 2007. This will hopefully be an annual event.

2007 ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The Committee has addressed its objectives (study, advocacy and liaison) in areas of ongoing concern as well as focusing the implications of changes to legislation and reports on current research. We have sought expert advice so that congregational leaders can be well informed in taking decisions. There were five areas of particular significance which have impacted, or will impact, on congregational schools and which demand a considered response from leaders, who need to continue to find ways of ongoing and meaningful participation in decision making processes, based on recognition by all concerned that congregations are equal partners with diocesan systems in Catholic education.

1. COMMONWEALTH FUNDING FOR THE QUADRENNIUM 2009-2012

It has been the sustained work of the CEC NSW and NCEC to secure from all political parties a guarantee that funding for all Catholic schools would be secure into the foreseeable future in this year of a state and a federal election.

2. FUNDING FOR EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The significance of the challenges faced by all associated with the education of students with disabilities is recognized by the Education Committee, which works constantly to raise awareness in the wider community. It is a challenge for the Catholic church community and all Catholic schools in NSW to embrace the responsibility to provide the most appropriate education for students with disabilities and to contribute to the associated costs as part of their commitment to be the face of Christ for all children.

While CLRI(NSW) and CEC are working separately and collaboratively on funding models to more adequately meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, the Executive Committee of CLRI(NSW) approved in 2006 the creation of a Special Education Task Force to consider models by which funding can be allocated to the education of students with disabilities.

The Special Education Task Force continues to work on the proposed model which would involve quarantining a proportion of total funds available, initially, to congregational schools and, later, hopefully to all Catholic schools, for the education of students with disabilities within the full range of contexts in which their education takes place, including special schools (all of which are congregational schools and in or close to the metropolitan region).

In 2007, the Committee supported member Jo Karaolis, the principal of St Lucy's Special School, in her appeal to Bishop Fisher to meet to discuss the plight of special schools. By year's end, there was some hope that this meeting might occur in 2008. The Committee also began in 2007 to plan a symposium on Special Education to be held in 2009.

3. THE ROLE, IDENTITY & EFFICACY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

For a couple of years now, CLRI(NSW) has been involved in thinking and discussions about the role, identity and efficacy of Catholic schools in NSW. Throughout the year we conducted a number of surveys of principals of congregational schools seeking information and opinion about the role and practices of congregational schools. The committee, under the leadership of Paul Oakley cfc, began a paper on the contribution of congregational schools to Catholic education in NSW. This paper is now being further developed by Dr Berenice Kerr rsm for publication and launch in 2008.

4. THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE AND THE CLASS OR KIND AGREEMENT

Throughout 2007 CLRI(NSW) continued to work to obtain a Class or Kind Agreement for congregational schools in NSW. Numerous letters to the Ombudsman and a meeting between the Ombudsman, the President of CLRI(NSW), Sr Maureen Watson pbvm and Mr Stephen Gageler, legal counsel, failed to convince the Ombudsman that congregational schools should be granted a Class or Kind Agreement similar to that granted to systemic and independent schools in NSW. CLRI(NSW) took up this cause because the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, which previously had assisted congregational schools in this matter was barred from further involvement in child protection-related issues by the bishops of NSW/ACT.

5. EDUCATION POLICY and the STATE AND FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Throughout 2007 the Education Committee kept a watching brief on the policies being stated by the major parties for the State and Federal elections with reference to funding, the national curriculum agenda, special education and a variety of other issues. Information for leaders and congregational members was provided via the *What's New* page of the CLRI(NSW) website www.clrinsw.org

6. CEC REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

There was a major review of the CEC committee structures in 2006-2007 which resulted in a decrease in the number of standing committees, the conversion of standing committees to expert rather than representative in nature and the alteration of advisory and other groups. CLRI(NSW), along with other stakeholders, was invited to nominate potential members for the Education Policy Committee, the Resources Policy Committee and the Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee. The three CLRI(NSW) nominees

- Dr Berenice Kerr rsm for the Education Policy Committee,
- Mr Greg Smith for the Resources Policy Committee
- and Sr Marie Hughes rsj for the Education and Social Welfare Coordinating Committee

were all appointed.

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7. REPRESENTATION OF NSW AGENDA AT NCEC

The CRA Education Committee is charged with effectively representing NSW needs and interests at the NCEC. The CLRI(NSW) Committee was concerned about a number of issues: how do our issues get to NCEC; does NCEC act on our issues and how do we get feedback from NCEC. Members were concerned that as more education matters are becoming federal or national matters, we have a need to have our concerns raised about issues at a national level ie NCEC and to hear about issues that NCEC is addressing. While our representative on the CRA Education Committee, Ms Michele Hugonnet, states our issues for forwarding to NCEC, there is no feedback from NCEC. The issue will be followed up in 2008.

8. ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN

Congregational leaders, principals and the Education Committee membership raised concerns about some aspects of the draft Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan, especially the proposed oath of fidelity. Discussions occurred at a number of levels, including with some leaders at the CRA Assembly in Perth and it was resolved that the CLRI(NSW) Executive Committee would write a letter to Bishop Porteous expressing support for the inclusion of education in the plan and asking to be included in the next round of consultations. The troubling aspects of the education section of the draft plan were omitted from the final published plan.

9. WORLD YOUTH DAY

There are some questions around this issue that have been raised with CEO Directors including the use and insurance of schools, the start date for Semester 3 and other issues. Many congregations are planning social justice activities prior to the formal days and information about activities, venues and presenters has been exchanged.

10. BISHOPS' STATEMENT ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AT A CROSSROADS*

Both the Education and executive committees have paid some attention to *Catholic Schools At A Crossroads*. It is the intention of this committee to make some response to the document.

11. A NETWORK OF MISSION DIRECTORS

In 2008 CLRI(NSW) will inaugurate a day for the Mission Directors in congregational schools –those staff members charged with the promotion of the charism to staff, students and parents and in all aspects of school life. As more of the individuals carrying out these responsibilities are lay rather than congregational members of staff, we believe that they can benefit from networking with others in their position.

ONGOING ISSUES

In addition to pursuing the issues raised above, the Committee through its members, representatives and meetings with the CEC and CEO Directors continues to monitor the following issues:

1. Catholic education in relation to Commonwealth and State government policies, especially with regard to changes in legislation, funding, accountability and reporting;
2. The National curriculum;
3. The emerging question of early childhood education;
4. Infrastructure Funds for Indigenous Boarding School Facilities;
5. National Testing 2008;
6. State Budget and abandonment of Interest Subsidy Scheme: implications for congregational schools;
7. Merit pay;
8. Awards;
9. The proposed TAA eligibility model and the proposed role for school principals;
10. Congregational Schools Targeted Programs Workshop days in 2008: focus on special school staff members sharing their expertise with mainstream school staff.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

The dates for Education Committee meetings, CEC-CLRI(NSW) meetings and CEO Directors – CLRI(NSW) meetings are listed on the 2008 CLRI(NSW) Calendar.

Please contact the Executive Director if you wish to:

- add an item to the agenda of any of these meetings;
- attend CEC-CLRI(NSW) or CEO-CLRI(NSW) meetings;
- 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 and congregational members ministering in systemic schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jeffrey Regan cfc
Chair
Education Committee
December 1, 2007

CLRI(NSW) REPRESENTATIVES 2007

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
Dr Kristin Johnston rsj
Sr Ailsa Mackinnon rsm
CEC STATE PRIORITY COMMITTEE FOR THE NSW BLOCK GRANT AUTHORITY
Sr Judith Lawson
CEC CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOLS EQUITY PROGRAMS COMMITTEE (reports to Standing Committee on Specific Purpose Programs)
Dr Marilyn Kelleher sgs
Mrs Loretto Richardson
Ms Val Thomas
Ms Dianne Klumpp
Ms Evelyn Waygood
CEC ICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (Information Technology & Communication)
Ms Diane Brook
CEC PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE
Br Alman Dwyer fms
CEC ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Ms Julieanne Manson
CEC SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Ms Sarah Humphreys
CEC ASSESSMENT & REPORTING ADVISORY GROUP
Ms Vivien Brewer
CEC VEAG (Vocational Education Advisory Group)
Mr Peter Crabbe
CEC SCHOOLS ANIMAL CARE & ETHICS COMMITTEE
Mr David Baker
CCER CISERC (Catholic Commission for Employment Relations Catholic Independent Schools Employment Relations Committee)
Sr Judith Lawson op
Br Paul Oakley cfc
Sr Frances Fitzpatrick rsm
SYDNEY ARCHDIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BOARD NEW SCHOOLS & RATIONALIZATION COMMITTEE
Br Robert Wallace cfc
ARCHDIOCESAN PRIORITY COMMITTEE FOR COMMONWEALTH CAPITAL GRANTS
Mrs Fay Gurr

CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
Sr Laureen Dixon rsc
CCER SWERC (Catholic Commission for Employment Relations Social Welfare Employment Relations Committee)
Ms Juanita Winks
CCER PDRIERC (Catholic Commission for Employment Relations Parish and Diocesan Religious Employment Relations Committee)
Sr Margaret Chaplin rsm
Sr Sharon Price rsm
Sr Noelene Simmons sm

CLRI(NSW) NOMINEES 2007

CEC STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION POLICY
Mrs Fay Gurr
CEC STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL RESOURCES
Mr Bill Rowan
CEC STANDING COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC PURPOSE PROGRAMS
Mr Brian Roberts
CEC STANDING COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS
Ms Jennie Hickie

Note: Standing Committees are **expert** committees, not **representative** committees, so the above personnel are on the committee because nominated by CLRI (NSW).