

Statement from ACARA Chair Professor Barry McGaw for release 23 September 9.30am

For over two decades Australia has been moving towards a national approach to schooling, including a national curriculum.

In 1989 all Education Ministers issued a set of common goals for schooling in Australia, expressed in their Hobart Declaration, and initiated work on supporting detailed statements of expected outcomes for students that would influence state and territory curricula.

Now, more than 20 years later and after a series of collaborative efforts among the states and territories, the first truly Australian Curriculum is almost ready for Australian schools. Australia ranks high in the international comparisons of school students' performances in key subject areas so our state and territory curricula have served us well. We are not right at the top and we should aspire to be there in education as we do in other domains. A world-class national curriculum, building on the best of our current curricula and shaped by comparison with the best from overseas, gives us the prospect of achieving that goal.

The Australian Curriculum up to Year 10 for the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history will be presented to the Council of Ministers of Education in December this year.

We had hoped to have reached this point in October, but the Board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has decided to take a few more weeks in the final stages to ensure that we have an Australian Curriculum that all education authorities support as we present it to Ministers.

Once Ministers endorse the curriculum in December, it will be available for implementation from 2011 by those jurisdictions and schools wanting to commence implementation in 2011. Ministers have previously agreed that the nature and timing of implementation is a matter for individual jurisdictions and schools as long as there is substantial implementation in all schools by the end of 2013.

Along with the final curriculum content, in December ACARA will also publish the achievement standards, work samples and a range of information and curriculum planning resources to support schools prepare for implementation. From next year ACARA will collect and publish further samples of students' work to clarify the expectations of students. Schools will also have immediate access to over 4,500 support resources provided through the national digital resource collection that will link to the Australian Curriculum.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of the education community from around Australia who have participated in the process, both those who have been engaged in the current work and those who laid the foundations on which we have built. The process has been robust and productive and the product is something of which, I believe, we will all be proud.

Background to the Development of an Australian Curriculum

A twenty year journey

The Hobart Declaration 1989

State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education agreed to

- Common Agreed National Goals for Schooling
- National collaboration in curriculum development

The Adelaide Declaration 1999

State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education agreed to

Continuing to develop curriculum and related systems of assessment, accreditation and credentialing that promote quality and are nationally recognised and valued.

The Statements of Learning 2003

As a means of achieving greater national consistency in curriculum outcomes across the eight States and Territories, the July 2003 ministerial council meeting agreed that *Statements of Learning* be developed in English, mathematics, science and civics and citizenship. It was agreed that *Statements of Learning* would describe essential skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn by the end of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Introduction of the NAP including the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy May 2008

The introduction of the statements of learning enabled a national assessment program to be implemented to assess the learning of Australian students in a nationally consistent fashion.

April 2008

Work on national curriculum development began with scoping of curriculum development by the interim National Curriculum Board (iNCB)

November 2008 – February 2009

Public consultation was held on the framing papers for English, mathematics, science and history

The Melbourne Declaration December 2008

State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education agreed to

Developing a national curriculum including the learning areas of English, mathematics, sciences, history, geography and social sciences, the arts, languages, health and physical education, information and communication technology and design and technology.

May 2009

Overarching Shape of the Australian Curriculum paper and Shape papers for English, mathematics, science and history released based upon feedback on the framing papers.

Establishment of the ACARA Board. ACARA's Board has representatives from every state and territory, as well as representatives from the Catholic education system and the independent schools sector.

May 2009 – March 2010

Drafting of curriculum for K-10 English, mathematics, science and history.

March 2010 – May 2010

The K-10 formal consultation period. The consultation process has been comprehensive and has included:

- public online access to the draft curriculum over March-May provided opportunities for any individual and group to submit online feedback directly on the curriculum, via an online survey and via written submissions
- consultation forums in each state and territory over March and April conducted by ACARA provided opportunities for colleagues from schools and from education and curriculum authorities to provide direct feedback on the draft K-10 curriculum
- national consultation forums in May attended by teachers and other curriculum experts nominated by school and curriculum authorities, professional associations, universities and other key stakeholder groups provided opportunities to confirm and contribute further to the consultation feedback and provided suggested ways forward
- trial school activity by approximately 150 schools across the country over the formal consultation period; this enabled teachers to use the draft curriculum, provide their experiences and views, and submit examples of work, program overviews and student samples

- Curriculum Mapping provided an indication of the extent of similarity and difference with current curriculum in states and territories with reference to content and level of cognitive demand
- written submissions from school and curriculum authorities in every state and territory, from national agencies and professional associations, and key stakeholder groups; this process provided opportunities for key stakeholders to engage directly with ACARA on matters which would be followed up in dialogue during the revision process
- presentations and workshops by ACARA to a range of stakeholder groups upon invitation; these raised awareness of the curriculum development work, provided additional forums for feedback, and increased people's engagement with the Australian Curriculum
- public awareness raising through the media, which alerted parts of the education community not already engaged in consultation on the draft Australian Curriculum, as well as the broader Australian public, of the opportunity to participate in this important exercise.

June 2010 – September 2010

Following the formal consultation period, ACARA was involved in a period of curriculum revision which included a further round of consultation. This period included:

- ACARA working with a small group of expert learning area advisers and writers in responding to the feedback and reviewing the curriculum.
- two national panel meetings for each learning area (each with in excess of 50 participants) in July and August; these panels consolidated responses to the consultation feedback and provided feedback on the subsequent revisions to the draft curriculum
- ongoing conduct of a number of presentations and workshops by ACARA to a range of stakeholder groups upon invitation; these activities raised awareness of the curriculum development work, provided additional forums for feedback, and increased people's engagement with the Australian Curriculum
- meetings with representatives from each state and territory school and curriculum authorities, and with the major national learning area professional associations; these meetings enabled clarification of

ACARA's response to their consultation feedback and identification of any outstanding matters requiring attention

- feedback from critical readers and reviewers around the country.

September 2010 – December 2010

During this time ACARA will continue to work intensively with Education Departments and education systems to respond to questions and to reassure them that their feedback has been incorporated into the final versions of the curriculum.