MEDIA RELEASE

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New Australian Curriculum content to combat antisemitism and strengthen civil discourse

Education ministers have endorsed changes to the Australian Curriculum following the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) focused review into Antisemitism and Australian Values, as part of national efforts to combat antisemitism and all other forms of hate.

The changes strengthen students' understanding of Jewish histories and cultures, the recognition and rejection of antisemitism, and the importance of Australian values, including respectful and civil engagement with different perspectives.

The revised content will provide students with the knowledge and skills to recognise and reject antisemitism by the end of Year 10, while providing greater clarity for teachers and schools.

Key changes include:

- Explicit learning about contemporary antisemitism, including common tropes and stereotypes, and how historical prejudice manifests in modern contexts.
- Strengthened Holocaust content in Year 10 History, including its causes, significant events and consequences
- Explicit teaching of civil discourse in Years 7-10 Civics and Citizenship, helping students engage respectfully with different perspectives on contemporary issues.
- Greater opportunities to learn about Jewish histories, cultures and lived experiences in Australia and overseas.
- Strengthened Civics and Citizenship content addressing discrimination, respect, inclusion in Australian society.
- Greater emphasis on responsible and ethical online behaviour in Digital Technologies.

ACARA CEO, Stephen Gniel, said the changes deliver on the direction of education ministers and the Prime Minister's Antisemitism Education Taskforce.

"While students have always been expected to learn about the Holocaust, the revised Year 10 History curriculum provides a more comprehensive study, including Jewish life in Europe before the Second World War.

"Importantly, Jewish community representatives emphasised that Jewish people should not be defined solely by the Holocaust and antisemitism. Our changes reflect this by providing greater opportunities to learn about Jewish histories, cultures and lived experiences.

"Having robust but respectful debates about civic issues is central to a free and democratic society. While curriculum changes alone won't solve the challenges of antisemitism, racism and hate, they have an important role to play in strengthening social cohesion and helping young Australians become inclusive and tolerant citizens who recognise and reject all forms of racism and hate," Mr Gniel said.

Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal, AO, welcomed the changes to the Australian Curriculum.

"I commend ACARA for their work on these revisions to the Australian Curriculum and the extensive stakeholder engagement they have undertaken to develop them into a highly workable framework. The revised curriculum content sets clear expectations about what teachers should teach so that all Australian students can understand and reject antisemitism and all other forms of hate.

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“Antisemitism is a threat to all Australians – not just our Jewish community – because it tears at the fabric of Australian society. Our education system has a crucial role to play in taking decisive action to combat this evil, at a particularly critical time of increasing division. I look forward to working with ACARA and our school systems to support the implementation of these curriculum changes in our classrooms,” she said.

The revised curriculum content will be published on the Australian Curriculum website before the end of November. ACARA will work with states, territories, education sectors and schools to support implementation.

The changes are an important first step in strengthening the Australian Curriculum to support national efforts to combat racism and hate. ACARA will continue this work through a further focused review on Racial and Religious Understanding, at the direction of education ministers and the Prime Minister’s Islamophobia Education Taskforce, which will commence by the end of the year.

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