

The Board of Directors
C/- Professor Barry McGaw AO PhD
Chair
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
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Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
LETTER OF EXPECTATION
July 2012–June 2014

Dear Professor McGaw

The Letter of Expectation sets out the priorities and expectations of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for the 2012–13 and 2013–14 financial years.

At the October 2011 meeting of the former Ministerial Council, Ministers endorsed the budget and forward work plan for ACARA for the period 2012–13 to 2015–16. It is expected that ACARA will, according to its Charter, prepare a detailed work plan for 2012–13, and subsequently for 2013–14, for the Standing Council's endorsement that sets out the key actions and timeframes for addressing the strategic directions and work priorities set out in its Charter and this Letter of Expectation.

Curriculum priorities

Shape, design and development processes

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* guides the development of the Australian Curriculum.

At the October 2011 meeting of the then Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, version 3.0 of the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* was endorsed, providing:

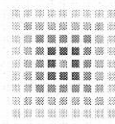
- a policy background for the implementation of the first phase of curriculum development
- information about the design of the whole curriculum and implementation of the Foundation to Year 10 (F-10) Australian Curriculum
- achievement standards and their relationship with curriculum content within the Australian Curriculum, and
- the provision of curriculum for students with disability.

During 2012–13, ACARA will publish a revised *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* that will include the shape of the senior secondary curriculum and additional advice on how the Australian Curriculum provides for students with disability.

Curriculum development – English, mathematics, science and history

The endorsement of the F-10 Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history was a historic decision by Education Ministers. Now that the F-10 curriculum is being implemented in classrooms, during 2012–13, ACARA will work with education authorities to enhance its collection and publication of annotated work samples to aid teachers in exercising their professional judgement of student achievement. It is expected that, while this project is ongoing, additional materials will be published by December 2012.

It is important for those students already studying the Australian Curriculum that there are appropriate pathways for continuing their study after they complete Year 10. By December 2012, ACARA will finalise for Ministers' agreement the first 14 subjects of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history. ACARA will also work closely with state and territory curriculum and certification authorities to develop advice by December 2012 for the Standing Council on the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum, and the breadth and scope of future senior secondary curriculum development.



Curriculum development – Geography, languages and the arts

Following the successful endorsement of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum, educators and the broader community are expecting further Australian Curriculum to be developed and implemented. Shape Papers have already been released for languages, the arts and geography, and consultation held on a draft geography curriculum.

In 2012–13, ACARA will finalise for Ministerial endorsement an Australian Curriculum for:

- geography – to be presented to Standing Council in December 2012
- the arts – to be presented to Standing Council by mid-2013
- Chinese and Italian languages – to be presented to Standing Council by mid-2013 (with further languages curriculum to follow), and
- an Indigenous Languages Framework – to be presented to Standing Council by December 2013.

Following endorsement and publication of these, ACARA will undertake processes to collect and publish annotated work samples.

At the December 2012 Standing Council meeting, ACARA will provide advice on the process and timelines for developing further senior secondary curriculum beyond English, mathematics, science, history and geography.

Curriculum development – Health and physical education, civics and citizenship, economics and business studies, and technologies

During 2012–13 and 2013–14, ACARA will finalise the development of shape papers for health and physical education, civics and citizenship, technologies and economics and business studies. It is expected that during 2012–13 curriculum development in these subjects will be substantially progressed and finalised for Ministerial endorsement during 2013–14 for:

- health and physical education and technologies – able to be presented to Standing Council by December 2013 and
- civics and citizenship and business and economics – able to be presented to Standing Council by December 2013.

General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

The general capabilities are the essential knowledge, skills and dispositions which young people require in the 21st century. They have strong linkages to other policy areas, including employability skills and vocational learning.

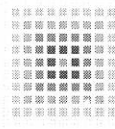
During 2012–13, ACARA will enhance the current general capability sequences to include descriptions for the end of Foundation and Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 for each of:

- literacy
- numeracy
- information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- critical and creative thinking
- ethical behaviour
- personal and social capability, and
- intercultural understanding.

The cross-curriculum priorities equip young Australians with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to engage effectively with and prosper in a globalised world. During 2012–13 and 2013–14, ACARA will continue mapping the cross-curriculum priorities across the learning areas and will consider the development of sequences of learning.

Nationally agreed and consistent approaches for assessment and reporting in relation to the F-10 Australian Curriculum

With the Australian Curriculum being progressively implemented across the country, parents and the broader community will have higher expectations that there is greater consistency in assessment and reporting of student learning and achievement.



During 2012–13 and 2013–14, ACARA will work with education authorities and the Australian Government to explore possibilities for achieving greater national consistency in reporting on student achievement, with the aim of bringing further advice to the Standing Council by the end of 2013.

Inclusivity – Articulation of how the Australian Curriculum meets the diverse learning needs of students, including students with disability and students for whom English is another language or dialect (EAL/D)

It is essential that the Australian Curriculum provide rigorous, relevant and engaging learning experiences for all students, including for students with disability and for EAL/D students. During 2012–13 and 2013–14, ACARA will finalise its advice on how the Australian Curriculum achieves this, including updating advice in a revised *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper, and developing and publishing appropriate curriculum materials by December 2012.

ACARA will also publish EAL/D specific annotations to content descriptions in the curriculum and collect and publish EAL/D specific annotated work samples by December 2013.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of the Australian Curriculum

ACARA's Charter requires the Authority to advise on the most effective processes for ensuring the continuous improvement of the Australian Curriculum and requires this improvement to reflect evidence and experience as the curriculum development work continues. In 2012–13, ACARA will finalise a monitoring, evaluation and review plan for consideration and endorsement by Ministers.

Well-established curriculum as alternatives to the Australian Curriculum recognised

In December 2011, ACARA published the outcomes of its first phase of activity to assess well established alternative curriculum frameworks as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. During 2012–13 and 2013–14, it is expected that ACARA will undertake further assessments of well-established national frameworks on an as-required basis and publish the results on its website.

Assessment Priorities

National Assessment Program (NAP) delivered, reported and analysed

The NAP is the measure through which governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not young Australians are meeting important education outcomes.

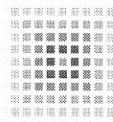
The *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) tests skills that are essential for every child to progress through school life and move successfully into further education or employment.

During 2012–13 and 2013–14, it is expected that ACARA will:

- develop, trial and analyse test items, review and quality assure the tests and construct final test forms
- centrally manage and quality assure the marking of writing and the central analysis of test performance data
- provide data to education authorities for student and school reporting
- develop and publish the *NAPLAN Summary Report*, *NAPLAN National Report* and *Test Incidents Report*, and
- review the *National Protocols for Test Administration* and *Test Integrity Guidelines* and consider any significant issues relating to NAPLAN.

The *NAP Sample Assessments Program* has been finalised up to 2013. During 2012–13, ACARA will:

- provide the 2011 ICT Literacy Assessment public report for approval and publication and release all materials
- deliver and analyse the 2012 Science Literacy Assessment, and
- develop and trial the 2013 Civics and Citizenship Assessment.



Alignment of national assessments with the Australian Curriculum

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum provides the opportunity to review the *NAP Sample Assessment Program* to take into account not only the curriculum itself but to link the national program to international assessments and to the social and workforce skills expected of students of the coming decades.

During 2012–13, ACARA will review the NAP sample assessments and provide advice to the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) and the Standing Council on options for improving the coverage of the program to provide performance information on key areas of student achievement for the 21st century in line with the *Melbourne Declaration* and the Australian Curriculum.

Detailed plan to move to online adaptive assessment modes of delivery prepared

The logistics, technical limitations and costs of printing, scanning and marking constrain a number of policy choices about what can be assessed, the year level at which assessments can occur, the length of tests, the nature of test items, when they are administered and the amount of time required to process them and provide results to students, teachers and parents. The use of digital onscreen technologies to deliver the National Assessment Program has the potential to remove many of these constraints.

During 2012–13, ACARA will finalise advice for Ministers on the potential for onscreen delivery of the National Assessment Program, including the design and development of an online delivery platform and alternative technologies for schools where online delivery is not an option under the Australian Government funded *Online Diagnostic Tools* initiative. Subject to Ministers' agreement, ACARA will commence work on the design and development of new NAPLAN tests, cooperate with Education Services Australia (ESA) on the development of a technical delivery system, and undertake bridging studies to inform the transition from paper-based to an online delivery model with a view to commencing trialling on-screen NAPLAN tests in 2013-14.

In April 2012, Ministers directed ACARA to deliver the 2013 NAP – Civics and Citizenship assessment program electronically using an online delivery platform. During 2012–13, ACARA will deliver this test.

Reporting Priorities

My School 2012 evaluation and development of future releases

The update of *My School* in February 2012 allowed parents and teachers to track the progress of students who sat NAPLAN tests over the past four years, and provided updated information for every school in the country. In 2012–13, ACARA will undertake an evaluation of the February 2012 update to determine what improvements can be made.

ACARA will also annually revise data for the 2013 and 2014 releases of *My School*. ACARA will work with the Standing Council to determine appropriate release dates.

Framework of key performance measures reviewed and updated

The basis for reporting by ministers to the community on progress with achieving the national goals for schooling is the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* including the *Schedule of Key Performance Measures*. This framework underpins reporting through the *National Report on Schooling* (ANR) released by Education Ministers, the *Report on Government Services* (ROGS) released by the Productivity Commission, and the *National Education Agreement* (NEA) reports published on behalf of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) by the COAG Reform Council.

ACARA will review the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* including the *Schedule of Key Performance Measures*. This review should provide ministers with an updated and improved set of performance measure and include the proposed options for the *NAP Sample Assessment Program* beyond 2013–14.

School opinion surveys (student, staff and parents) developed and reported

Information on the opinions of students, staff and parents provides schooling systems, schools and their communities with another source of information on the quality of education being delivered. During 2012–13, ACARA will develop an online survey delivery tool for use by schools, school systems and jurisdictions, commencing in 2013, and conduct a pilot survey for staff in 2013–14. ACARA will ensure survey results data are provided to schools, school systems and jurisdictions to support reporting findings within school annual reports.



National Report on Schooling (ANR) published

The ANR provides a range of information on schooling in Australia and reports on progress made towards the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* and the Commitment to Action for achieving them.

In 2012–13, ACARA will plan and develop the framework for the 2011 ANR, obtain data and prepare a draft report, and undertake consultation with jurisdictions. ACARA will also submit the 2011 report to Ministers for approval and publish it. ACARA will undertake similar work for the delivery of the 2012 report in 2013–14.

During 2012–13, ACARA will investigate new ways of publishing and presenting information.

Other activities

National Trade Cadetships

The *National Trade Cadetships* is an Australian Government commitment and its development is funded solely by the Australian Government. The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs agreed in July 2011 to refer to ACARA development of the *National Trade Cadetships* curriculum for Years 9 and 10, and asked ACARA to identify existing vocational learning curriculum being delivered in each state and territory that would form the basis of the Year 9-10 pathway.

In 2012–13, ACARA will undertake this mapping and develop appropriate curriculum content for the Year 9-10 *National Trade Cadetships* pathway.

Data

In today's education policy environment, quality data is essential for developing a reliable evidence base upon which Governments can understand and measure progress. Accurate, consistent and accessible data are important for national transparency and accountability.

As agreed by AEEYSOC, key items from the work program being undertaken by the Schools Data Subgroup will transition to ACARA during 2012–13. During 2012–13 and 2013–14, ACARA will assume the responsibility to develop the key items of better measures for Year 12 completion/attainment and post-school destinations.

Governance

Reporting and work plans

ACARA will continue to manage its financial affairs and reporting in accordance with its legislative requirements under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*, *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, and appropriate Finance Ministers' Orders. In addition, ACARA will be guided by the Standing Council's *Governance Protocols for SCSEEC Ministerial Authorities and Companies*.

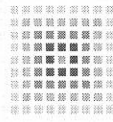
Stakeholder Engagement

The Standing Council asks that ACARA continue to build on the current productive relationships with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and ESA in order to maintain the cohesion and effectiveness of the national educational architecture.

The engagement of stakeholders is vital in ensuring that the work of ACARA is understood in the context of the COAG's education reform agenda. The Standing Council asks ACARA to continue to build networks with all stakeholders and work collaboratively to achieve education reforms at the national level. It is expected that ACARA will support education authorities across sectors in the implementation of these reforms.

ACARA is asked to continue to implement processes to maintain a high level of jurisdictional engagement, including through the membership of AEEYSOC, as well as the wider stakeholder engagement required to support and progress its work. ACARA must ensure appropriate engagement from all relevant stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- government and non-government education sectors
- the teaching profession
- universities and higher education providers



- the education unions
- the Australian Government, and
- parents and the wider school community.

On behalf of the Standing Council, I look forward to continuing to work with ACARA on these national reforms to support world class curriculum, assessment and reporting practices in Australia.

Yours sincerely

The Hon. Peter Collier MLC

Chair

Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood

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