

SEVENTH MCEECDYA MEETING

8 December 2010, Canberra

COMMUNIQUE

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs met today in Canberra. The Council made a number of major decisions in relation to national education reforms.

Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum

In an historic decision Ministers today endorsed the content of the Australian Curriculum: Foundation to Year 10 for English, mathematics, science and history. The Australian Curriculum will be available online from today at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au.

Ministers agreed to a number of steps towards achieving the next stage of substantial implementation of the Australian curriculum by 2013. These will include:

- establishing a national common approach to the achievement standards across all States and Territories, and trialling and validating that approach
- states and territories developing additional material to support effective implementation of the curriculum to accommodate their different curriculum development, approval and implementation requirements
- further refining and adjusting the curriculum content as a result of validating achievement standards and structured feedback from teachers
- finalising a clear overarching framework that assures the place and integrity of all learning areas within the context of the overall school curriculum and different State and Territory structures
- developing the curriculum content and achievement standards as required to meet the needs of special needs students
- engaging with the teaching profession in the implementation of these processes to ensure comprehensive preparation for substantial implementation by 2013.

Ministers noted that WA will be involved in the trialling and validation of the achievement standards in 2011 and will commence its widespread implementation when MCEECDYA finalises any refinements and adjustments to the total curriculum package.

Ministers asked that ACARA finalise for their approval the achievement standards and any adjustments and refinements that may need to be made to the curriculum content by October 2011. This next stage will involve close consultation with State and Territory authorities and education stakeholders and the teaching profession.

Shape of the Australian Curriculum

Ministers agreed to the publication of a new version of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*. The first iteration of this document, approved by Ministers in September 2009, was written to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum (English, mathematics, science and history).

While continuing to provide a policy background for the implementation of the first phase, this second version of the shape paper will guide the development of the second phase of the Australian Curriculum (geography, languages and the Arts) and will inform the initial work on the rest of the Australian Curriculum.

Ministers noted that ACARA will consult on *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum v2.0* to enable ACARA to provide advice to Ministers on the whole Australian Curriculum towards the end of 2011.

National Safe Schools Framework

Ministers today endorsed for publication, a revised National Safe Schools Framework. The Framework provides a vision and a set of guiding principles that will assist schools to develop a proactive and practical whole-school approach to developing effective student safety and wellbeing policies. This vision supports schools to create learning environments that are free from bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.

First introduced in 2003, the Framework has been updated to ensure that it is relevant in today's context and takes account of the way developing technologies have enabled new forms of bullying to occur.

The Framework will be launched on the inaugural National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence to be held on 18 March 2011. Copies of the Framework will be sent to every Australian School, as well as being made available online. An online, interactive resource manual is also being developed to support the Framework.

Engaging Families in the Early Childhood Development Story

Ministers will release research reports from the first stage of the *Engaging Families in the Early Childhood Development Story* project. This project aims to increase the understanding of parents, carers and the community of evidence-based information from the neurosciences about early childhood development and thereby influence their interactions with children to maximise early childhood outcomes.

Other Matters

Ministers received a substantial progress report from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), which included an update on their work to validate and finalise the National Professional Standards for Teachers, develop a National Professional Standard for Principals and finalise a national system for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs.

Ministers also noted information provided on the Australian Government's election commitments for Empowering Local Schools, Reward for School Improvement, Online Diagnostic Tools and National Trade Cadetships.

Ministers also noted the substantial progress made with implementation of the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.