

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Agency - Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA)**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0614\_15**

**Senator O'Neill asked on 22 October 2014 , Hansard page 34**

**Question**

**ACARA: elements in the curriculum**

Senator O'NEILL: I think Mr Randall's comments about balance are very important. Fearmongering that creates an impression in a public place that these issues are not covered is simply that: it is fearmongering; it is not accurate. To put this matter to bed, in relation to the elements that I have just questioned you about: on notice, could you provide a comprehensive list or description of where these elements feature in the curriculum? I am always mindful of the depth issue. I would love to have more on particular areas myself. The independence of ACARA in making reasoned judgements about making sure that it is there and not overly represented has absolutely been important.

Mr Randall: We will do that.

**Answer**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has provided the following response.

These elements feature across the curriculum as follows and there is a breakdown of each element at Attachment 1. All references are to the *Australian Curriculum: History*, unless otherwise specified.

Elements – general overview of what students learn:

- the world wars (World War I and World War II are both mandatory and studied in depth),
- history of western democracy from ancient times to the present,
- history of Australia's system of government (particularly in Years 5 and 6),
- democratic concepts relating to western democracies (covered in particular depth via electives in the modern history curriculum, senior secondary curriculum),
- links to the British system of government,
- content relating to religions (included in History, as well as Civics and Citizenship); geography also includes a reference to religions,
- economics and business curriculums include content related to business, economic theories and practices and development.

### **The world wars**

- Year 3 – the significance of Anzac Day as a time of national commemoration
- Year 9 – students learn about World War I (as a depth study)
- Year 10 – Students learn about World War II (as a depth study)
- Year 10 – Students also learn about (as an overview)
  - Australia’s involvement in UN peacekeeping
  - Australia’s involvement in Cold War and post-Cold War conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf Wars, Afghanistan)

### **The history of democracy**

- Year 6 - experiences of democracy and citizenship – particularly after 1900

From the overviews for each year level

- Year 7 - religion and the rule of law in the ancient world
- Year 8 - transformation of the Roman world and the spread of Christianity
- Year 9 - emergence and nature of political ideas 1750 to 1918
- Year 10 - major movements for rights and freedoms in the world

### **The development of the Australian system of government**

- Year 5 - the impact of significant developments, events, individuals and groups on a colony
- Year 6 - Key figures and events that led to Federation, Australia's system of law and government, including the influence of Australia's British heritage, and American influences

### **The history of western democracies in the curriculum**

- Senior secondary Australian Curriculum - The American Revolution (1763 – 1812)
- Senior secondary Australian Curriculum - The French Revolution (1763 – 1812)

### **The colonial and contemporary links to Britain and the British system of government (including in the primary curriculum)**

- **History**
  - Year 5 - The reasons people migrated to Australia from Europe and Asia, and the experiences and contributions of a particular migrant group within a colony
  - Year 6 - Key figures and events that led to Australia’s Federation, including British and American influences on Australia’s system of law and government
- **Civics and Citizenship**
  - Year 6 - The key institutions of Australia’s democratic system of government based on the Westminster system, including the monarchy, parliaments, and courts

### **Teaching about religions, including Christian religions**

- **History**

- Year 2 - The importance today of an historical site of cultural or spiritual significance; for example, a community building, a landmark, a war memorial
- Year 3 - Celebrations and commemorations in other places around the world; for example, Bastille Day in France, Independence Day in the USA, including those that are observed in Australia such as Chinese New Year, Christmas Day, Diwali, Easter, Hanukkah, the Moon Festival and Ramadan
- Year 5 - The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony; for example, explorers, farmers, entrepreneurs, artists, writers, humanitarians, religious and political leaders, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Year 7 - Key features of ancient societies: farming, trade, social classes, religion, rule of law

Roles of key groups in society, including the influence of law and religion' (students study this in relation to ancient societies selected for study, such as Greece, Rome, India etc)

- Year 8 - The transformation of the Roman world and the spread of Christianity and Islam
- **Civics and Citizenship**
  - Year 4 - How a person's identity can be shaped by the different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they may belong
  - Year 7 - How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society
  - Year 8 - Judeo-Christian traditions of Australian society and religions practised in contemporary Australia
  - Year 9 - How and why groups, including religious groups, participate in civic life
- **Geography**
  - Year 6 - The world's cultural diversity, including that of its indigenous peoples

### **Business, economic theories and practices, and development**

The most explicit references include the following:

- Year 5 - The difference between needs and wants and why choices need to be made about how limited resources are used
- Year 6 - How the concept of opportunity cost involves choices about the alternative use of resources and the need to consider trade-offs
- Year 8 - The ways markets operate in Australia and why they may be influenced by government
- Year 9 - Why and how participants in the global economy are dependent on each other.
- Year 10 - The ways businesses organise themselves to improve productivity, including the ways they manage their workforce, and how they respond to changing economic conditions

### **Industry and business**

- **Economics and Business**
  - Year 6 - The reasons businesses exist and the different ways they provide goods and services.
  - Year 7 - Characteristics of entrepreneurs and successful businesses.
  - Year 8 - Types of businesses and the ways that businesses respond to opportunities in Australia.

- **History**
  - Year 9 - The significance of the Industrial Revolution and how it affected living and working conditions in Australia