

Submission 10

P.O. Box 177
Carlton South Victoria 3053
AUSTRALIA

Telephone: (03) 9207 9600
Facsimile: 1300 780 545
(Within Australia)

**Curriculum
CORPORATION**

A.C.N. 007 342 421
A.B.N. 18 007 342 421

28 November 2002

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade
Inquiry into Human Rights and Good Governance
Education in the Asia Pacific Region
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Madam/Sir

I am writing to you in connection with the Inquiry into Human Rights and Good Governance Education in the Asia Pacific Region.

Curriculum Corporation notes that the Terms of Reference for the work of this Committee refers to Australia's role in promoting fair and sustainable social, political and economic development in the Asia Pacific region. The Corporation has been involved at both national and international levels in curriculum development work addressing Human Rights and Good Governance issues over a number of years. It seemed appropriate to give an account of this work to the Committee.

Curriculum Corporation therefore tenders this submission as an account of the broad and significant body of work undertaken over the past ten years. In addition, I attach an account of a peace education project recently delivered on behalf of the World Bank in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Whilst not located in the Asia Pacific region, the project process has been acknowledged as good practice, and may be of some interest to the Committee if there is a need to identify related work in the field.

Should the Committee need further information regarding the attached submission, please contact Ms Jane Weston, Senior Project Manager on (03) 92079600.

Curriculum Corporation wishes the Committee every success in this important work.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Wilson
Chief Executive Officer

**Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign
Affairs, Defence and Trade**

**Inquiry into Human Rights and Good
Governance Education in
the Asia-Pacific Region**

Rights education

Peace education

Justice education

Values education

**Civics and citizenship
education**

History education

**Curriculum
CORPORATION**



**Level 5, Casselden Place
2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
P O Box 177, Carlton South Vic 3053
jane.weston@curriculum.edu.au
03 9207 9600
ABN 18 007 342 421
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Curriculum Corporation

Curriculum Corporation is an independent company owned by all Australian Ministers for Education. The Board of the Corporation consists of representatives of all Australian Ministers for Education, the independent and Catholic schools sectors, teachers and parents and the New Zealand Minister for Education. Curriculum Corporation was formed in 1989–90 and is located in Melbourne, Victoria.

Curriculum Corporation has a detailed understanding of the most recent education programs and trends in Australia and many other countries. Through its growing national and international activities, the Corporation has also developed capacity to contribute to educational policy advice, educational reform programs and curriculum resource development. This work is managed through the Curriculum Solutions unit of the Corporation. The following curriculum initiatives are outlined as an indication of past and current best practice in the area of human rights and good governance education in the Asia-Pacific region.

Rights education

Curriculum Corporation has built a sound reputation in the development of curriculum material supporting rights, peace and justice education.

Peace education

As part of the Global Education project funded by the Commonwealth Government, Curriculum Corporation developed a statement to support global education in Australian schools, *Global Perspectives: A statement on global education for Australian schools*, published in March 2002. The statement provides a concise philosophical and practical reference point for educators seeking to include a global education perspective in their curriculum.

The Corporation was also contracted by the World Bank to develop peace education curriculum materials for the Ministry of Education, Sport and Technology (MOEST) in Sierra Leone, West Africa. The Years 1–9 materials include teacher-training modules and classroom activities.

The Sierra Leone project involved consultation with local stakeholders regarding existing materials and approaches to peace building through curriculum and further consultation on the first draft materials. Both these processes involved conducting extensive workshop activity in Sierra Leone and collecting a broad range of data to inform appropriate curriculum content development.

The final product developed for the MOEST is a kit of peace education materials for use in schools and non-formal settings. The materials will be used to support a broader teacher-training initiative.

Justice education

Curriculum Corporation was commissioned by the Federal Court of Australia in 2001 to design, develop and implement a national curriculum resource project. The aims of the project were to foster teaching and learning in law and justice and the Australian legal system. As a way of marking the Centenary of Federation, the Federal Court wanted to promote student understanding and awareness of the work of the Court, its jurisdiction, its processes and its relationship to Australia's system of justice and federal democratic government.

A unique feature of the project was the one-off national Centenary of Federation Arts competition that ran in 2001–2002.

The project developed a book with two teaching and learning units supported by a video – *The Art of Delivering Justice* kit. The units focused on actual cases on which the Court had adjudicated – the unit for lower secondary students is based on a human rights case and the unit for middle–upper secondary students is based on a native title case. The resource is extremely popular with teachers, dealing as it does with real cases on issues of great interest to students.

The project was framed and conducted within a rigorous and demanding consultative process overseen by an Advisory Committee, which consisted of the Chief Justice, a panel of Federal Court judges and registrars and eminent national education advisers. A national Reference Group was consulted on drafts and advised on specific State and Territory requirements. The project also engaged specialist experts in law, native title and Arts education to advise and comment on the development of all the materials.

These materials add to the Corporation's existing materials that deal with 'Law and Rights' as one of the underpinning themes of the Discovering Democracy project (see 'Civics and citizenship education' below).

Values education

Curriculum Corporation has built a sound reputation for developing curriculum materials that support peace, rights and justice education. We have undertaken work in these fields for such diverse clients as the Federal Court of Australia, the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, the World Bank and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

Our expertise in these areas has grown from the Corporation's significant involvement in the Commonwealth's Discovering Democracy program, which explores issues such as active citizenship and encourages the development of skills, values and attitudes that enable effective, informed and reflective participation in political processes and civic life.

A common theme in all these projects has been the core values that underpin society and how the education system can assist in their formation and expression.

Consequently, in August 2002 the Commonwealth Government requested Curriculum Corporation undertake some detailed work to ascertain the values that are currently taught in both government and non-government Australian schools. The Values Education study will provide an informed basis for promoting improved values education in Australian schools and will enable schools to develop and demonstrate exemplary practice in values education.

Values Education Study

The study, managed by the Corporation on behalf of DEST, comprises three aspects:

- a review of current Australian and overseas research on values education
- research to determine parent, teacher and student views on the values the community expects Australian schools to foster
- action research with a range of schools across Australia which are funded with grants to develop and demonstrate good practice in values education.

The research will document the kind of values that are currently taught in Australian schools and how they are developed and the kind of relationships that exist between teachers, parents, local communities and the governments that support the schools. Curriculum Corporation is utilising inclusive consultation processes through a representative Advisory Committee and will present an endorsed final report on the study to DEST in June 2003.

The interim Values Education Study website is located at
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values/>

Civics and citizenship education

The Discovering Democracy program was announced by the Hon David Kemp MP, then Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, in May 1997. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed the program at its June meeting in 1997. The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training, has continued support for the program, stating that:

Discovering Democracy helps students to learn about Australia's democratic heritage and the values underpinning it, including equality, liberty, fairness, trust, mutual respect and social cooperation.

The eight year program, now in its sixth year is intended to lay the foundations for ongoing civics and citizenship education across a range of education sectors: schools, higher education and adult and community education. John Hirst, Chair of the Civics Education Group, says:

The aim of the Discovering Democracy program can be readily stated. We want students to understand the way we govern ourselves and to think of themselves as active citizens.

Achieving this aim requires developing a knowledge of the history and operation of Australia's political and legal systems and institutions and of the principles that underpin Australian democracy. The Discovering Democracy program encourages the development of skills, values and attitudes that enable effective, informed and reflective participation in political processes and civic life.

Discovering Democracy school materials

A project to develop teaching and learning materials was established within the Discovering Democracy program. The materials relate to State and Territory curriculum frameworks and syllabuses for Years 1-12 and have been distributed free to all

government and non-government schools. Materials development continues on a yearly basis until 2004.

Curriculum Corporation manages the development and publication of these print, audiovisual and electronic resources. The development involves consultation with the eight education systems, the non-government sectors and a wide range of interest groups. This broad consultation ensures that the materials meet the needs of all stakeholders and are accurate, balanced, interesting and engaging. The materials include:

- resource kits that provide teaching and learning units of work supported by a teacher reference book, interactive CD-ROMs for students, videos, posters and cards
- six *Australian Readers* that include speeches, songs, paintings, cartoons, poetry and extracts from novels and plays grouped around civic themes; these readers are for use in English and Studies of Society and Environment classrooms from lower primary to senior secondary and were distributed to all schools in class sets
- a 'big book' for lower primary classes, one of the *Australian Readers* series, that gives a story of a community working together to solve a problem, songs, poetry and a narrative account of Federation
- a book that provides research investigations about civic issues for middle primary to middle secondary students to undertake in their schools and communities
- assessment resources for teachers to use in conjunction with the teaching and learning units
- a CD-ROM about Federation that includes a huge bank of primary sources, a slide show of eight themes and interactive activities for students about such issues as the process of Federation, the role of women, the Australian Constitution, issues debated and of concern to the States and the attitude to and place of Indigenous Australians in Australian society at the time of Federation
- *Australia's Democracy – A short history*, a reference book written by Dr John Hirst for senior students, teachers and the general public, which tells the story of the democracy Australians have made.

Discovering Democracy has a rich and multifaceted dedicated website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/>, which has been hosted, maintained and updated by the Corporation for the last five years. The target audiences are civics educators and primary and secondary students nationwide.

History education

Curriculum Corporation has a developing project portfolio in the area of history and commemorative education.

National Centre for History Education

Curriculum Corporation is a member of a consortium contracted by the Commonwealth through the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) to establish a National Centre for History Education. The role of the National Centre is to:

- act as a national and international research centre in history education
- become a focus for the advocacy of information technology in the teaching and learning of history in schools

- act as a curriculum and professional development reference source
- act as a research-based centre for dissemination of best practice in history teaching
- set up a national association for history educators
- as its major activity, manage one upper primary and one lower secondary curriculum project in history
- link with other activities being funded under the Commonwealth Government's National History project.

The establishing consortium, headed by the Monash University Faculty of Education, includes the following members: Curriculum Corporation, Curtin University of Technology Division of Humanities, La Trobe University School of Historical Studies, The University of Melbourne Faculty of Arts, Monash University School of Historical Studies and University of Sydney Faculty of Education.

Curriculum Corporation's role

The Corporation's role is to work closely with the National Centre for History Education in the design, production, trialling and dissemination of the two major curriculum projects. The Corporation is also ensuring that State and Territory education systems and sectors are consulted at strategic points during the development of the materials and is managing the trialling of materials in 84 schools across Australia to obtain the practitioners' point of view. In addition, Curriculum Corporation will consult with interest groups as identified by the National Centre and the Commonwealth and has responsibility for developing information communication technology (ICT) materials and encouraging of the use of ICT in history teaching.

Curriculum Corporation will develop, trial, publish and distribute two books, one each for primary and secondary, with associated online materials for each. The online materials will complement the print materials and provide students with skills in seeking and analysing primary and secondary sources and with guidance and pathways for finding and analysing documentary, video and visual resources.

History teaching handbook

The Corporation has been contracted by DEST to develop and publish a handbook to support the teaching of history in Australian schools. The book will:

- effectively disseminate Australian and international research outcomes in history education and best practice in school history teaching among primary and secondary teachers
- develop closer collaboration between academic and professional historians, teacher educators, classroom teachers and curriculum officials to support improved teaching and learning of school history
- provide a clearer focus on the relationship between school history and Australia's democratic heritage and in particular will augment and support the Discovering Democracy program
- provide effective focus on the use of information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning of history with special emphasis on student acquisition of source evaluation skills
- as part of the National History project, contribute to the strengthening of the study of history and improved student learning outcomes in Australian schools.

The handbook will be written by two of Australia's leading history educators and trialled in schools throughout Australia. It will be published online.

Commemorative resources

To help schools commemorate Remembrance Day 2001, the Corporation developed *We Remember*, a 'big book' for lower primary students, on behalf of the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (DVA) Their Service – Our Heritage program.

The book addresses the theme of remembering and investigates links between children and their relatives who have served Australia during wartime and in peacekeeping operations.

The Corporation is a member of the DVA's panel of qualified education resource providers for commemorative education resources.