

# ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



## 2022 CURRICULUM PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT

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The 2021 Federal Conference in Longreach saw no Curriculum motions presented. Federal Council has used the time since conference to work on past motions in policy and to continue fostering the relationship with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). ICPA (Aust) continues to partake in regular ACARA meetings as part of the Parents and Principals Peak National Bodies group. With the recent Curriculum Review and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) undergoing changes to delivery processes, ICPA (Aust), has been kept informed of changes and also provided feedback from our members and experiences.

### **Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review**

Federal Council took part in the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Review which has been completed and endorsed by Education Ministers on 1 April 2022. ACARA has now made the new version 9.0 available on an improved, specially built website at this link [v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au). The previous version 8.4 website will be maintained and will support all resources until all states and territories have fully transitioned to the new version. The link to this version is [existing Australian Curriculum website](#).

This was the first time the curriculum has been reviewed in its entirety since its inception, with the intention of scaling back the curriculum 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. While ACARA was responsible for the review and its finalisation, State and Territory Governments are solely responsible for the implementation of the changes within their jurisdictions.

### **National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)**

In 2022, online National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing was fully implemented as well as the change from the previous three day national testing to a two week testing window. Further changes are being implemented going forth, with the NAPLAN testing window moving to Term 1 (March) in 2023. It is envisaged that this will allow for more timely return of results, meaning that the data will be available earlier in the year to inform teaching and learning programs within schools and to give parents information about their child's performance earlier in the year. Further information on these changes can be found here: <https://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/improvements-to-naplan-from-2023---final.pdf> and here: <https://www.nap.edu.au/home>

Following the 2021 Conference, Federal Council made contact with then Federal Minister for Education, Hon Alan Tudge MP to raise concerns regarding the proposed reforms and planning for NAPLAN. ICPA (Aust)'s main concern about the changes was the possible adverse effects they may have on geographically isolated students, citing *that the unique circumstances of the geographically isolated distance education students we represent, specifically regarding timing and accessibility of NAPLAN testing*. Federal Council also encouraged State Councils to make contact with their respective

Education Ministers to raise these concerns, as all changes were to be signed off at the Education Ministers' Meeting. The priority for ICPA (Aust) in all jurisdictions is that while geographically isolated students have idiosyncrasies in their learning and living locations, away from their mainstream urban counterparts, they are a dynamic group that cannot be dismissed in considerations as their "data" for learning is as imperative as are all of their cohorts. Federal Council was encouraged to receive a response from then Acting Federal Minister for Education Hon Stuart Robert MP noting our concerns and committing to reiterating them at meetings to discuss the proposed NAPLAN reforms.

Despite assurances to the contrary, Federal Council has been made aware of instances where the circumstances of geographically isolated distance education students have meant they have been unable to participate in NAPLAN testing due to allowances not being made for their unique situations. Federal Council have raised this with relevant bodies and have been reassured that measures are in place to avoid issues and efforts will continue to avoid such situations.

While the 2022 NAPLAN results are yet to be released, the 2021 result data brought to the fore a clear picture that for those children educated in rural and remote areas of Australia with significant gaps and clear trends between the results of regional, remote and very remote students compared to metropolitan students from 2016 - 2021. The results highlighted that educational opportunities and outcomes for rural, remote and very remote are simply not equivalent to their urban counterparts and more needs to be done by all levels of government to recognise and rectify this trend. ICPA (Aust) published a Media Release titled 'ICPA Message As Important As Ever' <https://icpa.com.au/au/icpa-federal-media-releases-2021> calling on all Governments to address and rectify these trends. The message cannot be clearer. Living in rural and remote Australia should not mean that an inequitable education is tolerated.

ICPA (Aust) will continue to actively participate in discussions on the Australian Curriculum and provide information and background on the learning environments of geographically isolated students where possible with a view to improving these outcomes.