

CURRICULUM REPORT 2021

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With no Curriculum motions at the 2020 Federal Conference, Federal Council has focused on our ongoing relationships with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to ensure that the perspective of our rural and remote students is considered in decisions made with regard to the Australian Curriculum. We continue to participate in regular ACARA stakeholder meetings as part of the Parents and Principals Peak National Bodies group and have had the opportunity to provide feedback on a several topics and specifically NAPLAN recently. Federal Council has welcomed the Parent Updates we receive from ACARA which are shared in the Federal Branch Bulletin and hopefully members find these useful. Federal Council was pleased to assist in the “ACARA Parent Vox Pops re Australian Curriculum” during 2020, which provided feedback from parents in the format of one-to-two-minute short videos addressing questions related to the Australian Curriculum.

Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review

As part of Federal Council’s interaction with ACARA, we have been involved in briefings and consultations regarding the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review and we continue to follow the progress of the Review.

This is the first time the curriculum has been reviewed in its entirety since its inception, with the intention of scaling back the Curriculum by about 20 per cent amid concerns it is too overcrowded. Further, the syllabus will be simplified in an attempt to ensure children have a solid grasp on foundational numeracy and literacy.

The Learning Area Review aims to declutter the curriculum, improve manageability and reduce content across the eight Learning Areas as well as improve the Australian Curriculum with some revision and updating of content.

On April 29 2021, a slimmed-down syllabus was released for public comment and the public consultation phase of the Australian Curriculum Review began. A new Review of Curriculum website was used for the public consultation phase of the Review (28 April- 8 July 2021), to assist members of the public with resources, Frequently Asked Questions and other information.

A few examples of proposed Australian Curriculum changes include:

- The English curriculum remains mostly intact, although lessons on using software such as Word or PowerPoint are removed
- Students learning a foreign language will focus more on speaking and writing, instead of analysing cultural differences in English
- reading a clock (new suggestion Yr 2) and reciting times tables (new suggestion Year 4) won’t be taught until children are older
- physical education lessons will include more activity, games and sport, with less classroom theory

In our comments to the Review, ICPA (Aust) put forward curriculum issues which have been raised by members and in ICPA policy throughout the consultation process and also through the web form.

Topics Including:

- Basic literacy, numeracy and computer literacy be regarded as essential to all students on the completion of primary school, regardless of location

- The development of Distance Education courses to be undertaken by those who have a working knowledge of the needs of rural and remote students and consideration for the time commitment required by distance education tutors for course implementation.
- That rural and remote students with specific learning needs be a vital consideration in curriculum development.
- National curriculum which contains relevant, accurate representations of agriculture, including explicit components on Food and Fibre production, to be taught and integrated into primary and secondary school curriculums.

Federal Council acknowledges State Councils also contributed to the Review and all councils encouraged members to provide feedback where possible, as on the ground experience of the curriculum is extremely valuable.

At the conclusion of the Review, explanations of the changes being made to the curriculum and the reasons for these changes in each learning area will be explained in a section on the ACARA website and each state curriculum authority will also decide how they wish to share their information as well. The current Curriculum Review website can be found at:

<https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum-review>

It has been indicated that the altered Curriculum should be available for implementation from early next year. However, whether the new version is implemented across jurisdictions will be dependent upon decisions made at state and territory level.

National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Federal, state and territory education ministers have agreed that all schools will gradually transition from the current paper-based NAPLAN tests to the computer-based assessments, with the aim for all schools to undertake NAPLAN online by 2022. ICPA (Aust) continues to participate in discussions around how to manage the devices and ensure that the download and upload required for the NAPLAN Online platform will be obtainable as well as the necessary resources available for schools no matter where they are located. Several states have raised points around a shortage of devices to implement NAPLAN Online and concern for schools that do not have reliable (or any) internet at their school and Federal Council is closely following these conversations. Federal Council would welcome feedback from members as to the experiences of their students during the 2021 NAPLAN testing period.

The Federal Government have signalled that the 2021 NAPLAN results will be used to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to identify consequences associated with these effects. ICPA (Aust) welcomes the identification of increased needs and additional assistance for students where required to address pandemic impacts. We are interested to keep abreast of effects that may be specifically attributed to the move to online lessons and schooling from home, given this mode of learning for many geographically isolated children is used regularly and often their only option for education due to the remoteness of where they live.

Further Australian Curriculum information and updates are regularly available on the ACARA and NAPLAN websites <https://www.acara.edu.au/> and <https://www.nap.edu.au/>

Primary Production in the National Curriculum

The Australian Government's Educating Kids About Agriculture: Kids to Farms grant continues to run over three years from 2019-20 to 2021-22 and will conclude on 30 June 2022. The program was announced in May 2019 as part of the Federal Government's Our Plan to Showcase Agriculture: Our Heritage Our Future where state farming bodies and organisations were encouraged to apply for

grants to help run programs which connect students and agriculture by sponsoring government, Catholic and independent primary school visits to farms and other primary production worksites to learn about agriculture production, sustainability practices and land stewardship.

Federal Council is encouraged by the resources and programs being developed by other organisations as well as some state governments to assist schools and students (both Primary and Secondary) learn about food and fibre production, including:

Kids to Farms

Kids to Farms is a joint initiative between NSW Farmers and Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as part of the Educating Kids about Agriculture: Kids to Farms program.

https://www.visitmyfarm.com.au/kids-to-farms home?mc_cid=9c13c1fc23&mc_eid=f1883f5d1b

Cotton Australia

The Cotton Education Kit is a comprehensive digital platform that maps the information to the Australian Curriculum for Years 7-10 and to Years 11-12 in relevant curriculums from all states and territories. Cotton Australia has two Education Kits available for students and school classroom teachers: the Cotton Education Kit (digital resource) and the Cotton Sampler Education Pack (physical resource).

<https://cottonaustralia.com.au/education-kit?fbclid=IwAR2qWlr85fdth1zBoCzUbHKArXD5u5ayee7vcN6XKhGiGpucspCh9YyBG7c>

Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)

The GRDC has invested in the development of a suite of user-friendly grain education resources and initiatives for students, teachers and families. Each curriculum linked resource incorporates a range of lesson plans which explore the latest science, technology, engineering, mathematics, nutrition, research and innovation in the Australian agricultural industry. A recent GRDC-supported study has provided new insights into how the story of grain growing can be incorporated into education through school subjects such as geography, biology, maths and home economics.

<https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/educational>

Australian Eggs

“All About Eggs” is a resources page for teachers with complete lesson plans, resources and links to videos that will support teaching students about Australia’s Egg Industry.

<https://www.australianeggs.org.au/education>

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)

MLA has been running their Schools Education program for more than six years which includes National Curriculum study guides, lessons and activity sheets, facts for students, digital lessons and virtual excursions. <https://www.goodmeat.com.au/education-resources/>

They also partner with others to offer online resources such as “Cattle and Sheep Farming today”.

<https://www.forteachersforstudents.com.au/site/themed-curriculum/cattle-sheep-farming/>

Dairy Australia

“Discover Dairy” was designed to provide tools and curriculum linked resources to better inform children of the story behind dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream. The site also offers engaging programs such as “Picasso’s Cows” and “Healthy Bones”. <https://www.dairy.edu.au/>

Agforce Qld School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP)

The AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program provides a range of events and programs for primary and secondary students, as well as teachers. The programs inform students about the origins of their food and fibre, engaging them with information from primary production and agricultural sectors and raise the profile of careers in agribusiness. At Beef Australia 2021, around 4000 students participated in a program designed through SIPP to provide information on agriculture and available career opportunities. <https://www.agforceqld.org.au/knowledgebase/article/AGF-01158>

ICPA (Aust) has collated a list of Food and Fibre learning resources which is located on our ICPA website. While this is not an exhaustive list, we hope that it assists members with information on some of the programs available to assist both students and teaching staff to bring food and fibre production into the classroom. This list will be updated on the ICPA website regularly.

ICPA (Aust) continues to be a partner of Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA)- <https://www.piefa.edu.au/> PIEFA is a not for profit company which operates and manages several web portals and sites relating to Primary Industries Education.

- Primezone provides teachers, parents and students with an Australian Curriculum driven range of high quality vetted primary industries education resources from Foundation to Year 12. www.primezone.edu.au
- Primezone Academy which provides both teachers and students with access to a range of primary industries eLearning courses. www.primezoneacademy.edu.au
- Career Harvest- assists students in discovering rewarding careers in primary production. It provides students with career options, scholarships, opportunities and more. www.careerharvest.com.au
- Farmer Time- PIEFA is the Australian partner of the UK founded program "Farmer Time". This program allows students to connect with a farmer, fisher or forester, ask questions, take a virtual tour and experience what a career in food and fibre looks like. Designed for years K-12, Farmer Time provides real-world context for food and fibre curriculum. www.farmertime.com.au
- Knowing Growing- This program facilitates teaching about primary industries in schools by providing quality professional development for all teachers. It is a joint initiative between Primary Industries Education Foundation of Australia, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

While the above initiatives are welcomed as an adjunct to enhancing the provision of agricultural education, we will continue to call for Primary Production to be included as a recognised essential component of the Australian Curriculum. ICPA (Aus) requests assurance be given that the actual production of food and fibre is taught in classrooms so that students gain an understanding of where food and natural materials come from as well as how they are produced.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to participate in discussions on the Australian Curriculum and provide information and background on the learning environments of geographically isolated students where possible.