

ACARA CEO's opening statement

Additional Budget Estimates – 27 February 2025

Thank you Chair.

I'd like to update the Committee on the key work ACARA has delivered since our last Estimates appearance in November 2024, in line with our work plan as agreed to by all education ministers.

Our Assessment team has been preparing for NAPLAN 2025. Starting on 12 March, students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will undertake assessments to see whether they are developing the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills they need for success throughout their lives.

ACARA has experts in curriculum, content, measurement, assessment development and psychometrics who oversee the National Assessment Program to ensure that the assessments are of the highest standard.

Working with our partners, including Education Services Australia who provide the testing platform and our test administration authorities in each state and territory, we are completing the scheduled activities in the lead-up to the NAPLAN 2025 test window.

Meanwhile, our Reporting team has been ensuring that up-to-date information about key education indicators is available to schools, families, policymakers and the general public.

Parents, carers and wider school communities can now access the latest information on ACARA's [My School website](#), which was updated in December for 2024 with new profile information on schools and the latest school-level NAPLAN data.

Last month, as part of the National Report on Schooling in Australia, ACARA released the latest information on Australia's school education sector covering matters including student attendance, student attainment and statistics relating to participation in education, training and work.

The National Report on Schooling in Australia is released progressively, providing more timely commentary on progress against nationally agreed policy initiatives as the latest data becomes available.

Members of the Committee will be aware that last week we published the 2024 National Assessment Program sample Civics and Citizenship Report. It is encouraging to see from this latest sample assessment that most students rate citizenship behaviours, such as learning about Australia's history and civic institutions, as important.

However, there is a concerning decline in civics and citizenship knowledge among a representative sample of Years 6 and 10 students across Australia. Results have fallen since the last assessment undertaken in 2019 and to the lowest levels since the assessment began in 2004.

These results show that it is vital that all young Australians get a strong grounding with civics education to feel engaged with social and political issues, so that they can make a valuable contribution as society's future stewards.

As the recent report from the Joint Standing Committee on electoral matters' inquiry into civic education reaffirmed, there is a clear expectation when it comes to Civics and Citizenship education within the Australian Curriculum, with content within the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area.

The inquiry and ACARA's latest report highlight how we need to continue to support our teachers and educators with high-quality training and resources to help them effectively deliver engaging civics and citizenship education in classrooms across the country. ACARA will continue to play its role on this important issue.

Turning to the Australian Curriculum, ACARA continues its work to support jurisdictions and schools with implementation of the curriculum and bringing it to life in the classroom.

Of note, we have released a new online course to help teachers plan their lessons for students with a range of learning abilities and interests, so every student achieves their full potential.

The new course for teachers went live on ACARA's Professional Learning Hub in November 2024. The course covers planning and assessment practices, and includes templates and examples to guide teachers as they develop their lesson plans.

There are now over 210 work samples published on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website. Work samples will continue to be published for all subjects during 2025. These work samples help teachers by showing what evidence of student learning in relation to the achievement standards looks like in real examples of student work.

I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce that the mandatory content in the curriculum, approved by all Ministers in 2022, is the achievement standards and content descriptions. This provides the essential knowledge, understanding and skills we want all young people to have.

The content elaborations are teacher support material and are not mandated. They were developed working with relevant specialists and have had positive feedback, including from teachers and other experts. These optional resources support teachers and deepen student engagement with learning area content.

ACARA is very aware of the workload pressures our teachers face and so we will continue to work in partnership with states and territories and school sectors to support our teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum.

I would like to close by acknowledging on behalf of ACARA the ongoing work of our fantastic teachers, principals, school administrators, support staff and families in ensuring a successful year of learning.

Thank you.