



Update on the Proposal for a Catholic Pastoral Centre for Disabilities on the Central Coast, Diocese of Broken Bay

Wednesday 12 June 2019

Dear friends,

In August 2017, Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, then Bishop of Broken Bay, commissioned a Working Party Committee to explore the need for a Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Disabilities on the Central Coast. The Committee was chaired by Mr Warren Hopley and enjoyed the contribution of the Diocesan Office for Evangelisation, the Catholic Schools Office, CatholicCare and parents of children with special needs.

The Committee provided a Report to Bishop Comensoli on 19 December 2017. During the first half of 2018, site visits were made to a variety of locations to determine possible venues for the Centre. Then, with regret, on 29 June 2018 it was announced that Bishop Comensoli had been appointed to the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Upon the election of Fr David Ranson as Diocesan Administrator in early August 2018, the project has been revisited. Through subsequent conversations, it became apparent that the best opportunity to realise the project would be through a partnership between the Diocese and other entities who shared a commitment and expertise in the education of children with special needs. To this end, towards the conclusion of 2018, Fr Ranson wrote to the Chairs and Executive Directors of Edmund Rice Education Australia, Dominican Education Australia, and Good Samaritan Education Australia to invite them to consider joining a discussion about such collaboration. The Chairs of the Boards of these entities, along with other representatives, accepted an invitation by Fr Ranson to dinner on 15 May 2019. Mr Warren Hopley was also present and briefed the gathering on the achievement of the initial Working Party.

It was a most remarkable evening to have the Diocese of Broken Bay, Dominican Education Australia, Good Samaritan Education and Edmund Rice Education Australia all at the same table to share our insights, experience and vision about such a possibility. We are most encouraged that all left the evening with a shared commitment to progress consideration about the initiative.

Very Rev Dr David Ranson

Diocesan Administrator



In early August, a draft Terms of Reference will be formulated for a new Task Force to explore, and to propose how such a collaborative venture might be envisaged. Consideration of such a draft Terms of Reference can then be the vehicle for the Trustees of the various entities to express their continuing interest by participation on the Task Force. Hopefully, we might have the Task Force in place by September/October 2019.

In the meantime, we have been greatly encouraged by a briefing from Mr David Raphael, Principal of St Lucy's School Wahroonga about a newly initiated *AISNSW Building for the Future: Education Infrastructure Fund*. It is envisaged that grants from such a source may be approximately \$6 million. Through Mr Raphael, we will continue with our contact with AISNSW and to express our interest in such an application in light of the project before us.

Given the events that have occurred in the life of our Diocese over this last twelve months, the project has unfortunately suffered delay. However, though the initiatives that have now been taken, we wish to assure you that nothing is lost, and that we are indeed progressing things substantially. Thus, it is our hope that once a new bishop is appointed, we will be able to present him with a concrete proposal for the establishment, conduct and financing of the Centre.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Ranson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Very Rev Dr David Ranson
Diocesan Administrator