

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **NEW ELABORATIONS TO HELP TEACHERS INCORPORATE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES IN THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: SCIENCE**

In response to feedback from community and educators, ACARA has released information to support teachers to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures into teaching the Australian Curriculum: Science.

Ninety-five ‘elaborations’ – practical examples that provide guidance on teaching the Australian Curriculum – have been published today on the Australian Curriculum website within the Science learning area for all year levels.

ACARA CEO, Robert Randall, said there was a strong desire among teachers for more support in implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority (which applies across the Australian Curriculum and allow students to connect the content of learning areas).

“Teachers have told us they can generally see a connection between this cross-curriculum priority and some of the learning areas, like Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Arts, but they have asked for advice on how they can embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learnings in other subject areas, particularly STEM subjects,” Mr Randall said.

The elaborations, which are optional resources, will also help teachers provide a more culturally responsive curriculum experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, resulting in better educational outcomes, and increased achievement and engagement among students.

“It is crucial that our curriculum effectively includes respect and understanding of 65,000+ years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, comprehensive exploration of the past 250 years, and an understanding of current and developing collaborative partnerships, which combines the best of Indigenous and Western scientific understandings for the mutual benefit of all involved,” Mr Randall said.

“The elaborations released today are scientifically rigorous, demonstrating how Indigenous history, culture, knowledge and understanding can be incorporated into teaching core scientific concepts.”

One elaboration, for example, explains how students can learn about chemical sciences and different types of chemical reactions used to produce a range of products by investigating the methods employed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to convert toxic plants into edible food products.

Teachers will be supported with further information and guidance accompanying the expanded elaborations, to help build confidence in their scientific rigour and cultural appropriateness.

Australia’s Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel AO, welcomed ACARA’s commitment to immersing students in the scientific basis of traditional knowledges and practices.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have explored the many wonders of our continent for millennia,” Dr Finkel said. “Through their rich enduring legacy, we can inspire the same instinct to explore in our students today.”

Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, also commended and congratulated ACARA on this ground-breaking work to strengthen the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history in the Science section of the Australian Curriculum.

“Learning about the world’s oldest continuing cultures and incorporating traditional knowledge developed over millennia into modern scientific teaching is not only a huge privilege for Australian students, but will also enhance our own scientific thinking,” Minister Scullion said.

The new elaborations were developed with the assistance of ACARA’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group and Taskforce, and Science and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum specialists.

Professor Mark Rose, Chair of ACARA’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, said the elaborations affirm that Australian Indigenous knowledges have an important place in the Science curriculum.

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“We now have an opportunity for all Australians to understand who we are and how we can work together in a common national interest.”

The elaborations can be viewed on the [Australian Curriculum website](#).

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*Background: The Australian Curriculum includes eight learning areas, seven general capabilities and three cross-curriculum priorities, reflecting the Melbourne Declaration on Educational goals for Young Australians, as determined by Australia’s education ministers. The cross-curriculum priorities are not curriculum on its own – they only exist where they are applied in developing content, where they are relevant and fit naturally, to teach the eight learning areas.*

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