National Curriculum Board

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum:

English, Mathematics, Science and History

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM BOARD

Professor Barry McGaw AO

The National Curriculum Board (NCB) has reached a major milestone in developing the Australian curriculum. This publication summarises the work of the Board from its inception in April 2008 to May 2009.

The writing of the curriculum for English, mathematics, the sciences and history, the first phase of the Board's work, will begin in May. Consultation about the broad shape for languages, geography and the arts, the second phase, will take place during 2009.

During May the National Curriculum Board's work will be taken up by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) which will be based in Sydney.

To ensure timelines are met for the development stage of the curriculum for the four learning areas, the curriculum unit of ACARA will remain in Melbourne until December 2009.

Engagement with a wide range of people has contributed greatly to the directions set for the Australian curriculum. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express appreciation of the support and participation of those who have contributed to the Board's achievements.

Chair of the National Curriculum Board, May 2009

MILESTONES 2008/09

27 June 2008
National forum to discuss keys questions about shaping Australia's curriculum. Initial ideas were then built on at forums held in each state and territory (June - November 2008).

August 2008
Lead writers appointed to support writing initial advice papers.

12 September - 3 October 2008
Small expert advisory groups including lead writers met to support the development of the draft initial advice papers.

13 - 17 October 2008
Initial advice papers discussed at national forums.

14 - 18 October 2008
Nominated teacher professional association groups met to support lead writers to shape the direction of framing papers following consultation at national forums.

20 November 2008
Framing papers released for consultation.

28 February 2009
Consultation on framing papers closed. Submissions read and analysed. Consultation reports developed for the Board endorsement.

6 May 2009
Shape of the Australian Curriculum publications made available on the Board's website.

Mid May 2009
The writing of the curriculum for the four learning areas begins.

CONSULTATION

Partnerships with education authorities (national, state and territory, government, Catholic, independent and local school authorities), parent bodies, professional education associations, academics, business, industry and community groups have been integral to establishing the directions for the design and development of the curriculum.

In developing the Australian curriculum thus far, there has been substantial consultation with the education profession and general community about:

- the shape of the national curriculum
- how the curriculum areas (English, mathematics, the sciences and history) should be framed
- equity and diversity, learning for the 21st century, the nature of learning (K-12), Indigenous education, sustainability issues
- ICT, literacy and numeracy continua

Consultation processes have included:

- submissions in response to discussion papers
- national, state and territory forums
- meetings with key education and professional bodies
- meetings with subject and cross-curriculum experts
- online surveys and feedback systems (feedback@ncb.org.au)

Following closure of the consultation period, work has focused on:

- analysing submissions
- developing formal consultation feedback reports
- publishing reports on the website with an action plan detailing how the feedback would be addressed.

Consultation report for The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion

The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion was developed following the initial national forum in June 2008 at which key groups and individuals across Australia discussed key questions about shaping the curriculum. Initial ideas were then built on at forums held in each state and territory.

Notes taken at these forums, surveys completed at meetings or received through the Board's website and formal written submissions provided valuable feedback about the broad directions for the curriculum.

The paper's consultation report provides an analysis of responses from education authorities, professional associations, teachers, academics, business, industry and community groups. Affirmations and significant issues raised are identified.

Following a brief overview of the consultation process, feedback is described about:

- understanding the contemporary context of curriculum goals of education
- principles to underpin curriculum
- specifications for curriculum development
- curriculum content - general comments, knowledge, skills and understanding, literacy and numeracy, general capabilities and achievement standards.

All submissions will be retained on a database for ongoing analysis to support the development of the curriculum.

To view the full consultation report visit the website **www.ncb.org.au**

Level 5 | 440 Collins Street | PO Box 177 | Carlton South | Victoria 3053
P (03) 8330 9400 | F (03) 8330 9401 | E info@ncb.org.au| W www.ncb.org.au

Consultation reports for English, Mathematics, Science and History framing papers

The framing papers for English, mathematics, the sciences and history were released for public consultation from 20 November 2008 to 28 February 2008.

The framing papers proposed broad directions for what teachers should teach and young people should learn from Kindergarten to Year 12. They sought to generate broad-ranging discussions about the proposed directions for the curriculum.

Community contribution to the consultation process included opportunities to complete specific framing paper online surveys and/or lodge submissions. Surveys and submissions were received from individual teachers and other educators; school and curriculum authorities; professional and subject associations; and business, industry and community groups.

The consultation report for each of the learning areas includes:

- an overall introduction and background to the development of the framing papers
- an outline of the methodology used to collect and analyse the data
- a summary of respondents including demographic data
- analysis of quantitative and qualitative feedback including the source of the data
- recommended actions in response to the feedback

To view the consultation reports for each of the respective learning areas, visit the website **www.ncb.org.au**

HOW THE CURRICULUM WILL BE DEVELOPED

Curriculum development includes four stages:

Curriculum Framing Stage
Development of a broad outline of the K-12 curriculum for each learning area.

Curriculum Writing Stage
Development of the K-12 curriculum for each learning area.

Implementation Stage
Schools use curriculum for teaching and learning.

Evaluation and Review Stage
Data collection on the use of the curriculum. Review of curriculum and modification as appropriate.

The timeline for the writing of national curriculum is set out on the following page.

The timeline can also be viewed on the website **www.ncb.org.au.** It will be updated to reflect the progress of the national curriculum development.

TIMELINE FOR CURRICULUM WRITING

Stage	Activity	Timelines K - 10	Timelines Senior years 11 - 12
Curriculum Framing	Confirmation of the broad outline of the curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History	April 2009	April 2009
Curriculum Development	Two step process for development of curriculum documents: • Step 1 - development of scope and sequence • Step 2 - completion of 'detail' of curriculum	May - December 2009	June 2009 - January 2010
Consultation	National consultation on curriculum documents	February - April 2010	March - June 2010
Publication	Publication of national curriculum documents in digital and print format	June - July 2010	July - September 2010

Writing teams and advisory panels

Writing teams and advisory panels have been selected from across Australia and will play a key role in developing the curriculum.

Appointed writers have learning area and/or curriculum development experience and teaching and/or education related history.

K-12 learning area and cross curriculum advisory panels will assist curriculum writers by providing advice on draft materials at key stages in the development process.

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PUBLICATIONS

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper outlines proposals in relation to:

- goals of education for young Australians
- principles and specifications for development
- curriculum content
- achievement standards
- implementation of the curriculum.

The paper has been developed following analysis of extensive consultation feedback on *The Shape of National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion* released in October 2008, and reflects the decisions the Board directs after considering the consultation report.

A full copy of the Board's *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* is available on the Board's website ***www.ncb.org.au***

THE SHAPE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

English, Mathematics, Science and History

The publications for the Shape of the Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, the sciences and history have been developed following consultation feedback reports about the framing papers.

English

The national English curriculum is built around three interrelated strands that together support students' growing understanding and use of the English language.

- ***Language:*** *Knowing about the English language*
- ***Literature:*** *Understanding, appreciating, responding to and creating literature*
- ***Literacy:*** *Growing a repertoire of English usage.*

The curriculum aims to develop students' knowledge of language and literature and to consolidate and expand their literacy skills.

More specifically, it aims to support students to:

- understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with other non-linguistic forms of communication
- learn Standard Australian English to help sustain and advance social cohesion in our linguistically and culturally complex country
- respect the varieties of English and their influence on Standard Australian English
- appreciate and enjoy language and develop a sense of its richness and its power to evoke feelings, form and convey ideas, persuade, entertain and argue
- understand, interpret, reflect on and create an increasingly broad repertoire of spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of settings
- access a broad range of literary texts and develop an informed appreciation of literature
- master the written and spoken language forms of schooling and knowledge
- develop English skills for lifelong enjoyment and learning.

To view *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English*, please visit **www.ncb.org.au**

Mathematics

A fundamental goal of the mathematics curriculum is to educate students to be active, thinking citizens, interpreting the world mathematically, and using mathematics to make predictions and decisions about-personal and financial priorities.

The mathematics curriculum ensures:

- access to mathematic skills, knowledge, processes and understandings for all students
- that the interaction between the content and proficiency strands enables a focus on the thinking, doing and reasoning of mathematics

- the development of a positive attitude and disposition to mathematics and mathematics learning
- numeracy is specifically identified within the mathematics curriculum and appropriately embedded in the other learning areas
- that teachers can have the time required for depth of study by emphasising more important topics, with a goal of reducing the extent to which teachers feel the need to rush from topic to topic
- appropriate selection and use of technology to enhance learning; it will embed digital technologies so they are not optional extras.

To view *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics*, please visit **www.ncb.org.au**

Science

The aim of the Australian science curriculum is to provide students with a solid foundation in science knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning beyond school can be built.

In particular the science curriculum should develop in students:

- an interest in science and a curiosity and willingness to speculate about and explore the world
- the ability to engage in communication of and about science
- valuing of evidence, scepticism and questioning of scientific claims made by others
- identification and investigation of scientific questions and drawing together evidence-based conclusions
- the ability to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing
- an appreciation of science as a human endeavour which can be applied to daily life.

To view *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Sciences*, please visit **www.ncb.org.au**

History

The national history curriculum aims to support students to develop knowledge and understanding of the past in order to appreciate their own and other's culture, to understand better the present and to contribute to debate about planning for the future.

The national history curriculum aims to support students to:

- develop significant historical knowledge and understanding through the use of the skills of historical inquiry
- appreciate the longevity and richness of Australian Indigenous history
- appreciate the distinctive as well as the shared nature of our past
- develop a critical perspective on received versions of the past and learn how to compare different accounts so that the conflicts and ambiguities are appreciated
- build their capacity to respond to modern-day issues in an intelligent and informed manner
- become active and informed democratic citizens.

To view *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: History,* please visit **www.ncb.org.au**