

## National History Curriculum: Initial advice

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## National Curriculum Board's consultative process

### Determining the form of the national curriculum

1 The National Curriculum Board is committed to an open development process with substantial consultation with the profession and the public. The Board began its consultation with the publication on its website ([www.ncb.org.au](http://www.ncb.org.au)) of *National Curriculum Development Paper*, a discussion paper in which it described the context of its work and set down a set of questions that it said it needed to answer to determine the kind of curriculum it would produce. That paper has been discussed at a national forum attended by 200 people on 27 June 2008 and in subsequent state and territory forums.

2 In the light of these discussions and its own further work the Board now sets down answers to its questions in the document *The Shape of the National Curriculum: a Proposal for Discussion*. That does not mean, however, that discussion is closed. The paper is posted on the Board's website with an invitation to anyone interested to provide comment and advice during Term 4 2008<sup>1</sup>. After this time, the Board will determine its final recommendations and post them on its website in Term 1 2009.

### Developing the scope and content of each national curriculum

3 The Board has also begun work on the shape of the national curriculum in English, mathematics, the sciences and history. For each, the Board recruited a writer who has worked with a small advisory group to draft a relatively brief initial advice paper that provides a rationale for students studying the curriculum and a broad scope and sequence of material to be covered over the years Kindergarten to Year 12.

4 This approach will facilitate a discussion of the key issues in each curriculum before any detailed curriculum development commences. The first discussions will be held in the following national forums attended by 150-220 people:

- Monday 13 October 2008 *Science*
- Tuesday 14 October 2008 *Mathematics*
- Wednesday 15 October 2008 *History*
- Friday 17 October 2008 *English*

5 At the forums there will also be some discussion about cross-curriculum learnings, including literacy and numeracy. Feedback from the forums will form part of the consultative process that will ultimately lead to more focused consultation about literacy and numeracy as a strong foundation for all learning, as outlined in the Board's remit to develop national curriculum.

6 On the day after each forum a small group of nominees from the relevant subject associations will meet with the authors and staff from the Office of the National Curriculum Board to provide their interpretation of the discussion in the forum and its implications for developing the curriculum. More detailed papers will be posted on the Board's website with an invitation to anyone interested to provide comment and advice in the period to 28 February 2009. After that, the Board will post on its website its final recommendations to guide curriculum development.

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals can register on the website to receive email alerts when any new material is posted, particularly material on which comment and advice are invited.

## **National Curriculum Board members**

Professor Barry McGaw AO, Chair  
Director, Melbourne Education Research Institute, University of Melbourne

Tony Mackay, Deputy Chair  
Executive Director, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne

Tom Alegounarias, Chief Executive, New South Wales Institute of Teachers

John Firth, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Kim Bannikoff, Director, Queensland Studies Authority

Professor Bill Loudon, Dean of Education, University of Western Australia

Helen Wildash, Executive Director, Curriculum, South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services

David Hanlon, Former Deputy Secretary, Tasmanian Department of Education

Rita Henry, Executive Director, Innovation and Change, Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training

Janet Davy, Deputy Chief Executive, Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training

Dr Brian Croke, Executive Director, Catholic Education Commission New South Wales

Garry Le Duff, Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia

Professor Marie Emmitt, Dean of Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University National

## **History advisory group**

The advice in this paper was provided by an advisory group led by Professor Stuart Macintyre, University of Melbourne, Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard in 2007/08, President of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

The advisory group members are:

Dr John Hirst, La Trobe University

David Boon, Illawarra Primary School, Bateman's Bay, Tasmania

Dr Dawn Casey, Director, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Louise Secker, WA History Teachers' Association, Shenton College

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### **Professor Stuart Macintyre biography**

Stuart Macintyre was educated in Melbourne and undertook doctoral studies in history at Cambridge. He has held appointments at Cambridge, Murdoch, the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne. Since 1990 he has been the Ernest Scott Professor of History and in 2002 was made a Laureate Professor of the University of Melbourne. He was Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1999 to 2006.

In 2008 he took up the chair of Australian Studies at Harvard. From 1996 to 1998 he was president of the Australian Historical Association and from 2002 to 2004 he chaired the Humanities and Creative Arts panel of the Australian Research Council. He served terms on the councils of the National Library of Australia and the State Library of Victoria.

Stuart Macintyre is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and currently the president of the Academy of the Social Sciences.

## **National History Curriculum: Initial advice**

1. The development of a national history curriculum provides an invaluable opportunity to ensure that all Australian students learn history. Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any civilized society, historical knowledge fundamental to understanding ourselves and others, historical thinking as foundational and challenging as the disciplines of science, mathematics and English. By teaching history systematically and sequentially across the years of schooling we will enrich educational outcomes.

### **Why history?**

2. History is the study of the past. It provides knowledge, understanding and appreciation of previous events, practices and ideas. It orders them and renders them intelligible, discerns patterns of continuity and change. It provides the means whereby individual and collective identities are formed and sustained.

3. History is a distinctive and indispensable form of understanding practised across many generations. Human civilization is marked by a preservation of the past in oral memory, documents, monuments and traditions, the veneration of exemplary figures and commemoration of formative events.

4. History sits across the social sciences and the humanities. Like the social sciences, it employs explanatory models and evidence to test hypotheses and reach conclusions about social behaviour. Like the humanities, it deepens our understanding of humanity, creativity, purposes and values.

5. History draws on and contributes to other bodies of knowledge, but it is a discipline with its own methods and procedures. Like other disciplines, its practice is bound by powerful norms, yet at the same time it moves as the result of innovation and discovery. The discipline of history was shaped powerfully in the nineteenth century by the rise of scientific research, yet marked itself off by the distinctive feature of its subject matter. Each event is unique, bound by its particular context and culture.

6. History stretches from the distant past to the present, and provides a deeper understanding of contemporary events as well as the enduring significance of earlier ones. It introduces us to a variety of human experience, enables us to see the world through the eyes of others, and enriches our appreciation of the contingent nature of change.

7. For all these reasons history is an essential component of school education.

### **History for the twenty-first century**

8. The French historian Pierre Nora suggests that the present conviction that we are experiencing an 'acceleration of history' does not result from an unprecedented number of events of significance. Rather, he contends, globalisation and the pervasive influence of mass culture make this a period of remarkable and profound change.

9. Globalisation itself has a longer history but in its common usage it refers to the movement of capital, goods, people and cultures across national boundaries. Australia is marked particularly by migration: a quarter of all Australians were born elsewhere, and

they have come from all over the world, bringing with them their own experiences, belief systems and aspirations. Australia has a particular awareness of its first people and an enlarged appreciation of the Aboriginal dimension of Australian history coincides with a commitment to improving educational and other outcomes for Aboriginals. Australia has engaged with its immediate region and the attainment of deeper knowledge of the Asia-Pacific is a national priority. The growth of the global economy, and the transformation of the newly industrialised countries, has placed severe strains on the environment. And the opening up of Australia to global competition has placed greater emphasis on educational outcomes.

10. These changes find recognition in the *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians – Draft* recently issued by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). Looking back on the first Declaration of Goals in 1989, the ministers note that ‘Increasing global integration and interdependence are driving the need for greater religious tolerance, an appreciation of cultural diversity and a sense of global citizenship and commitment to peaceful conflict resolution among all Australians’. The new draft declaration observes that the growing importance of India, China and other Asia-Pacific nations sparks the need for Australians to become ‘Asia literate’, as well as the need for greater environmental awareness, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the augmented importance of educational attainment.

11. The starting-point of this paper is that the restriction of the national curriculum to Australian history is inappropriate. If only to equip students to operate in the world in which they will live, they need to understand world history. That history should have a broad and comprehensive foundation from which its implications for Australia can be grasped. It is only from such a foundation that the longevity and richness of Aboriginal history will be appreciated; that the dimensions of our migrant experience and cultural diversity will be intelligible; that our relations with the Asian region will be comprehended; that the ecological limits of our current practices will be grasped, and the distinctive as well as the shared and derivative character of our past will be revealed.

12. Australian history will retain an important place in a national curriculum. We fail students — both those who have arrived recently and those with many earlier generations in this country — if we deny them a familiarity with the national story, so that they can appreciate its values and binding traditions. We fail them also if we do not foster the skills of historical thinking that equip them, by the end of their studies, to take an active part in the debates over the legacy of the past, to understand and make use of new sources of information, to sift the wheat from the chaff, to find truth and meaning in history and contribute to democratic discussion of national issues. A good understanding of Australian history is essential to civics and citizenship education.

### **The objective**

13. The fundamental objective of school history is to provide students with the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past. Young Australians come to school from different backgrounds that are informed by different family and community narratives. These influences continue to operate as they progress through school, and subsequently they will be exposed to other forms of collective memory. The school is thus but one agency that shapes historical consciousness.

14. One reason for teaching history is to foster the capacity to respond to these influences in an intelligent and informed manner so that their full potential for enriching experience is realised.

15. Another is to develop a critical perspective on received versions of the past, and learn how to compare conflicting accounts so that the conflicts and ambiguities are appreciated. A historical education should increase self-awareness and the awareness of others. Through comparative historical analysis and critical appraisal of evidence, history contributes to an active and informed democratic citizenship.

16. Introducing students to historical thinking involves teaching methods of historical inquiry. Students need both to know history and practise it. Factual knowledge is essential to historical thinking. Without knowledge of chronology, geography, institutional arrangements, material circumstances and belief systems, no student project on a past period — however well intended — will afford understanding. Accordingly, a complementary objective of school history must be to provide students with this knowledge.

17. In broad terms, students should be introduced to world history from the time of the earliest human communities: they should have sufficient familiarity with the course of human history to the present to be able to grasp the major phases of that history and the transformations that determined them.

18. Students should have an appreciation of the major civilizations of Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia. They should understand Australian history within a comparative framework that embraces the indigenous and settler components, and they should be aware of its regional and global dimensions.

19. While this knowledge will necessarily be broad, students should have the skills to extend it: if they are not familiar with a specific historical reference, they should be able to locate it in place and time, know how to find sources of information about it and to appraise them, familiarise themselves with context and grasp the import of the reference. No-one possesses an exhaustive historical knowledge, but an historical education should furnish both the capacity to acquire new knowledge and a continuing desire to do so.

### **Historical thinking**

20. Historical thinking requires the mastery of the methods, procedures and tools that constitute the discipline of history. As Sam Wineburg, a Professor of Education and History at Stanford, puts it, historical thinking is not a natural act. It differs from the intuitive, memory-based understandings of the past because it requires negotiating between the familiar and unfamiliar, and involves investigation, debate and reasoning about the past.

21. Recent discussion of historical pedagogy has identified core concepts of historical thinking. These concepts, it should be noted, are not skills divorced from content, for they operate in conjunction with historical knowledge to guide and shape the practice of the discipline. There are various articulations of these core concepts. Peter Seixas, the

director of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia, suggests the following Benchmarks of Historical Thinking:

(1) Historical significance: the principles behind the selection of what should be remembered, investigated, taught and learned. Establishing historical significance involves going beyond what is personally interesting or congenial: it requires judgements of contemporary import, consequence, durability and relevance.

(2) Evidence: how to find, select and interpret historical evidence. This involves understanding the nature of a primary source, locating its provenance and context, asking questions about it, distinguishing between the claims it makes and the assumptions and values that inform it, and the ability to compare competing primary sources.

(3) Continuity and change: dealing with the complexity of the past. This involves the capacity to understand the sequence of events, to make connections by means of organising concepts including periodisation, and to evaluate change with an informed understanding of the principles of progress and decline.

(4) Cause and consequence: the interplay of human agency and conditions. This involves an appreciation of motivation and contestation, short-term events and embedded circumstances, the ways that the legacy of the past shapes intentions and the unintended consequences that arise from purposeful action.

(5) Historical perspectives: the cognitive act of understanding the different social, cultural and intellectual contexts that shaped people's lives and actions in the past. This involves an understanding of the dangers of anachronism and an appreciation of diverse perspectives on the past.

(6) Historical empathy and moral judgement: the capacity to enter into the world of the past with an informed imagination and ethical responsibility. The discipline of history constrains the practitioner from imposing personal preferences on the evidence but all meaningful historical accounts involve explicit or implicit moral judgement, and historians require an awareness of their own values and the impact of these values on their historical thinking.

22. Within Australia, Tony Taylor and Carmel Young have developed a related framework of attributes of historical thinking under the rubric of Historical Literacy. Their Framework distinguishes between skills of Investigation (Events, Narrative, Research skills and use of evidence, Language of history, Historical concepts and ICT understandings — drawing on the importance of the Web as an online archive) and those of Engagement and Explanation (Making connections, Contention and contestability, Representational expression, Moral judgements, Applying science and technology, and Explanation).

23. These attributes provide a similar guide to the development of historical understanding as the Benchmarks, though they go further in their attention to cross-curricular elements as well as their inclusion of Contention and contestability, which aims to assist students in 'understanding the rules and the place of public and professional historical debate'. The formulation of Historical Literacy has also been endorsed by both



the History Teachers Association of Australia and the Australian Historical Association. This paper finds the concept of historical thinking an attractive one, but leaves the codification of its components for future consideration.

### **What the curriculum should look like**

24. This section of the paper will be developed by closer consideration of:

(1) A survey of the current scope and sequencing of history curriculums in the states and territories; the national curriculum will clearly involve change, but ought to build on successful existing curriculums and avoid unnecessary disruption of them.

(2) Advice from history teachers on pedagogical issues.

(3) Attention to the uneven state of professional preparation of history teachers; since history is currently taught within a generic social education framework in most states, often with teachers who have no training in history, the successful implementation of a national history curriculum requires attention to its feasibility.

25. The starting-point of curriculum design should be that less detail allows greater depth. The experience in New South Wales, which in 1999 introduced a compulsory Australian history syllabus in Years 9 and 10, was that it was too laden with content, too prescriptive, too much of a forced route-march for many students. A revision of the syllabus in 2002 reduced the content and increased engagement.

26. The development of historical thinking requires sustained attention to key concepts and skills, which in turn are grounded in specific bodies of historical knowledge. The English educationalist Peter Lee distinguishes between substantive and procedural knowledge of history: substantive knowledge incorporates knowledge of events, historical actors and other information; procedural knowledge refers to the concepts and vocabulary that are used to make sense of the substance of the past. The distinction does not imply a hierarchy or sequence of learning, for both forms of knowledge are mutually dependent.

27. The efficacy of this approach was demonstrated by an evaluation of the British Schools History Project (SHP) conducted by Denis Shemilt. The SHP model combined a historical survey with studies in depth, and Shemilt's study demonstrated that many more of the students in the Australian equivalent of Years 9 to 11 who followed this model achieved historical understanding than those who worked with the more traditional British curriculum.

28. The attention to both domains of knowledge places limits on the extent of substantive knowledge that can be covered, and calls for careful curriculum design. The curriculum needs to incorporate overview, bridging and depth components. Overview components will use an expansive chronology and assist students to understand broad patterns of historical change. Bridging components will provide a context for closer studies in depth. Depth studies will provide students with the opportunity to bring the skills of historical thinking to bear on well-defined events of particular significance.

29. The curriculum should provide for a sequence of learning, building on and consolidating earlier studies, but avoid excessive repetition — for a consistent complaint of students in history, especially Australian history, is that they repeatedly cover the same ground.

30. The curriculum should be substantial and flexible. It should be sufficiently rich and descriptive to guide teachers with limited experience, but avoid excessive prescription that would hamper experienced and able teachers from exercising their skills.

31. The curriculum should allow for differences in interests, capabilities and future pathways of students. It should include components providing the opportunity for able students to undertake more advanced studies.

### *Primary*

32. History is generally taught in the primary school in conjunction with cognate fields of study such as geography, social studies, environmental studies and civics, usually in an inquiry-based, integrated curriculum. This is appropriate, for history should be informed by and contribute to these parallel studies, though it is at primary school that history should be introduced as a distinctive branch of learning, with its own concerns and procedures.

33. The primary school curriculum should introduce students to the traditions, stories, myths and legends that connect them with the values, beliefs and the socio-cultural elements of past societies. It should also lead to an appreciation of the legacy of that past on present society.

34. The curriculum has traditionally moved from the child's personal and family history through to studies of the local, state and national levels, with a limited coverage in the upper grades of some aspects of world history. This model is based on the need to build from the concrete experiences of lower primary students towards the abstract understanding of elements more removed in terms of both space and time for upper primary students.

35. Yet modern technologies have broadened the personal experiences of many young children beyond the immediate sphere of family, home and locality. While these remain major factors of influence, they are not the only influences in young children's lives. Moreover, students come from a far wider range of backgrounds and their personal histories can often have far greater connection to the history of distant countries than that of the local area. The history curriculum, while building from direct experience towards more abstract understanding, must ensure that learning opportunities allow for relevant global and national connections to be made to personal, family and local history in the early years of schooling.

36. In the lower primary school years the curriculum should enable students to make connections between their direct experiences and those that result from their exposure to artefacts, images, simple primary sources and oral histories that relate to their own past and those of significant others. Through questioning and sharing understandings, lower primary students begin to make comparisons between their own personal past and the past of others.

37. The middle and upper primary school curriculum for Australian history should introduce students to key topics for inquiry in history that will be pursued in greater depth and breadth in the junior secondary years.

38. This approach to history at the primary level is consistent with the national *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship*. The approach is set out persuasively in Tony Taylor's *Outline of a Model Curriculum Framework: Australian History Years 3 to 10* which was produced for the Australian Government working party established after the 2007 History Summit. It would make use of local and community history, with strong links to national, regional and global perspectives. Students would use local and community history, as well as stories about well-known and 'ordinary' people, as they acquire an initial understanding of some key events in Australian history, particularly significant events in the development of Australian democracy. Such an approach is exemplified in work done by some primary schools in South Australia for the Commonwealth History Project: one school began by investigating local monuments, then studied Uluru and finally Angkor Wat.

#### *Junior secondary*

39. It is recognised that the transition from primary to secondary school occurs at Year 7 in some jurisdictions, and Year 8 in others. The proposals set out here assume that the studies begin in Year 7.

40. It is proposed tentatively that the history curriculum should follow a sequence:

- (1) History from the time of the earliest human communities to the end of the Ancient period (c. 60,000BC — c. 500AD)
- (2) History from the end of Ancient period to the beginning of the Modern period (c.500 — 1750)
- (3) Modern history (c. 1750 — present)
- (4) Australian history (c.1901 — present)

41. The first three units should be taught as world history; that is, they should comprehend all five continents. The history of human activity in Australia would be a significant component of the first three units, so that Aboriginal history, early Asian and European contact, settler colonialism and the development of parliamentary democracy in Australia would be taught comparatively within them.

42. This will call for careful planning, drawing on experience of the components of these subjects that work well in current practice (both Ancient History and Medieval History have long standing and deserved popularity in the junior secondary years).

43. The global perspective is crucial, but not all of the world's history can be considered. World history is a distinct field of historical study, with its own practitioners, practices and literature that seeks to comprehend the forms and patterns of all human societies, and it is a popular field in the teaching of history in the United States. The approach to world history envisaged in this paper draws on the insights of that field but uses it to enrich the

study of world history as it bears on Australia and its place in the world. Hence the emphases in the following unit descriptions.

44. The first unit will explore the ways of life and global migrations of the earliest communities, noting their social structures, economic activities, technologies, forms of communication, rituals and exchange networks across continents and bodies of water. It will explore the parallel origins of sedentism and then agriculture in various locations across the globe, including the Pacific region. In turn, it will consider the diffusion of agricultural activities and the emergence of cities, states and empires and their associated social, economic, political and religious systems. It will track the connection of Africa with the Near East, Europe and Asia into a Eurasian world system, but also highlight Aboriginal, Melanesian and American societies.

45. The second unit follows the expansion and collapse of states and empires, and the emergence of global networks of exchange. This unit will highlight the consolidation of complex urban states and associated social, political, economic and religious activities in Europe, for the settler society of Australia derived many of its core institutions and values from Western Europe and its expansion into the rest of the world from the sixteenth century had decisive consequences. The unit will also consider other major civilizations in Asia — particularly those located in the Near and Middle East, China, Japan and India and America. This unit provides an important opportunity to understand the context for the settler society of Australia, and the acceleration of Aboriginal technologies on the eve of European settlement. It is here also that the major world religions would be studied.

46. The third unit highlights the effects of the global convergence first seen in unit two, including the emergence of a global economy. It deals with the industrial revolution and industrialisation, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, the French and American Revolutions, the principles of human rights and democracy, the rise of the nation-state and associated ideas of national identity, the era of mass warfare and the ideological conflicts it engendered, and the emergence of supra-national organisations. The unit would give particular attention to the consequences of these transformative changes for the region, and to a comparative study of settler societies.

47. The fourth unit on Australian history will draw on the recommendations made in the *Outline of a Model Curriculum Framework: Australian History Years 3 to 10*. The *Guide to the Teaching of Australian History in Years 9 and 10* prepared by the Australian History Reference Group and issued in 2007 will also be a useful resource. The *Outline* and the *Guide* set out a curriculum for a two-year study of Australian history, and there will need to be consideration of how a one-year study might be designed. It would draw on the systematic coverage of Aboriginal, imperial and colonial history in the prior units, and it will include Federation, World War I, the Depression, World War II, immigration, women's rights, the Vietnam War, Indigenous rights and contemporary political history.

48. All four units will employ the overview, bridging and depth studies. The curriculum will make particular use of narrative, applying the skills of historical thinking to the depth studies, and working to a comparative overview by the completion of each unit. Year 10 should include a larger retrospective overview of the four units.

### *Senior secondary*

49. It is recognised that the transition to senior secondary studies occurs at Year 11 in some jurisdictions, and Year 10 in others. The proposals set out here assume that the studies begin in Year 11. Senior secondary students exercise a choice of subjects, so not all of them will be enrolled in history; but it is to be hoped that the majority will continue with history. History at the senior secondary level typically offers a range of choice of more specialised units that are studied in greater depth. There should be options to pursue more advanced studies in the histories taught in Years 7 to 10. It is proposed that there should be units in Years 11 and 12 in Ancient and Modern History, and Australian History. The Modern History unit should ensure coverage of the full period from 1750 to the present.

50. New South Wales offers extension studies in history at Year 12 which allow students to explore traditions of historical research and writing, including debates among historians, and engage in the production of an extended research project. This option provides a valuable opportunity for able students to work with primary and secondary materials and to examine varying methodologies and approaches, and should be offered nationally.

### **Guidelines for skills, knowledge and understanding**

51. The basis for such guidelines can be found in the document, *Outline of a Model Curriculum Framework: Australian History Years 3 to 10*, which provides a description of historical skills, knowledge and understanding at Years 6 and 10. The guidelines are based on historical thinking and state:

By the end of Year 10, students should know, and be able to clarify for themselves, issues associated with the use of evidence, including location of sources, provenance, reliability, completeness and the use of the Web as a source; understand the value of significance, motivation, causation and empathy as historical concepts; describe and assess the significance of key events in Australian history; understand the broader context of these key events by making connections to wider social, political and economic factors; apply, where relevant, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and gender perspectives; examine and draw conclusions about the relationship between events in Australia and the wider global community, and vice versa; test out moral and ethical dilemmas in past events; have an understanding of the differences of opinion that exist about historical interpretation of key events; be able to assess the contribution of creative representations of the past to historical explanation and the impact of scientific and technological investigation on historical understanding and, finally, be able to construct a sequenced narrative in Australian history.

With appropriate translation for the enlarged curriculum, this provides a suitable basis for establishing student attainment levels. The statements should allow for different levels of attainment.

### **Cross-curriculum learnings**

52. Historical inquiry provides opportunities for the incorporation of literacy, numeracy, ICT, languages and civics and citizenship. Accordingly, the history curriculum should be

aligned to relevant elements of each of these cross-curriculum areas. With the integrated approach to history favoured in the primary schools, teaching times dedicated to literacy, numeracy, ICT, languages and civics and citizenship can incorporate relevant elements of historical inquiry. Equally, secondary teachers can enhance learning in these areas. The successful balancing of competing curriculum demands and the need to provide adequate time for students to fully develop historical understanding as well as to develop understanding in the identified cross-curriculum areas requires that such natural connections be made explicitly.

### *Literacy*

53. Literacy is deeply embedded in historical thinking. Through the study of history students learn how to find information, how to read texts with critical discernment and how to create their own texts that present the results of historical thinking clearly and logically. These skills should be developed across a range of textual genres and formats, including art, photography, film, music, fiction and multimedia. With a growing range of multimodal texts in the areas of film and ICT, students should also develop the capacity to utilise such texts to undertake and present research that demonstrates historical understanding.

54. From Edward Gibbon to Geoffrey Blainey, writers of history provide models of literary distinction that engage students and enhance their appreciation of prose. Students should be exposed to secondary sources that exemplify these qualities, and opportunities should be taken to include such non-fiction texts in the English curriculum.

### *Numeracy*

55. Much of the evidence and reasoning in historical thinking is quantitative: chronology, demography, economic activity, changes in the size and reach of institutions. All of these call for an appreciation of numerical scale and proportion. Ancillary disciplines of history such as archaeology, and its use of carbon dating, call for mathematical skills.

56. Utilising the five 'broadly defined and inter-related aspects of Mathematics curriculums that are considered essential and common' outlined in the Statements of Learning for Mathematics, it is clear that history has an integral part to play in the area of numeracy. In undertaking historical inquiry students need to:

- (1) work with and utilise number and measurement
- (2) understand dimensions of space, including location
- (3) gather, interpret and present data
- (4) identify patterns in numerical and spatial data

### *ICT*

57. The MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce defined ICT literacy as 'The ability of individuals to use ICT appropriately to access, manage and evaluate information, develop new understandings, and communicate with others in

order to participate effectively in society'. History presents opportunities to incorporate each of the elements of ICT outlined by the Taskforce.

58. Through digitised online materials such as historical documents, books, newspapers, images and items from museum collections, as well as other online resources including databases, reference works (such as dictionaries of biography), and indexes to archival museum and library holdings, students and teachers have access a growing range of online information critical for historical understanding.

59. A range of computer applications provide new and less linear ways of thinking about, interpreting and representing data. This includes new ways for capturing oral history, such as digital audio-visual recording. Tools such as those utilised in the area of Global Information Systems (GIS), applications for the creation of online timelines and graphic organisers, and a range of other programs and applications for data collection and management enhance opportunities for gathering, interpreting and presenting historical material.

60. Online learning objects, learning sequences and other resources provide additional resources. The new curriculum should utilise and build upon such resources to provide support in navigating the ever-increasing amount of online materials available for historical inquiry.

#### *Languages and Studies of Asia*

61. This history curriculum is concerned with a large number of non-English speaking societies, and provides substantial opportunities to draw on materials in languages other than English. Language study is enriched by an appreciation of history, literature and culture. By providing substantial opportunities to study Asian history, the curriculum also supports the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* agreed by all Australian Ministers of Education in 2006.

#### *The Arts*

62. Historical understanding enhances student appreciation of the arts and, in turn, can be enhanced by drawing on a wide range of artistic works (performing and visual) and considering them in their historical context.

#### *Civics and citizenship education*

63. Civics and citizenship education became a matter of national concern during the 1990s, so that the 1999 revision of the National Goals for Schooling added the goal that when students leave school they should be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.

64. Civics and citizenship education was supported by the Commonwealth government's Discovering Democracy program, which developed a range of educational materials and funded professional development of teachers. The program had a historical emphasis. While the teaching of civics and citizenship was not mandated, it was one five areas of learning incorporated in the first national assessment of student outcomes during 2003.

65. All Australian ministers for education agreed to implement the 2006 national *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship* from January 2008. The *Statements* set out the essential skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities in civics and citizenship that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn by the end of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. They are grouped by 'aspects', namely Government and Law, Citizenship in a Democracy, and Historical Perspectives, which are common to curriculums across the jurisdictions. In addition, national sample assessment of students in Years 6 and 10 in civics and citizenship is conducted every three years. The assessment domain includes a significant historical component, particularly the history of democracy in Australia.

66. The proposed history curriculum would include some of the skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities in civics and citizenship specified in the *Statements*, particularly in the Historical Perspectives aspect as well as the historical understandings tested in the National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship.

67. The teaching of civics is commonly linked with history. It allows students to follow the emergence of key principles of citizenship, the arguments they engendered, the changing institutional forms of government and civil society, and the circumstances in which they have flourished or failed. The skills of historical thinking equip students to make informed and morally responsible judgements.

### **Pedagogy and assessment**

68. The approach set out in this paper is premised on schools making a substantial commitment to teaching history. This will require making space in the timetable for a sustained and sequential program. At present there is little guidance for the allocation of time to history. It should occupy at least ten percent of teaching time in the primary school years, and in years 7 to 10 it should occupy an average of 100 classes a year, and a total of 400 classes.

69. It will also require empowering teachers to meet the substantial challenge of developing the knowledge and skills required for historical thinking. There are many able teachers of history who are trained in the discipline and its pedagogy; we should recognise and support their expertise, and draw on it to develop the new curriculum. The involvement of their professional associations will be crucial.

70. But there many schools in which the teaching of history is undertaken by teachers who lack the training and confidence to undertake the task. Hence successful implementation will require attention to teacher preparation: we need teachers who have undertaken a rich major in history as part of their first degree (and it is to be hoped that an increasing proportion will have also undertaken honours and postgraduate research) as well as attention to history in their teacher training. We need recruitment policies that emphasise such qualifications. We need provision for professional development that allows history teachers to keep abreast of developments in the discipline, and to enrich their teaching through familiarity with current research. We need resources to be available for use in the classroom that will support the history curriculum that this paper describes.



71. Finally, in order to ensure that history receives the attention it needs, there needs to be appropriate assessments and reporting of outcomes. The assessment should be appropriate to the goal of developing historical thinking.

### **Research basis**

72. This paper draws on the research of Tony Taylor and the National Centre for History Education at Monash University, as well as international research I encountered through Peter Seixas and his Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia. It is informed by the advice provided by a group of history teachers, educators, and historical practitioners, who met on 22 September.

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