

Statement

I would like to make a short statement on behalf of the Acting Minister for Education and Youth, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, regarding the Australian Curriculum ahead of ACARA appearing before the Committee at 5pm.

Public consultation, led by ACARA, on a draft of the Australian Curriculum between April and July 2021 elicited significant public awareness and showed that parents and the broader community care about the curriculum that children learn at school.

The Australian Government wants to acknowledge that ACARA undertook a significant body of work to refine, realign and declutter the Curriculum in line with the June 2020 Terms of Reference and in line with the Commonwealth's view that that the Curriculum should be evidence-based, lift learning standards, and provide a more balanced view of our history.

Education Ministers met on 4 February 2022 to consider Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum, which incorporates changes since ACARA's public consultation version.

At this 4 February meeting, Ministers agreed that ACARA should provide a revised Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum to EMM for approval by April 2022.

There was unanimous support from Ministers to the consent content within the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, which had been strengthened significantly from the April consultation draft.

All jurisdictions agreed that further work in the important area of mental health for young Australians will occur in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum and Ministers noted that the Australian and Western Australian Governments would write to ACARA requesting further work in the learning areas of Mathematics and Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS).

As this Committee has also shown an interest in the Review of the Australian Curriculum, the Minister has asked that I table a copy of Minister Robert's letter to ACARA of 16 February 2022, which also includes a copy of the resolution from the Education Ministers Meeting on 4 February 2022. You will note Attachment B to the letter, which is a list of experts and/or organisations, is not attached, as these experts have not been approached, or agreed to participate in work on the further revisions. It would be inappropriate to name those individuals and/or organisations without their agreement.

<ENDS>



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

Reference: MS22-000144

Mr Derek Scott
Chair
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
Level 13, Tower B
280 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Scott

I would like to thank the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for its work on Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum. It is an improvement on the version released to the public in April 2021 and I acknowledge these revisions were developed within the challenging context of COVID-19.

As you are aware, at the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) on 4 February 2022, Ministers considered ACARA's submission on the Australian Curriculum Review, including how the draft curriculum had been refined, realigned, and decluttered to meet the Terms of Reference. The EMM resolutions are at [Attachment A](#) for your information.

The Australian Government and the Western Australian Government's position at the EMM was that ACARA should undertake further work in two learning areas – Mathematics and Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS). Ministers noted that we would write to ACARA outlining areas for attention and agreed ACARA should bring back a revised Version 9.0 to EMM for approval in April 2022. I understand the Western Australian Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Sue Ellery MLC, will write to you separately with her concerns.

Without diluting the improvements already achieved in lifting learning standards, I seek the following improvements in Mathematics:

- lifting standards to ensure they match those of high-performing nations (this could include being clear about which operations students need to be able to do without a calculator)
- ensuring a focus on mastery of foundational material in the primary curriculum
- ensuring content descriptors are written clearly
- reducing the number of elaboration examples, ensuring only those that show the most effective, evidence-based way to teach the content are included.

Without diluting the improvements already achieved in portraying a more balanced view of Australian history, I seek the following improvements to HASS:

- further reducing the volume and complexity of the content, so teachers know what content is essential to teach
- reducing the number of elaboration examples, ensuring only those that show the most effective, evidence-based way to teach the content are included
- ensuring that key aspects of Australian History, namely 1750-1914 and Australia's post World War II migrant history, are appropriately prioritised and can be taught within the time available.

I also ask that you consult a number of experts in determining your revisions, as outlined in Attachment B. While I ask ACARA to reach out to these experts, gauge their interest in being involved in the revision process, and consult with them over the coming months, I may also seek their individual advice on the process and revisions made.

Given the short timeframe available, you may wish to convene a workshop as soon as possible with these experts, as well as senior officials from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, to examine in detail what changes should be made to improve the Mathematics and HASS curricula. Officials from my Department are also available to provide specific suggestions about how the content in Mathematics and HASS can be improved.

Once the additional expert input has been incorporated, Ministers noted all jurisdictions should be consulted.

Finally, Education Ministers agreed that further work in the important area of mental health for young Australians is to occur in the Health and Physical Education learning area, noting that this work should not hold up its progress. To facilitate this work, I ask that you consult a number of experts in determining your revisions. Suggested experts are outlined in Attachment B, however, I note all Ministers expressed an interest in this important work.

I have copied this letter to all State and Territory Education Ministers for their information.

Thank you again for your ongoing work on this review.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Robert

Encl.

16 FEB 2022

Education Ministers Meeting 4 February 2022

Resolutions:

Item 3 - Version 9.0 of the F-10 Australian Curriculum

The Education Ministers Meeting:

- a. **agreed** that ACARA provides a revised Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum to EMM for approval by April 2022, to enable jurisdictions to implement the revised curriculum from 2023.
- b. **noted** that the Australian Government and Western Australian Government have requested further work in two learning areas – Mathematics and Humanities and Social Sciences – and will write to the Chair of ACARA outlining areas for attention noting full consultation with all jurisdictions.
- c. **agreed** that further work in the important area of mental health for young Australians will occur in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, noting that this work should not hold up its progress.