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## GREATER CURRICULUM FLEXIBILITY WILL SUPPORT TEACHING, LEARNING

Teachers and students would benefit from a more focused, flexible curriculum, particularly in the primary years, that supports the individual learning needs of every student, the National Catholic Education Commission has said following the release of the Australian Curriculum Review this morning.

“The Review of the Australian Curriculum is a considered document with broad input and Catholic education leaders look forward to working through the recommendations with Commonwealth, state and territory governments to ensure the curriculum supports the needs of students, teachers and parents,” said NCEC executive director Ross Fox.

Among the 30 recommendations made in the Review, Catholic education has endorsed the call for flexibility in the Australian Curriculum for teachers and students including the most important foundations of literacy and numeracy.

“Teachers and school leaders know that there isn’t a ‘one size fits all’ approach to teaching and learning,” Mr Fox said.

Catholic schools, which are educating more students with disability than ever before, also welcome further efforts to shape the curriculum to better support students with special needs. Teachers are working to provide an inclusive learning environment for all students and the curriculum should support these efforts, Mr Fox explained.

“The Australian Curriculum must engage students, teachers and parents as students begin their life-long learning journey. The Review importantly recommends greater engagement with parents.

“The appropriate recognition of the importance of the Judaeo-Christian heritage of Australia is welcomed by Catholic education. The Melbourne and Adelaide Declarations indicated the need to consider personal spirituality and values in an overall education,” Mr Fox said.

“A proper treatment of social issues such as drug, sex education and social justice realities requires the consideration of an ethical framework because of the moral issues involved. The Review’s recommendations would seem to accord well with the outlook of Christian humanism that is the basis of Catholic education.”

The incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history, in the appropriate contexts, to ensure all Australian children understand the history and heritage of Australia is also supported by Catholic education.

Other challenges faced by schools to deliver quality teaching, and learning in depth, must be considered along with issues of curriculum.

“The Australian Curriculum is a collaboration of truly national significance between education sectors, jurisdictions, education leaders, students and parents,” Mr Fox said.

“The Review’s recommendations deserve careful consideration and reflection as they go forward for consideration by all Education Ministers.”

Mr Fox said changes proposed to the role and governance of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) also require careful scrutiny through the legislatively prescribed review of ACARA beginning later this year. Catholic education is committed to participating in the review and will endeavour to maintain the strong working relationship with ACARA supported by representation at the board level.

“Other education policies will require attention in the medium term,” Mr Fox said. “The Australian Government’s policy to link school funding to CPI beyond 2017 will create significant pressure on schools and school fees. That policy will need attention to ensure sustainable school funding for all schools, including Catholic schools, in 2018 and beyond.”