



**The Shape of the  
Australian Curriculum:  
Civics and Citizenship**



October 2012

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# Purpose

1. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* provides broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of an Australian curriculum for Civics and Citizenship. It is intended to guide the writing of the Foundation to Year 12 *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*.
2. This paper has been prepared following analysis of consultation feedback on the *Civics and Citizenship Curriculum Initial Advice Paper* (2012) and ACARA Board advice.
3. The paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v3.0* available at [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/The\\_Shape\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Curriculum\\_V3.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_V3.pdf)

# Defining Civics and Citizenship

4. a) **Civics** is defined broadly as an identifiable body of knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society, including Australia's federal system of government, political and social heritage, democratic processes, public administration and judicial system; that includes local, state, national, regional and global perspectives.

b) **Citizenship** can be formally defined as the legal relationship between an individual and a state. More broadly, citizenship is the condition of belonging to social, religious, political or community groups, locally, nationally and globally. Being part of a group carries with it a sense of belonging or identity which includes rights and responsibilities, duties and privileges. These are guided by the agreed values and mutual obligations required for active participation in the group. In the Australian Curriculum citizenship incorporates three components – civil (rights and responsibilities), political (participation and representation) and social (social values, identity and community involvement).

# Context

5. Civics and citizenship education is premised on the propositions that each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will allow for inclusive teaching practices that take account of the abilities of all students and respect the diverse range of students in Australian schools. This is a key proposition of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, V3.0*.
6. Civics and Citizenship education is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for young Australians to become active and informed citizens in a global context. It presents exciting and challenging opportunities for school authorities, schools and teachers to prepare students for citizenship, both as part of the formal school curriculum and as part of a wider whole-school program. This could include participation in experiences external to the school but linked to the school curriculum (for example, community activities, parliamentary education programs, civic institution visits and electoral commission programs). Over the past two decades in Australia and internationally, there has been a broadening of the concepts, processes, and practices in Civics and Citizenship education. In particular there has been an increased emphasis on the role of active citizenship, both as explicit content and as a key outcome of Civics and Citizenship education.
7. Civics and Citizenship education in schools helps citizens to participate in and sustain their democracy. The link between schooling, citizenship and democracy is enshrined in every set of Australian education goals, most recently in Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australia* (MCEEDYA, 2008), which states that all young Australians should become active and informed citizens [who]:
  - act with moral and ethical integrity
  - appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture
  - understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
  - are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life
  - are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
  - work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
  - are responsible global and local citizens.

## Context

8. As an identified subject, the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will contribute to achieving the educational goals identified in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008, pp. 8-9) and will set out what young people need to learn and be able to do in order to become active and informed citizens in Australia and globally. It will do this by specifying content descriptions and achievement standards, guided by a rationale and a set of aims. In delivering the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*, education authorities, schools and teachers will decide on the most appropriate organisational approaches and pedagogy to achieve these aims.
9. Since 2004 there has been a National Assessment Program (NAP) for Civics and Citizenship in Years 6 and 10, at three yearly intervals (2004, 2007 and 2010). Data sets from the NAP sample for Civics and Citizenship will provide a useful reference point for developing a progression in knowledge, understanding and skills, across the relevant years of schooling for Civics and Citizenship.

# Informing Principles

10. The principles that will inform the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* include the following:
- a) Democracy in Australia involves a constitution, a well-established representative parliamentary process based upon the Westminster system and a constitutional monarchy. It is grounded in liberal democratic values and a belief in civic engagement. If Australian citizens are committed to and participate in civic life, our democracy will be sustained and strengthened.
  - b) The values on which Australia's democracy is based include freedom of the individual, government by the people through a representative parliament, free and fair elections, the rule of law, equality of all before the law, social justice and equality, respect for diversity and difference, freedom of speech and religion, lawful dissent, respect for human rights, support for the common good, and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
  - c) Australia is a multicultural, secular society with a multi-faith population. Young people are members of diverse local, national and global communities, and need opportunities to understand and participate in Australia's multicultural and multi-faith society.
  - d) Citizenship contributes to the concepts of individual identity and a sense of belonging. Individuals may identify with multiple 'citizenships' at any one point in time and over a period of time. Citizenship means different things to people at different times and depending on personal perspectives, their social situation and where they live. This is reflected in multiple perspectives of citizenship that reflect personal, social, spatial and temporal dimensions of citizenship. The preparation of active and empowered citizens includes opportunities for students to apply democratic principles, practise behaviours and to actively engage in practical citizenship activities within schools, in the community and online.
  - e) Student experience of Civics and Citizenship should be based on the formal curriculum in Civics and Citizenship and a combination of class-based activities, whole-school activities and community activities.
  - f) Students in schools are citizens but they need opportunities to build their knowledge and understanding and experience to become active adult citizens. The school plays an essential role in the provision of opportunities for preparing active and informed citizens to ensure the continuation of Australia's parliamentary, liberal democracy.
  - g) Participation of citizens takes place at many levels – within the home/family, classes, within schools, within workplaces, within communities, within our nation and internationally. To be effective, citizens require knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, of the political and legal institutions and processes and of the principles and values that underpin Australian democracy. They also need the associated and necessary supporting skills, values, attitudes and dispositions to become active citizens who can participate in communities at local, state, national, regional and increasingly the global level.



# Rationale

11. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will provide essential learning for young Australians to be active, informed citizens in their democracy and an increasingly interconnected world. To achieve this, the Civics and Citizenship curriculum will focus on developing knowledge and understanding, and skills — underpinned by values, attitudes and dispositions to participate in civic life, locally, nationally and globally.
12. The key knowledge, understandings and skills in the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* can be taught in a range of different contexts. This will provide flexibility and choice for teachers and schools based on local school and community contexts, local civics learning opportunities and available resources. Using a context-based approach will assist in linking Civics and Citizenship learning with other learning areas and subjects but requires rigorous consideration of essential content and appropriate contexts.
13. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will provide opportunities for the recognition of Australia's first peoples and for students to develop awareness and understanding of the diverse society in which they live. It will also help students develop inclusive attitudes and beliefs and liberal democratic values and challenge stereotypes based on difference. This is in the context of Australia as a multicultural, secular, and multi-faith society, governed through a well-established representative parliamentary process and based on liberal democratic laws, values, principles and practices.
14. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* has been written on the assumption that links between students and local, state, national, regional and global communities will be consolidated and strengthened through a whole school approach. Wider-school programs will provide opportunities for students to engage with communities and civic institutions. This could include students actively participating in community decision-making or contributing to civil society through, for example:
  - a) engagement with community service programs, fundraising for charities and volunteer work
  - b) broader community projects including working with national and international NGOs.
15. As an international citizen, Australia has commitments to United Nations conventions, including human rights declarations and international obligations. An awareness of the political and legal systems of other countries enhances students' understanding of their own system of government.
16. The key to Australia's representative, responsible and accountable democracy is informed citizens who actively take part in their community in the context of liberal democratic values, institutions and systems of government. If Australian citizens are committed to and participate in civic life, our liberal, representative democracy, built on a constitution and the supremacy of parliament, will be sustained and thrive.

# Aims

17. An *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will contribute to the general educational aims set out in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v3.0*. Its principal task is to assist students to develop the civic knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to engage purposefully as citizens at local, state, national, regional and global levels now and in the future.
18. An Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship will:
  - a) develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that will facilitate the development of the attitudes, values and dispositions students need to fully participate in civic life as active citizens in their communities, the nation, regionally and globally
  - b) develop knowledge and understanding of Australia's liberal, representative democracy, legal system and civic life, including reference to Australia's democratic heritage
  - c) develop a critical appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic life nationally and globally, including the capacity to act as informed and responsible citizens and to critically examine values and principles that underpin Australia's liberal democracy
  - d) build an understanding and critical appreciation of Australia as a multicultural and multi-faith society and a commitment to human rights and intercultural understandings, with particular consideration of Aboriginal Peoples' and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' experience of, participation in and contribution to Australian civic identity and society.

# Organisation of the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum

19. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum includes a cognitive domain (knowing, understanding and reasoning) and a behavioural domain (engagement, skills and behaviours), both influenced by an affective domain (values, attitudes and dispositions). School activities concerned with the development of citizenship relate to all three of these domains.
20. The two organisational strands of an *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will be Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding and Civics and Citizenship skills.

## *Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding*

21. The important knowledge and understanding developed in an *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will be drawn from the following:
  - a) Key institutions and processes of the Australian political system and of government at state, national and international levels including how governments and parliaments are elected and formed; levels and roles of government; concepts of power, leadership and community service.
  - b) Principles, concepts and values underpinning Australia's liberal, representative democracy, including the Westminster system and the Australian Constitution, the role of democracy in building a socially cohesive and civil society and ways in which individuals, groups and governments make decisions, including checks and balances in the political system.
  - c) Key elements of Australia's legal system and legal processes including the purpose of laws, constitutional principles, legal rights and responsibilities, the rule of law, and the ways in which Australia's legal system contributes to democratic principles, human rights and freedoms.
  - d) Rights and responsibilities of citizens, including human rights (civil, political, social, economic, cultural), as well as the right to dissent, critique and communicate, and the ways in which individuals, groups and governments exert influence on civic debate and citizen engagement.
  - e) Knowledge of the cultures, social and political processes and laws of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
  - f) Australia as a secular, pluralist, multicultural society and the contribution of major religions and beliefs and the voluntary, community, interest and religious groups, associations and clubs to civic life and to the development of Australian civic identity.
  - g) Multidimensional citizenship and the influence of local, state, national, regional and global events, perspectives and cultural diversity on government policy and on civic identity.

# Organisation of the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum

## *Civics and Citizenship skills*

22. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will provide a set of skills that will enable students to be active and engaged as well as informed and critical participants in their multiple communities:

a) Questioning and research

This involves, for example: planning inquiries and investigating information and ideas, using research skills in reviewing literature and collecting data, questioning existing situations; preparing reports and critiquing research.

b) Analysis and synthesis

This involves, for example: evaluating a position or decision, taking a position, and defending a position; distinguishing a statement of fact from an opinion; synthesising research data; understanding and coping with ambiguity.

c) Collaborative problem-solving and decision-making

This involves, for example: displaying interest and skill in decision-making, solving problems and resolving conflict resolution through collaboration and demonstrating intercultural competence.

d) Communication

This involves, for example: presenting ideas in oral and written form; critical reading, debating, writing and listening; applying empathic and social skills; using both traditional and social media (Twitter, blogs, Facebook and so on) and the internet in socially constructive ways as communication tools in modern democracy.

e) Interpretation

This involves, for example: interpreting political policies and decisions, and critiquing media messages, including the interests and value systems that are involved

23. These skill areas are critical to the inquiry process, and aim to support students in becoming active, informed and critical citizens

# Organisation of the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum

24. As part of a broader social inquiry process, these align closely with the skill sets in other Australian Curriculum humanities subjects (see table below).

Civics and Citizenship	History	Geography
Questioning and research	Chronology, terms and concepts	Observing, questioning, planning and collecting
	Historical questions and research	
Analysis and synthesis	Analysis and use of sources	Evaluating, processing and analysing
Interpretation	Perspectives and interpretations	Interpreting and concluding
Communication	Explanation and communication	Communicating
Collaborative problem-solving and decision-making		Reflecting and responding

25. The knowledge, understandings and skills of Civics and Citizenship are underpinned by **values, attitudes and dispositions** that are the foundation of Australia’s parliamentary liberal democracy and responsible civic action, and include:

- a) the values that are the foundation of liberal and parliamentary representative democracy, such as freedom of expression, government by the people, equality, the rule of law, equality before the law, fair and effective representation, responsibility, accountability and common good
- b) the commitment to civil behaviour, civic duty and human rights in a modern democracy, including care and compassion, respect for all people, fairness, social justice, freedom of speech, honesty, respecting others’ rights and views, responsibility, inclusiveness, equality, sustainability, peace, giving and contributing to the common good.
- c) the dispositions, that is the inclination of an individual to behave in a manner that is informed by the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes acquired as an active, democratic citizen, such as an inclination to:
  - participate in the political community
  - volunteer to be active in the community
  - participate in civil society, and community life with a focus on social and global issues
  - engage in activities to improve society, guided by civic values and attitudes.

# Learners and Learning: F-12

## Overview

26. The draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* provides broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of an Australian curriculum for Civics and Citizenship.
27. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will be developed from Years 3 to 10. It is assumed that all students will be taught Civics and Citizenship across Years 3–8. In Years 9–10 students will have the opportunity to continue their study of Civics and Citizenship, so they may deepen their understanding in preparation for senior secondary study in the humanities or other areas.
28. The Australian Curriculum has been developed so that it can be taught within 80 per cent of the available teaching time. With this in mind, a notional time allocation of 20 hours per year will be used as a guide by the writers as they develop the Civics and Citizenship curriculum.
29. The curriculum focus outlined for Civics and Citizenship learning is cumulative in nature and is intended to build depth of student knowledge and understanding and sophistication of skills over the years of schooling. In the context of an Australian democracy it builds on the understanding of empowering students to be active citizens now as well as in the future.
30. A Civics and Citizenship curriculum must take into account the development of children to adolescence and adulthood. As children develop through the years of primary school they are increasingly able to understand and appreciate the concepts and more abstract ideas embedded in Civics and Citizenship. They begin to appreciate different points of view and can maintain engagement with tasks for longer periods of time. Thought processes become more conceptual and consistent, with learners drawing upon a broader range of experiences to inform their thinking. Students increasingly look for and value learning that helps explain broader aspects of their world.
31. During the phases of schooling students should be encouraged to become increasingly active in forms of citizenship participation, from class and whole school activities to community and global projects. The following sections provide guidance for curriculum writers as to what content and skills should be addressed at each phase.

## Learners and Learning: F-12

32. Children, including young children, are citizens. The *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) recognises the importance of children connecting with people and place, being effective social communicators and using skills to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking. In Years F–2, the Australian Curriculum builds on the EYLF.
33. There will not be curriculum developed for Years F–2 as part of the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*. Through other learning areas and subjects, as well as the general capabilities, students will have opportunities to learn about ‘rules’ as part of the school ethos/classroom setting, ‘relationships’, ‘responsibilities’, and interpersonal and communication skills. The transition from primary to secondary school coincides with a range of significant personal, biological and social changes. Students further develop the propensity to question established conventions, practices and values. Their interests extend beyond their own communities and they develop concerns about wider issues. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum should provide opportunities to engage with these changes.
34. The middle and senior secondary years of schooling can also be seen as a period of empowerment for, and transition to, adult citizenship. Students have a clearer sense of their strengths, interests and goals. They begin to see themselves as active players in community life and are often concerned about national and international social and environmental issues and the ethical implications of human activity and knowledge.
35. The design of the Australian Curriculum for Years 9 and 10 recognises that many students commence senior secondary pathways and programs in these years. The Australian Curriculum is designed to provide increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways and to deepen their understanding in each subject. In Years 9 and 10 there is flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior secondary years.

### *Years 3–6*

*Years 3 to 4 (typically 8–10 years of age)*

36. During these years of schooling, students are progressively engaging with a wider breadth of ideas. They begin to understand and recognise different points of view and can maintain engagement with tasks for longer periods of time. Students become more aware of different perspectives and draw upon a broader range of experiences to inform their thinking and decision-making. Students increasingly engage with and value learning that helps explain broader aspects of their civic world.
37. In Years 3 and 4, students will have the opportunity<sup>1</sup> to develop their understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> For example: refer to the Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship p5



# Learners and Learning: F-12

concepts of law, rules, power, government, freedoms, cooperative decision-making, rights and responsibilities, media and other Civics and Citizenship concepts at an appropriate level. They are able to develop the skills and values associated with Civics and Citizenship.

*Years 5 to 6 (typically 10–12 years of age)*

38. During these years, students continue to develop a better awareness and appreciation of different points of view and of justice and fair play. They increasingly engage in discussions about community and national issues, with a focus on contemporary issues, in order to consider why and for whom decisions are made. They have a broader awareness of global issues, such as human rights and Australia's relationships with other countries.
39. In Years 5–6, students will have the opportunity<sup>2</sup> to develop their understanding of civics concepts in the context of local, national, regional and global communities and the skills that enable active citizenship in these contexts. The content will provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding of the processes of government and democracy and to examine civic issues. It will also provide opportunities for students to engage in practical civics and citizenship activities.

## *Years 7–10*

*Years 7 to 8 (typically 12–14 years of age)*

40. During these years, students develop a broader awareness of, and concern with, civics and citizenship issues. Students are developing their capacities to think, act and solve problems progressively on the basis of wider community concerns rather than individual interests. They increasingly engage with more abstract concepts, follow more complex explanations, and challenge and debate ideas. Students develop increasing independence in critical thinking and skill application; have more awareness of ethical issues, and the connections between the polity, culture, environment and development.
41. In Years 7 and 8 students will have the opportunity<sup>3</sup> to develop their understanding of the local and national, with a greater emphasis on regional and global perspectives than in Years 5–6. Students learn to make independent judgments about information and develop some understanding of a range of political systems, with particular emphasis on liberal representative democracy, the role of constitutions, and a critical perspective on the influence of the media within society, including social media.

*Years 9 to 10 (typically 14–16 years of age)*

42. During these years, students further develop their awareness of global, national and community issues. They increasingly engage in activities, with a focus on more complex contemporary issues as they consider why and for whom decisions are made at different

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<sup>2</sup> For example, refer to the *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship*, pp. 6-7

<sup>3</sup> For example, refer to the *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship*, pp. 8-9



## Learners and Learning: F-12

levels. They have a broader awareness of individual and group civic identity, the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen, and how citizens can influence governments.

43. In Years 9 and 10 students will have the opportunity<sup>4</sup> to develop their understanding of the functions of parliament and the court system and the risks associated with various decision-making processes. Increasingly a global perspective will be evident, with opportunities to understand the complex interdependencies involved in the development of political decisions and civic engagement. Students critique problems, collect and analyse relevant data, generate and communicate ideas, and create and construct possible solutions to civic and political problems.

### *Senior Secondary (typically 16–18 years of age)*

44. During these years, students develop a broader awareness of more advanced topics related to politics and law, investigating international problems and understanding the complexities of these problems, including the associated ethical issues. These problem-solving activities are sophisticated, acknowledge the complexities of contemporary life and make connections to related subjects such as History and Geography. Students have a more global perspective, with a more sophisticated understanding of the complex interdependencies involved in political decision-making at local, national and international levels.
45. In the senior secondary years, students will further develop the skills and understanding achieved by the end of Year 10. They will have the opportunities to: develop knowledge and understanding of Australia's legal system and constitutional basis of Australian democracy; to study global politics in order to contextualise Australian democracy; and the skills to critically evaluate civics and citizenship issues.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, refer to the *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship*, pp. 10-11

# Civics and Citizenship and the cross-curriculum priorities

46. The Australian Curriculum must be relevant to the lives of students and address the contemporary issues they face. With these considerations in mind, the Australian Curriculum gives special attention to three cross-curriculum priorities:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
  - Sustainability
  - Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

## *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures*

47. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* recognises the importance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority for its capacity to create more informed citizens and contribute to social cohesion and inclusion. The subject will acknowledge the contribution to Australian society and civic life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and recognise them as having the longest continuous histories and cultures in the world.
48. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will encourage students to learn about the means of law and governance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and of cultural diversity and how that shapes identity and citizenship. It will build on the F-10 history curriculum which includes historical experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, by providing opportunities for students to enhance their understanding of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences of Australia's political and legal system, and citizenship.

## *Sustainability*

49. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* recognises the role of civic and political activity in generating more sustainable patterns of living. Actions to improve sustainability are both individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of political, environmental, social, cultural and economic systems, and their interdependence.
50. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will provide students with the knowledge and skills to understand and participate in democratic processes to improve sustainability, across local, state, national, regional and global levels, for the wellbeing of all life into the future.

## *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia*

51. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* recognises the importance of the Asia region in the world today, as well as that Australia's engagement with Asia has the capacity to build understanding and appreciation of diversity in our society and contribute

## Civics and Citizenship and the cross-curriculum priorities

to harmonious local, regional and global communities. The subject will enable students to explore the significant contribution that the peoples and cultures of the Asia region make to our political, social and economic world and the impact that Australia's involvement in the region has upon Asian societies.

52. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will provide students with the knowledge and skills to systematically engage with Asia today and for the future. It will enable students to explore and appreciate different approaches to citizenship and the diverse political systems within the Asia region.

# Civics and Citizenship and General capabilities

53. In the Australian Curriculum, the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to succeed in life and work in the twenty-first century has been identified as general capabilities. Over the course of their schooling, students develop and use general capabilities within and across learning areas and subjects, and in their lives outside school. General capabilities and learning areas and subjects have a reciprocal relationship. Learning areas and subjects provide opportunities for students to develop and use general capabilities. Similarly, wherever general capabilities are made explicit in learning areas and subjects, they can enrich and deepen learning. In the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* each of the seven identified general capabilities should be embedded in the content descriptions and/or elaborations where appropriate.
54. The general capabilities are integral to being a citizen and are to be a central part of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum. Every citizen needs, for example, to think and act ethically, to be able to communicate and to think critically and creatively. These capabilities assist students to become engaged citizens in their democracy, using skills to resolve issues, and developing the attitudes, values and dispositions that are the foundations of modern democracies.

## *Critical and creative thinking*

55. Students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas and subjects.
56. Civics and Citizenship is particularly suited to developing students' ability to think creatively and critically about political and social issues. This should include opportunities to generate ideas, imagine possibilities and consider alternatives, apply logical and inventive reasoning, draw conclusions and design a course of action against a backdrop of environmental and social needs and concerns. Critical and creative thinking will be developed through topics featuring questions that do not have obvious or straightforward answers. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will stimulate students to think creatively about the impact that civic issues have on our lives, how they might be addressed, and about possible, probable and preferred futures.

## *Personal and social capability*

57. Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing respectful relationships, making responsible decisions, working

# Civics and Citizenship and General capabilities

effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

58. In Civics and Citizenship students should be encouraged to develop and apply personal, interpersonal and social skills, behaviours and dispositions, through working collaboratively and constructively in groups, developing their communication, decision-making, conflict resolution and leadership skills, and learning to appreciate the insights and perspectives of others.

## *Ethical behaviour*

59. Students develop the capability to behave ethically as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical behaviour involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.
60. In Civics and Citizenship students should be encouraged to consider and apply ethical principles in collaborating, sharing and acting with social responsibility. This includes identifying values and rights (based on agreed principles) promoted by groups such as peers, local community groups, corporations and governments. This will involve an exploration of ethical issues, the notion of the common good and the place of national values and human rights. Students should have opportunities to investigate national and global priorities, and to evaluate their findings against the criteria of environmental sustainability, economic viability and social responsibility. By exploring such issues, students develop informed values and attitudes, and become aware of their own roles and responsibilities as present and future citizens.

# Civics and Citizenship and General capabilities

## *Intercultural understanding*

61. Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages, religion and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.
62. In Civics and Citizenship students should have opportunities to engage with their own cultures, values and beliefs and those of others in local, national, regional and global contexts. They should be given opportunities to explore how people interact across cultural boundaries and to consider how factors such as group membership, traditions, customs and religious and cultural practices impact on the function and form of daily life.

## *Literacy*

63. Students become literate as they develop the knowledge and skills to learn and communicate confidently at school and to contribute to a literate society. Literacy involves students in composing and comprehending spoken language, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for a variety of purposes and audiences in a range of contexts so they are able to read critically.
64. In Civics and Citizenship students learn to understand and use language to explore, analyse, discuss and communicate information, concepts and ideas related to the subject. This involves learning to recognise how language can be used to manipulate meaning, distinguish between fact and fiction on political and social issues, and communicate ideas, concepts and detailed proposals to a variety of audiences. Communication is critical in Civics and Citizenship, in particular articulating, debating and evaluating ideas and participating in group discussions.

## *Numeracy*

65. Students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across all learning areas and subjects at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy involves students in recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.
66. In Civics and Citizenship students apply key numeracy knowledge and skills in relation to a range of political and social theories and practices. Numeracy enables students to use mathematics to analyse and address Civics and Citizenship questions. This includes counting, calculating, approximating and estimating, statistics (for example in relation to polling and voting), measuring and recording throughout the process of idea generation, developing, refining, and testing concepts in political and social contexts. A useful

# Civics and Citizenship and General capabilities

application is in understanding political opinion polls that are central to modern politics.

## *Information and communication technology (ICT) competence*

67. Students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas and subjects at school, and in their lives beyond school. ICT capability involves students in learning to make the most of the technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.
68. In Civics and Citizenship students develop the knowledge and skills to use digital technologies to locate, manage, organise, analyse, represent and present information, and to collaborate, share and exchange information and support thinking and engagement. ICT capability will be particularly important for students in research and in collecting and analysing data related to Civics and Citizenship.

## Links to other learning areas and subjects

69. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum will maintain close and strong links with other areas of the Australian Curriculum at both primary and secondary levels.
70. The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* will present an opportunity to build on strong synergies with particular humanities and social sciences subjects as well as other learning areas and subjects. The content of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum will take into account related content from other Australian Curriculum subjects, to ensure that unnecessary repetition is avoided and links and potential for integration are maximised.
71. This is particularly the case in Years 5- 6, and Years 9-10 History, Geography, Business and Economics, and English. There are multiple opportunities for History in particular to be linked with the content of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum, including the development of Australian democracy and the growth of modern Australian identity.
72. A further key feature of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum will be the links made, in conjunction with other learning areas and subjects, with a range of experiences outside the school.



# Conclusion

73. Civics and Citizenship education is designed to provide young people with the confidence, knowledge, understanding and skills to develop their civic identity, live as citizens in their local and wider communities and create a future that will enhance society. The Civics and Citizenship curriculum provides opportunities for students to explore local, national, regional and global issues and priorities that link to a broad cross-section of societal needs. The curriculum may be taught through class-based activities, whole-school activities and community activities in conjunction with activities through the informal curriculum. Civics and Citizenship is characterised by students engaging with and creating solutions for authentic situations and issues. Students will explore scenarios, generate and develop ideas, research and experiment, and problem-solve using their knowledge, skills and understanding of values related to Civics and Citizenship.

# Key Terms and Definitions

**Active citizenship** refers to involvement and informed participation in the civic and political activities of society at local, state, national, regional and global levels. For the purpose of this curriculum, reference to active citizenship is primarily about student citizenship in a school and community context that ultimately contributes to the development of students as adult citizens

**Australian democracy** includes a written constitution; a well-established representative parliamentary process based upon the Westminster system, a constitutional monarchy and is grounded in liberal democratic values and a belief in civic engagement.

**Informal curriculum** can be defined as those school experiences which are planned to achieve pre-determined outcomes but which are not school subjects. In terms of civic learning, the informal curriculum includes student governance, student newspapers, debating, student clubs and school assemblies, all of which can offer education in civic values together with civic knowledge and skills.

**Knowledge** implies a conceptual understanding of phenomena including factual understanding (for example understanding, supported by factual knowledge, of parliamentary democracy in one's country and state/local area).

**Liberal democracy** is an approach to political arrangements that takes the view that the ideal political system should combine majority rule by the people with the protection of the political, legal and social rights of individuals and groups.

**Multidimensional citizenship** accepts that an individual can function with more than one sense of citizenship composed of four dimensions (personal, social, spatial and temporal). In particular, at any one time a person may identify as a 'citizen' of a city, a region, a country and globally.

**Parliamentary democracy** is a political system based on the idea that parliament is supreme or sovereign. In a parliamentary democracy citizens elect representatives to govern on their behalf. Legislation within parliament is passed by a majority vote and becomes the law of the nation.

**Representative democracy** occurs where people elect others to represent them in the decision-making process. Representative democracy occurs in parliament where people elect representatives, or members of parliament, to make laws on their behalf.

**Rights and responsibilities** refer to entitlements and obligations that are associated with citizenship. Rights and responsibilities are a cornerstone of modern democracies. While there are many rights a citizen may enjoy (freedom of speech, the right to vote) there are also responsibilities of citizenship (vote in elections, pay taxes, jury service).

# Key Terms and Definitions

**Rule of law** is the legal principle that decisions by government are made according to established principles and that all citizens are subject to the law and equal before the law. It includes acceptance by government and the community that all executive action will be constrained and adjudicated by an independent judiciary, subject to due and proper processes. Embedded within the rule of law is the notion that people accept and follow, but also change as needed, laws as agreed by the political process and upheld by independent courts.

**Skills** means the ability to do something in the civic domain, such as effectively engage with others in public arenas, and engage in critical and creative reflection on all political levels from local to national and international levels.

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