
STATEMENT

Cross-Curriculum Priorities in the Australian Curriculum Review

2 July 2021

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Over the last 9 weeks, Australians have had a once-in-six-years opportunity to contribute their feedback and shape a revised Australian Curriculum. There has been considerable public engagement and discussion, as there should be.

However, there have been some inaccuracies and misunderstandings regarding the cross-curriculum priorities (Sustainability, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures). To be clear:

- Cross-curriculum priorities are not stand-alone subjects in the Australian Curriculum – teachers are not expected to teach them in isolation or outside the content of the learning areas. Cross-curriculum priorities provide opportunities to enrich the content of the learning areas, only when it is most appropriate and authentic to do so.

For example, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is included in Content Descriptions (the essential curriculum content) where the development of knowledge, understanding and skills relating to First Nations Australians is core to the delivery of the learning area content. This happens most in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area and in subjects such as History. Accordingly, in the Review, there is proposed new content in the History curriculum to ensure that all students learn about the history of First Nations Peoples of Australia.

- The cross-curriculum priorities are also identified in the Content Elaborations of different learning areas where this can offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning. Content Elaborations are optional elements of the curriculum – they are practical examples offering ideas and suggestions for teachers on teaching the essential content.

For example, in Science, teachers could use an investigation of traditional fire-starting methods used by First Nations Australians when teaching Year 8 students about the core science concepts of energy transformation.

- Content Elaborations related to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority can also give teachers extra support and ideas for making learning more meaningful and culturally relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their classrooms. If students see what they are learning as relevant to them, they are more engaged in their learning. The elaborations in the

proposed curriculum are not mandatory and teachers are not expected to teach them.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum plays a key role in addressing two important objectives of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration approved by all education ministers in 2019:

- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas so they can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem
- Ensure all students learn about Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures to allow all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

All feedback on the proposed revisions to the Australian Curriculum, including how well the revisions improve the relationship of the cross-curriculum priorities to the content of the learning areas, is welcome during this public consultation phase.

Feedback will contribute to amendments to the final revised curriculum for the education ministers' consideration and determination. Feedback is being sought via the Australian Curriculum [consultation website](#) until 8 July 2021. The updated version of the F-10 Australian Curriculum, once approved by ministers, will be made available on a new Australian Curriculum website at the start of 2022.