

ACARA's submission to the Inquiry into building Asia capability in Australia through the education system and beyond

November 2025

As the national authority for curriculum, assessment and reporting, ACARA is committed to supporting the learning of all young Australians by delivering a world-class curriculum that equips students with the knowledge, skills and intercultural understanding needed to thrive in a globalised world.

ACARA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the *Inquiry into building Asia capability in Australia through the education system and beyond*.

Scope of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum is structured around three interrelated dimensions: discipline-based learning areas, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priorities. This three-dimensional design, affirmed by both the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)* and the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019)*, ensures students develop deep disciplinary knowledge alongside the skills, behaviours and dispositions needed to thrive in a complex, globalised world. The cross-curriculum priorities—**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**, **Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia**, and **Sustainability**—enrich learning by making the curriculum more relevant, contemporary and engaging.

Purpose and vision of the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum is first and foremost an explicit statement of the priorities and aspirations we hold for our young people, and about what the Australian community values as the knowledge, understanding and skills that our young people should attain while at school. It exemplifies a shared commitment to high expectations of achievement across the country, to respectful and rational discussion of different perspectives, values and beliefs, and to democratic processes as the means of promoting the common good of all.

The Australian Curriculum supports every student to develop strong literacy and numeracy skills in their early years of schooling and to then go on to develop deep discipline knowledge within the learning areas, along with the capabilities to enable them to thrive in times of rapid social and technological change, and to contribute to our nation's progress as a prosperous, compassionate, tolerant and just society.

Australia is closely connected with Asia, making it important for young people to develop the knowledge, skills and intercultural understanding needed to engage effectively. By learning about Asia's societies, histories, languages, cultures and contemporary challenges, students build respect, empathy and confidence to contribute meaningfully to Asia–Australia engagement.

The Australian Curriculum provides these opportunities through the Cross-curriculum Priority *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* and the Languages learning area. Students can develop both intercultural understanding and linguistic skills with Asian languages offered including Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia - Cross-curriculum priority

The cross-curriculum priorities support the Australian Curriculum to be a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum. These three priorities — **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**, **Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia**, and **Sustainability**— are not separate learning areas or subjects. Rather, they provide opportunities to enrich the content of the learning areas, where appropriate, allowing students to engage with and better understand their world.

Asia is a region of global significance, with deep and growing influence both internationally and within Australia. To thrive in this context, young Australians need the knowledge, skills, capabilities and attitudes to engage confidently and respectfully with our regional neighbours.

The Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority recognises the importance of equipping students to navigate and contribute to this dynamic region. It is embedded, where relevant, across all learning areas - including Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, English, Science, Health and Physical Education, and Technologies.

The Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority describes Asia in terms of cultural, religious, historical and language boundaries of commonalities. It has three sets of organising ideas:

- *Knowing Asia and its diversity*: This emphasises the need to appreciate the backgrounds, experiences, stories, religions, beliefs and perspectives within and among the nations of the Asia region. It is supported by understanding Asia and Australia's interconnected environments, natural, managed and constructed, and the political, financial and technological systems that drive relationships.
- *Understanding Asia's global significance*: This examines the ways in which different significant nations in Asia have effected change. People are central to global developments, with human endeavour expressed through aesthetic, creative, political, economic and scientific pursuits. Highlighting key individuals, events, developments or nations reinforces how they have contributed to Asia's global significance.
- *Growing Asia–Australia engagement*: This includes the relationship-building contribution of Australians with Asian heritage and explores how active connections between students and Asia's diverse communities can be deepened. Interaction builds empathy, respects cultural and linguistic differences, and leads to collaborative opportunities and outcomes. These active connections provide the lived experiences of global citizenship for young Australians, including through popular culture, and nurture relationships that reflect the historical and contemporary interdependency of Australia and the nations of Asia.

The Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences

In Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), students explore the rich diversity of cultures, values, beliefs, histories and environments within and across the countries of the Asia region. This learning is embedded across HASS F–6, and the secondary subjects of Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business, Geography, and History (Years 7–10). They learn about how this diversity influences the ways people interact with each other, the places where they live, and the social, economic, political and cultural systems of the region as a whole. They investigate the reasons behind internal migration in the Asia region and migration from Asia to Australia and develop understanding of the experiences of Australians with Asian heritage. This supports a deeper understanding of the shared histories and the environmental, social and economic interdependence between Australia and the Asia region.

In an increasingly globalised world, the nature of interdependence between Asia and Australia continues to evolve. By exploring the way transnational and intercultural collaboration support shared and sustainable futures, students reflect on how Australians can participate in the Asia region as active and informed citizens.

The Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences is supported by annotated work samples that demonstrate student achievement in relation to the curriculum for each subject. Currently, ten published work samples demonstrate explicit connections to the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority. Resources to support teachers are on the [resources section of the Australian Curriculum website](#).

Examples include:

- [Year 6 - Australia and Indonesia](#)
- [History - Year 7 - Role and achievements of a significant individual](#)
- [Geography - Year 8 - China's fastest growing city](#)

The Australian Curriculum: Languages

Communication is a fundamental human activity that enables the exchange of meaning, fosters creativity and builds understanding across cultures. Language learning provides students with opportunities to engage with the diversity of the world's peoples and to broaden their personal, social, cultural and employment horizons.

In an increasingly interconnected world where plurilingualism is the norm, the study of Asian languages and cultures is a national priority. It equips young Australians with the skills and intercultural understanding needed to participate confidently in the Asian region.

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* includes six Asian languages: Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese. Each language curriculum is supported by illustrative elaborations that provide teachers with concrete examples to guide classroom implementation.

To support differentiated learning, the Chinese curriculum offers three pathways - First Language, Background Language and Second Language – allowing teachers to select the most appropriate sequence based on students' language proficiencies and cultural backgrounds.

Language support resources

To support effective implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*, downloadable **language support resources** are available for each language. These optional resources assist teachers in differentiating content and provide illustrative examples of language and language use specific to each language. They are designed to support informed curriculum planning and classroom practice.

Below are links to the language support resources for the six Asian languages:

- [Chinese: Second-Language Learner Pathway](#)
- [Chinese: Background-Language Learner and First-Language Learner Pathway](#)
- [Hindi](#)
- [Indonesian](#)
- [Japanese](#)
- [Korean](#)
- [Vietnamese](#)

In addition, **language-specific work samples**, including **annotated examples**, are available to demonstrate student achievement in relation to curriculum expectations. These resources support teacher planning and assessment and include examples that reflect the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority.

Examples of Asian Language-specific work samples across band levels include:

- [Chinese Years 1-2](#)
- [Japanese Years 3-4](#)
- [Indonesian Entry 7-8](#)

Conclusion

ACARA recognises that building Asia capability is essential to preparing young Australians for a future shaped by regional and global interconnection. The Australian Curriculum provides a strong foundation for this through the Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority and the Languages learning area. As we look ahead, ACARA remains committed to working in partnership with governments, educators and communities to ensure the curriculum continues to reflect Australia's place in the world and the aspirations we hold for our young people. By fostering intercultural understanding, respect and active citizenship, the curriculum empowers students to engage meaningfully with Asia and contribute to a more inclusive, collaborative and sustainable future.