



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Ms Sonia Palmieri
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO CIVICS AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION

Dear Ms Palmieri

The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education. Please find the DEST submission attached.

The attached submission focuses on an understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures as a crucial component of a broader civics and citizenship education. It provides information on:

- the arrangements for testing student knowledge of and dispositions towards electoral processes and voting procedures as part of the National Civics and Citizenship Assessment Project being run by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)
- coverage of electoral processes and voting procedures in the draft National Statements of Learning in civics and citizenship being developed by MCEETYA to provide nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in this important curriculum area;
- the history of the Australian Government's civics and citizenship programme *Discovering Democracy* and the evaluations of the programme in 1999 and 2003;
- surveys of Australian student civic knowledge: the IEA (International Evaluation Association) study *Citizenship Education in Twenty Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* conducted in Australia late in 1999 and the *Discovering Democracy* baseline study (also conducted in 1999);
- continued Australian Government support for civics and citizenship education since 2004 (including through the Parliament and Civics Educational Rebate,) and support for related initiatives in values education and history.

DEST officers would be pleased to expand on this submission at a Committee hearing.

Yours sincerely

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July 2006



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Science and Training**

**SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ELECTORAL MATTERS INQUIRY**

CIVICS AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION

JULY 2006

Table of Contents

I	Introduction	2
II	National Testing	8
III	National <i>Statements of Learning</i>	10
IV	<i>Discovering Democracy: Pre-History</i>	13
V	<i>Discovering Democracy: 1997-2004</i>	16
VI	Evaluating <i>Discovering Democracy</i>	19
VII	IEA Study and Baseline <i>Discovering Democracy</i> Survey	23
VIII	Continued Support for Civics and Citizenship Education	26
IX	Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate	28
X	Related Initiatives: Values Education, History	29
XI	Conclusion	31
	References	33
	Attachments	
Attachment A	Civics and Citizenship Assessment Domain	
Attachment B	Executive Summary of First <i>Discovering Democracy</i> Evaluation (1999)	
Attachment C	Executive Summary of Second <i>Discovering Democracy</i> Evaluation (2003)	
Attachment D	Executive Summary: <i>Citizenship and Democracy: Students' Knowledge and Beliefs - Australian Fourteen Year Olds and The IEA Civic Education Study, 2002</i>	
Attachment E	Executive Summary – <i>Discovering Democracy</i> Baseline Survey, 2001	

I Introduction

Civics and citizenship education is a national priority for Australian schooling along with English, maths, science, and information and communication technologies. Having more young Australians better educated about how their government operates, and understanding our democratic traditions, is important for the future of our country and our democracy.

(The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, 9 May 2006, <http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/bishop/budget06/bud0706.htm>)

The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education. The DEST submission focuses on the contribution that schooling can make in this area.

The Australian Government is strongly committed to ensuring that when students leave school they have an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life. This includes an understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures. Electoral education in the latter sense could be seen as a crucial component of a broader civics and citizenship education.

Australian Government funding for civics and citizenship education and its policy support for national assessment and nationally consistent curriculum outcomes has helped revitalise an important part of the school curriculum. The 1994 Report, *Whereas the People ...* found that civics and citizenship had become a neglected part of the school curriculum and that, although there was no clear point at which it became submerged, its decline had begun in the late 1960s:

... social studies was disowning its civic function and declaring itself to be more concerned with "current realities" than with the formal institutions and methods by which they were shaped (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 31)¹.

The Australian Government provided funding of \$4.9 million for its Civics and Citizenship Education programme over four years in its 2004-2005 Budget to build on the work of the successful *Discovering Democracy* programme (funded with some \$31.5 million, 1997-2004). This includes funding for a national website (<http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/>) and national activities including *Celebrating Democracy Week* in schools and the National Schools Constitutional Convention. *Celebrating Democracy Week* provides opportunities for schools across Australia to highlight their work in civics and citizenship education. In addition, the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER), announced in the 2006-2007 Budget, has been provided with funding of \$16.3 million over the next four years (2006-07 to 2009-10).

Discovering Democracy was launched on 8 May 1997. The Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed it in principle on 13 June 1997. The importance of civics and citizenship education was reaffirmed in April 1999, when all

¹ An appendix to *Whereas the People ...*, "The History of Civics Education in Australia" by Julian Thomas, discusses the decline of civics in more detail (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 161-71)

Australian Ministers for Education endorsed the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century*, including the goal that students, when they leave school, should:

be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.

Discovering Democracy helped students to learn about Australia's democratic heritage and the values underpinning it, including equality, liberty, fairness, trust, mutual respect and social co-operation. *Discovering Democracy* also helped students to learn how the Australian system of government and law operates and to explore what it means to be an Australian. Funding (\$31.6 million) was provided for curriculum resources, teacher professional learning and national activities to support the programme. The priority in the first quadrennium was curriculum resources; in the second quadrennium it was teacher professional learning.

Civics and citizenship is a national priority. In 2003, Australian Government, State and Territory Ministers of Education all agreed to develop nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in civics and citizenship education, along with English, mathematics, science and Information Communications Technology (ICT), through MCEETYA. This also involves the development and agreement of proficiency standards and the reporting of outcomes against these standards.

This submission provides information on:

- the arrangements for testing student knowledge of and dispositions towards electoral processes and voting procedures as part of the National Civics and Citizenship Assessment Project being run by MCEETYA (Chapter II);
- coverage of electoral processes and voting procedures in the draft National Statements of Learning in civics and citizenship being developed by MCEETYA to provide nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in this important curriculum area (Chapter III);
- the prehistory and history of the Australian Government's civics and citizenship programme *Discovering Democracy* (Chapters IV-V),
- evaluations of the *Discovering Democracy* programme (in 1999 and 2003) (Chapter VI),
- surveys of Australian student civic knowledge: the IEA (International Evaluation Association) study *Citizenship Education in Twenty Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* conducted in Australia late in 1999 and the *Discovering Democracy* baseline study (also conducted in 1999) (Chapter VII)
- continued Australian Government support for civics and citizenship education since 2004 (including through the Parliament and Civics Educational Rebate, announced in the 2005-2006 Budget) and support for related initiatives in values education and history (Chapters VIII- X)

The text below links the topics mentioned in the Inquiry's terms of reference (bolded and shaded) to their coverage in this submission.

The current status of young people's knowledge of, and responsibilities under, the Australian electoral system

Young people's knowledge of the Australian electoral system (including their knowledge of their responsibilities under that system) is discussed in this submission's consideration of:

- national student assessment (Chapter II) and the development of nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in civics and citizenship education (Chapter III);
- the evaluations of *Discovering Democracy* in 1999 and 2003 (Chapter VI); and
- the IEA study and the *Discovering Democracy* baseline survey, both conducted in 1999 (Chapter VII).

The nature of civics education and its links with electoral education

As noted in the Introduction to this submission (p 2), the Australian Government is strongly committed to ensuring that students have an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life, when they leave school: "This includes **an understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures**. Electoral education in the latter sense could be seen as **a crucial component of a broader civics and citizenship education**" (emphasis added).

The discussion of the national civics and citizenship education assessment domain (Chapter II), the national statements of learning being developed by MCEETYA (Chapter III) and the curriculum resources provided free to schools through the *Discovering Democracy* programme (Chapter VI) has a particular focus on education for understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures as a crucial component of a broader civics and citizenship education and focuses on examples in this area.

The content and adequacy of electoral education in government and non-government school programs of study, as well as in TAFE colleges and universities

The content and adequacy of electoral education in schools is considered in the context of a broader discussion of national student assessment and nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in the national statements of learning in civics and citizenship education (Chapters II and III). The content and adequacy of civics and citizenship education programmes in TAFE colleges and universities is not specifically addressed in this submission.

However, the first phase of *Discovering Democracy* (2000-2004) included some resource materials for universities and the adult and community education sector (see Chapter V). The 1999 evaluation concluded that there did not appear to be a need for more resources for these sectors but that the available resources should be promoted (see Chapter VI).

The school age at which electoral education should begin

National statements of learning for civics and citizenship education are being developed for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (see Chapter III). This would indicate that civics and citizenship education should be well under way by Year 3 and there are strong arguments for starting in Year K, particularly as civics and citizenship education can be combined with literacy education.

The 1999 evaluation of *Discovering Democracy* recommended including students in Years K-3 in the programme (Chapter VI). As a result, a resource, *Australians All*, was developed and provided free to all Australian primary schools in 2001.

The potential to increase electoral knowledge through outside school programs

The potential to increase electoral knowledge through outside school programs is not specifically addressed in the submission, which focuses on civics and citizenship education in schools. However, as noted above, the *Discovering Democracy* programme initially provided some resource materials for universities and the adult and community education sector (see Chapters V-VI).

The adequacy of electoral education in indigenous communities

The results of the first national assessment of civics and citizenship education are expected to be available by August 2006 and will include results by students' Indigenous status (see Chapter II).

The adequacy of electoral education of migrant citizens

The results of the first national assessment of civics and citizenship education are expected to be available by August 2006 and will include results by students' language background (see Chapter II).

The role of the Australian Electoral Commission and State and Territory Electoral Commissions in promoting electoral education

The role of the Australian Electoral Commission and State and Territory Electoral Commissions in promoting electoral education is not specifically addressed in the submission.

However, *Discovering Democracy* and the subsequent Civics and Citizenship Education programme have always fostered strong partnerships between civics and citizenship education providers, for example through the convening of an annual forum which discusses key challenges in this area (see Chapters V-VI and VIII). The Australian Education Commission is always represented at these forums.

The 2005 civics and citizenship education forum included a workshop by Dr Larry Saha from the Australian National University outlining the Youth Electoral Study which aimed to provide insight to the cause of youth disengagement from political involvement, with a focus on students who are 17 or older; research being conducted in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission.

During *Celebrating Democracy Week* schools may apply and receive small grants take part in activities organised in cooperation with civics and citizenship education providers such as, for example, the Australian Electoral Commission or State/Territory Electoral Commissions (see Chapter VIII).

The role of Federal, State and Local Governments in promoting electoral education

As noted above, in 1999, all Education Ministers in Australia endorsed the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century*. Goal 1.4 states that students, when they leave school, should “*be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia’s system of government and civic life.*” In addition, students should:

have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members (Goal 1.2); and have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions (Goal 1.3)².

States and Territories have primary responsibility for school education, including the development and implementation of curriculum about how we are governed. The Australian Government plays a collaborative role in identifying and developing national priorities for schooling and has provided a lead in the area of civics and citizenship education.

Australian Government funding support for education for understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures **as a crucial component of a broader civics and citizenship education** (emphasis added) is discussed in Chapters I, V, VI, VIII, IX and XI. Funding for related initiatives in values education and history is discussed in Chapter X.

The national assessment of student learning in civics and citizenship education and the development of nationally consistent curriculum outcomes (discussed in Chapters I and II) are both conducted under the aegis of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and endorsed by all Education Ministers.

The *Discovering Democracy* programme and the Civics and Citizenship Education programme have operated in partnership with education authorities in States and Territories (see Chapters V and VIII). The 2003 evaluation noted the ‘cooperative federalism’ underpinning *Discovering Democracy* (see Chapter VI).

Four learning circle kits were produced for the adult and community education sector in the first phase of *Discovering Democracy: The Governance of Australia*, and *The Three Spheres of Government* developed by Adult Learning Australia and *The Australian Nation and Citizens and Public Life* developed by Real Options Pty Ltd. These have been used in partnership with local government (see Chapter V). In addition, some of the *Discovering Democracy* professional learning projects in States and Territories included partnerships with local government (see Chapter V).

The access to, and adequacy of funding for, school visits to the Federal Parliament

Funding for school visits to the Federal Parliament through the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate is discussed in Chapter IX.

Opportunities for introducing creative approaches to electoral education taking into account approaches used internationally and, in particular, in the United States, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom and New Zealand

² The *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* can be accessed on the DEST website at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/national_goals_for_schooling_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm

Australia, the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom were amongst the 28 countries participating in the IEA study *Citizenship Education in Twenty Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* (discussed in Chapter VII).

As noted above, the Australian Government funds an annual forum focusing on key challenges in civics and citizenship education. These forums draw on national and international evidence and have included speakers from, for example, the United States, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong-China) (See Chapters V and VIII).

II *National Testing*

Late in 2004, MCEETYA conducted the first national assessment of civics and citizenship education for a representative sample of Year 6 primary and Year 10 secondary school students as the basis for national reporting. Future tests are planned for 2007 and 2010. The results of the 2004 test are expected to be available by August 2006 and include results by State/Territory, sex, parental occupation group, language background, school location and Indigenous status. 10,712 Year 6 students from 318 schools and 9,536 Year 10 students from 249 schools took part in the test. DEST will provide a copy of the final report to the Committee when able to do so.

A Civics and Citizenship Assessment Domain was developed for the national test. The Assessment Domain is provided at Attachment A (it can also be accessed on the MCEETYA website at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=12182>). There are two key performance measures (KPMs).

KPM 1: Civics: Knowledge and Understanding of Civic Institutions and Processes includes 'Knowledge of key concepts and understandings relating to civic institutions and processes in Australian democracy, government, law, national identity, diversity, cohesion and social justice.'

KPM 2: Citizenship: Dispositions and Skills for Participation includes 'Understandings related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.' Much of the knowledge, understanding, dispositions and skills in the Assessment Domain focuses on electoral processes and voting procedures and the contexts in which such processes and procedures occur.

For example, under KPM 1:

- Year 6 students are expected to be able to “recognise key features of Australian democracy” (6.1); “outline the roles of political and civic institutions in Australia” (6.4) and “identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Australia’s democracy” (6.5).
- Year 10 students are expected to be able to “understand the ways in which the Australian Constitution impacts on the lives of Australian citizens” (10.2); and “understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a range of contexts” (10.4).

Under KPM 2:

- Year 6 students are expected to be able to “recognise that citizens require certain skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic decision-making” (6.7); “identify ways that Australian citizens can effectively participate in their society and its governance” (6.8); and “understand why citizens choose to engage in civic life and decision-making” (6.10)
- Year 10 students are expected to be able to “understand that citizens require certain knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic political and civic action” (10.7); “analyse the role of a critical citizenry in Australia’s democracy” (10.8) and “analyse the reasons Australians make choices about participating in political and civic processes” (10.8)

The civics and citizenship education website provides information on teaching and learning about the assessment domain and professional learning materials for teachers, including, for example:

- a professional learning module which helps schools identify where areas of the assessment domain are already taught and where there are further opportunities for teaching this material;

- advice on using *Discovering Democracy* units, assessment resources and readers to teach the Assessment Domain; and
- a range of expert papers including for example “Solving some Civics and Citizenship Education Conundrums” by Suzanne Mellor, Australian Council for Educational Research and “Elections in the Classroom” by Megan McCrone, Electoral Education Officer, Australian Electoral Commission, Canberra (these materials can be accessed at <http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/default.asp?id=9011>).

III *National Statements of Learning*

In addition, national *Statements of Learning in Civics and Citizenship* for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are expected to be released by MCEETYA shortly. Draft National Statements of Learning have been sent to Ministers for approval.

The National Statements will identify some common elements in all curriculum policies for Civics and Citizenship across Australia, which will provide a common basis for education systems to develop greater consistency. The *Statements of Learning* will be implemented across all States and Territories by the beginning of 2008.

The full national *Statements of Learning in Civics and Citizenship* will be provided to the Committee when they are approved by Ministers. The draft *Statements* recognise that civics and citizenship aspects of curriculums in Australia seek to provide students with the opportunity to develop, inter alia, “*an understanding of, and commitment to, Australia’s democratic system of government, law and civic life*”; “*the knowledge, skills and values that support active citizenship and the capacity to act as informed and responsible citizens*”; “*an appreciation of the influence of media and information and communication technologies on the views and actions of citizens and governments*” and “*an understanding of historical perspectives on Australia’s development as a democratic nation*”.

The *Statements* are intended for use by jurisdictions, not schools. They identify what are referred to as ‘opportunities to learn’ rather than ‘learning achievements’, for implementation within State and Territory curriculum documents. The draft *Statements* are structured around three broadly defined aspects of Civics and Citizenship curriculums that are considered essential and common:

- **Government and Law** (which explores institutions, principles and values underpinning Australia’s representative democracy including, inter alia, the key features of the Australian Constitution and the ways in which Australia’s legal system contributes to democratic principles, rights and freedoms):
- **Citizenship in a Democracy** (which explores the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society and the civic knowledge, skills, and values required to participate as informed and active citizens in local, state, national, regional and global contexts); and
- **Historical Perspectives** (which explores the impact of the past on Australian civil society including, inter alia, the impact of British colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their pursuit of citizenship rights and the impact of individuals, events and popular movements on the development of democracy in Australia).

Excerpts from the draft *Statements of Learning* focusing on an understanding and appreciation of electoral processes and voting procedures and the contexts in which such processes and procedures occur are provided below:

Year 3 Statements of Learning – Civics and Citizenship

Year 3 Government and Law

Students ... know that voting is a key method for group decision making in a democracy. They investigate why we have leaders, what leaders do and consider the qualities of an effective leader. They identify examples of people working together to provide government services within familiar contexts.

Year 3 Citizenship in a Democracy

Students ... develop skills to make decisions in groups to achieve common goals ... Students explore how and why people's views and ideas are communicated through media and information and communication technologies. They investigate ways that the media conveys messages to influence people's opinions.

Year 3 Historical Perspectives

Students explore perspectives on Australia's civic past through symbols, events and personal and group stories ... They examine the influence of different types of rule on people's lives.

Year 5 Statements of Learning – Civics and Citizenship**Year 5 Government and Law**

Students understand that Australia is a democracy based on a constitution, shared values and specific civic features. They reflect on and engage with values that are fundamental to a healthy democracy including freedom of speech. They understand the role and purpose of elections, parliament, government, political parties and civic participation in Australia's democratic system. They know that there are three levels of government. They understand the role of elected representatives and explore concepts of power, leadership and community service.

Year 5 Citizenship in a Democracy

Students develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities and engage with these within their school and community. They investigate the range of ways in which people work together to contribute to civil society and discuss values that can help people resolve differences and achieve consensus. They appreciate the right of others to be different, within the rule of law, and participate in activities that celebrate diversity and support social cohesion. They develop skills to contribute effectively to representative groups in familiar contexts.

... Students explore different ways in which media and information and communication technologies can portray an event or story and how these can influence citizens' beliefs and actions. They evaluate the range of media and information and communication technologies that active and informed citizens can access.

Year 5 Historical Perspectives

Students ... understand that some important concepts and civic terms in Australian democracy are legacies of past societies. They investigate the influence of significant individuals and events on the development of democracy in Australia

Year 7 Statements of Learning – Civics and Citizenship**Year 7 Government and Law**

Students investigate principles and institutions that underpin Australia's representative democracy such as free and fair elections and political parties. They explore the purpose of a democratic civil society and discuss ways in which this can be achieved. They understand the purpose of the Australian Constitution and recognise the roles of each level of government. They are familiar with the general process of elections and how governments are formed and consider ways in which elected representatives serve their constituents. They understand the difference between parliaments and governments, explore how governments make decisions and

consider how these decisions impact on people. They compare non-democratic systems of government with democracies such as Australia.

Year 7 Citizenship in a Democracy

Students explore the civic values and rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. They discuss and engage with the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens. ... They develop skills to become involved in or influence representative groups in the school or community.

... Students explore how media and information and communication technologies can influence public opinion. They analyse media portrayal of issues to identify viewpoints, bias and stereotypes and investigate ways in which the media and ICT are used to influence citizens' views.

Year 7 Historical Perspectives

Students ... investigate key events and ideas in the development of Australian self-government and democracy. ... They investigate the contributions of people who have helped achieve civil and political rights in Australia and around the world. They compare the governance of some ancient societies to that of Australia today.

Year 9 Statements of Learning – Civics and Citizenship

Year 9 Government and Law

Students develop an understanding of principles and features of democracy in Australia including the common good, separation of powers, government accountability and parliamentary elections. They understand that the Australian Constitution is the legal framework for Australia's system of law and government. They explore the role of government in developing policy and formulating legislation. They understand the role of political parties in Australian democracy and explore concepts of power, responsibility and influence in relation to political leaders and elected representatives. They compare Australia's democracy with other democracies.

Year 9 Citizenship in a Democracy

Students engage with and reflect on the rights and responsibilities associated with being a young adult in Australia and consider ways in which people can contribute to the common good. They assess how majority rule is balanced with respect for minorities in the exercise of democratic power and civic decision-making. ... They develop skills in making collective decisions and take opportunities for informed civic action on important issues.

... Students explore the ways in which media and information and communication technologies are used by individuals, groups and governments to exert influence, shape opinion and manage controversy.

Year 9 Historical Perspectives

Students ... consider the development of Australian citizenship over time and reasons why people choose to become Australian citizens. They have an understanding of Australia's development as a self-governing nation from colonisation to the present and the achievement of civil and political rights in Australia.

IV *Discovering Democracy: Pre-History*

Discovering Democracy (1997-2004) helped revitalise a neglected area of the curriculum through a multi-faceted strategy which included high quality curriculum resources for all schools; professional learning to engage and skill teachers to use the resources, work with principals, education authorities and teacher educators and promotion to the general community, and parents in particular.

Discovering Democracy was launched on 8 May 1997 and endorsed in principle by MCEETYA on 13 June 1997, partly in response to growing concern about students' lack of civic knowledge. Surveys showing that understanding of basic democratic governance among young Australians was worryingly low had helped to prompt a renewed focus on civics and citizenship education in school curricula in Australia in the 1990s. Similar concerns also led to curriculum reorientations in comparable liberal-democracies such as the UK and the USA³.

Two influential Senate Committee reports, *Education for Active Citizenship in Australian Schools and Youth Organisations* in 1989 and *Active Citizenship Revisited* in 1991 both focused on students' civic ignorance and the dangers of youth apathy and alienation from mainstream politics. Both stressed the need for lively curriculum resources and for teacher professional development, although the second report had a stronger "participatory" emphasis than the first. It took on board some teacher educator criticisms that the first report's concept of "active citizenship" wasn't active enough. This tension in debates about the content and pedagogy of civics and citizenship education, about the extent to which it had to be informed by historical awareness, for example, and the extent to which it should foster the development of participatory skills, can be exaggerated. As we shall see in Chapter VII, there is some evidence that helping to equip students to take an active and informed part in community affairs and helping them to appreciate their democratic heritage are mutually reinforcing.

The Commonwealth Government of the time agreed that civics and citizenship education was important but responded cautiously to the Senate Committee reports. *Education for Active Citizenship in Australian Schools and Youth Organisations* had recommended that the Commonwealth encourage teacher education institutions to "recognise the importance of active citizenship" and identify active citizenship as a priority area for expenditure on in-service training.

The Commonwealth Government said it shared the Committee's concerns and supported its proposal for a national effort on civics and citizenship education. It went on, however:

It must be borne in mind, however, that while objectives for schooling espoused by the Commonwealth Government can be articulated, any concerted action to give them effect requires collaboration between the Commonwealth, and the States and Territories, also the shared commitment of the wider community (Commonwealth Government, 1989)

In 1994, the Civics Expert Group was appointed to provide the Government with:

³ See the Center for Civic Education (<http://www.civiced.org/index.html>) and National Association of State Secretaries New Millennium Young Voters Project (<http://www.stateofthevote.org/>) websites for US developments and Whiteley (2005) and Kerr and Cleaver (2004) for UK developments, particularly the subsequent curriculum reorientation.

a strategic plan for a non-partisan programme of public education and information on the Australian system of government, the Australian Constitution, Australian citizenship and other civics issues (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 1).

The Civics Expert Group included Professor Stuart Macintyre (University of Melbourne, Chair) the then Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Ken Boston, and Susan Pascoe from the Victorian Catholic Education Commission. Following wide consultation, the Group presented its report called *Whereas the People ...* to the Prime Minister in December 1994; with the words for the title coming from the start of the Constitution.

WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established:

A national survey conducted for the Civics Expert Group confirmed that there was “a low level of understanding across the community about Australia's system of government and its origins” but also found high interest in learning more and high participation in voluntary civic activities (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 13). This survey of adults found that:

- Only 19% had some knowledge of what Federation means for Australia's system of government
- Only 18% knew something about content of Constitution
- Only 40% could name the two houses of Parliament
- 62% saw the main attribute of good citizenship as not breaking the law, and
- This lack of knowledge and understanding was linked closely to feelings of cynicism, estrangement and resentment about our system of government” (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 19-20).

The Group described what it had found as a “civic deficit”. Like the Senate Committee reports, *Whereas the People ...* also worried about what youth alienation from and cynicism about politics might lead to, noting that the efficacy and legitimacy of our political system depend on an informed citizenry (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 15)

As Macintyre (1995) summed it up, the Civics Expert Group’s recommendations proceeded from

an appreciation that education is a responsibility of the states. They administer the public schools and determine what is taught in both the public and private schools”.

The Group wanted civics education to be a priority within the Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE) learning area (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 57), adding

While states and territories will develop their own civics syllabuses and programs, curriculum materials that support the profile outcomes would be helpful to them and can be provided on a national basis to avoid unnecessary duplication (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 63)

Whereas the People called for lively materials in a range of media that:

- engaged students where they were at (as opposed to a "textbook" with the "right" answers to be learned off),
- were pitched to the right age groups and met student development needs.
- provided interesting examples for discussion and projects,
- were linked to broader curriculum programmes, and
- were aligned with the State and Territory curriculum priorities and national profiles (and supported by guidance for teachers and professional development).

The Civics Expert Group (1994:68) insisted that **civic knowledge** and **education for participation** had to go hand-in-hand:

Without an active citizenship education, one that touches all aspects of social life, civics education will only create confusion and resistance.

The Government of the time largely accepted the Civics Expert Group recommendations. That Government was defeated in the March 1996 election. The programme re-emerged in May 1997 with a more strongly school-based focus, a distinctive name (*Discovering Democracy*) and an emphasis on:

teaching students an understanding of the history and operation of Australia's system of government and institutions, and the principles that support Australian democracy (Kemp, 1997).

The Civics Expert Group got a new name (the Civics Education Group), two new members (historian Dr John Hirst and constitutional lawyer, Professor Greg Craven), a new chair (Dr Hirst) and responsibility for overseeing Curriculum Corporation's production of the curriculum resources (with support from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs)⁴.

⁴ Ken Boston resigned from the Civics Education Group on taking up a position in the UK in 2002. Two new members were appointed in early 2003: Professor Ross Fitzgerald (Adjunct Professor, School of Humanities, Griffith University; writer and broadcaster) and Mr Julian Dowse (Deputy Headmaster, Camberwell Grammar School).

V *Discovering Democracy, 1997-2004*

Discovering Democracy (1997-2004) helped students to learn about Australia's democratic heritage and the values underpinning it, including equality, liberty, fairness, trust, mutual respect and social co-operation. *Discovering Democracy* also helped students to learn how the Australian system of government and law operates and to explore what it means to be an Australian today.

Funding (\$31.6 million) was provided for curriculum resources, teacher professional development and national activities. The principal curriculum resources, the *Discovering Democracy Units* are available on the national civics and citizenship education website (<http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/>).

A range of curriculum resources was made available free to every school in Australia from 1998 on:

Year	Resource
1998	Primary and secondary <i>Discovering Democracy Kits</i> built around eighteen learning units, principally for students from mid-primary to Year 10 (supported by CD-ROMs, videos, posters and teacher guides). The learning units are organised around four themes: <i>Who Rules?</i> , <i>Law and Rights</i> , <i>The Australian Nation</i> and <i>Citizens and Public Life</i> .
1999	<i>Australian Readers</i> (two primary and two secondary collections of illustrated fictional and factual, historical and contemporary texts dealing with civics and citizenship themes)
2000	Resources to assist teachers with assessment and to promote student research activities
2001	<i>One Destiny! The Federation Story - the Centenary Edition</i> (a CD-ROM on Federation), and <i>Australians All!</i> (a big book for early primary students)
2002	<i>Our National Flag since 1901</i> (video and teachers notes for primary students), <i>Australia's Democracy: A Short History</i> (by John Hirst, a library resource for senior secondary students) and an additional <i>Reader: The Australian Reader Upper Secondary Collection</i> .

The *Discovering Democracy Kits* included primary units such as *Stories of the People and Rulers*, *Parliament versus Monarch*, and *People Power*; and secondary units such as *Should the People Rule?*, *Parties Control Parliament*, *A Democracy Destroyed*, *Democratic Struggles* and *Getting Things Done* (all of which help students understand electoral processes, voting procedures and their contexts)

The middle primary unit, *Stories of the People and Rulers* compares absolute power in Ancient Egypt with direct democracy in ancient Greece and representative democracy in contemporary Australia.

The upper primary unit, *Parliament versus Monarch*, continues the comparison between absolute power and representative democracy. It asks how the power has moved from the monarch to the people and how does Australian parliamentary democracy reflect its British inheritance. The upper primary unit, *People Power* investigates three popular movements in which citizens combined to secure rights: the 1965 Freedom Ride, the Eight-hour Day movement and the Equal pay for Women campaign; campaigns which demonstrate that in a democracy rights may be gained by people mobilising for specific causes.

The lower secondary unit, *Should the People Rule?*, looks at different types of government and asks how do the people rule in contemporary Australia (including consideration of representative democracy, the Senate and the House of Representatives, preferential voting, direct democracy in Australia and how groups govern themselves). The lower secondary unit, *Democratic Struggles*, looks at the influence of the Chartists on the goldfields, the contribution of the struggle at Eureka to the establishment of democracy in Australia and the struggle of Indigenous Australians to get the vote in the twentieth century.

The middle secondary unit, *Parties Control Parliament*, looks at the role of political parties in parliament and government, who Australia's political parties represent and how they select policies and campaign for government. The middle secondary unit, *A Democracy Destroyed*, focuses on the destruction of democracy in Nazi Germany and asks how democracy in Australia is protected. The middle secondary unit, *Getting Things Done*, focuses on how citizens can influence governments through a consideration of the Franklin dam issue in Tasmania in the early 1980s.

Further information including school showcases, case studies of schools addressing Indigenous issues in civics and citizenship education, professional learning support and online versions of all eighteen learning units can be found on the civics and citizenship education website, which is being regularly updated. A full list of *Discovering Democracy* units is provided below:

Level	Who Rules	Law and Rights	The Australian Nation	Citizens and Public Life
Middle Primary	<i>Stories of the People and Rulers</i>	<i>Rules and Law</i>	<i>We Remember</i>	<i>Joining In</i>
Upper Primary	<i>Parliament versus Monarch</i>	<i>The Law Rules</i>	<i>The People make a Nation</i>	<i>People Power</i>
Lower Secondary	<i>Should the People Rule?</i>	<i>Law</i>	<i>Democratic Struggles</i>	<i>Men and Women in Political Life</i>
Middle Secondary	<i>Parties Control Parliament A Democracy Destroyed</i>	<i>Human Rights</i>	<i>Making a Nation What Sort of Nation?</i>	<i>Getting Things Done</i>

Discovering Democracy project officers in each State and Territory coordinated the delivery of professional learning activities and school grants. These officers worked with committees including representatives from Education departments and the Catholic and independent sectors as well as teacher and academic representatives.

Some of the *Discovering Democracy* professional learning projects in States and Territories included partnerships with local government. For example the school grants programme in South Australia included Active Citizenship grants that enabled the schools involved to work closely with the Adelaide City Council in programmes which were able to make a difference to the students and to the wider community. Adelaide City Council identified a number of projects relating to urban design, environmental issues, the evaluation of recreational facilities and web design as being areas where schools could be actively involved with the council. Teachers and students from 5 city schools undertook research in the community using the resources of the Adelaide City Council. All students from these schools presented their findings to members of the Adelaide City Council.

National activities included *Discovering Democracy Achievement Awards*, *Celebrating Democracy Week*, national projects with teachers and principals and a national forum for what could be described as Australia's civics and citizenship education community, including principals and teachers from all systems and sectors, curriculum developers, parent representatives, teacher educators and civics and citizenship education partners such as the Australian Electoral Commission, the Parliamentary Education Office, the National Museum of Australia, Old Parliament House and the National Archives of Australia.

The forum has focused on key civics and citizenship education challenges, including, for example, national assessment and the development of nationally consistent curriculum outcomes. The forum has showcased good practice in schools and provided professional learning for participants, including learning from good practice in civics and citizenship education overseas.

The 2003 national forum, for example featured presentations by Professor Carole Hahn from the United States of America, Professor David Kerr from the United Kingdom and Professor Lee Wing On from Hong Kong - China, which led to considerable discussion on the implications for Australian civics and citizenship education practice (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 2003). They focused on attempts to incorporate citizenship education into the curriculum and on gaps between the intended, the planned and the received curriculum. A keynote address by Libby Tudball from Monash University at the 2004 forum looked at lessons to be learned from developments in the United Kingdom and Canada and from the Citizenship Education Policy Study project, a four year, cross-national, cross-cultural study (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 2004).

Discovering Democracy always had a primary focus on civics and citizenship education in schools. However, in the first phase of the programme (1997-2000), some resource materials were developed for universities and the adult and community education sector.

The university resources were developed by the Open Learning Agency and offered by distance education to explore the nature of Australian citizenship, identity and contemporary democracy. They included a first year undergraduate programme introducing students to conceptual, historical and contemporary perspectives on citizenship and Australian democracy, another undergraduate programme focussing on civics curriculum in schools and a postgraduate programme covering the same topics.

Four learning circle kits were produced for the adult and community education sector in the first phase of *Discovering Democracy: The Governance of Australia*, and *The Three Spheres of Government* developed by Adult Learning Australia and *The Australian Nation and Citizens and Public Life* developed by Real Options Pty Ltd. These have been used in partnership with local government, especially the *Three Spheres of Government* kit.

The four adult and community education were launched on 1 November 2001, at a special learning circle at Parliament House in Canberra organised by Adult Learning Australia (ALA) in conjunction with the Parliamentary Education Office and the ACT *Discovering Democracy* professional development officer. The special learning circle included 80 invited participants from ACT colleges, and other adult community groups, e.g. U3A, migrant learners from Canberra Institute of Technology, ALA learning circles in the ACT. ALA produced the first two kits. There was some interest in using the adult and community education kits in ACT (senior secondary) colleges.

VI *Evaluating Discovering Democracy*

Discovering Democracy was evaluated twice; in 1999 and again in 2003. The first evaluation helped to inform the extension of the programme until 2004 in the 2000-2001 Budget; the second one fed into funding decisions about the Civics and Citizenship Education programme and the related Values Education programme in the 2004-2005 Budget. Both evaluations were conducted by Erebus Consulting Partners. The first evaluation was released in March 2000; the second one in May 2004.

The purpose of the 1999 evaluation was to ascertain how much *Discovering Democracy* had achieved in terms of its objective of assisting students to understand the history and relevance of our political and legal systems and to develop the capacities to become informed and active citizens. The evaluators were also asked to consider making recommendations about the future of the programme.

The evaluation found that schools across Australia were still in the early stages of implementation of the programme. The curriculum resources were well received. However, the necessary lead-time in producing and disseminating them and conducting awareness raising professional development meant that schools really had less than a year to implement such a core change in curriculum. The evaluators advised:

The next three years will be critical to the success of the Discovering Democracy program. While it has experienced success in some schools, the program needs continuing support. If not, the initiative will certainly diminish, if not flounder (Erebus Consulting Partners, 1999: xiv).

The evaluation recommended further funding with a focus on in-school implementation, particularly structured professional development initiatives over three to four years. The evaluation also recommended that some funding support be provided to ensure that *Discovering Democracy* curriculum material was adapted and updated to be accurate, current and inclusive, particularly in regard to the needs of Indigenous students and to include students in Years K-3 and 11-12 in the programme.

Students' literacy learning in Years K-3 could be supported by appropriate civics and citizenship education curriculum resources. The evaluators reported:

At the K-3 level, there is a ground-swell of opinion that indicates existing materials can be adapted to introduce key principles in the early years (Erebus Consulting Partners, 1999: 55)

Continued funding for national activities supporting improved in-school implementation was also recommended. The evaluators noted that *Discovering Democracy* had included a limited focus on the provision of materials for universities and the adult and community education sector but concluded that, at this stage, there did not appear to be a need for more materials in these sectors but that there was a need to promote the resources that had been developed.

Key Findings

- Significant increase in awareness of *Discovering Democracy* over the past twelve months. (80% of teachers surveyed in 1999 aware of programme compared to 46% in 1998).

- Need for further professional development (70% of teachers did no professional development in 1999).
- Widespread praise for the programme materials by those who have used them.
- Some schools saw the materials as “too hard” and some thought they needed further adaptation for particular groups, especially Indigenous students, while some church groups had concerns about their treatment of religious topics. However, schools at the ‘leading edge’ of implementation focused on developing historical awareness in the context of broader approaches “to active and informed citizenship across their whole operation” (Erebus Consulting Partners, 1999, p ix)
- Pressures from competing demands on teachers’ time and the “crowded” curriculum seen as major obstacle to successful implementation.
- Curriculum successfully “uncrowded” in leading edge schools through integrated approach across several learning areas.
- Networking and follow through on professional development necessary (including through continued State/Territory professional development coordinators and committees).
- Provision of teacher release for professional development and school grants important (although quantum of grant does not seem to matter).
- Assessment of student learning outcomes the weakest aspect of program implementation
- Generally stronger take-up in primary rather than secondary schools with strong case for adapting *Discovering Democracy* materials for K-3 use.
- Opportunities for extending reach of programme upwards to Years 11/12 as well
- The Civics Education Group had been instrumental in providing informed guidance to the programme
- Projects with principals, teacher, parent, academic associations and other national support projects have assisted implementation.
- *Discovering Democracy* works best where embedded in whole school culture.

The Executive Summary of the first evaluation is at [Attachment B](#).

For the second evaluation, conducted in 2003, Erebus Consulting Partners:

- sent out survey forms to over 2,000 primary and secondary teachers and got 455 replies; ie about a 22% response rate,
- undertook 63 school case studies across the country,
- interviewed very many of the people in this room, and
- analysed curriculum frameworks in each State and Territory.

Erebus found that as well as being used in nearly 50% of schools, *Discovering Democracy* had helped put civics and citizenship education on the map through its contribution to decisions on national testing and nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in civics and citizenship education. Teachers in just under one-half of the schools surveyed make regular use of the materials (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2003:27), although the sample may over-represent schools with experience of *Discovering Democracy*.

There was considerable praise for the *Discovering Democracy* resources. The evaluators also noted links between *Discovering Democracy* and the then emerging values education agenda.

Key Findings

Praise for the *Discovering Democracy* Resources

- Teachers consistently praised the resources, highlighting their attractive presentation, enduring nature, and suitability for student learning (pp ix-x). One head of Department of SOSE described the *Discovering Democracy* kit as the most useful set of materials in his 25 years of teaching
- The website is the bare minimum that must be retained to keep the programme alive. However, it should become more student-friendly (p 32). Apart from additional materials for the early childhood years, there is no demand for new curriculum resources. (p xi)

Discovering Democracy in the Schools

- Teacher enthusiasm and the availability of resource materials were most frequently rated as important factors facilitating the use of *Discovering Democracy* (the latter particularly in primary schools). Student enthusiasm, school leadership support, availability of professional development, and the support of parents and the community were also frequently rated as being extremely or moderately important. (p xvii)
- Very modest investments at the level of the individual school return substantial dividends. School grants programmes in States and Territories are widely endorsed as successful in more deeply embedding *Discovering Democracy*. (p 70)

Discovering Democracy and the Emerging Civic Values Agenda

- Schools using *Discovering Democracy* do not see it as a programme in its own right, but as a set of resources to be “dipped into” on an as required basis, “a means to an end, rather than an end in itself”. It is rarely taught in totality, or even sequentially (p xxi). Experienced users are now facing the challenge of simultaneously teaching such areas as *Discovering Democracy*, Studies of Asia, Australian History and Multiculturalism. (p 31)
- There are strong links between Civics and Citizenship Education and Values Education. The aspect of civics and citizenship education most strongly emphasised by teachers is “developing skills and values for participation as informed, reflective and active citizens (e.g., mutual respect, empathy, and critical thought)” (p 36, see also p 24).
- Many teachers an approach that use current events as a “way into” Civics and Citizenship studies. This reflects “the need and desire for students to develop a stronger understanding of the broader context and application of democratic values (p xxiii). The Australian Council of Deans has argued that, for the future ‘... *new learning will be about creating a kind of person, better adapted to the kind of world we live in now and the world of the near future....as citizens we now simultaneously belong to many more kinds of community at the local, the regional and the global level...the key to civic harmony will be respecting and valuing diversity.*’ (A Charter for Australian Education’ The Australian Council of Deans of Education October 2001).”
- The Australian community is perhaps more interested now in civic values, national identity and our place in the world, than in the recent past (p xxii). Events in both our national context and the international context, such as the Bali bombings, international terrorism, war in Afghanistan and Iraq, press home this point and highlight the importance of links to studies of Asia and learning about regional and global citizenship.
- The emphasis on promoting active citizenship in many schools and jurisdictions matches the approach explored by Values Education Study schools, particularly those which focused on student resilience, social skills and self-management (p xxiv)

The evaluators also noted stakeholders' commendation of the 'cooperative federalism' underpinning *Discovering Democracy* and the programme's sophisticated approach to the promotion of civics and citizenship in Australian schools (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2003: 58). Stakeholder groups endorsed the national forum, *Celebrating Democracy Week* and other national activities:

as significant elements in the profile of civics and citizenship education in Australia and as contributing especially to teacher and school awareness. As 'flagship' initiatives, they provide a sense of national imprimatur that all stakeholder groups regard as an essential component of a multi-faceted approach (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2003: 66).

The national forums, for example, gave teachers opportunities to meet and work with others from other states and territories and linked the *Discovering Democracy* work to the work of other national agencies that cover civics and citizenship education.

The Executive Summary of the second evaluation is at [Attachment C](#).

VII IEA Study and Baseline Discovering Democracy Survey

Some *Discovering Democracy* funding was provided for Australian participation in an international civics and citizenship education survey (the IEA study) and for another baseline survey of Australian student civic knowledge.

The IEA (International Evaluation Association) study *Citizenship Education in Twenty Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* (Torney-Purta, J, Schwille, J and Amadeo, J, 2000) surveyed 90,000 14 year olds across 28 countries on their knowledge of fundamental democratic principles, skills in interpreting political information, attitudes towards government, and willingness to participate in civic activity. The 28 countries included both old liberal-democracies (like Australia) and new ones (like states which have emerged from the collapse of Communism and the break-up of the old Soviet Union). The Australian survey took place late in 1999 before the *Discovering Democracy* really had time to have much effect.

Australian students came 11th of the 28 countries on civic knowledge. Countries ahead of Australia included Poland, the US, and Italy. Countries behind Australia included Germany, England and Sweden.

The following countries participated in the IEA Civic Education Study:

Australia	Belgium*	Bulgaria	Chile
Colombia	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark
England	Estonia	Finland	Germany
Greece	Hong Kong (SAR)**	Hungary	Italy
Latvia	Lithuania	Norway	Poland
Portugal	Romania	Russian Federation	Slovak Republic
Slovenia	Sweden	Switzerland	United States

* Only the French educational system in Belgium participated

** Special Administrative Region of China

The *civic knowledge* scale included two sub-scales – *content knowledge* and *interpreting civic-related information skills*. Australian students scored significantly higher than the international mean on the interpretation sub-scale, third overall in fact.

Australian students were comparable to those in other countries in their understanding of the importance of voting, positive attitudes towards their own nation, and their support for migrant political rights. They were stronger than most in their support for women's political rights, but did not show a strong belief in the importance of political participation.

A further detailed analysis of the Australian data *Citizenship and Democracy: Students' Knowledge and Beliefs - Australian Fourteen Year Olds and The IEA Civic Education Study* (Suzanne Mellor, Kerry Kennedy and Lisa Greenwood, 2001) found that four in five Australian students were very sure they do not want to live anywhere else, and believed Australia should be proud of what it has achieved. Four in five students also believed in the importance of good citizenship and the value of helping other people. The executive summary of the report is at [Attachment D](#).

The report found that Australian fourteen year olds were somewhat disengaged from conventional civic participation. Despite this disengagement, Australian students thought it would be good for democracy 'when young people have an obligation to participate in activities

in the community'. As the report says "Perhaps they are also saying they would like to be asked to participate, to be offered a role".

A key finding from the IEA study was that participation in a school council or parliament was found to be positively related to civic knowledge for Australian students, even more than for students in other countries. At the time of the study, approximately 33% of Australian 14 year old students participated in a school council or school parliament. In this context, it is worth noting the 1999 *Discovering Democracy* evaluation finding that the schools at the 'leading edge' of implementation focused on developing historical awareness in the context of a broader whole-school approach that was:

reinforced by many aspects of classroom and school community life ... Several schools at the leading edge of program implementation have incorporated civics knowledge and approaches to active and informed citizenship across their whole operation (Erebus Consulting Partners, 1999: ix)

Some 50 % of the Australian students had a real grasp of the pre-requisites of democracy such as the meanings and processes associated with elections. Professor Kerry Kennedy has spoken of Australian students' "democracy of the heart" based on a strong, if somewhat intuitive, understanding of rights, which needs to be supplemented (principally through good civics and citizenship education) with a "democracy of the mind" which understands democratic processes more comprehensively (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *Discovering Democracy National Forum Report*, 2002).

The IEA survey results showed Australian students particularly valued the freedom to vote openly, for whomever they wished; freedom of expression; freedom from undue influence by the powerful; political equity for women; broad-based ownership of the press; freedom of public speech; independence of the judiciary; freedom of association; cultural equity for immigrants; freedom to protest against laws; and freedom of expression in the press. However, as Professor Kennedy noted:

*Although the students' "in principle" values were encouraging, the survey showed that only 50 per cent of the students had a real grasp of the pre-requisites of democracy — for example, the meanings and processes associated with elections, roles of the media, differences between democracy and dictatorship, and the roles of the economy and globalisation. Some students couldn't answer any questions at all (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *Discovering Democracy National Forum Report*, 2002)*

In 1999, before the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum resources had a chance to make a significant impact and well before the commencement of national assessment and the development of nationally consistent curriculum outcomes, the survey showed, the majority of students' learning about democracy was informal:

School played a relatively small part in the children's formation of the values they espoused, or even their gathering of information about them. Rather, the students intimated that they were mainly influenced by the media - especially television.

... The general levels of understanding did not give great confidence. The students could not make fine-grain distinctions or voice definitions of democracy.

This cannot be good for the young people or for Australian society. Democracy of the Heart is not enough. It is not enough just to believe in it. As citizens we need to know how our values are supported by institutions and processes. As educators we need to encourage understanding and engagement (Professor Kerry Kennedy, quoted, Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *Discovering Democracy National Forum Report*, 2002).

Professor Kennedy's research colleague Suzanne Mellor from the Australian Council for Educational Research, added:

Regarding the provision of Civics Education, 90 per cent of teachers and Principals said that its teaching should be integrated in subjects related to the humanities and social sciences. Between 30 and 40 per cent agreed that it should be taught as a specific subject. Participants at this Forum are the converted and the skilled. Many others in the schools are neither convinced nor skilled in the area. The teaching and learning of Civics Education will not just happen. Pro-activity will be required. The data in the IEA study provides a valuable resource to be drawn upon as we strive to ensure that Civics Education takes its proper place in the school curriculum (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *Discovering Democracy National Forum Report*, 2002).

An additional *Discovering Democracy* baseline survey of 6000 students across the nation in Years 6 (age 11-12) and 10 (age 15-16) in the first half of 1999 found that students performed poorly on questions relating to democracy and forms of government, political processes and institutions, and the meaning of historical events but did better on questions relating to political symbols (the flag, parliament house), citizens' rights and obligations, multiculturalism and equality. The executive summary of the baseline survey is at [Attachment E](#).

VIII *Continued Australian Government Support for Civics and Citizenship Education*

As noted earlier, since 2004, Australian Government funding support for civics and citizenship education through its Civics and Citizenship Education programme (\$4.9 million over four years, 2004-2008) has concentrated on the national civics and citizenship education website (<http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/>) and national activities including *Celebrating Democracy Week* in schools and the National Schools Constitutional Convention.

Celebrating Democracy Week provides opportunities for schools across Australia to highlight their work in civics and citizenship education. *Celebrating Democracy Week 2006* is scheduled to take place between 18 and 24 October.

During *Celebrating Democracy Week* schools may apply and receive small grants take part in activities organised in cooperation with civics and citizenship education providers such as the Australian Electoral Commission or State/Territory Electoral Commissions. For example, St Joseph's Primary School, NSW received \$200 to visit Parliament House and the Electoral Education Centre in Canberra during *Celebrating Democracy Week 2005*. In total in 2005, 302 schools received grants (of up to \$500) to:

- Subsidise excursions to democratic, historic and cultural institutions (eg Parliament Houses, Immigration Museums);
- Conduct student parliaments and forums;
- Establish Remembrance Gardens;
- Education programs (eg voting);
- Develop and deliver student leadership training;
- Hold multicultural days;
- Acknowledge volunteers in the local community;
- Create democracy murals; and
- Hold forums where guest speakers (eg politicians) talk to students.

In addition, 32 students came to Canberra for an *Every Voice Counts!* student forum. They participate in debates, take a behind-the-scenes tour of Parliament House, observe Question Time. A programme was developed around the theme "*Access to clean water- a fundamental human right.*" Participants investigated how water was sourced and used in their location. This allowed students to come to the forum prepared for the topic discussion. Following presentations from guest speakers, the students discussed water purification in Aboriginal communities; using recycled water; and students as the water decision makers of tomorrow.

The Australian Government has funded the National Schools Constitutional Convention (NSCC) with more than \$1.5 million since 1997. The NSCC brings senior student delegates from each state and territory to discuss constitutional issues. More than 1400 students have participated in the high quality learning programme provided for the NSCC and approximately 65,000 students have participated in the feeder conventions. Eleven National Schools Constitutional Conventions have been conducted since 1995 for senior students in Year 11 and 12. The NSCC has been built on a partnership with the States and Territories with the NSCC delegates selected from State and Territory feeder conventions.

The Electoral Education Centre helps conduct mock referenda during the NSCCs to help the participants understand how to make an informed vote during a referendum. Applications to join the electoral roll are also available during the NSCC for participants.

The national civics and citizenship education forum (previously known as the *Discovering Democracy* national forum, see Chapter V) has also continued under the Civics and Citizenship Education programme, with a focus on key challenges in civics and citizenship education, drawing on national and international evidence.

For example, Dr Larry Saha (Reader, School of Social Sciences, Australian National University), outlined findings from the Youth Electoral Study at the 2005 national civics and citizenship education forum (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *Civics and Citizenship Education National Forum Report*, 2005). This study, conducted in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission, aimed to provide insight to the cause of youth disengagement from political involvement, with a focus on students who are 17 or older. Also at the 2005 forum, Kurt Mullane (Education Foundation) and David Brown (Curriculum Corporation) examined civics and citizenship themes in the context of Asian cultures and societies. This gave participants opportunities to explore specific examples of civic action being undertaken by youth in Asian countries.

IX *Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate*

The Australian Government introduced a new Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (to commence on 1 July 2006) in the 2005-2006 Budget. The Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) has been provided with funding of \$16.3 million over the next four years (2006-07 to 2009-10).

PACER amalgamates two existing rebates – the Citizenship Visits Programme previously operated by the parliamentary departments, and the Education Travel Rebate previously operated by the National Capital Authority (and funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training).

The combined rebate will receive an additional \$10.7 million bringing the total commitment to \$16.3 million. The rebate will be paid to schools to assist students from years 4-12 to visit Canberra and will start at \$20 per student for those travelling 150 to 499 km, rising to \$260 for those travelling over 4,000 km. On average, this represents a 15% increase on previous rebates.

Sliding scale -kilometres	Subsidy	Sliding scale -kilometres	Subsidy
150 – 499	\$20	500 – 999	\$30
1000 – 1499	\$60	1500 - 1999	\$80
2000 – 2499	\$120	2500 – 2999 & Tasmania	\$150
3000 – 3999	\$240	4000 and over	\$260

The rebate will help offset the cost of students' travel to the national capital and will particularly assist students living in country Australia. Announcing the rebate, the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, said:

Schools can use the rebate to offset the cost of their visit to Canberra to see our great national icons – such as Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial – to learn directly about the role our national institutions play in our democracy.

As part of the new Parliament and Civics Education Rebate, students will be provided with resources that they can take home to build on their civics and citizenship education.

PACER supports the Australian Government's Civics and Citizenship Education programme (see Chapter VIII) and the Commonwealth History Project (see Chapter X) through its support for student learning in civics and citizenship and in history.

X *Related Initiatives: Values Education, History*

Two related Australian Government initiatives – supporting values education and history – complement its support for civics and citizenship education in schools.

The 2004-2005 Budget provided \$29.7 million over four years (2004-2008) to help make values education a core part of schooling. This includes funding for:

- curriculum and assessment resources to help all schools teach values in all schools;
- clusters of schools implementing good practice approaches;
- values education forums in every school in Australia involving the whole school community;
- national partnership projects with parents, teachers, school principals and teacher educators, and an annual national values education forum.

The *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*, endorsed by all State and Territory Ministers, highlights the development of “*student responsibility in local, national and global contexts*” as a key component for schools to focus on in their values education efforts.

The Framework includes nine *Values for Australian Schooling*. These values help students appreciate their local, national, regional and global responsibilities. They are:

- **Care and Compassion** (Care for self and others)
- **Doing Your Best** (Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence)
- **Fair Go** (Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society)
- **Freedom** (Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others)
- **Honesty and Trustworthiness** (Be honest, sincere and seek the truth)
- **Integrity** (Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensuring consistency between words and deeds)
- **Respect** (Treat others with consideration and regard; respect another person’s point of view)
- **Responsibility** (Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways; contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment)
- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion** (Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others)

It is a condition of Australian Government financial assistance to the States and Territories for government and non-government schools in the period 2005-08 (with funding worth \$33 billion in total) that the agreed national *Values for Australian Schooling* are displayed prominently in every school.

Discovering Democracy always had an emphasis on helping students to understand the values underpinning Australia’s democratic heritage, including equality, liberty, fairness, trust, mutual respect and social co-operation. For example, *Discovering Democratic Values*, a professional development video, was developed in 2004 to support the teaching of civic values in primary and secondary schools and distributed to teachers through *Discovering Democracy* professional

development officers in States and Territories. The national civics and citizenship education website provides professional development activities for teachers to support this video.

The Australian Government commissioned an inquiry into the teaching and learning of history in schools in 1999. The resultant report, *The Future of the Past* (Taylor, 2000) highlighted the need to strengthen the place of history in the school curriculum. It found, for example, that very few primary teachers were trained in teaching history and that many teachers felt that “school history had been under siege for some time, particularly in the secondary school”.

The Australian Government implemented the report’s recommendations through the Commonwealth History Project (formerly known as the National History Project); funded with \$4.93 million over six years (October 2000–December 2006). This includes funding for a National Centre for History Education (NCHE); some nationally accessible curriculum resources for primary and secondary schools ([*Making History: Upper Primary Units – Investigating Our Land and Legends*](#) and [*Making History: Middle Secondary Units – Investigating People and Issues in Australia after World War II*](#) – distributed to all schools in June 2003 and available electronically on the NCHE website), an on-line guide for teachers of history and teacher professional learning in States and Territories.

The Commonwealth History Project was designed to complement the Australian Government’s support for civics and citizenship education in schools, which has always included a strong emphasis on Australia’s democratic heritage. *Discovering Democracy* had a strong historical emphasis. In his Ministerial Statement, launching the programme, the then Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, the Hon Dr David Kemp MP (1997: 2 and 5), commented:

Effective citizenship requires an understanding of the history and operations of Australia’s system, of government and institutions and the principles that support Australian democracy. Students should be able to identify and explain the essential characteristics of representative democracy and the nature and purpose of the Australian Constitution. They should be able to describe the operations of Commonwealth and State and Territory parliaments and understand the relationship between parliament and government. They should be knowledgeable about Australia’s history and the role of leading Australian political figures who have shaped the direction of Australia’s civic life.

... A knowledge of Australia’s strong historical traditions of flourishing civic community will empower students to apply our national values of equality, liberty, justice, democracy and participation to the big questions of the next millennium.

Whereas the People had stressed the importance of historical understanding as a component of civics and citizenship education:

We believe that a knowledge and understanding of the history of Australians is an essential foundation for Australian citizenship. It should be a core element of the curriculum for all students up to school leaving age (Civics Expert Group, 1994: 52)

The Future of the Past also stressed that school history had a vital role as “the main arbiter and interpreter of civics and citizenship education” and that all specialist history teachers were by definition civics and citizenship teachers:

In dealing with social and political issues over a series of era and in a variety of political contexts, they and their students are required to analyse in a critical fashion, not only the forms and structures of governance but also the events that illustrate the workings and failings of government (Taylor, 2000: 150).

X Conclusion

This submission demonstrates how civics and citizenship is being revitalised in Australian schools through:

- Australian Government funding support for civics and citizenship education in schools through the previous *Discovering Democracy* programme, the Civics and Citizenship Education programme and related initiatives (including the Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate, the Values Education programme and the Commonwealth History Project); and
- the work being done through MCEETYA in national testing in civics and citizenship for students in Years 6 and 10 and in the development of nationally consistent curriculum outcomes in civics and citizenship education.

The 2004 national test results should be of interest to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education. They are expected to be released by August 2006. While, as this submission demonstrates, much has been done to raise the profile of civics and citizenship education in the school curriculum in the last ten years, the test results (which will include results by State/Territory, sex, parental occupation group, language background, school location and Indigenous status) will show us the extent of our progress in revitalising civics and citizenship.

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Attachment A

Civics and Citizenship Assessment Domain



ccap_assessment_do
main_2004.pdf

Attachment B

Executive Summary of First *Discovering Democracy* Evaluation (1999)



exec summary.doc

Executive Summary of Second *Discovering Democracy* Evaluation (2003)



Executive Summary -
final.doc

**Executive Summary: *Citizenship and Democracy:
Students' Knowledge and Beliefs - Australian Fourteen Year Olds
and The IEA Civic Education Study, 2002***



Final Executive
Summary (12 Feb 200

Executive Summary – *Discovering Democracy* Baseline Survey, 2001



exec summary
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