

MEDIA RELEASE

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WESTERN CIVILISATION FRONT AND CENTRE IN NEW CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) today rejected claims that the new Australian Curriculum for History neglects Western Civilisation or the Judeo-Christian roots of our common heritage.

Responding to comments made last night by former Prime Minister John Howard, Professor Barry McGaw AO pointed out that the *Australian Curriculum: History* was approved by state and territory education ministers in December 2010. It is not the Australian government's curriculum.

"With the release of the Australian F-10 history curriculum we have raised expectations that all young Australian will study history in each year of schooling F-10. This is a significant advance on previous practice," said Professor McGaw.

"The new curriculum sets Australian history in in a broad context by having students pay attention to what was happening elsewhere in the world when they study Australian history."

"This does not prejudice our Western and Judeo-Christian heritage. Their influences on Australian culture and our legal and political systems are clearly dealt with."

The *F-10 Australian Curriculum: History* includes content at most year levels that is related to the history of western civilisation and its achievements (with reference to values, way of life, individuals/groups, and general factors that have influenced humanity's development):

- Year F - the commemoration of events in history (examples include Easter, ANZAC day)
- Year 3 - celebrations and commemorations in other places around the world (examples include references to Bastille day in France, Independence Day in the USA, Christmas Day)
- Year 5 - the impact of significant developments, events, individuals and groups on a colony (examples include the influence of religious and political leaders, references to the Eureka stockade)
- Year 6 - Australia's system of law and government, including the influence of Australia's British heritage (examples include references to the Magna Carta, federalism, constitutional monarchy, the Westminster system and the separation of powers – legislature, judiciary, the houses of parliament, how laws are made)
- Year 6 - Australia's political institutions and their historical influence on Australian life, for example experiences of democracy and citizenship
- Year 7 - religion and the rule of law in the ancient world (examples include a reference to Christianity and its key beliefs); Greece and Rome (examples include references to the rights

and responsibilities of citizens in ancient Athens, the invention of freedom, the idea of Republican virtue)

- Year 8 - transformation of the Roman world and the spread of Christianity (examples include references to Anglo-Saxon institutions and the roots of medieval parliament),
- Year 9 - emergence and nature of political ideas (examples include references to the French Revolution and American independence, and the influence of Classical models and theories on democratic values); significance of the Industrial Revolution, and progressive ideas and movements
- Year 10 - major western movements for rights and freedoms since 1918 and the importance of civil society, for example the continuing nature of efforts to secure rights and freedoms.

Students also learn about Australia's civic and democratic institutions through the proposed Civics & Citizenship curriculum.

"I would urge everyone to have a look for themselves and have a look at what the Curriculum contains by visiting www.australiancurriculum.edu.au".

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For media interviews and inquiries:

Contact: James Morrow, Snr Manager, Communications

(02) 8098 3221

0424 727 016

james.morrow@acara.edu.au

About ACARA:

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is the independent authority responsible for the development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students. ACARA's work is carried out in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, governments, State and Territory education authorities, professional education associations, community groups and the general public.