

**Draft Australian Curriculum:
Civics and Citizenship
Consultation Report**

September 2013

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1. Executive summary	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Purpose of the report	1
1.3. Background	1
1.4. Consultation process and participants	1
1.5. Key findings	1
2. Introduction	3
2.1. Background	3
2.2. Purpose of the report	3
3. Consultation processes and methodology	4
3.1. Consultation processes	4
3.2. Online survey	4
3.3. Written submissions	4
3.4. Intensive engagement activity	4
3.5. Methodology	4
3.6. Consultation demographics	5
4. Consultation findings	7
4.1. Responses to survey questions	7
4.2. Rationale	9
4.3. Aims	10
4.4. Content structure	11
4.5. Content descriptions	12
4.6. Content elaborations	14
4.7. Achievement standards	15
4.8. Diversity of learners	16
4.9. General capabilities	17
4.10. Cross-curriculum priorities	18
4.11. Glossary	20
4.12. Perspectives by state and territory	20
Appendix 1: Online survey	24
Appendix 2: Written responses from organisations	29

1. Executive summary

1.1. Introduction

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship for public consultation between 6 May and 19 July 2013.

1.2. Purpose of the report

This report details feedback on the draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. Feedback was sought in relation to the following areas of the draft curriculum:

- rationale
- aims
- content structure
- content descriptions
- content elaborations
- achievement standards
- diversity of learners
- general capabilities
- cross-curriculum priorities
- glossary

1.3. Background

ACARA is responsible for a national curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas.

In October 2012, ACARA published online the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. ACARA then began the process of developing curriculum for Years 3–10 Civics and Citizenship and released the draft curriculum content in May 2013.

1.4. Consultation process and participants

The draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship was the subject of public consultation between 6 May and 19 July 2013.

Responses were received from a range of stakeholders as follows:

- 87 online surveys, which included feedback collected from teachers across the states and territories who engaged directly with the draft Civics and Citizenship curriculum. These surveys represent the views of 141 individuals.
- 38 written submissions from individuals, schools, curriculum and school authorities, and representative bodies. These submissions represent the feedback of 396 individuals.

1.5. Key findings

Overall the findings suggest the following are areas of strength:

- rationale and aims
- two-strand structure

- threads for knowledge and understanding – *Government and democracy; Law and citizens; Citizenship, diversity and identity*
- clarity and appropriateness of content descriptions
- links to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

The findings suggest the following as key areas for improvement, to provide the focus for review and revision:

- some reduction of content in the knowledge and understanding strand to address a concern with the volume of content
- improved sequencing and the representation of some knowledge and key concepts
- strengthening how intercultural understanding is represented with a focus on diversity
- greater clarity and simplified language in some content descriptions
- giving greater emphasis to skills that are particular to Civics and Citizenship in the skills strand with a focus on critical evaluation
- explicit reference to social aspects of sustainability
- strengthening of human rights, global citizenship and gender perspectives
- improved consistency of language between the achievement standards and the content
- ensuring a more appropriate pitch in relation to some statements within the achievement standards.

2. Introduction

2.1. Background

The draft curriculum was developed according to a set of design specifications that were approved by ACARA's Board following consultation with state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities and are published in ACARA's *Curriculum Development Process, Version 6 (2012)*.

The draft curriculum specifies content and achievement standards for Civics and Citizenship across Years 3 to Year 10. Content refers to the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught and learned in Civics and Citizenship. Achievement standards refer to descriptions of the quality of learning (the depth of understanding and sophistication of skills) expected of students who have studied the content for Civics and Citizenship.

2.2. Purpose of the report

This report details feedback on the draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. Feedback was sought in relation to the following areas of the draft curriculum:

- rationale
- aims
- content structure
- content descriptions
- content elaborations
- achievement standards
- diversity of learners
- general capabilities
- cross-curriculum priorities.

3. Consultation processes and methodology

3.1. Consultation processes

The draft curriculum was made available for nationwide consultation from 6 May to 19 July 2013.

The two main avenues for consultation feedback were through an online survey on the consultation portal of the Australian Curriculum website, and through written submissions sent directly to ACARA.

Opportunities to provide feedback either via an online survey or by written submission were promoted on the ACARA website and through education authorities, professional associations, and academics in the field of education. Reminders were regularly provided to subscribers to ACARA's e-newsletter, *ACARA Update*.

3.2. Online survey

The online survey comprised a mixture of rating scale questions (four-point Likert scale) and space for comments that focused on suggestions for improvement. Feedback on Civics and Citizenship was sought on the:

- rationale, aims and coherence of the curriculum structure
- coverage and clarity of curriculum content
- clarity and coherence of the achievement standards
- representation of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

All online survey questions are included in Appendix 1.

3.3. Written submissions

Written submissions were received from state and territory education authorities, professional associations and bodies, and other stakeholders. These typically offered more detailed feedback than was possible via the online survey. Respondents were requested to complete a cover sheet which contained space to record basic demographic information that would assist in collation and analysis of responses.

3.4. Intensive engagement activity

As part of the consultation, 51 teachers from 26 schools participated in intensive engagement activities using the draft curriculum. This involved teachers programming aspects of the draft curriculum and developing sample assessment items.

Teachers participating in the intensive engagement activity completed the online survey.

3.5. Methodology

Quantitative data of the online surveys are presented in Table 4 in this report. All quantitative data were collated and analysed in spreadsheets from which tables were produced. The quantitative data include online surveys while the qualitative data include commentary from the online surveys and written submissions.

For questions in the online surveys, the response for each rating (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree) was assigned a numeric value (for example, strongly agree

– 4; agree – 3). Responses were tallied and a percentage calculated for each rating and displayed in Table 4.

Analysis of qualitative data was outsourced to experts in research and data analysis. The qualitative data were analysed using NVivo10 software. From responses to each question in the online survey, comments were categorised as strengths, concerns, and areas for improvement and suggestions, with specific topic nodes developed within these three categories. Content was analysed for recurring themes and general trends.

An identical coding procedure was used for the written submissions.

For reporting purposes, the analysed data were organised according to the broad structural organisers for the survey, that is:

- rationale and aims
- content structure
- content descriptions
- content elaborations
- achievement standards
- diversity of learners
- general capabilities
- cross-curriculum priorities
- glossary.

Findings are reported against those headings in terms of strengths, concerns and improvements.

3.6. Consultation demographics

ACARA received a total of 124 responses to consultation: 87 responses to the online survey and 38 written submissions.

The 87 online survey responses received included 51 from intensive engagement activity participants. These surveys represented the responses of 141 individuals.

The 38 written submissions received represented 396 individuals.

Written submissions

Organisations which submitted written submissions are listed in Appendix 2. Table 1 provides a breakdown of written responses received by stakeholder type.

Table 1: Number of written submission responses by stakeholder type

Stakeholder type	Number of responses
State and territory education authorities	11
Teacher professional associations	4
Education stakeholders (other than authorities or professional associations)	3
Professional associations (other than education)	6
Community	3

Government organisations (other than education)	4
Universities	2
Schools	2
Individuals	3
Total	37

Online survey responses

Feedback was submitted by stakeholders throughout Australia including:

- state and territory curriculum and school authorities
- representative bodies (such as teacher professional associations, government agencies and non-government organisations)
- schools and universities
- individuals (teachers, academics, parents, members of the community).

A total of 87 responses were received from the online survey. Table 2 shows the breakdown by state and territory.

Table 2: Number of online survey responses by state/territory

State/territory	Number of responses	State/territory	Number of responses
Australian Capital Territory	9	South Australia	13
New South Wales	12	Tasmania	7
Northern Territory	4	Victoria	16
Queensland	13	Western Australia	13

Table 3 shows the breakdown of responses from schools/teachers that participated in the intensive engagement activity by state and territory.

Table 3: Intensive engagement teacher online survey responses by state/territory

State/territory	Number of responses	State/territory	Number of responses
Australian Capital Territory	5	South Australia	9
New South Wales	6	Tasmania	5
Northern Territory	2	Victoria	11
Queensland	4	Western Australia	9

4. Consultation findings

4.1. Responses to survey questions

Table 4 below shows the percentages of respondents to the online survey who strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed with each statement. An analysis of feedback on each section of the survey is presented in the following pages.

Questions one to six are omitted from the report as they refer to background and demographic information collected. For demographic information, refer to section 3.6 of this report.

Table 4: Civics and Citizenship – responses to online survey

Question	Overall agreement (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
7. The Rationale for the learning area provides clarity about intent and scope of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	96	33	63	4	0
8. The Aims of the learning area clearly express the overall intention of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	97	27	70	2	1
9. The nature of the two strands and their relationship is clearly recognisable in the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	91	26	65	6	2
10. The content descriptions are clear and unambiguous, i.e. explaining in understandable language what is to be taught	76	13	63	20	3
11. The content descriptions are coherent, i.e. work well together across strands and year level	85	22	63	13	3
12. The content descriptions are sequenced appropriately, i.e. in an order consistent with your experience	77	16	61	19	4
13. The content descriptions are pitched appropriately, i.e. realistic yet sufficiently challenging for students at each year level	64	14	50	30	5

14. The content descriptions cover the important content for this learning area	88	22	66	9	3
15. The content descriptions encourage the pursuit of in-depth teaching and learning	77	20	57	18	5
16. The draft content elaborations illustrate the content descriptions effectively	90	18	72	9	0
17. The draft content elaborations are clear and unambiguous	83	21	62	16	1
18. The draft content elaborations are relevant and appropriate illustrations	83	17	66	16	1
19. The draft achievement standards are clear and unambiguous, i.e. explaining in understandable language what students are expected to learn	87	23	64	9	4
20. The draft achievement standards are coherent, i.e. articulate clearly across year levels	88	22	66	10	3
21. The draft achievement standards are sequenced appropriately, i.e. in an order consistent with your experience	80	12	68	15	4
22. The draft achievement standards are pitched appropriately, i.e. realistic yet sufficiently challenging for students at each year level	71	15	56	22	7
23. The draft curriculum takes into account available evidence about the nature of the learner	76	14	62	19	5
24. The draft curriculum takes into account the needs of all students	63	8	55	31	5
25. The draft curriculum enables teachers to cater for diversity	79	19	60	17	4
26. The general capabilities are appropriately represented in the draft curriculum, i.e. in a reasonable and natural way as appropriate to the subject	91	16	75	7	1
27. The general capabilities are clearly evident in the draft curriculum, i.e. that the appropriate representation is visible to the reader	91	14	77	8	1

28. The cross-curriculum priorities are appropriately represented in the draft curriculum, i.e. in a reasonable and natural way as appropriate to the subject	82	22	60	18	0
29. The cross-curriculum priorities are clearly evident in the draft curriculum, i.e. that the appropriate representation is visible to the reader	84	21	63	15	0

4.2. Rationale

An analysis of the feedback on Question 7 is presented below.

Strengths

Consultation participants commend the clear articulation of the subject as a distinct and important area of learning in the Australian Curriculum. The rationale is considered a clear description of the intent and scope of the subject.

The rationale and aims of the curriculum provide a sound basis for teachers to understand the importance of Civics and Citizenship and the goals of the curriculum. The emphasis on active and informed participation is vital to ensure that students not only understand Australia's democracy but also their essential role in it.

Australian Electoral Commission, written submission

I think that the rationale is generally good – especially the focus on notions of active citizenship which is rightly foregrounded as being important. I also appreciate the way the various ways that people can participate in civil society has been recognised, rather than limiting it to participation or knowledge of civic institutions.

New South Wales school leader, questionnaire response

The Rationale is inspiring and uses contemporary terminology and concepts reflecting a future focus.

Victorian academic, questionnaire response

Concerns

Some education authorities expressed concerns about the length of the rationale and the potential for confusion over the description of how 'civics' and 'citizenship' are integrated in the curriculum.

Language around integrating the study of 'civics' with the study of 'citizenship' tends to confuse. In the minds of most teachers the two are linked.

Tasmanian Department of Education, written submission

The rationale itself is repetitive and could be reduced substantially. The statement that the studies of Civics and Citizenship are integrated highlights an issue that runs through the draft content descriptions – that of the confusion of a 'civics' understanding of the definition, rights and responsibilities of a citizen and 'citizenship' as a set of values, skills and attitudes.

South Australian Department of Education and Childhood Development, written submission

Improvements

There is support for revising the rationale to provide a more succinct statement on the purpose and scope of the subject, and for providing greater clarity around the definitions of ‘civics’ and ‘citizenship’.

A number of other recommendations are also suggested to improve the rationale. The key points are outlined below.

- *Student participation* – There is considerable comment from consultation participants on the need for more explicit reference in the rationale on the importance of informed and active citizenship in enabling student participation, and the opportunities that the school environment enables to foster this participation.

However, there is a need for students to recognize the role of civil society as an important contemporary means to express ‘informed and active citizenship’. The rationale would benefit from an explicit recognition of this key sector in contemporary Civics and Citizenship discourse and practice.

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Global Education Working Group, written submission

— *Human rights* – Consultation participants with a legal or human rights perspective support a more explicit reference in the rationale (and more broadly) to the role and importance of the legal system and human rights to learning and teaching Civics and Citizenship.

- *Local, national, regional and global contexts* – The rationale’s discussion of citizenship in a local, national, regional and global context underpins considerable comment in the data. The inclusion of a local context is commended, but the discussion of national, regional and global contexts draws a mixed response. The Asia Education Foundation applauds the rationale for building on and incorporating relevant general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. However, a number of other consultation participants, including education authorities, consider the rationale too ‘introspective’ and argue for a greater emphasis on global citizenship.

Rationale also needs an explicit ‘recognition of Australia’s commitment as a member of the international community and obligations to international human rights’ or ‘develop an understanding of Australia’s role as a responsible global citizen. This includes responsibilities as a signatory nation to UN Conventions/treaties’.

ACFID Global Education Working Group, written submission

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives* – There is support for the inclusion of reference to the ‘experiences and contributions of Australia’s First Peoples’; however, there is contention surrounding the term ‘First Peoples’. Most education authorities argue for consistent use of the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ throughout the curriculum.

4.3. Aims

An analysis of the feedback on Question 8 is presented below.

Strengths

The aims of the curriculum are viewed as generally clear, succinct and providing a sound basis for the curriculum. The emphasis on active and informed participation is also welcome.

The aims of the learning area clearly express the overall intention of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship.

Queensland Studies Authority, written submission

Concerns

Some respondents argue that the aims need to be amended and/or expanded to ensure they better reflect the rationale. Others express concern that the concepts of justice and human rights are not properly represented.

Most of these aims are important, but I was troubled to see that there is no mention of justice. I think that this is an error: part of any Western democracy is the commitment to justice for all citizens ... A commitment to justice should include a critical understanding of the structural causes of injustice in modern civil society.

NSW school leader, questionnaire response

Improvements

Consultation participants make a number of varied suggestions to improve the aims. These include more reference to the regional and global context in relation to citizenship, the importance of active citizenship, and greater alignment between the aims and the inquiry approach outlined in rationale.

4.4. Content structure

An analysis of the feedback on Question 9 is presented below.

Strengths

There is broad support for the content structure. Most consultation participants welcome the consistency of the Civics and Citizenship content and organisational structure with other subjects and learning areas.

We are pleased to see that the strands are organised into knowledge and skills consistent with the other Australian Curriculum humanities and social sciences documents. The sub-strands for each are also clearly articulated in the overview.

NT Department of Education and Children Services (DECS), written submission

It is pleasing to see three focus areas at each year level, rather than a more general, single focus area for the whole year. This helps break down our political and legal systems in manageable parts and helps teachers exercise the skill of variability as they can move from one 'topic' to another 'topic' within a year.

NSW Economics and Business Educators NSW, written submission

The provision of key focus areas within each strand is supported by consultation participants. They are seen as important organising elements of the curriculum, supporting teachers in the organisation and teaching of the subject and fostering an inquiry approach to learning.

Concerns

There is some concern about the amount of content to be covered within each strand, particularly *Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding* (often raised alongside ACARA's indicative time allocation for the subject).

The amount of content in the Knowledge and understanding strand is excessive. The number and complexity of concepts across the three key focus areas will promote a superficial treatment and will certainly not foster deep understanding of the key concepts underpinning Civics and Citizenship.

Queensland Studies Authority, written submission

Improvements

There is suggestion for a more clearly articulated description of the interrelationship between the two strands.

The key focus areas also drew a number of comments and suggested improvements. This includes a more explicit reference to human rights (within Law and citizens) and global citizenship.

Some respondents argued for greater consistency in the strands between the different humanities and social sciences subjects.

With Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business, the skills can be more generic as the discipline base of this curriculum is less established than History and Geography.

Queensland Studies Authority, written submission

4.5. Content descriptions

An analysis of the feedback on Questions 10–15 is presented below.

Strengths

Overall there is support for the sequencing and progression of content over the course of the curriculum. Education authorities that provided comment consider the progression clear, and agree that it allows for increasingly deep learning. The Victorian Commercial Teachers Association's (VCTA) discussion with primary school teachers yielded similar results.

VCTA consultation with primary teachers yielded a positive response to the Years 3–6 draft curriculum. They felt that the sequence was appropriate and the writing approach taken was quite understandable. Primary educators particularly welcomed the 'global citizen' reference at Year 6 level and the inclusion of a study of Parliament at Year 6 level – a study which at draft Shape level was in the secondary education domain.

Victorian Commercial Teachers Association, written submission

Comments from trial school teachers on the content descriptions were more mixed. Teachers found the content well structured and believed it would enable teaching and inquiry. A selection of comments from the consultation data includes: 'excellent and logical', 'allow for creativity', 'solid sequence'.

Concerns

There was considerable concern from trial school teachers about the pitch of the content, particularly for the primary school levels.

Far too much is expected in primary years. It will take a long time for this knowledge to filter through the primary. Even for the very brightest this is too challenging, especially the knowledge and understanding strand.

WA primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

I think that some of the content is a bit too much at certain year levels. For example, learning about the three levels of government, referendums and how new laws are made is quite heavy learning for the primary years and is difficult to teach at a superficial level.

SA primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

There was also some concern about the amount of content to be taught and some of the implementation questions it raised.

The issues here are not about the content, which is mostly desirable and clearly stated. They concern the point in schooling at which these ideas are to be introduced, and the volume of the material, and therefore the teaching time, proposed.

Australian Primary Principals Association

The descriptions are coherent, but there is so much to cover, particularly given the other subjects that we are meant to also teach in each year level.

ACT secondary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

Improvements

Some trial school teachers recommend reconsideration of the volume of content to be covered in the curriculum, particularly in light of the indicative hours suggested for the teaching of the subject.

To do this properly it would take considerably more time than that available. Some concepts are difficult in the law and politics and take heaps of time to cover.

SA secondary teacher, trial schools questionnaire response

A number of respondents recommend improvements to the law-related content.

Law is not appropriately sequenced throughout the draft curriculum nor is the content about Australia's legal system correct. For example, customary law is not a source of law, while common law is a source of law but this is omitted in the content description. While the balance between political and legal systems is appropriate, the lack of coherent development of content around the legal system reduces the status of law in the document. The rule of law must be included in the study of a democracy.

WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, written submission

There are also suggestions to include greater coverage of international examples of government systems and more strongly link content to the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

4.6. Content elaborations

An analysis of feedback on Questions 16–18 is presented below.

Strengths

On balance, the content elaborations are considered comprehensive and successful in illustrating the content descriptions. Teachers and professional associations consider the elaborations varied, practical and engaging.

The content elaborations are quite good and varied.

Social Educators Association of Queensland, written submission

Generally the content descriptions are written clearly and the differences between the descriptions at different year levels are evident. A progression is obvious and is mostly appropriate for knowledge and understanding, the three sub-strands, and skills.

Queensland Studies Authority, written submission

Concerns

There is some concern among teachers about the number of elaborations on offer, and how they may be used. They are worried that they may be interpreted as *the* curriculum, rather than examples of how the curriculum could be taught.

There is some comment from legal stakeholders over the description of how legal concepts could be taught.

There should be no suggestion or discussion that focusses on the disadvantages of the presumption of innocence, fair trials or access to justice. This is an inappropriate way to couch these principles. Diminishing the importance of any of them is contrary to the rule of law. Discussion of practical limitations on their scope is possible, but must be carefully worded so as not to suggest these are optional or negotiable principles that exist within a rule of law society.

Rule of Law Institute of Australia, written submission

A number of respondents contend that the content elaborations are pitched too high at the lower year levels. There is concern that this may lead to a loss of student engagement.

I think that some of the elaborations are a bit dry and too advanced for primary school level, in particular teaching about the constitution and changing it at primary school level is a bit much.

SA primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

The draft content elaborations are not always age appropriate (e.g. action pledges at Year 7); the amount of content and skills suggested does not fit with the time allocation for the subject.

Brisbane Catholic Education, written submission

Improvements

Participants suggest a range of improvements to the Civics and Citizenship content elaborations, including a review of the link between the content descriptions and elaborations to ensure they are properly aligned, in terms of age-appropriateness.

There were many varied views about emphases within the elaborations. The Human Rights Commission recommends considerable amendment to the elaborations across the year levels to fully embed the teaching of human rights across the curriculum. Similarly, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. suggests a greater range of elaborations making more explicit the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

4.7. Achievement standards

An analysis of the feedback on Questions 19–22 is presented below.

Comment on the achievement standards is mixed, with noticeable variance in the responses from teachers and education authorities.

Strengths

A considerable proportion of teachers who participated in the trial engagement commend the achievement standards for their sequencing and consistency with other subjects. Three of the education authorities which provided written submissions take a similar view.

Developmental progression of the achievement standards is apparent. Explanation of standards is easy to comprehend. The fact that the achievement standards are divided into 2 paragraphs is helpful and straightforward. The ease of language in the achievement standards means that they can be used with students in assessments and rubrics.

AISWA, written submission

Concerns

There is concern among consultation participants over a perceived misalignment between the achievement standards and the content descriptions.

There is also a view from the Queensland and South Australian education authorities that the achievement standards are pitched too high. This view is supported by a number of general and trial school questionnaire respondents, who also commented on teacher training and support requirements that may be needed to teach this curriculum.

The Year 10 achievement standard is pitched well above their year level. It sounds like a university level standard. The language is ambiguous even to teachers. It has to be remembered that parents and students will be trying to interpret these standards.

Trial school teacher, secondary, ACT

We regard it unlikely that Year 3 children will meet the expectation of the Achievement Standard that they can 'explain key democratic processes [and] how decisions are made in a democracy'.

Australian Primary Principals Association

Improvements

In response to these issues, a number of suggested improvements are made by consultation participants. Review of the pitch of the achievement standards, particularly in the primary school years, is recommended.

Some respondents suggest changing the wording of the achievement standards to ensure greater alignment with the content descriptions.

The language in the achievement standards does not always match the content descriptions, e.g. the key features of Australia's court system in the content description and the key principles of Australia's system of justice in the achievement standard. These are not the same and the achievement standard appears to be more challenging than the content description.

Queensland Studies Authority, written submission

4.8. Diversity of learners

An analysis of the feedback on Questions 23–25 is presented below.

Strengths

On balance, consultation participants supported the advice and guidance provided in the curriculum to cater for the diverse needs of students. A number of trial school teachers felt there was enough flexibility within the curriculum to tailor or personalise teaching options for students with diverse need.

The curriculum provides an enabling framework within which schools and teachers can make sound, evidence-based judgements about the needs of individual students and local adaptations of the broad curriculum.

Tasmanian primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

Concerns

There is a view that the volume of content in the curriculum could limit the extent to which teachers could cater for diversity. This concern is aligned with broader views about the curriculum, namely that it places too much emphasis on learning content rather than the development of skills and values.

In the current draft this curriculum does not clearly or genuinely reflect the diverse nature of Australian society. By being very content-heavy it does not allow students to properly explore and challenge their own values and dispositions. This limits their capacity to be and to develop as active citizens. They may have learned a great deal of knowledge but they will not see how it applies to them and their community. It is much better to engage with less content but more depth and understanding.

Brisbane Catholic Education, written submission

Improvements

Suggested improvements to this section include providing more guidance and assistance within the curriculum and consideration of a wider diversity of learner populations.

The draft curriculum takes into account the available evidence about the nature of the learner in a very specific demographic. In order to incorporate more evidence it is important to include different racial, religious, political and personal views into the teaching of this curriculum.

SA primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

4.9. General capabilities

An analysis of the feedback on Questions 26–27 is presented below.

Civics and Citizenship – both in rationale and content – is considered by consultation participants as a subject particularly relevant and appropriate to the development of general capabilities.

Having used this Draft Curriculum for the past number of weeks, it was clearly evident how the General Capabilities were (and could be) used. I particularly feel that the inclusion of Ethical and Intercultural Understanding is vital.

Victorian primary school teacher, trial school questionnaire response

In their feedback some trial school teachers commented that in implementing the draft curriculum they had found the general capabilities evident in the curriculum. Notwithstanding this view, there is a considerable degree of support for more clearly mapping where in the content the opportunities exist to explore and develop the capabilities (without prescribing where it should occur).

Feedback on specific general capabilities is outlined below. The intercultural understanding capability drew the most comment from consultation participants.

Literacy

Respondents argue there is potential to broaden the literacy capability beyond its current description to one that encompasses a broader concept of communication and active citizenship, and concepts of political literacy.

All aspects of the inquiry process require sophisticated literacy practices. More emphasis needs to be placed on articulating, debating and evaluating ideas and participating in group discussions.

NSW Department of Education and Communities, written submission

Numeracy

The description of the numeracy capability is supported by the consultation data.

The application of the 'Numeracy' general capability to the 'voting process' is seen as very relevant as students investigate numbers related to electorates, members in the lower houses of parliaments, senators in each state and territory, et cetera.

NSW Economics and Business Educators, written submission

Information and communication technology capability

Respondents see a chance to broaden the information and communication technology capability to include social media and other methods of investigating, creating or communicating with technology.

Competence in information and communication technology (ICT) should include reference to how ICT can enhance the study of Civics and Citizenship as well as how the study of Civics and Citizenship can improve students' ICT competence. ICT skills should be included, particularly in relation to evaluating and analysing data, and organising and presenting information as well as being a tool for the collaborative development of an inquiry.

NSW Department of Education and Communities, written submission

Critical and creative thinking

The description of this capability is supported and it is seen as fundamental to the Civics and Citizenship learning area. One respondent recommends further elaboration of the description to aid implementation.

Critical and creative thinking refers to thinking logically but fails to capture the range of possibilities for exploring new ideas and innovation through the study of Civics and Citizenship. A statement outlining how students develop their capacity to innovate would add value to this description.

NSW Department of Education and Communities, written submission

Respondents also indicated that greater emphasis could be placed on the skill of critical evaluation to enable students to be active and informed citizens.

Personal and social capability

There was no substantive comment on this particular general capability.

Ethical understanding

The Human Rights Commission would like to see an explicit reference to human rights in this capability. There is also some support for a broader description of ethical behaviour to encompass governments and corporations.

Intercultural understanding

The description of this capability is commended by a range of consultation participants, but a number of improvements are also suggested. There is support for strengthening intercultural understanding in relation to diversity, including the multi-faith nature of Australian society.

One written submission argues that explicit reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is needed in order to strengthen the link with the relevant cross-curriculum priority.

There is also support for the inclusion of the negative impacts of racism on individuals and communities and reference to the importance of developing cultural competency.

The Commission recommends that intercultural understanding include reference to the negative impact that racism and discrimination can have on civic engagement and the health and wellbeing of members of the community. There is strong evidence that shows that tackling racism and supporting intercultural understanding is an essential component of living in a healthy democracy.

Australian Human Rights Commission, written submission

Respondents express support for the inclusion of regional contexts in the description, and the numerous opportunities to develop this in the curriculum, but there is also support for an explicit reference to Asia in the overview of the capability.

4.10. Cross-curriculum priorities

An analysis of the feedback on Question 28–29 is presented below.

Teachers who contributed feedback felt the cross curriculum priorities were appropriately represented and clearly evident in the draft curriculum support the cross-curriculum priorities. However, they, and other consultation participants, would support clearer

indications of where they cross-curriculum priorities have been tagged or included in the curriculum.

The curriculum needs to be comprehensively mapped to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Connections also need to be made with other ... learning areas so that teachers can provide more in-depth learning experiences for students without further crowding the curriculum.

Australian Human Rights Commission, written submission

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

This priority drew a variety of responses. The description is supported by consultation participants, but there are a number of suggestions made to improve it, and to improve the extent to which the priority is evident in the curriculum.

There was some support for a greater emphasis on the exploration of contemporary perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the curriculum. The Human Rights Commission recommends a stronger emphasis on this priority, with suggestions to include elaborations exploring contemporary (but longstanding) issues such as constitutional recognition.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) suggests a more celebratory description of the priority and the benefits for students in exploring the opportunities it presents in the curriculum.

There are some concerns raised by consultation participants about age-appropriateness of the Year 4 elaboration discussing forced removal of Aboriginal children from their parents. The ability of Year 4 students to understand 'forms of local governance found in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' is also questioned.

Some of the education authorities reinforce the importance of using consistent and agreed language to ensure the opportunities in the curriculum are not insensitive, and that they are achievable.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

The description of this priority and its embedding in the curriculum is strongly supported by the Asia Education Foundation.

Responses gathered from AEF online consultation participants also support this observation, with 86% of them agreeing, or strongly agreeing, that there is strong Australia and Australia's Engagement with Asia and Intercultural Understanding presence within the draft.

Asia Education Foundation, written submission

There is some support for broadening the coverage of the priority – and the opportunities to explore it – into the law and citizens focus area, and to encompass issues of regional citizenship and humanitarian responsibilities.

Sustainability

Consultation participants consider there is significant opportunity to explore issues of sustainability throughout the curriculum.

There is support for broadening the description of the priority by placing a greater emphasis on social sustainability, particularly in relation to the practice of democracy.

4.11. Glossary

Respondents welcome the reference to a glossary and suggest various terms for inclusion. Some examples of terms mentioned as important to define include ‘civics’, ‘citizenship’, ‘culture’, ‘multicultural’ and ‘the common good’.

The Rule of Law Institute of Australia notes the importance of a glossary in supporting the entire curriculum and ensuring consistency in implementation across the country.

If this is to be a truly national curriculum, an expanded set of definitions which effectively guide how content descriptions are interpreted is needed. This will allow teachers to appropriately scaffold the teaching of terminology.

Rule of Law Institute of Australia, written submission

4.12. Perspectives by state and territory

Table 5 below summarises feedback provided by states and territories regarding key themes and perspectives (i.e. strengths, concerns and areas for improvement) in relation to the draft curriculum.

Table 5: Civics and Citizenship – key themes and perspectives by state/territory

Participant/s	Themes	Comments
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY		
Education authority	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too much of a jump in expectation between primary and secondary years. Achievement of content difficult within indicative time allocation.
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearer language and terminology to be used throughout the curriculum• Opportunities to explore general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities could be better mapped throughout the content
Others	Strength/improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall support for the curriculum, but would like to see stronger links to other learning areas

Participant	Theme	Comment
NEW SOUTH WALES		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall support for the organisation and strand structure
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to achieve all the content within the indicative time allocation
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater integration of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities required throughout the curriculum Revision of rationale required to shorten the statement and strengthen contemporary communication methods Further detail of student expectation required for the key focus areas of the knowledge and understanding strand Sequencing of Years 6–10 content to be revised to better reflect student development
Professional associations	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall support for the curriculum, including the strand structure, and the advice and guidance for teachers provided throughout the curriculum. Scope and sequencing of content is supported.
	Concern/improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some concern over implementation issues, the need for further professional development of teachers, and the extent to which the curriculum will engage with student interests
Teachers	Strength/improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum is clear and appropriate. Greater emphasis on developing skills and behaviours needed for the practice of citizenship.
NORTHERN TERRITORY		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum underpinned by a clear rationale, organisation and content structure Clear progression of learning and assessment through the years
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years 7–10 content will be difficult to address within indicative time allocation
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater consistency of reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Teachers	Strength/concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum is supported, but concern remains over the ability to implement it within the indicative time allocation
QUEENSLAND		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear justification for the teaching and learning of the subject. Clear and appropriate curriculum structure, scope and sequence across Years 3–10. Year level descriptions and key inquiry questions support teachers. The range of elaborations help teachers explore the content. General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities clear and evident in the curriculum
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volume of content is excessive, which will inhibit in-depth learning. There is an imbalance between learning content and developing skills.
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the level of content to be covered in the curriculum Greater consistency in language and terminology, including alignment with other subjects, and reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Greater emphasis on the pursuit of skills required to develop active citizenship and participation capacity within students

Participant	Theme	Comment
Professional association	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough emphasis on the development of skills and behaviours required to support active and informed citizenship Concern over the extent to which the content will interest and engage students
Teachers	Strength/ concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by teachers, but some concern over the volume of content to be covered in allocated time
SOUTH AUSTRALIA		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale, aims and content structure considered appropriate Evident links to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some inconsistency in the sequencing of content Pitching of some content is considered age-inappropriate
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer definition and distinction of the terms <i>Civics and Citizenship</i> required Make rationale more concise
Teachers	Strength/ concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by teachers, but some concerns over the volume of content
TASMANIA		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall support for the curriculum, its intent, and its structure
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some concern over the volume of content to be covered in the curriculum, especially within the context of the indicative time allocation for the subject
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the pitch of some of the content, for example in areas like the study of the Constitution in Year 7
Teachers	Strength/ concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by teachers, but some concerns over the volume of content
VICTORIA		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the rationale, aims and organisation of the curriculum. The content is sequenced appropriately.
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over the pitch of some the content elaborations in the primary school areas, as well as instances of misalignment between achievement standards and content descriptions. Absence of global perspectives within the content.
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More explicit reference to human rights in the rationale, and consistency in references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Greater clarity required around the description of skills that enable active citizenship Greater alignment between the general capabilities and the content of the curriculum More emphasis on global perspectives across the curriculum Review of the law and citizens focus area across the secondary years to ensure accuracy and consistency
Professional association	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intent, structure and organisation of the curriculum is sound

Participant	Theme	Comment
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some reconsideration of the age-appropriateness for primary school content elaborations required Review of the content in the secondary school years for key focus areas of <i>Government and democracy</i> and <i>Laws and citizens</i>, to ensure accuracy, sequencing and consistency between content descriptions and achievement standards
Teachers	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most teachers consider the curriculum a well-structured and easy to use document.
WESTERN AUSTRALIA		
Education authority	Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation and structure of the curriculum is clear and appropriate. Clear links to other humanities, arts and social science subjects.
	Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volume of content unachievable in indicative time allocation. Some concern over planning a teaching program over primary school years. Law and citizens focus area poorly sequenced. Elaborations within this focus area considered inappropriate Inconsistency in language throughout the curriculum, particularly in discussion of rights and responsibilities or reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
	Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater use and integration of general capabilities into the curriculum Development of participation skills could be more in depth and sophisticated
Teachers	Strength/ concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the curriculum among most teachers. Considered a clear curriculum with appropriate structure and sequence. However, there is some concern about covering all of the content in the indicative time allocation.

Appendix 1: Online survey

YEARS 3–10 DRAFT AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP CONSULTATION SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this survey is to enable individuals and groups to provide feedback on the draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship.

Feedback is sought on the details of the draft curriculum in relation to the following:

- The structure, coverage, clarity, placement and sequence of curriculum content 3–10
- Representation of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in the 3–10 content
- The pitch, sequence, clarity, usability and coherence of the 3–10 achievement standards
- The manageability of the curriculum for teachers at each year level and the relevant stages of schooling

Each section of the survey requires responses on a rating scale to statements about components of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. There is an opportunity to include comments which preferably would include suggestions for improvement. If more detailed feedback is required, additional notes to the survey can be forwarded to civicsandcitizenship@acara.edu.au with the essential <cover sheet>.

The 3–10 consultation website for Civics and Citizenship officially closes on 19 July 2013.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK.

Note: *This site and the relevant surveys are intended to gather feedback on the draft Years 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. It can be completed by an individual or by a group of people, e.g. an association or a school authority. Please note that ACARA may make any feedback provided during the consultation process publicly available. Please visit the terms and conditions of the website at <http://consultation.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Copyright>*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Individual feedback

1. In which state or territory are you based? (drop down menu)
2. Which CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT best describes your perspective? (drop down menu)
 - Primary teacher
 - Secondary teacher
 - School leader
 - Academic
 - Parent
 - Student
 - Employer
 - Other (please specify)

Group feedback

3. If you are providing a group or institutional response (e.g. school, professional association, university faculty, education authority) which CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT best describes your perspective? (drop down menu)
 - School
 - Professional association
 - University faculty
 - Education authority
 - If other, please specify
4. Please indicate the NAME of the group or institution below.
Group/institution name: _____
5. If group/institution response, how many people have contributed DIRECTLY to this response?

6. My/our feedback relates primarily to: (check as appropriate)
 - 3–6
 - 7–10
 - 3–10

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A. STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM (3–10)					
7.	The Rationale for the learning area provides clarity about intent and scope of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Comments				
8.	The Aims of the learning area clearly express the overall intention of the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Comments				
9.	The nature of the two strands and their relationship is clearly recognisable in the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Comments				

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
B. CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS					
The draft content descriptions:					
10.	are clear and unambiguous, i.e. explaining in understandable language what is to be taught	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	are coherent, i.e. work well together across strands and year level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	are sequenced appropriately, i.e. in an order consistent with your experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	are pitched appropriately, i.e. realistic yet sufficiently challenging for students at each year level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	cover the important content for this learning area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	encourage the pursuit of in-depth teaching and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please identify any content that you believe should be included in the draft curriculum that is not currently, and give reasons for your selection:

Please identify any content that you believe should not be included in the draft curriculum that is currently included, and give reasons for your selection:

Other comments

C. CONTENT ELABORATIONS

The draft content elaborations:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16. illustrate the content descriptions effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. are clear and unambiguous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. are relevant and appropriate illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

D. ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

The draft achievement standards are:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
19. clear and unambiguous, i.e. explaining in understandable language what students are expected to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. coherent, i.e. articulate clearly across year levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. sequenced appropriately, i.e. in an order consistent with your experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. pitched appropriately, i.e. realistic yet sufficiently challenging for students at each year level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

E. DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS

The draft curriculum:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
23. takes into account available evidence about the nature of the learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. takes into account the needs of all students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. enables teachers to cater for diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

F. GENERAL CAPABILITIES

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
26. The general capabilities are appropriately represented in the draft curriculum, i.e. in a reasonable and natural way as appropriate to the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. The general capabilities are clearly evident in the draft curriculum, i.e. that the appropriate representation is visible to the reader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any advice on the representation of general capabilities in the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship				

G. CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
28. The cross-curriculum priorities are appropriately represented in the draft curriculum, i.e. in a reasonable and natural way as appropriate to the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. The cross-curriculum priorities are clearly evident in the draft curriculum, i.e. that the appropriate representation is visible to the reader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any advice on the representation of the cross-curriculum priorities in the draft Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship.				

H. FINAL COMMENTS

Please provide any further comments you have on the draft 3–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship.

Appendix 2: Written responses from organisations

The providers of written submissions are listed below. In line with privacy laws, the names of individuals and international respondents are not listed.

State and territory education authorities (10)

Association of Independent Schools Western Australia

Board of Studies NSW

Brisbane Catholic Education Office

Department of Education Tasmania

Education and Training Directorate ACT

NSW Department of Education and Communities

Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)

Queensland Studies Authority

SA Department of Education and Child Development (SA DECD)

Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Teacher professional associations (4)

Australian Primary Principals Association

Economics and Business Educators NSW

Social Educators Association of Queensland

Victorian Commercial Teachers Association

Education stakeholders (3)

Asia Education Foundation

Australian Association for Environmental Education

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

Professional associations (other than education) (6)

Australian Emergency Management Institute

Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration

Law Council of Australia

Law Society of WA

National Alternative Resolution Advisory Council

Rule of Law Institute of Australia

Community (3)

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Global Education Working Group (representing charity groups)

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Government departments (other than education) (4)

Attorney-General's Department

Australian Electoral Commission

Australian Human Rights Commission

Australian Taxation Office

Universities (2)

Deakin University

NSW Faculty of Law, UTS

Schools (2)

Fintona Girls' School

Gympie State High School

Individuals (3)

Due to privacy laws individuals and international respondents cannot be named.