



Our Ref: DECD17/50758  
Your Ref: 14029/2510/17

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Hon Robert Brokenshire MLC  
Australian Conservatives  
Parliament House  
North Terrace  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Mr Brokenshire

**RE Freedom of Information - Determination**

I refer to your Freedom of Information (FOI) application received by the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) on 25 October 2017, requesting access to:

*'Copies of submissions made to the review on the Australian Curriculum.'*

Searches have been conducted for information in relation to your request. One document has been located that has been identified as matching the scope of your application. I have considered the document with reference to the *Freedom of Information Act, 1991* and have determined to release the document in full.

No costs have been levied for processing of your application as they are within the threshold prescribed by the Fees and Charges Regulations allowed for Members of Parliament.

If you are dissatisfied with this determination you have a legal right of review as outlined in the attached document.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, a copy of your notice of determination and the documents to which you are given access, will be published in the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

Should you require further information or clarification on this matter, please contact me at [decd.foi@sa.gov.au](mailto:decd.foi@sa.gov.au) or on telephone 8226 3231.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CA', written over a horizontal line.

Chrissie Argitis  
**ACCREDITED FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER**

15 November 2017

## **YOUR RIGHTS TO REVIEW**

### **1. INTERNAL REVIEW**

Under S.29 and S.38 of the Freedom of Information Act (SA) 1991, if you are dissatisfied or "aggrieved" with certain decisions or "determinations" of an agency (regarding access to documents or amendment of records) you can apply to the agency concerned for an internal review of its determination.

To apply for an internal review of a determination you must write a letter addressed to the Principal Officer or lodge an internal review application form with the same agency which made the original determination. The application must be accompanied by the appropriate fee (if applicable). The application should be lodged within 30 days of the original determination.

There is no right to an internal review of a determination made by a Minister or Principal Officer of an agency.

### **2. INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN/POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY**

If, after an internal review has been completed, you are still dissatisfied with the agency's determination you can request an external review of the determination by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is empowered to investigate the conduct of any person or body in relation to a determination made by an agency under this Act.

You may also request an external review by the Ombudsman if you have no right to an internal review.

The application for review by the Ombudsman should be lodged within 30 days of the date of a determination.

Requests to the Ombudsman must be in writing. An application form is not required. Investigations by the Ombudsman are free. Further information is available from the Office of the Ombudsman.

### **3. REVIEW BY SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (SACAT)**

You have a right to apply for a review by SACAT if you are unhappy with:

- a determination not subject to Internal Review
- an Internal Review determination, or
- the outcome of a review by the Ombudsman SA or the Police Ombudsman.

You must exercise your right of review with SACAT within 30 calendar days after being advised of the above types of determinations or the results of a review.

Any costs will be determined by SACAT, where applicable.

For more information contact:

South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT)  
Telephone: 1800 723 767  
Email: [sacat@sacat.sa.gov.au](mailto:sacat@sacat.sa.gov.au)



**Government of South Australia**

Department for Education and  
Child Development

**South Australian Department for Education and Child Development**

**Submission to the Australian Government Review of the  
Australian Curriculum**

**Submitted: February 2014**

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## **1. Introduction**

The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) provides this submission to the Australian Government's review of the Australian Curriculum. The provision of a sound and robust curriculum, accessible to the diversity of students in our schools, is a key driver to the achievement of DECD's two strategic objectives namely that:

- 1) every child achieves their potential and 2) excellence in education and care.

In line with its legislative responsibility to determine the requirements for the achievement of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) for students in the three school education sectors, the SACE Board of South Australia will determine processes and timelines for the integration of the Australian Curriculum into the Years 11-12 context. Please note that this submission relates to the Foundation (Reception) to Year 10 Australian Curriculum only.

Aligned to the Terms of Reference of the Australian Government review, the DECD submission comprises the following structure.

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Development of the Australian Curriculum**
  - 2.1 National governance and decision making
  - 2.2 Curriculum shaping process
  - 2.3 Curriculum development process
  - 2.4 Curriculum structure and content
  - 2.5 Future monitoring, evaluation and review
- 3. Implementation of the Australian Curriculum**
  - 3.1 DECD's implementation strategy
  - 3.2 National resources
  - 3.3 Online publication
- 4. Summary**

## **2. Development of the Australian Curriculum**

### **2.1 National governance and decision making**

The development of the Australian Curriculum has been under the direction of the Australian education ministers since December 2007 when the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the establishment of the interim National Curriculum Board (NCB), and participating fully in the development and implementation of a national curriculum commencing with the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History, by 2010. (Communiqué of the Council of Australian Government's meeting, Melbourne, 20 December 2007.)

In May 2009 the responsibilities of the National Curriculum Board were transferred to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and all learning

areas referred to in the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians were included in the curriculum development process.

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC), set up by COAG and previously the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), determines ACARA's work priorities and expectations. As a member of these Councils, South Australian Minister for Education has had an ongoing central role in key directions and decisions in relation to the each stage of the development of the Australian Curriculum since 2007.

The formal consultation and decision making processes that ACARA established have also provided opportunities for ongoing involvement of DECD personnel in the governance and decision making processes from ministerial level to teachers in schools. The table below illustrates the comprehensive ACARA curriculum consultation opportunities in which DECD has participated as a key stakeholder.

**Table 1: DECD involvement in ACARA's formal curriculum development process**

GROUPS INVOLVED IN ACARA'S CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	DECD INVOLVEMENT
Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC)	SA Minister for Education
Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC)	DECD Chief Executive
ACARA Board	DECD Executive Director
F-12 Curriculum Reference Group	DECD Director
Curriculum writers	3 DECD officers
Learning area advisory groups	DECD has had 1 – 10 officers participate in each of these groups.
Across learning area advisory groups	
Other advisory or working groups	
National Panels	
National forums	
Curriculum Directors Forum	DECD Director
Intensive engagement schools	>100 DECD schools

From the commencement of national collaborative work to develop the Australian Curriculum, initially by the NCB and from 2009 by ACARA under the direction of the ministerial council, DECD has undertaken extensive local consultation on draft materials. 18 DECD Australian Curriculum Advisory Groups comprising practicing teachers, curriculum managers, parents and nominees from the tertiary sector, professional associations and the Australian Education Union were established for all areas of the curriculum and levels of schooling. This network of Advisory Groups was activated when ACARA sought feedback on draft materials as well as proactively initiating advice to ACARA to inform decision making about the structure and content of learning areas and the inclusion of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Consultation advice was collated and submissions prepared, reviewed and forwarded to ACARA.

The South Australian Cross Sector Australian Curriculum Implementation Coordination Forum comprises members at director level from the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors and the SACE Board of SA. This group operates collaboratively to facilitate coordination between the South Australian school sectors in matters related to the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

DECD has found ACARA to be responsive to the feedback and consultation advice provided and has been satisfied with the process used by ACARA to resolve concerns and problematic issues that have been raised.

## 2.2 Curriculum shaping process

The first version of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* published in 2009, guided the development of the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History. Annual consultation on the 'Shape paper' since then has continued to promote ongoing discussion about the shape of the Australian Curriculum as a whole. 'Shape papers' that provide broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of a learning area have also been developed by ACARA. All of the 'Shape papers' have been extensively informed by open public consultation and targeted consultation with key stakeholders including teachers, state and territory education authorities, parents and students, professional associations, teacher unions, universities and industry and community groups.

DECD has participated in all of the curriculum shaping consultation opportunities provided by ACARA. Formal feedback, informed by contributions from the network of DECD Australian Curriculum Advisory Groups, has been provided at a jurisdiction level and by DECD directors and curriculum officers. DECD is satisfied that the ACARA curriculum shaping process has been responsive to stakeholder input and generated broad engagement with, and discussion and feedback about, the structure of the Australian Curriculum as a whole, and for each learning area.

## 2.3 Curriculum development process

The process for the development of the Australian Curriculum has been well documented by ACARA and is available in three key documents on ACARA's website - the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0*<sup>1</sup>, the *Curriculum Development Process v6.0*<sup>2</sup> detailing the process for curriculum development from Foundation to Year 10 (F-10) and the *Curriculum Design Paper v3.1*<sup>3</sup> detailing the specifications for the F-12 Australian Curriculum.

These three documents, first written in 2009, have been revised on an annual basis to take account of issues and areas for improvement identified in the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/The%20Shape%20of%20the%20Australian%20Curriculum%20v4.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available at:

[http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/ACARA Curriculum Development Process Version 6.0 - 04 April 2012 - FINAL COPY.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/ACARA%20Curriculum%20Development%20Process%20Version%206.0%20-%2004%20April%202012%20-%20FINAL%20COPY.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Available at:

[http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/07 04 Curriculum Design Paper version 3+1 %28June 2012%29.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/07%2004%20Curriculum%20Design%20Paper%20version%203+1%20%28June%202012%29.pdf)



learning areas that used the formal ACARA curriculum development processes. The revisions have been informed not only by ACARA personnel but by contributions from external stakeholders such as DECD. This has engendered ongoing DECD confidence in the process and the quality of the curriculum documents produced.

As well as participating in the numerous ACARA initiated opportunities, DECD has conducted a thorough local consultation process to inform input and review of draft curriculum documents. The network of DECD Australian Curriculum Advisory Groups mentioned previously has made significant ongoing contributions at all stages of the curriculum development process.

Between 2009 and 2011 more than 3 000 DECD participants were involved in formal and informal information and consultation sessions about *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* and learning area framing papers. More than 1 500 DECD participants including teachers, academics and parents were involved in consultation and trialling of the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History.

In 2012 DECD aligned its consultation strategy to the opportunities made available by ACARA. Targeted consultation about draft Australian Curriculum documents occurred with 17 DECD Australian Curriculum Advisory Groups comprising 330 members. 55 DECD schools participated in trialling of draft curriculum, 17 DECD curriculum officers and teachers participated in validation of Australian Curriculum achievement standards processes, and 20 DECD curriculum officers and teachers participated in ACARA advisory groups and national panels.

In 2013, 30 DECD curriculum officers were involved in ACARA advisory groups and national panels, 15 DECD curriculum officers and teachers were involved in validation of Australian Curriculum achievement standards processes, and 28 DECD schools were involved in trialling draft Australian Curriculum documents and providing advice to ACARA and DECD. The trial schools also provided assessment tasks aligned to the curriculum and examples of student work. Subsequent to this, and in consultation with expert advisory groups including curriculum directors, portfolios of annotated student work that provide illustrative exemplars of the achievement standards for the curriculum area have been published as part of the achievement standards. The portfolios support teachers to use the achievement standards to develop high quality assessment tasks that enable students to engage with the tasks to their full capacity.

Additionally, DECD officers have provided expert advice to ACARA national panels and advisory groups and eight DECD curriculum officers have undertaken contractual work with ACARA in recognition of their curriculum development expertise.

DECD is satisfied that issues raised within the national consultation process were given due consideration within the curriculum development process and the rigour of the process has strengthened DECD's confidence in the final curriculum products. The outcomes and quality of the Australian Curriculum at this time, combined with the use of evidence-based research and benchmarking against curricula in high performing countries during the shaping and development process, enabled DECD to proceed confidently with phased implementation in government schools from 2012 to 2017.

## 2.4 Curriculum structure and content

DECD has contributed significantly to the structure and content of the Australian Curriculum most notably in the three-dimensional design of the curriculum. The design comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, builds on the curriculum used in South Australian government schools for Reception to Year 10 - the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework.

Some fine tuning in relation to the content descriptions and associated elaborations, achievement standards, the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities may be beneficial to the overall quality of the curriculum. However, DECD is supportive of maintaining the three dimensional structure as providing a balance of content and student capabilities that will equip students with the knowledge, skills and understandings they require for their future in a rapidly changing world.

In relation to the content of the Australian Curriculum the consultation process for the development of each learning area has involved vigorous debate and comparisons with existing curricula. Whilst there may be some remaining disagreement with aspects of the content in some learning areas, overall DECD is satisfied with the final content.

For the purposes of this review, DECD highlights that in the Australian Curriculum the cross-curriculum priorities involving indigenous, Asian and sustainability perspectives are only considered where they fit naturally within the curriculum content. There is some reference to the perspectives in some of the content elaborations which are helpful illustration material, not required content.

## 2.5 Future monitoring and evaluation, and review

Whilst DECD has expressed satisfaction with the Australian Curriculum development processes and final documents, DECD acknowledges that curriculum development is an iterative process and that there is a need for ongoing monitoring and review that will refine and improve the effectiveness of the curriculum over time.

The past four years have been characterised by a period of transition during the phased development of the Australian Curriculum and the phased implementation in all states and territories. During that period DECD teachers have been using two curriculum documents to plan teaching and learning programs. A period of curriculum stability would enable DECD teachers to build on and consolidate their curriculum planning expertise.

ACARA has developed a formal monitoring and evaluation cycle as part of the curriculum development process in consultation with states and territories. DECD supports the ACARA monitoring and review process as being designed to be flexible enough to be responsive to educational needs and developments as they arise, whilst providing curriculum stability for schools, the community and education authorities.

The comprehensive consultation that occurred during the development of the Australian Curriculum resulted in consensus among stakeholders of various persuasions about the quality of the curriculum and ministerial agreement to proceed with implementation. DECD suggests that review of the curriculum would be more opportune when the

implementation is more advanced. States and territories have various timelines for implementation of the curriculum with some just beginning this process and six learning areas and subjects have only recently been made available for teachers to use.

### 3. Implementation of the Australian Curriculum

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum and implementation support is the responsibility of state and territory school and curriculum authorities.

#### 3.1 DECD's implementation strategy

With the assurance that DECD's consultation and trialling feedback has been taken into account, and that the completed Foundation (Reception) to Year 10 Australian Curriculum is of sufficient quality to be implemented, a significant long term change initiative is occurring in DECD schools focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning in relation to the delivery of the curriculum.

DECD recognises that the structure and content of the Australian Curriculum is designed to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and capabilities to take advantage of opportunities and face future challenges with confidence. DECD also recognises the importance of the teacher's role in the quality of students' social and educational learning. DECD is capitalising on the opportunity presented by the implementation of the Australian Curriculum to ensure strategic reform to systematically up skill leaders and teachers in quality teaching practices that lead to improved students' engagement, intellectual challenge and achievement.

The DECD Australian Curriculum implementation strategy is based on a year of familiarisation with a learning area/subject before teachers are expected to implement that learning area/subject. Table 2 outlines DECD's expectations in relation to implementation timelines for government schools.

**Table 2: Timeline for familiarisation and implementation of the F(R)-10 Australian Curriculum in DECD schools**

	Learning Area	Familiarisation	Implementation
<b>Primary (Years R-7)</b>	<b>Mathematics, Science</b>	2011	2012
	<b>English, Humanities and Social Sciences - History</b>	2012	2013
	<b>Humanities and Social Sciences – Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business</b>	2014	2015
	<b>The Arts</b>	2014	2015
	<b>Health and Physical Education</b>	2015	2016
	<b>Technologies</b>	2015	2016

Secondary (years 8-10)	Learning Area	Year Level	Familiarisation	Implementation
	Mathematics, Science	8	2012	2013
	English, Humanities and Social Sciences – History	9	2012	2014
		10	2012	2015
	Humanities and Social Sciences – Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business	8-10	2014	2015
	The Arts	8-10	2014	2015
	Health and Physical Education	8-10	2014	2015
Technologies	8-10	2014	2015	

Languages (years R-10)	Languages (years R-10)	Familiarisation	Implementation
	Chinese, Italian, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish	2014	2015
	<i>A Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages</i>	2014	2015
	Arabic, Modern Greek, Vietnamese	2014	2015
	Schools without a current Languages program	2014	2015

Initial evaluation of the DECD Australian Curriculum implementation strategy indicates a high level of teacher engagement. Using an engagement rubric for English, Mathematics, Science and History, respondents indicated levels of engagement from 'Developing' to 'Personalising'. According to quantitative data from 1 100 respondents, between 60-70% of teachers have indicated a confidence to *implement, embed or personalise* the learning to a high degree using the Australian Curriculum for English and Mathematics, and between 50-60% of teachers indicated a confidence to *implement, embed or personalise* the learning to a high degree using the Australian Curriculum for History and Science. It is possible that expecting teachers to accommodate further changes before the whole Australian Curriculum has been implemented could negatively impact on the momentum of teachers' current high-level engagement.

### 3.2 National resources

One of the advantages of a national Australian Curriculum is the opportunity to significantly enhance the pool of national, and state and territory digital curriculum resources that support teachers to use the curriculum to develop quality teaching and learning programs. The development of complementary rather than duplicate resources has led to economic benefits for all education jurisdictions. Readily available relevant digital resources aligned to the curriculum also support teachers to develop flexible learning approaches and integrate digital resources into the classroom.

DECD has developed a number of resources to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and made them readily accessible to all Australian teachers

through the portals that teachers use locally as well as the national digital content platform, Scootle. For example, the *Leading Learning - Making the Australian Curriculum work for us* website is a suite of 21st century resources for leaders and teachers to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in South Australia.

The support materials and resources produced by DECD would require amending to incorporate any changes made to the Australian Curriculum structure and/or content. The financial and human resources required to make changes resulting from the Australian government review would be significant. A period of curriculum stability would also enable teachers to focus on planning for, and implementing high quality teaching and learning programs to improve students' understanding, engagement and achievement.

### 3.3 Online publication

DECD, along with internationally recognised high performing education systems, for example, in Hong Kong and Finland, recognises the need to ensure students emerge from schooling with a range of integrated and complex skills. Students need to become multi-literate, adaptable, enterprising, problem solvers, capable of both independent and team work. The online publication of the Australian Curriculum content is well suited to achieving these priorities.

The online publication also provides DECD teachers with increased flexibility when designing teaching and learning programs that are inclusive of all students, enables the curriculum to be multidimensional and supports teachers to integrate ICT within their classrooms.

DECD notes that the ACARA monitoring and review process will take into account review and evaluation data; new national and international knowledge and practice about learning, teaching, curriculum design and implementation; and contemporary research in discipline and cross-discipline areas, and will continue to be benchmarked against the curricula of countries that are leading the world in education excellence and performance. DECD has, and continues to support ACARA's monitoring and review process described in the *Curriculum Development Process (v6.0)*, as being timely and integral to an effective curriculum development and implementation process. Any changes to the Australian Curriculum as a result of the ACARA monitoring and review process will be readily facilitated given the online publication.

## 4. Summary

DECD, in alignment with the Australian Government, has students as its first priority and has been satisfied with the comprehensive development process for the Australian Curriculum. Extensive local consultation has occurred and ACARA has listened and responded to the advice provided during the shaping and development stages over the last five years.

The Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards in all F(R)-10 learning areas and subjects provide a sound foundation for ongoing improvement in teaching and learning in DECD schools. The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is part of a long term change initiative designed to build DECD teachers' capacity to engage and intellectually challenge their students and improve the students' achievements.

DECD supports refinement of the Australian Curriculum in a way that builds on the extensive consultation processes and ongoing national and state implementation.