

Why have an Australian Curriculum?

In 2008 all Australian governments agreed that a quality education for all young Australians is critical to maintaining Australia's productivity and quality of life. They agreed that a national curriculum would play a key role in delivering quality education and committed to the development of a K–12 national curriculum, initially in the areas of English, mathematics, science and history.

Subsequently, all Australian education ministers committed to a set of educational goals and actions to better prepare young people for their participation in a changing and increasingly globalised world. One of these actions was the development and implementation of a world-class national curriculum. This commitment by ministers is captured in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

It is widely accepted that Australia should have one curriculum for school students, rather than the eight different arrangements that exist at the moment. The commitment to develop an Australian Curriculum means that:

1. The individual and combined efforts of states and territories can focus on how students' learning can be improved to achieve the national goals, regardless of individual circumstances or school location.
2. Greater attention can be devoted to equipping young Australians with those skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary to enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future.
3. High-quality resources can be developed more efficiently and made available around the country.

4. There will be greater consistency for the country's increasingly mobile student and teacher population.

What young people should be taught and the quality of learning that is expected of them will be made clear in the Australian Curriculum. At the same time, it will provide flexibility for teachers and schools to build on student learning and interest.

Whilst the Australian Curriculum will outline the scope of what is to be learned, it will be teachers in classrooms who will make decisions about how best to organise learning, the contexts for learning and the depth of learning that will be pursued for each child in their class.