Submission to Australian Curriculum Assessment Authority on the Review of the Australian Curriculum

Table of Contents

Introduction

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the review of the Australian Curriculum.

The NCEC is the representative body of Australia's Catholic schools. Working closely with State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions, the NCEC advocates at the national level on behalf of the Catholic sector and the hundreds of thousands of Australian families who entrust the education of their children to our schools.

Catholic schools are the nation's largest provider of education outside the government. Australia's 1,755 mostly low-fee Catholic schools educate one in five, or 777,000 students and employ more than 100,000 Australians, including 65,00 teaching staff.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas. The Australian Curriculum is reviewed on a six-year cycle with the review commencing in 2020.

The Review is an opportunity to build on the strengths of the existing Australian Curriculum to both improve its accessibility for classroom teachers as well as deepening engagement and knowledge of the learning areas and subjects for students.

The Review aims to improve the Australian Curriculum F-10 by refining, realigning and decluttering the content of the curriculum. It also aims to improve the quality of content descriptions, achievement standards and content elaborations through consistency and clarity of language and cognitive demand ensuring that they are 'fit for purpose'.

The draft changes to the F-10 Australian Curriculum were made available for consultation from 29 April to 7 July 2021. The main avenues for feedback were through three separate online surveys for learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities located on the Australian Curriculum consultation portal.

This consultation submission represents feedback from State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions and the NCEC representatives on the Curriculum Reference and Teacher Reference Groups. It follows the prescribed layout in the online survey.

This submission provides feedback on all eight learning areas (English, mathematics, science, humanities and social sciences, the arts, technologies, health and physical education and languages), the three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and sustainability) and five of the eight general capabilities (critical and creative thinking, digital literacy, ethical understanding. intercultural understanding, personal and social capability) under review.

Executive Summary

Overall, there was broad agreement that the curriculum content has been refined, updated and realigned but not necessarily decluttered or reduced in all learning areas. Highlighted is the need to balance the inclusion of different perspectives within the curriculum to provide a comprehensive picture of Australia's history, including our Judeo-Christian heritage. There is also the need to preserve a focus on the humanities which is foundational to the human understanding of history, as well as culture, religion, the arts, literature and philosophy.

The importance of educating the whole person, including spirituality was well reflected in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration preamble. *'Education plays a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion.'* The Australian Curriculum should follow this approach.

The inclusion of references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, practices and perspectives was seen as a strength in most F-10 learning areas. However, in some learning areas (English, mathematics, economics and business, and the arts) there were concerns expressed that the weighting between these and other cultural and religious matters and cross-curriculum priorities lacked appropriate balance. Many teachers also commented on the need to develop professional learning resources to help teachers effectively embed this content in learning areas.

Often the 'decluttering' has resulted in minimising the content through a merging of content descriptions rather than genuine reduction. Respondents have acknowledged that some F-6 content that was repetitive from one year to another has been removed; however, many learning areas still have too much content in F-6. This may encourage superficial coverage to be achieved rather than frequent, revisiting of content for deep learning.

In several learning areas, content has moved from one year level to another to create a more logical sequencing that is more age appropriate for students. Concern has been raised by mathematics and science teachers that the movement of some content from higher levels to lower levels is too difficult for students at that level and therefore developmentally inappropriate. The cognitive demand for a year or band needs to be closely reviewed.

In some learning areas, particularly in the arts, there is insufficient detail in the content descriptions to know what to teach. Teachers reported that they need to refer to the content elaborations in order to unpack the content descriptions. As the elaborations are optional for teachers to use there is concern that critical content relating to subjects within the Arts may not be taught. Greater specificity and clarity are needed to better inform teaching and assessment.

Both primary and secondary teachers have raised concerns regarding the capacity to cover the requirements of the arts, languages, technologies, health and physical education in allocated/available time frames given demands of other learning areas. The Australian Curriculum needs to be designed in a way that can feasibly be implemented in the available timeframe. ACARA should provide advice about the expected commitment to each learning area with respect to year levels.

Improvements have been made to the content descriptions and achievement standards which are more closely aligned with learning expectations. The introduction of cognitive verbs in the content descriptions provides a stronger framework for planning and assessment. However, in English there was some concern that the particular verbs chosen to differentiate across year levels may not accurately reflect student development and may need to be refined. The use of sample inquiry questions in science, history, geography, civics and citizenship, and business and economics is a good indication to teachers of the importance of inquiry as a key methodology for developing deeper levels of understanding within the subject disciplines. In the achievement standards, primary teachers welcomed the 'split' between Foundation and Foundation – Year 2.

Clarifying the structure of the Australian Curriculum and the relationships between the three dimensions of the curriculum has been well received. Incorporating the general capabilities into learning areas has been seen as a positive revision by teachers. A consistent approach has been made to embed the general capabilities into learning areas where they authentically fit. Feedback has shown that most respondents think that the changes to the general capabilities and the cross-curriculum priorities have been an improvement. We would encourage any future review to consider whether the current general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities remain fit for purpose and need to be refreshed with additional focus areas such as financial literacy or entrepreneurial learning.

Consultation Findings – Learning Areas

English

The overall response to the proposed changes to the English learning area is positive with agreement that refinement and realignment have been achieved; however, there is not overall agreement that the learning area has been decluttered and concern has been expressed that this might result in superficial teaching of too much content. There is general agreement that the various sections of the document have achieved a level of clarity and useability, that the key considerations provide useful information and that the achievement standards revised structure are more meaningful and related to the content descriptions. Further points of agreement and disagreement are noted within each section.

Rationale

The majority of responses are in agreement with the importance of the rationale and its clarity, particularly the importance of Literature; however, some disagreement was also expressed:
- concern that other types of texts are not mentioned
- concern that the difference between English and Literacy is not made clear in this section.

Aims

Responses spread evenly across strong agreement and agreement that the aims identify the major learning that students will demonstrate.

Organisational structure

There is general agreement that the strands and sub-strands provide a coherent organisational structure and that they describe the content aptly. The sub-strands are particularly useful when looking for connections to the literacy demands of other learning areas.

All respondents agree that the strands/sub-strands and core concepts are clear about what is important in the English learning area.

Key Connections

There is general agreement that the key connections identify the most relevant general capabilities, and some responses affirmed the importance of critical and creative thinking in the English curriculum by highlighting the critical reading of texts. However, there is a question raised as to why connections are not made between English and the general capability of ethical understanding. This general capability appears to have been removed from English although being an ethical member of society is mentioned in the rationale for English.

Within the cross-curriculum priorities there was some concern expressed in terms of weighting between First Nations Australian People and other cultural groups, languages, speakers and writers. It is believed that the two other cross curriculum priorities have a significant place in the English learning area, and no less than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Responses affirm the link made between English and languages, which can encourage English teachers and language teachers to share knowledge.

General responses agree with the connections between English and humanities and social sciences and the arts but there appears to be a missed opportunity between English (the home of texts) and all other learning areas.

Key Considerations

There is strong agreement that the key considerations section provides important information for planning teaching and learning.

There is also agreement as to the importance of this information, with particular support for the description of texts, understanding language as a system, as well as appreciation of literature.

Support is expressed for the set of dot points under 'Literacy is Language in Use' as these describe a broad view of the English learning area.

Curriculum Elements

Year /band/level descriptions

There is majority agreement that the year level descriptions provide a clear and concise overview of learning in English appropriate for that year level.

Achievement standards

Responses show agreement that achievement standards describe a progression in the quality of learning; however, there is some concern that the particular verbs chosen to differentiate across year levels may not accurately reflect development, and there needs to be some fine-tuning of language to achieve greater alignment between the year level descriptions and the achievement standards.

There is general agreement that the learning described in the achievement standards aligns with the essential content students should be taught.

Content descriptions

Responses indicate majority agreement that the content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding, and skills that should be learned.

Most respondents agreed that the content descriptions provide clarity and specificity as to the essential knowledge, understanding, and skills that should be taught but there is some disagreement as to the amount of content and concern that this could result in superficial 'coverage' rather than depth.

While two thirds of responses indicate agreement that the content can be covered in each year, there is also concern that the curriculum is still over-crowded and the view that content descriptions could be further combined as there is still some overlap.

Please refer below to some of the comments made by respondents in relation to the question *What further content could be removed or what revisions are needed to make the content more manageable in the learning area/subject curriculum*?

- Some content seems to cross over, and some progressions seem out of sequence. Some could be combined.
- I think there is so much content that the document is too unwieldy to be user-friendly, and I know you aren't expected to cover everything in a year.
- Simplifying the amount and content needed for one year.
- Content descriptions and achievement standards to be delivered in dot points. It is too wordy and most of it does not get taught as there is so much there to cover. Using wording such as what students need to know, could know, and nice to know language.

Content Elaborations

The majority of responses indicate agreement that the elaborations provide useful suggestions for planning. They provide teachers with improved ideas and illustrations of ways to teach the content descriptions. They illustrate the content descriptions with diverse relevant examples, clearly unpacking the content description.

While they target the general capabilities, the revised content elaborations only link strongly to one of the cross-curriculum priorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It is felt that the remaining two are equally important to the English learning area where a wide range of issues are dealt with via texts, both literary and informative.

Band/level specific feedback

No specific year level feedback.

Overall feedback

There is overall agreement that:
- the introductory section provides important information
- the content descriptions have been improved
- the achievement standards have been improved
- the quality of content elaborations has been improved

Many of the proposed changes to the English learning area have been well received and there is general agreement that the content has been refined and realigned, however, there is no overall agreement that it has been decluttered. This gives rise to concern that superficial 'coverage' will be achieved rather than frequent revisiting of content for deep learning.

It is also considered important that all three cross curriculum priorities be closely connected to the English learning area due to texts being the vehicle for much learning in these areas.

Mathematics

Feedback received from Catholic schools showed that within our secondary settings, teachers believed that mathematics is a subject in most need of decluttering in its current form. An overwhelming majority of teachers responded negatively when asked whether the proposed mathematics curriculum had been refined, realigned and decluttered.

Rationale

The rationale states the importance of the mathematics learning area within the Australian Curriculum and the associated importance of mathematics in life. Responses have been mostly positive regarding the introductory elements. Teachers feel strongly that the strands and sub-strands provide a good organisational structure to the curriculum. The responses also indicate that the responders value the key considerations as necessary for planning teaching and learning. In addition, the introduction of core concepts is potentially viewed as problematic, adding another layer for teachers to engage with when using the curriculum. Feedback received notes that the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to unfamiliar situations has been lost. The inclusion of familiar and unfamiliar contexts would assist in defining the notion of transference of knowledge.

Aims

There is strong agreement that the aims identify the major learning that students will demonstrate. The aims speak of enabling teachers to help students to become self-motivated, confident learners through inquiry and active participation in relevant and challenging experiences. The inclusion of the word 'inquiry' is interesting in this context as it is referred to in the curriculum preamble but not explicitly illustrated throughout the curriculum by way of listed suggested inquiry questions as in other learning areas.

Organisational structure

There remains some uncertainty regarding the 'core concepts' of mathematics and whether they are useful to curriculum developers but less useful for teachers. Teachers reported that they were confused by the diagram and found the definitions/explanations overly complex. Concern was raised regarding the technical nature of the information presented. It was felt that non-specialist maths teachers (eg generalists, out-of-field, primary school, inexperienced teachers) would struggle to understand these concepts. It was agreed that extensive professional learning would be required to support teachers to unpack and understand these concepts.

Many schools have engaged in Di Siemon's research on the 'Big Ideas of Number'. It may have been helpful to incorporate some of this content into the curriculum. Coupled with assessment tasks for the 'Big Ideas', this addition would assist teachers to prioritise the teaching and learning of mathematics and differentiate for the complex needs of all learners. Embedding the

proficiency strands into the content descriptions and achievement standards has provided some clarity for teachers in implementing the proficiencies.

The removal of the sub-strands has provided the appearance of decluttering. However, the merging of strands and sub-strands results in dense content descriptions and the loss of clarity of concepts within and across year levels.

Key Connections

Key connections also assist in planning for integrated teaching, learning, and assessment which is helpful for multi-age classrooms. The key connections make it clear that mathematics is the core learning area for numeracy development. This is well supported by teachers. There is some dissension among teachers whether the key connections section identified all of the relevant general capabilities.

Key Considerations

The key considerations which include proficiencies are seen to be well located and assist teachers to clearly identify the four problem-solving processes. Some teachers did not understand the terms computational thinking and algorithms, were unclear how these should be taught and assessed despite it being included in the content descriptions.

Curriculum Elements

Year /band/level descriptions

There was no specific feedback on the year/band level descriptions.

Achievement standards

There is significant change evident in the structure of the proposed achievement standards. There is strong disagreement that the quality of the achievement standards has been improved. They need to be revised to ensure the language and cognitive verb choices align with the content descriptions for consistency between what teachers teach and how students are assessed. Teachers have identified ambiguous phrases in the proposed curriculum such as 'a variety of strategies', 'a range of methods' and 'within financial contexts'. A supportive glossary would assist with clarity.

Achievement standards should articulate the understanding and skills which can be achieved by the majority of students by the end of a year. It was mostly agreed that the standard of the achievement standard has become more difficult (ie the cognitive demand and rigour has increased). There is also content missing from achievement standards in most year levels as well as misalignment in the use of cognitions between what is taught and what is assessed.

Content descriptions

There is strong disagreement that the quality of content descriptions has been improved. There

needs to be a stronger alignment between the content descriptions (what is taught) and the achievement standard (what is assessed). Many teachers considered that the language used in the content descriptions and the length of the statements made them more difficult to interpret. One example is found in the content description for subitising which includes the definition of the word subitise in the content description, thus making the content descriptions overly complicated.

Many teachers commented that they needed to look at the content elaborations to understand the content description. It was agreed that whilst the elaborations are helpful, it should not be necessary to read the elaboration to interpret the content description. The content descriptions need to be reviewed to ensure the amount of content is manageable and can realistically be taught and assessed at each year level.

The inclusion of proficiency strands in the content descriptions is a valued improvement and are essential in developing deep learning.

Regarding Specific feedback

The increased use of mathematical terminology and the prescription of skills and processes emphasising mathematical reasoning and problem-solving will require more planning time for all teachers but especially early career, non-specialist teachers and those in multi-age settings.

The following feedback summarises these themes:

At the current level of mathematics lessons per week, minus disruptions, I believe it is impossible to adequately address the revised curriculum. With the introduction of the algorithm strands from digital technologies and science, we need to cover even more work than before - and we already struggled to do that - not to mention the increased emphasis on mathematical investigation. Inquiry, done in a way that is meaningful, takes time.

and

There is too much content to cover concepts well. Teaching is rushed and does not allow time for students who need more time to consolidate their learning. There is also no time for inquiry tasks or delving more into problem solving tasks as teachers are rushed to get through content within the year.

Foundation to Year 6

The sub-strand content for money and financial mathematics needs to be re-emphasised with content explicitly included in the content descriptions and achievement standards, especially for the F-6 curriculum.

De-emphasising 'money and financial mathematics' especially in the early years is a result of children's reduced familiarity with coins and money exchanges. However, it does not address the need for knowing our currency and understanding that although physically smaller, a two-dollar coin is worth twice as much as the larger one-dollar coin. Understanding the value of

Australian currency is important for students to know. Where does financial literacy sit within the curriculum if it is not in mathematics and not a general capability?

The moving of 'telling time to the half hour' from Year 1 to is supported as it provides time for the development of fractional concepts which assist student understanding of analogue clocks. Also moving the introductions to fractions to Year 2 from Year 1 is further supported as students are more conceptually ready when they have a solid grasp of natural numbers prior to moving into parts of a whole.

Consultation feedback identifies Year 2 as being overloaded with new concepts – fractions AC9M2N06, time - AC9M2M03, multiplication and division - AC9M2N05, location/ transformation - quarter turns - AC9M2M04, estimating - AC9M2N03. While it is acknowledged that this content is appropriate for this year level, the Year 2 level is too crowded.

Years 7-10

There are some improvements to content in the secondary mathematics curriculum. The introduction of Pythagoras' theorem in Year 8 has been positively received. The Year 8 data and probability component has also been favourably viewed and factorising simple quadratics in Year 9 fills a gap in the current curriculum.

However, areas of identified concern in the Year 7-10 Mathematics Curriculum are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Identified areas of concern in Years 7-10

Year Level	Curriculum Reference	Comment/Question
Year 7	Investigating the proportion of land mass/area of Aboriginal Peoples' traditional grain belt compared with Australia's current grain belt (AC9M7N08_E6) & investigating the nutritional value of grains traditionally cultivated by Aboriginal Peoples in proportion to the grains currently cultivated by Australia's farmers (AC9M7N08_E7)	Are these investigations useful in improving mathematical learning outcomes for Year 7 student especially those who may have struggled with primary mathematics?
Year 8	Exploring progress in reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians, investigating and evaluating sampling techniques and methods to gather relevant data to measure progress (AC9M8ST04_E3)	Would this be more appropriate in HASS?
	Exploring and evaluating conjectures about sums or difference of fractions, for example, the pattern generated by sums of the form $1/n+1/(n+1)$ (AC9M8A04_E2)	Would it be better not to overcomplicate this and use the lowest common multiple as the common denominator

Year Level	Curriculum Reference	Comment/Question
Year 9	Exploring quadratic functions through hunting techniques of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by increasing the number of hunters to increase the area/circumference to catch more prey (AC9M9A05_E3)	Has this received culturally appropriate approval from First Nations consultants? Sourcing of correct information regarding hunting techniques could be problematic.
	Exploring geodesic design in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander building traditions and its relationship to Euler's formula and how this has influenced contemporary housing design (AC9M9SP01_E5)	Sourcing of accurate, approved and helpful resources will be required.
	Exploring the impact of decreased landline usage or an increased aversion to answering calls from unknown numbers on survey data (AC9M9ST01_E4)	Is this a relevant and contemporary way to engage young learners?
	Suggest that AC9M9SP01 is removed from Year 9 as Euler's formula is covered in General Mathematics Unit 4 where it is appropriately required at this stage of learning.	Not appropriate for the year level
Year 10	Comparing and contrasting the effect of truncation or rounding on the final result of calculations when using approximations of real numbers rather than exact representations (AC9M10N01_E1)	Could be covered in Years 7/8.
	Using the concept of Indigenous data sovereignty to critique and evaluate the Australian Government's Closing the Gap report (AC9M10ST01_E7)	Firstly students will need to know of the Australian Government's Closing the Gap report before evaluating data. Should mathematics be politicised?
	Exploring geospatial technologies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to consider spatial problems including position and transformation (AC9M10SP03_E5)	Perhaps the geospatial technologies from a broad perspective could also be engaged with, beyond Australia.
	Using simulation to predict the number of people likely to be infected with a strain of flu or virus (AC9M10P03_E3)	Is this the best context for this simulation exercise? There is a potential to negatively impact student wellbeing with such a focus.

The 10A mathematics curriculum was revised with changes made to the optional '10A' content.
The proposed content is challenging and is considered a suitable pathway for a student studying
higher levels of mathematics such as mathematical methods and specialist mathematics in

senior years. The introduction of new and revised content has resulted in some content from 10A being pushed down to the Year 10 course, making the year 10 course far more challenging for Year 10 students. Teachers have raised this as a concern.

Content Elaborations

There is a general agreement that the elaborations are clearer and align more clearly with the content descriptions. The majority of the content elaborations provide authentic depictions of how the content could be delivered. They clarify understanding of the revised content descriptions and provide teachers with suggestions of mathematical strategies which align with best practice. Clear links to the cross-curriculum priorities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia are affirmed. There has been some commentary that the curriculum is reliant on teachers reading the elaborations to understand the content's intent.

Additionally, and in a repeated theme across the curriculum, respondents articulated their need for clear examples, especially in regard to First Nations Peoples' activities including a well-resourced list of suggestions/background knowledge. Teachers are mindful that false or stereotyped information will not assist in achieving the intent of the curriculum and this call for support is consistent and increasing. An agreed understanding of the cognitive verbs has also been identified as a need for teachers.

Overall feedback

Overall, there have been improvements in clarity around what to teach but little to no reduction of the content. The addition of new content, the merging of content descriptions, the movement of content across year levels and the de-emphasis of content referring to money and financial mathematics has resulted in significant change but not an overall content refinement, realignment and/or reduction. There is a shared view held by mathematics teachers in the Catholic sector that they hold significant concern regarding their ability to adequately cover the content within each year level. Teachers are concerned that without more time, they will be unable to properly and deeply teach the concepts contained within the curriculum. Others are concerned that moving to a more problem-solving and inquiry focus will not be possible unless there is more time to implement changes.

The inclusion of proficiency strands (understanding, fluency, reasoning and problem-solving) in the content descriptions and achievement standards was seen as a valued improvement.

There has been content pushed down from a more advanced level (Year 10A supplementary content) to a lower level (Year 10) making the Year 10 mathematics curriculum more challenging. The 10A section requires further clarification in regard to curriculum implementation.

Science

Overall, feedback received from teachers across the Catholic sector supported teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the changes to the science curriculum. There was positive feedback about the use of cognitive verbs throughout the content descriptions and elaborations and the inclusion of inquiry questions in the year level descriptions. The greater emphasis on First Nations contributions to science skills and knowledge and on the core concepts of science was well received.

There were some concerns about movement of some science understanding content and a perceived increase in the cognitive demand of moving some of the science understanding content to lower year levels. There were concerns about the influence that some of these changes could have on learning progression F-10 and transition into senior science subjects. There were also concerns around the effect of the revisions on teaching flexibility. Teachers have requested that more support and resources be developed to support the curriculum, particularly in implementing First Nations content and the use of the core concepts.

Rationale and Aims

There was general agreement that the rationale and aims were clearly written. Only minor revisions have been made to reduce the word length. Teachers agreed that the aims identify the major learning that students will demonstrate and support the alignment of the aim with the core concepts. It was noted that 'observation', which is a critical part of science and a driver for curiosity, had been omitted from the aims and that it should be included here.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure has remained largely unchanged for science and the strands and sub-strands continue to provide a coherent organisational structure.

The NCEC supports the renaming of the science inquiry skills strand to science inquiry to acknowledge that science practices involve both skill and cognitive dimensions. The sub-strand processing and analysing data and information has also been renamed as processing, modelling and analysing. This enables it to be better aligned with other sub-strand naming conventions and emphasises the importance of modelling as core science inquiry practice. Content from the processing, modelling and analysing sub-strand related to evaluation of data to develop explanations has been reallocated to the evaluating sub-strand where it is a better fit. Respondents support these changes.

The Australian Curriculum: Science contains 15 core concepts and five science inquiry skills. All core concepts contain big ideas, understandings skills, processes and are central to the teaching of science. These core concepts are further underpinned by key ideas which support the coherence and development of science knowledge within and across year levels. The inclusion of the 'Core Concepts', which are underpinned by the 'Key Ideas', is a valuable addition. Teachers would like to see resources developed with greater detail around how the core concepts and key ideas are connected in implementing the curriculum. It was suggested that an

overview chart showing at a glance how concepts develop over time, and where each year level fits in this developmental narrative, would be useful to teachers.

Key Connections

Respondents strongly support the key connections which provide teachers with clear information about the key relationships of science to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, specifically highlighting those that have the most authentic fit in the learning area context. The key connections also highlight the important opportunities to connect science with other learning areas' content, which is particularly useful for primary teachers. Perhaps the arts should be included in the key connections, particularly with the rise in STEAM programs and the increased use of science and technology in the arts. It would be also be helpful to provide quality resources related to the key connections: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the relevant elaborations as they can be challenging, especially for early career teachers.

Key Considerations

Respondents support the addition of the key considerations in providing information to teachers about the key matters they should consider when planning and teaching the science curriculum. In science, these issues relate to safety and animal ethics in science investigations and appropriate cultural protocols for engaging with First Nations Australians.

Curriculum Elements

Feedback regarding the curriculum elements has been generally positive, with the vast majority of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the revised curriculum is an improvement on the current version. There is clearer information about what students need to be learning and what teachers need to be teaching.

Year /band/level descriptions

The year level descriptions clearly describe what students will learn in each year level. The year level descriptions have been revised to focus on the core concepts and key ideas that underpin each level. Inquiry questions have been added to the year level descriptions to support the curriculum's focus on inquiry and to develop an understanding of the core concepts. The science inquiries are now more specific and related to content and refocus the teacher on the need to use an inquiry pedagogy. More detail could be provided for teachers in how to take the inquiry questions and turn them into questions that can be tested empirically.

Achievement standards

The majority of the respondents agreed that the achievement standards clearly describe the expected quality of learning students should demonstrate by the end of the year/band. The achievement standards are clearer, show a clear developmental progression and are better aligned with the revised content descriptions.

While the F-3 achievement standards have increased in length, the increase is due to explanatory language used to assist with clarity. The revised achievement standards can more easily be read with the content descriptions and better reflect the core concepts of and key ideas. Inclusion of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities to achievement standards is positive.

Content descriptions

Overall, there has been some reduction in the content descriptions, often achieved through the combining of content descriptions. Some content has been relocated across year levels, while additional content has been added. Various content has been removed as it did not align well with the core concepts.

Specific feedback on the three strands

Science Understanding

The science understanding strand has been the primary focus for reducing content in the Australian Curriculum: Science. In the F-3 curriculum, 112 content descriptions have been reduced to 105 descriptions. There has been a reduction from four content descriptions to three in F-3. Primary teachers agree with the rationale that this reduction will enable more time to plan for curiosity-based explorations and integration across the strands. However, it is not clear why there are inconsistencies with the number of content descriptions in F-2 across sub-strands and why equal teaching time has not been devoted to each sub-strand. There are three content descriptions for biological sciences and physical sciences sub-strands, two for chemical sciences and only one for earth and space science (Year 1). Also, is there is an expectation that teachers need to substitute the science inquiry and science as human endeavour strands instead of this sub-strand content?

The content descriptions in the science understanding strand generally have logical flow or sequence of concepts and skills which build each year. Many of the revised content descriptions for science understanding are more specific than in the previous version. All content descriptions in the science understanding endeavour strands have been revised to begin with the same verb: 'explore' is used in F–2 and 'investigate' is used in Years 3–10. Using 'explore' for F-6 and 'investigate' in 7-10 are well chosen, particularly for the chronological ages of students. These verbs clearly articulate to teachers the expectations associated with exploring or investigating at each year level.

In Year 6, content about sudden geological changes and extreme weather has been removed. While it is understandable that the modelling of this concept can be challenging, it may still be worthwhile having it embedded in Year 6 science rather than relying on it just being touched on in Year 6 HASS (HSIE 7-10 context). The 'science' of extreme weather in HASS seems like a loose connection to plate tectonics in Year 8 science. Concerns were also raised that Year 6 students will not be well supported to deeply understand the rock cycle if the concept being has not been built sequentially; for example, being taught before volcanic processes, or understanding the difference between rocks and minerals.

Changes to the science understanding in Year 7 including that students relate changes of an object's motion to its mass and the magnitude and the direction of forces acting on it, and, in chemical sciences, relate an understanding of attraction the motion of and attraction between particles to the properties of the substance, would require substantial additional teaching.

In Year 7-9 the inclusion of biomass pyramids also seems advanced for Year 7. They only just understand food webs at this level, presenting this in the form of biomass pyramids may lead to students feeling overwhelmed and confused.

A significant number of Year 10 students struggle to balance basic chemical equations and now this is proposed to be moved into Year 9. Many students will experience difficulty with this concept being moved forward to Year 9.

Moving the rock cycle from Year 8 to Year 4/5 will mean there is a big gap between understanding this information and applying it to plate tectonics - now proposed for Year 8. There will also be a considerable number of students that miss learning this information in Year 4/5 when this curriculum is implemented and will not have the foundational knowledge to apply it to plate tectonics in Year 8. Plate Tectonics (AC9S8U03) may be conceptually too complex for Year 8 and be better placed in Year 9 content.

Additionally, moving electric current (AC9S6U03) from Year 9 to Year 6 may make this aspect difficult for students entering Physics in Year 11. Could this be revisited in some other context in Year 9 eg AC9S9U05?

Mitosis and basic genetics are appropriate for Year 10. However, meiosis is a difficult concept and one covered in Senior Biology (ACS9S10U01). Should it be taught here? An understanding of how viruses and bacteria impact on our bodies a should be a priority in the curriculum. As should covering blood cell types, immunity, and vaccination by Year 10 to increase understanding of how vaccines work, with a view to increasing vaccination rates.

Science Inquiry

Respondents agreed with the new change in name of the sub-strand. In the renamed science inquiry strand (previously science inquiry skills) the content has been refined to articulate the progression of learning and differentiate between cognitive and skill demand more clearly across each band.

For Years 5-10 'Intercultural inquiry practice' is a good addition and allows students to reflect on current research and field-study practices to authentically acknowledge First Nations People. Having this added to the body of the curriculum rather than just a cross-curricular addition emphasises its relevance.

Science as a Human Endeavour

In the science as a human endeavour strand, content at F–6 has been reframed to ensure that students learn about the nature of science through a focus on how scientists engage in inquiry. This complements the science inquiry strand, in which students develop their own inquiry practices.

The focus on the role of science communication and links between science and the policy making decisions of the government is viewed as a positive inclusion by teachers.

Teachers support the references to occupations and careers being removed and covered in content elaborations F-10. Teachers commented that it is positive to see the inclusion of climate science in Year 10 and the addition of relativity in the physical sciences.

Content Elaborations

A diverse range of elaborations explicitly promote inquiry and support the application of science as a human endeavour, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture cross-curriculum priority and the sustainability cross-curriculum priority. Current elaborations have some excellent examples that should also be included in the reviewed curriculum. There were concerns from some respondents that some elaborations bring in new concepts and that the narrative between the intended learning and the elaborations is not always clear.

Through the elaborations, there are now opportunities to represent the diversity of scientists and science careers across the three strands. This is viewed as a positive change.

Band/level specific feedback

The revised curriculum lends itself to multi-age settings, being able to follow a concept through. For example, explore external features of plants and animals (Foundation), explore the basic needs of plants and animals (Year 1), explore the differences between living and non-living things and the life cycles of plants and animals (Year 2).

A risk exists that a year could elapse before a sub-strand is engaged with again. This would apply to Year 1 with absent chemical science content, Year 2 with no earth and space sciences content and Year 3 with no biological sciences content. Teachers are confused as to why Foundation students study biological science, physical sciences and chemical sciences but not earth and space sciences which were covered in the existing curriculum. It was strongly felt that exposure, connection, exploration and observation of the natural world, including natural materials and natural resources were crucial to student disposition and connection to the environment in the formative early years.

Overall feedback

Overall, the revisions to the Australian Curriculum Science have been well received.

A large majority of respondents agreed with the changes made to the Australian Curriculum, with the majority agreeing or strongly agreeing. Positive mention was made of the inclusion of inquiry questions in the year level descriptions and the inclusion of the core concepts and cognitive verbs. Respondents commented that the core concepts and content descriptions, as a whole, were written in a way that had greater clarity and better defined the expected understanding.

The few concerns that were reflected in the survey included the movement and/or removal of science understanding content from particular year levels and the possible impact of this on learning progression in F-10 and transition into senior sciences. Some sections do not show a clear progression as content covered in Year 8, for example, may have been lasted accessed in Year 4. This means that students are not building on prior knowledge due to a lengthy gap between building on concepts.

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Rationale and Aims

The Rationale for the Australian Curriculum: humanities and social sciences (HASS) describes the importance of HASS in providing a broad understanding of the world and how students can participate as active and informed citizens. The rationale and aims are written clearly to appropriately identify the importance of the learning area and the learning that students will demonstrate. The minor modifications made to the rationale and aims aid the clarity of the section as well as appropriately aligning the language to support the revised core concepts.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure of the HASS curriculum lists the understandings and skills central to the HASS as a key learning area and provides a clear and coherent outline of the learning area. The organisation provides a tightening of clearer progressions of students learning from F-6 to the four 7-10 HASS disciplines.

The refined descriptions of core concepts, particularly the inclusion of the concept diagram for the learning area and the removal of the interdisciplinary concepts from F-6, support clarity about what is important in the learning area and give a good indication of focus areas.

Key Connections

The inclusion of the new section outlining key connections is strongly supported. This section is particularly helpful for understanding the links between cross-curriculum priorities, general capabilities, and possible integration of learning areas.

It would be helpful to provide quality resources related to the Key Connections: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the relevant Elaborations as they can be challenging especially for early career teachers.

Key Considerations

The term 'key considerations' is not mentioned in the HASS consultation curriculum as it is in other learning areas. A specific section highlighting key considerations, present in drafts for other key learning areas, is completely missing. This is a curious and perhaps serious omission given the core concepts, content, and skills of HASS.

Given that the curriculum consultation states that HASS "is the primary learning area where students explore and deepen their knowledge of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the world's oldest continuous living cultures and Australia's First Nations Peoples", perhaps at least a section discussing appropriate cultural protocols for engaging with First Nations Australians would be appropriate.

HASS F-6

Rationale and Aims

The HASS F-6 rationale and aims are clearly written and appropriate.

Organisational structure

The revised organisation has provided greater flexibility to primary schools through the contributing disciplines used as sub-strands to arrange the development of the core concepts, content and skills. This will allow for teaching and learning in the disciplines, respecting the rigour of each as a separate area, while at the same time enabling connections to be made across the disciplines.

Curriculum Elements

Feedback regarding the curriculum elements has been generally positive, with the vast majority of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the revised curriculum provides clearer information about what students need to be learning and what teachers need to be teaching.

Year /band/level descriptions

The revised year level descriptions provide greater clarity to describe what students will learn and will help teachers to focus on the core concepts and key ideas that underpin each level in each year level. While the year level descriptions are clear what focus each unit should have, they still allow for choice of specific topic and the depth or length at which each topic is studied.

The revised inquiry questions to the year level descriptions, to support the curriculum's focus on inquiry and to develop an understanding of the core concepts is strongly supported. However, the suggested inquiry questions do not cover all content descriptions and achievement standards.

Achievement standards

The revisions and refinement of the F-6 achievement standards are welcomed. NCEC agrees that the achievement standards clearly describe the expected quality of learning students should demonstrate by the end of the year/band. The achievement standards are clearer, show a clear developmental progression and are better aligned with the revised content descriptions and learning expectations. The additional information provided in the achievement standards should ensure greater specificity and focus for teachers when designing assessments.

The removal of subject specific achievement standards in favour of standards that apply across the learning area is a sensible improvement. The separate set of achievement standards introduced for Foundation in the skills strand provides greater direction to the learning expectations for the first year of school.

The F-6 curriculum is seen as potentially problematic as the HASS achievement standards include verbs such as 'recognise' which can be difficult to evidence in student work across a five-point or A-E scale. Achievement standard verbs need to be consistent across the learning areas.

Content descriptions

The refinement, revision and reduction of the content descriptions have improved clarity and consistency of language, provided a clearer focus for each year level and enabled a better alignment of the cognitive demands between the content description and the achievement standards. Some content has been relocated across year levels, while additional content has been added.

The removal of F-6 repetitive content across year levels, together with the realignment of content, creates a more logical sequencing that is more appropriate for students.

There is a very strong concern that the F-6 curriculum has not been adequately decluttered or content reduced and encourages superficial rather than deep learning. Consolidating content descriptions does not necessarily mean that the amount of content has been reduced. While there has been some refinement, revision and reduction to the content descriptions, feedback received strongly indicated that there are still too many content descriptions that are overly wordy and complex.

The rationale for HASS notes that 'thinking about and responding to issues requires an understanding of the key historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors involved, and how these different factors interrelate". However, there appear to be significant historical events that have been omitted that have played a considerable part in understanding today's Australian and global contexts. For example, world navigators and explorers and the ideas and values (scientific, religious, cultural, etc) of those Europeans who explored and colonised Australia and the subsequent settler exploration of the Australian continent are absent. Many aspects of Australia's geographical population distribution are direct results of exploration activity and the context and motivation for federation are very difficult to teach without a firm understanding of how Australia developed as separate colonies.

Concern has also been expressed about the removal of the importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people (ACHASSK088). The focus now seems to be on First Nations custodial responsibility of country. Sustainability is a very engaging topic for students and one that is important for the future of the environment.

The inclusion of new content such as the impact of bushfires or floods on places and communities and how people can respond (AC9HS6K04) does not appear to clearly align with the achievement standards.

Content Elaborations

The revised content elaborations have been aligned with the revised content descriptions. They provide teachers with improved strategies and the opportunity to develop authentic connections across the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

While the revised content elaborations help to provide clarity, feedback received indicated that they remain very wordy and could be further refined to remove complexity and ambiguity.

History 7-10

Overall feedback received from teachers across the Catholic sector reflected teachers generally being positive about the changes to the history curriculum.

Rationale and Aims

The rationale for the history 7-10 curriculum describes the importance of history in promoting understanding societies, events, movements and developments that have shaped humanity from the earliest times and developing students' curiosity and imagination.

The minor revisions to the history rationale and aims add clarity and provide meaningful opportunities to teach the cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sustainability and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

Organisational structure

The revised organisational structure, which has been updated to reflect the changes made to the strands and sub-strands with 7-10 History, are supported. The inclusion of the sub-strand 'Deep time history of Australia' in Year 7 is especially welcome and strongly supported.

The revised organisation allows for students to study fewer topics but in greater depth and supports a far more explicit focus on historical thinking concepts and skills which will be very helpful for teachers.

The realignment of the history skills strand to better reflect historical thinking is appropriate and provides good clarity, supports history methodology, and a strong connection to the core concepts.

The newly included expectations of study connected to the revised and reorganised strands and sub-strands ensure that teachers have a clearer and more focused structure to ensure content is connected within and across strands.

Key Connections

While connections to the general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities and other learning areas are embedded within content descriptions, a significant response requested more explicit connections for the benefit especially of early career teachers and those teaching out of the subject area.

Curriculum Elements

The revised year level descriptions are clear and coherent, provide good overviews of the learning students should display and align well with the content descriptions and elaborations.

The inclusion of the expectations of study statement in each level description is welcome and strongly supported.

The revised inquiry questions in the level descriptions are a good indication to teachers of the importance of inquiry as a key methodology within history for developing deeper levels of understanding.

Achievement standards

The revised achievement standards clearly describe the expected learning that students should demonstrate at the end of each year level, reflect a clear development progression and align well with updated and essential content to be taught.

The revised standards allow appropriate flexibility in outlining students' opportunities to identify ways in which they apply content and are able to pose questions and interpret information using data, observations, resources and other sources across the year levels.

The inclusion of 'evaluate' to the Year 7 achievement standard will be challenging for these students. Evaluation was previously introduced in Year 9 and only present in the Year 10 achievement standard.

Content descriptions

The inclusion of the 'deep time history in Australia' sub-strand integrates well with cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities. This sub-strand also provides strong opportunities for teaching and learning to focus on further learning of historical skills and concepts.

The reorganisation of content from depth studies to sub-strands to reduce the amount of content, clarify expectations and allow students to study fewer topics at greater depth is welcomed. This change creates a more flexible structure for teachers to offer better learning opportunities. The realignment and embedding of depth study content descriptions into a common set of content descriptions for the sub-strands are strongly welcomed.

The reduction in the depth study requirements in Year 7 is appreciated. The integration of existing content descriptions from 'Investigating the ancient past' into the new sub-strand 'deep time history in Australia' and the 'ancient world' sub-strand could potentially work well. However, the increase in the number of descriptions is problematic and these should be reduced.

The Year 7 requirements will prove to be challenging due to explicit and complex content. Many teachers will require support around the introduction of new content and skills. Likewise, the breadth of content and the expectations of Year 7 student learning relating to the use of sources and different historians' points of view are very high. For example, the movement of

the requirement for students to 'evaluate', originally in Year 9, to Year 7 will be challenging for many students.

The introduction of 'rights and freedoms' focusing on Australia as a compulsory sub-strand to be studied in depth at Year 10 may create issues for senior modern history requirements in some jurisdictions. There needs to be greater flexibility in teaching this sub-strand.

A key opportunity in Year 10 to connect with senior ancient history is absent. There is no scope for ancient history to be taught in Year 10 as a preparation for senior years. This will have a significant and direct impact on student subject selection in the senior years.

While refinements and reduction to content have been made there is also significant new content across the learning area. This results in a curriculum that has not been decluttered, remains content heavy and limits the opportunity for effective teaching and learning. Further refinement is required.

Geography 7-10

Overall feedback received from teachers across the Catholic sector reflected teachers generally agreeing with the proposed changes to the geography curriculum.

Rationale and Aims

The rationale for the geography 7-10 curriculum describes the importance of geography in providing a broad understanding of the world. The minor revisions to the geography rationale add clarity.

The aims assist in ensuring meaningful opportunities to teach the organising ideas of the cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sustainability and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia within geography.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure for HASS lists the understandings, and skills central to the HASS curriculum. Within geography these are seen as being assistive for teachers. New knowledge and understanding sub-strands have been introduced with one skills sub-strand being removed, and the remaining sub-strands being renamed, which all add to the substantial change within the proposed curriculum.

Sub-strands can be taught separately or together through the exploration of a contemporary issue and this allows for flexibility and relevancy to ensure geographical studies reflect the world in which students are learning.

A question arises as to the purpose of removing the word 'inquiry' from 'inquiry and skills' Inquiry questions are listed within all year-level descriptions which are supported by teachers. The use of inquiry as a pedagogical approach should be reinforced.

Key Connections

The revised geography curriculum includes significant key connections to the general capabilities, however, there seems to be a lack of alignment with the numeracy capability. For example, the term 'collect' has been removed from the listed geographical skills in favour of evaluate in Year 7 and Year 8. Language across the curriculum should be consistent.

Curriculum Elements

The core concepts of geography 7-10 have been developed to identify the essential content students should learn for a deep and increasingly sophisticated understanding of geography - place, space, environment, scale, change, interconnection and sustainability are well defined. While these core concepts are strongly supported, they need to be more evident in the content descriptions.

Achievement standards

There is some refinement to language within the achievement standards. However, further alignment is required to ensure the cognitive verb choice aligns well to the content descriptions to ensure that these progress in a developmentally appropriate way. This would also provide better clarity to support teachers with assessment design.

The two-paragraph structure for the achievement standards is affirmed.

Content descriptions

There is evidence that refinements have been undertaken, however, content descriptions have been combined into new content descriptions which include additional content. This results in a curriculum that has not been decluttered and limits the opportunity for depth over breadth in teaching and learning. Further refinement is required.

Feedback has been given that the proposed Years 7 to 10 geography curriculum will be difficult to cover and challenging for teachers to implement in a school classroom context. This is because the curriculum has not been reduced relative to the existing curriculum, eg the proposed Year 8 content description AC9HG8K02 requires students to learn about the distribution of Australia's distinctive landscapes, compared with a country in Asia, and its consequences. This additional content is vague, and the content elaborations do not provide any further clarity with unpacking the content description.

Overall feedback

While refinements have been made in the 7-10 geography curriculum, current content descriptions have been combined which will include additional content. This means that the curriculum has not been decluttered effectively. There is a general theme that within geography, there is some misalignment between achievement standards, content descriptions and content elaborations.

Overall, it appears that geography has not been refined, reduced or decluttered. Also needing review is the use of cognitive verbs in achievement standards which cannot be easily assessed using a five-point scale. With the substantial changes, there will be a significant impact on the teaching and learning plans, resources and assessment tasks for teachers. Feedback received conveys a concern that the amount of content that remains in the geography curriculum will be difficult to cover and challenging for teachers to implement.

Civics and Citizenship 7-10

Civics and Citizenship have received only minor refinements. The changes that have been made have improved clarity for teachers and provided greater flexibility for teaching and learning. There is still too much content in this subject considering time allocations. Many teachers with little to no background in the subject will find this challenging and will require significant resources and support.

Rationale and Aims

The rationale and aims are clear and coherent and provide a strong foundation for understanding the scope of the learning area and underpinning teaching and learning across the year levels.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure provides a clear and coherent outline of the learning area. The revised organisation of the strands and sub-strands add to the clarity of the learning area. The reorganisation and resequencing of the sub-strands align well with the core concepts and contributes to a better progression and development of knowledge between year levels across the stands and sub-strands.

In general, the refinement of the skills strand is a positive change and an improvement to reflect relevant recent civics education research.

Key Connections

While connections to the general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities, and other learning areas are present and evident, more explicit connections for the benefit especially of early career teachers and those teaching out of subject area would strengthen the links.

Curriculum Elements

Modifications made to the curriculum elements were received positively by respondents. In particular, the refinements made to existing content in order to provide a broader scope for teaching and learning were seen as an improvement.

Achievement standards

The revised achievement standards clearly describe the expected learning that students should demonstrate at the end of each year level, reflect a clear development progression and align well with the revised and re-sequenced content.

The revised standards are an improvement as they allow appropriate and greater flexibility in outlining ways in which students can demonstrate learning.

Content descriptions

The resequencing of some content descriptions enables the consolidation of understanding and progression of knowledge and skills by creating meaningful connections between the strands.

Content descriptions, such as the proposed AC9HC7K01, AC9HC7K02, AC9HC7K05, AC9HC8K01, and AC9HC8K02, could be strengthened by clear, meaningful recognition of the religious, cultural and historical roots of ideas, characteristics and values in the Australian context.

The new sub-strand 'participating in civic processes' to provide students with opportunities to engage with and enact civics processes is positive and improves the skills strand by focusing on processes that are central to active citizenship. A stronger focus on the importance of the Australian Constitution for civic institutions, processes and actions is required.

It is recommended that the following content be included to strengthen the content of student understanding of active citizenship in Years 9 and 10:
- active recognition that informed consensus and political resolution may not be always reached
- that active citizenship aims for change that is sustainable
- not all civic actions have change as an aim

Overall feedback

Overall feedback indicated that the refinement and revisions to the civic and citizenship curriculum have been well received, albeit with a recognition that student understanding would be improved by strengthening the content which positively acknowledges Australia's religious, cultural and historical roots. Recent research has indicated that teaching the civics and citizenship curriculum has been a challenge for some teachers, therefore resources and illustrations need to be made available to assist teachers with understanding what needs to be taught.

Economics and Business 7-10

Rationale

The rationale of this curriculum is inspiring in nature and correctly sets the scene of a curriculum that is designed to teach students how Australian markets fit within and compare to international markets.

There are places within the rationale where the inspirational tone that has been used has extended beyond what the curriculum provides. For example, here is an excerpt from the rationale:

> *The Australian Curriculum: Economics and Business empowers students to shape their social and economic futures and to contribute to the development of a prosperous, sustainable and equitable Australian economy. The study of economics and business equips students to secure their financial futures, participate in and contribute to human wellbeing in society and understand their responsibilities as global citizens.*

While this curriculum draft does *teach* students about how decisions are made which affect the future of markets and, therefore, the living standards of countries; and similarly covers in some detail the responsibilities that members of global markets have; it does not explicitly give students the control over key elements of their social and economic futures as claimed in the rationale.

The rationale claims to "equip students to secure their financial futures", but it does not provide space within the curriculum for key financial literacy skills such as budgeting, understanding interest and credit cards, basic accounting and money management skills or other key skills that could be argued are vital in "securing their financial futures" in a modern world.

While the course does provide many important learnings, the rationale itself does not present a fair representation of the course.

Curriculum Elements

Year/band/level descriptions

The inclusion of a discussion of taxation in Year 8 is an improvement on the original curriculum. However, it would be difficult to teach the concept of the allocation of economic resources and the rights and responsibilities of governments in this, without an understanding of where government obtains its funds from.

Furthermore, content elaborations in this area demand a deep understanding of this system from students, which is beyond what they may be able to understand at this age and level. For example, explaining the different types of taxes in Australia (e.g., progressive, regressive and proportional) is advanced for Year 8.

The sub-strands in Year 8 appear to cover a lot more content than they did originally. While the original strands within economic and business activity centred around types of businesses, the revised curriculum now contains short and long-term personal, organisation and financial objectives, which is significant in depth and breadth if covered in detail.

The inclusion of the nature of international trade including the reasons for the unequal distribution of economic resources between countries within the 'function and operation of systems' in Year 9 is a sophisticated concept added at this year level. As a new concept in this curriculum, it is questionable whether there will be time within the curriculum or whether students will display the maturity needed to cover this topic in depth.

A similar issue is experienced in Year 10, where students are to 'evaluate the Australian Government's management of the economy by considering its ability to achieve its economic objectives'. In order to cover this content, it requires an understanding of a broad range of influencing factors, as well as effective skills in evaluating – all of which require maturity of students to comprehend the relationships between numerous stakeholders.

The inclusion of topics on superannuation in Year 10 within the "function and operation of systems" sub-strand is again valuable, however marks an extension to the curriculum where other topics have not necessarily been removed to allow room.

Achievement standards

There appears to have been a significant increase in difficulty in the cognitive verbs required in Year 8. While the original achievement standards used verbs such as develop, interpret, propose and apply; the new achievement standards include verbs such as analyse and evaluate.

There are times where the progression between year levels within the achievement standards does not appear clear nor is the rationale for understanding why the changes have been made. For example, in the below excerpts, there is only minor progression made in this element of the Achievement Standard between Years 8 and 9.

Year 8	*Year 9*
By the end of Year 8, students explain how markets facilitate decision making about the allocation of resources and recognise why governments may influence the market's operation. They explain influences on consumer and financial decision-making and the importance of planning for the future.	By the end of Year 9, students analyse factors influencing the distribution of resources and explain the importance of trade. They explain influences on consumer and financial decision-making and the importance of managing financial risks and rewards.

Content descriptions

Skills: In Year 7 and 8: the wording of 'develop questions using economic and business concepts' is vague and unclear. Consideration should be given to ensuring the expected outcomes are communicated. Students at this age, with this amount of prior business study, would not yet

have an understanding of what 'economic and business concepts' are. Teachers also need further guidance in this so that all students receive a comparable delivery of the curriculum.

The concept of stakeholders and their perspectives appears from Year 9 onwards. It should be considered whether this language should be introduced earlier, as it is an important consideration for "identifying the costs and benefits of the proposed action or response and make decisions about a course of action" from Year 7.

Content Elaborations

While further inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and understanding has been overall an improvement in the curriculum revisions, there are times when references throughout content elaborations appear unclear or unrelated in what is trying to be conveyed. For example, within the Grade 8 Content Elaborations, *exploring traditional knowledge and practices that enabled fast and expansive exchange in technology, ideas and resources within and between First Nations Australian communities (for example, reciprocal relationships, trade or exchange initiated as part of ceremonies or protocols) (AC9HE8K02_E1)*

This content is unclear in what it is trying to achieve, and the intended learnings for students. As the content that it is connected with refers to economic decision making, the focus on traditional knowledge and practice in this context appears superficial. Furthermore, teachers would need examples to support them in identifying examples of technology that was quickly and expansively exchanged, to ensure information was accurately shared.

Overall feedback

There have been some positive inclusions in this curriculum however, overall, there has not been a successful effort to refine, align and declutter the curriculum. There are inconsistencies in the intended outcomes of the course, with examples where there is no clear progression of knowledge and skills between year levels. There are also examples where important concepts are misplaced in the curriculum – leaving sophisticated concepts to be taught too early, or foundation concepts to be taught too late. Further work needs to be done to ensure the curriculum is clear, coherent and follows a logical sequence of progression.

There are limited examples throughout the curriculum where content has been reduced. The sheer size and variety of concepts that need to be taught, as well as skills that need to be developed, will ensure that teachers delivering this curriculum will not have the available time or resources to engage deeply in many (if any) areas of the curriculum. This will force teachers to either gloss over the many concepts without delivering depth or skip over areas in favour of focusing on some in further detail.

Health and Physical Education (HPE)

Rationale

The HPE rationale is clear about the importance the learning area, provides a thorough overview and attends to breadth of the curriculum area. Although important, it is considered to be quite lengthy, and a suggestion was made that the rationale would be best positioned as a separate tab in the final version.

Aims

The general consensus is that the aims are essential and identify the major learning that students will demonstrate. There is particular support for the first aim that students should be able to access, evaluate and synthesise information to make informed choices and take positive action to enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation.

Organisational structure

It is noted that the strands and sub-strands provide a coherent organisational structure with the content structured in two-year and separate levels being seen as effective. It was also seen as important that Foundation is presented as a single year level.

The layout is considered easy to follow, and it is possible to quickly identify particular areas such as strands and sub-strands which, along with core concepts, are clear about what is important in the HPE learning area.

Additionally, several participants shared that HPE is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the curriculum and it should therefore be treated as a core subject and subsequently allocated the same amount of time as English, mathematics and science.

Key Connections

There was mixed feedback regarding the key connections section in terms of identification of the most relevant general capabilities. Whilst the majority of feedback agreed that the key connections section identifies the most relevant general capabilities, there was concern that there is no mention of the intercultural capability - given there are many opportunities where intercultural elaborations mention the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority.

The key connections section identifies the most relevant cross-curriculum priorities. However, there is a lack of reference to Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. It was suggested there could be opportunities for reference to Asia as interest in sport forms a large part of many Asian cultures.

There was a general disagreement that the key connections section identifies the key opportunities to connect with other learning areas. Whilst there is a clear connection made to skills in numeracy in the general capabilities, mathematics is not mentioned as a learning area that has a connection with health and physical education. If numeracy skills are evident through calculation, measurement, estimation (etc) then mathematical concepts and understanding will be also be developed through health and physical education. It is therefore suggested that mathematics is mentioned in the key connections section.

Key Considerations

The key considerations section is seen as providing important information for planning teaching and learning and that the 'strengths-based approach' description in the key considerations section is seen as positive, as this places the child at the centre of the learning.

A question was raised with regards to the word 'proposition'. Could a word other than 'proposition' be used in the key considerations? The word 'proposition' can have negative connotations, especially in a health curriculum that involves important learning about respectful relationships.

Curriculum Elements

Year /band/level descriptions

There is general agreement that the year level descriptions provide a clear overview of the learning that students should experience at the year/band level and that the language of the content has been refined; it is now clearer and easier to understand. It is felt, however, that there seem to be increasingly more aspects to consider when planning and implementing the HPE curriculum. As some schools have only one health lesson per week, a respondent shared that there is a lot to achieve across a band in a very limited timeframe.

Connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, histories and culture are clear and well defined.

Achievement standards

Most respondents agreed that the achievement standards describe the expected quality of learning that students should typically demonstrate by the end of each band, while some indicated that 'quality' cannot be assessed.

There was general agreement that the achievement standards adequately reflect a clear developmental progression and strong agreement that the learning described in the achievement standards aligns with the essential content students should be taught.

It was strongly felt that a rubric, based on achievement standards and produced by ACARA, would provide a consistent method of assessment for all schools to use.

Content Descriptions

There is strong agreement that the content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn and teachers are expected to teach in each band.

It was noted that there have been some significant changes with the inclusion of age-appropriate content across the curriculum. The content is seamless and shows good progression between year levels / bands.

It is suggested that under the content descriptor AC9HP10P06, consideration should be given to one of the elaborations by linking it to the unsafe use and harms from vaping. As vaping is becoming an issue, it should be addressed in the Year 9/10 band.

There is support for the content descriptions from Years 5-9 which appear to be more specific in terms of outcomes around identity/choices. These prompt teachers to provide opportunities for students to reflect on themselves and how they can develop a positive sense of identity, support others to do the same and recognise how their choices/identity can affect others. This is vital in our current landscape where mental health and the wellbeing of our students must be at the forefront of all that we do. This was apparent in the following content descriptions

- Examine how identities are influenced by people and places (ACPPS051) has changed to 'explain how identities can be influenced by people and places and how we can create a positive self-identity' (AC9HP6P01)
- Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities (ACPPS070) has changed to 'evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of other' (ACPPS089)

A consistent theme in the feedback is that there is a large amount of health content to be covered, especially as many schools only have one dedicated health lesson per week. As such, it is felt that ACARA should stipulate how many minutes per week should be allocated to HPE. One 40-minute lesson is not enough to address the breadth of the curriculum. Concern was also raised about the amount of content that may need to be covered by composite classes.

Additionally, many aspects of the health curriculum are essential for well-being, so there should be more time allocated to the HPE curriculum. A recommendation was made that opportunities to embed wellbeing content across the curriculum need to be made, rather than relying on the HPE lesson to address the breadth of content in the curriculum.

Content Elaborations

The content elaborations are seen as being very useful in regards to planning and teaching content. Feedback recognised that the content elaborations are optional material, and they are not a set of complete or comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught. Participants appreciated the examples given and shared that these examples will help guide their planning.

There is general agreement that the provision of a range of contexts in the content elaborations support teachers to meaningfully integrate the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

Overall feedback

There is general agreementthat the introductory sections provide important information and it was questioned if some of the core concepts / key terms could be provided in a glossary, rather than in the introductory sections.

The introductory section is quite long, and feedback was given regarding the layout, with the introductory sections being organised under a separate tab for ease of access.

The HPE curriculum is seen as being robust and comprehensive with the new revisions and the changes representing an improvement in quality. Most feedback agrees that the quality of achievement standards has been improved.

There was agreement that content has been refined and realigned. However, feedback was given that the HPE curriculum feels 'crowded' and as such, there was no agreement that the curriculum content has been 'decluttered'.

There is overall agreement that the revised Australian Curriculum in HPE is seen as an improvement on the current version.

*Comment on general aspects of the revised learning area/subject that **have improved**.*

Improvements in the revised HPE curriculum were noted with the cross-curricular priorities (except for links to Asia) and the ability to link to other learning areas (except for the exclusion of mathematics).

The revised HPE curriculum is seen to have good breadth and depth as it addresses social, emotional, and physical aspects of HPE that are relevant to all learners. It shows good developmental progression and is age appropriate.

The content elaborations are seen as being improved compared with the current HPE curriculum and they provide useful examples that will assist teachers with their planning.

*Comment on general aspects of the revised learning area/subject curriculum that **need further improvement**.*

Feedback was given that it would be useful for ACARA to set clear expectations and guidelines around

- the number of minutes per week (or % of timetabled time) that students should be undertaking HPE, and indeed all other learning areas.
- the compulsory nature of subjects (and year level).

There seems to be some disparity across schools as to how much time is allocated to HPE as well as a lack of consistency as to whether HPE is compulsory at the Year 10 level.

It was noted that with the continued increase of mental and physical health issues among students, there needs to be an increased opportunity within the HPE curriculum to address social, emotional, and physical health.

Questions were raised around the possibility of exploration/reference of the effects/ways to deal with a pandemic or other devastating events considering what has unfolded over the past few years and the

lasting effects this may have, or if there is scope for discussion around choices and the responsibility of keeping our society safe? (eg. vaccinations)

Technologies

Overall, the changes to the curriculum have been welcomed by teachers. The feedback from primary respondents suggested that there are issues with some of the technical language included in the curriculum which may be difficult for teachers to engage with. Primary respondents also called for greater examples showing how technologies can be integrated with other learning areas. Teachers in F-6 welcomed the 'split' in F-2 and relocation of some data content to mathematics. Teachers in secondary contexts responded favourably to the changes, particularly the shift to single paragraph achievement standards, however expressed concerns about how they will cover the required content within the indicative time allocations.

Rationale

Most respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the rationale is broad and highlights the systematic approach to planning, problem-solving, prototyping, ongoing review and evaluation in responding to developing solutions to solve complex challenges and sustainable patterns of living. The inclusion of the following phrases 'create innovative solutions,' as well as 'the capacity for action,' are important as they capture the experimental nature of the technologies learning area. The rationale emphasises the students' ability to take action through transferring learning. The rationale is future-focused and captures the growing and changing needs of Australia's workforce. The rationale reflects that technology is rapidly advancing, hence the stronger focus on the skills required to utilise new and emerging technologies.

Respondents recommended the following change to paragraph three which currently reads, 'to realise ideas'. The recommendation is to change this language to 'transfer ideas into solutions'.

In design technologies, the inclusion of ethical, legal, aesthetic and functional factors when creating designs is well received. The rationale is well written and clearly defined for educators. However, it is recommended that design thinking to be more prevalent in the rationale for design technologies. It is also recommended that a clearer definition of design be included as this would provide teachers with more clarity around the language of design including 'design thinking'.

In digital technologies, the inclusion of "digital systems to support new ways of collaborating and communicating and require skills such as computational thinking and systems thinking" strengthens the understanding of the current practices to be undertaken in this learning area.

Some teachers suggested including a companion document or digital tool kits that unpacks the three thinking areas: computational thinking, systems thinking and design thinking, so teachers know what they look like in practice.

Aims

The aim clearly identifies the major learning that students will demonstrate. The general capabilities are strongly reflected through the aims, demonstrating the value of being inclusive on these when planning. The inclusion of traditional, current and emerging technologies is important due to the dynamic nature of technologies. In particular, innovative and enterprising skills were well received by respondents due to the focus on entrepreneurial skills and the world of work. The focus on ethical considerations, the use of technology and sustainable futures was strongly supported by teachers.

Several respondents commented that they would like to see 'design thinking' included in the digital technologies aim. This could be included in the first dot point as "use design thinking to design, create, manage and evaluate sustainable and innovative digital solutions to meet and redefine current and future needs".

Organisational structure

The opportunity to report on the learning area holistically or on each subject remains an important feature for schools as it provides the necessary flexibility required when reporting.

This section is well written. The diagram is easy to follow, and teachers appreciate the visual representation of the core concept with big ideas, understandings, skills and processes central to the curriculum. The Read More section helps to explain specific parts of the diagram and the language used is easily accessible. The inclusion of the word 'solutions' in the diagram 'Creating solutions for preferred futures,' is an important and necessary change. The inclusion of enterprising and innovation as a core concept in the diagram is also important ensuring these mindsets are valued.

In the Read More section the decision to not have the description for enterprise skills and innovation connected to financial outcomes but more focused on the skills for enterprise is crucial. It is important that system thinking, design thinking and computational thinking remain a core focus.

Teachers support Foundation being presented as a single year and technologies visually being represented as a core concept with big ideas, understandings, skills and processes central to the curriculum. There is some concern from respondents that the overview of core concepts diagram should include design thinking in both digital technologies as well as design technologies to provide better cohesion and alignment between the subjects.

Design Technologies

This section is well written, and the accompanying table and diagram provide a clear explanation. The use of a circle model for presenting the strands and sub strands creates a hierarchal impression of the strands, implying that the process and production skills strands are more important than the knowledge and understanding strands. We recommend the strands should be given equal weighting and therefore a different diagram could be considered.

Digital Technologies

The explanation and the table clearly unpack the digital technologies curriculum. However, the diagram that accompanies this section of the digital technologies curriculum does not provide adequate detail of the core concepts and processes used when engaging with digital technologies. The table provides a clear process for creating digital solution and it is recommended this be included on the exterior circle mirroring the design technologies diagram. Please see the figures below.
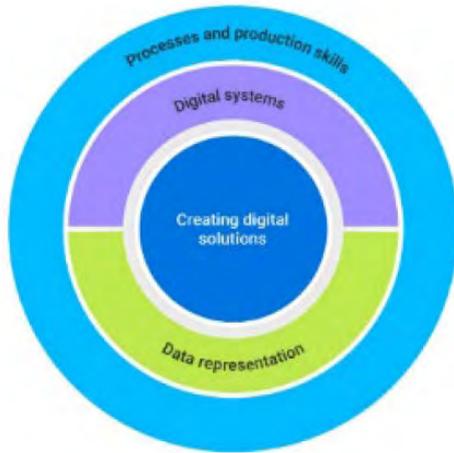

Figure 1: Current model of the relationship between the digital technologies strands and sub-strands

Figure 2: Revised or proposed model of the relationship between the digital technologies strands and sub-strands

Figure 3: Current model of the relationship between the design technologies strands and sub-strands

Key Connections

There was also agreement that the new key connections section was useful in identifying the most relevant cross-curricular priorities, general capabilities and learning area integration. The explicit nature of this section clearly details how to implement the general capabilities when designing learning aligned to the technologies curriculum. The key connections clearly identify which capabilities best align to technologies.

Identifying the learning areas which can be integrated with technologies will support educators, especially in secondary schooling, to integrate authentically and intentionally. Some F-6 teachers indicated that more concrete examples of how technologies can be integrated with other subjects may alleviate concerns over having too much content to cover in the curriculum.

The literacy and numeracy capabilities discussed in the key connections are not aligned to the language used in the literacy and numeracy progressions. As the progressions are being considered as the main literacy and numeracy documents, it might be preferential to align to the language in the progressions rather than to that of the general capabilities literacy and numeracy continuum.

Science is not a key connection to the digital technologies curriculum. It is recommended that science be called out due to the strong curriculum links between science and digital technologies as this would further support the development of integration.

Additionally, design technologies would benefit from being aligned to the mathematics curriculum as mathematics plays an integral component in the design process, specifically around measurement, space and geometry.

Key Considerations

These are important to as they support educators understanding of the different legislation requirements to consider when planning units of work.

It is recommended that the legislation involving copyright laws and intellectual property be included in this section due to the significant focus on designing and creating solutions in the technologies curriculum.

Curriculum Elements

The revised technologies curriculum is clearer and simpler, particularly within the primary years and provides more support and direction for teachers. However, the amount of learning required in F-6 is still an issue for primary teachers. Teachers requested further examples of quality practice embedded into the curriculum, particularly around integration with other learning areas.

Year /band/level descriptions

Most teachers found that the year/band level descriptions provided a clear overview of the learning that students should experience at the year/band level.

Design Technologies

A play focus pedagogy in the Foundation band level is an important inclusion. Separating the Foundation year level from the Year 1 and 2 Band is a positive change.

Digital Technologies

Separating the Foundation year level from the Year 1 and 2 Band is a positive change. The inclusion of play-based experiences when exploring digital systems, cameras, software and programmable devices supports early years pedagogical approaches. The inclusion of digital literacy from the Foundation year is considered an important inclusion especially as it can be built upon at each band level. However, there was some criticism that the band level descriptions are verbose, and the content elaborations are needed to unpack the required learning.

Achievement standards

Technologies

The shorter and sharper achievement standards are an improvement and focus on fewer ideas and make it clear what students should know and be able to do. The Foundation to Year 2 achievement standard has been split into Foundation achievement standard and an achievement standard by the end of Year 2 and this is a positive change.

Design Technologies

The Design Technologies achievement standard directly relates to the band descriptor and clearly aligns with the content descriptions. Teachers appreciate the achievement standard in now one single paragraph.

Digital Technologies

The digital technologies achievement standard directly relates to the band descriptor and clearly aligns to the content descriptors. Secondary teachers responded favourably to the shift to single paragraph achievement standards but expressed concerns about how they will cover the required content within the indicative time allocations. There were some concerns raised that the achievement standards demonstrate what students will do, rather than the quality at which they will do it.

Content descriptions

Design and Technologies

Design and technologies remains broad in its scope, which allows for flexibility of implementation. The knowledge and understanding, and process and production skills are clearly outlined, and the cognitive verbs assist students to develop the skills earlier. While there

have been improvements in language to improve clarity, there has not been great changes to the design technologies curriculum.

There has been a small reduction in content in technologies contexts for Foundation to Year 2 and Years 3 and 4 which removes duplication of materials with science and the arts and allows teachers to make connections between learning areas. The processes and production skills strand for Foundation has also been reduced from five content descriptions to one which is a welcomed change.

There is benefit in the restructuring and resequencing of the materials and technologies specialisations by placing them above the food and fibre production across F-10.

There is some uncertainty surrounding the splitting of food and fibre production and food specialisations for Years 1-6 into two content descriptions. Some teachers believe this improves clarity, allowing teachers to identify connections more easily with other learning areas. Other teachers believe the focus on healthy eating alone in food specialization does not relate to the design technologies curriculum eg "explore how food can be selected and prepared for healthy eating." It is thought that food specialisation aligns better to the health and PE curriculum and some teachers believe it would be better placed in the health and PE curriculum rather than design and technologies.

It is recommended that the content descriptor in the Year 1 and 2 Band level that states "explore … how animals are grown," is reworded, especially when one of the key considerations for design technologies is animal ethics and biosecurity.

Digital Technologies

Most of the changes to the digital technologies curriculum are seen as positive. The digital technologies curriculum requirements for F-6 have more clarity. However, the digital technologies curriculum has been substantially increased in terms of content, complexity and cognitive expectations, with no increase in time allocation. The removal of data collection and interpretation from F-2 has reduced the content in these critical years. However, a new sub-strand for considering privacy and security has been added with 14 new content descriptions across F-10 emphasizing the importance of online safety.

The splitting of the data content descriptor at Year 5 and 6 to specifically include binary ensures the content descriptor is explicit and accessible for teachers. Moving binary concepts to Year 5 and 6 is also an age-appropriate skill and teachers support the change.

Splitting the online safety content descriptor is an important change to the digital technologies curriculum as it allows for the integration with the health and PE curriculum, while also making it clearly visible for teachers that personal safety is an important component of the digital technologies curriculum. The inclusion of the sub-strand considering privacy and security in digital technologies supports students in developing their digital literacies.

In F-6, some primary teachers expressed concerns about the amount of learning around digital systems which needs to take place and that the content descriptions are too technical and

difficult to understand. It was acknowledged that the inclusion of a glossary could provide some clarity. Specific examples from teachers are provided below:

- Recognise different types of data and explore how the same data can be represented differently depending on the purpose (AC9TDI4K03) – Further clarity/examples of what this means and what is required.
- Co-created user story (eg AC9TDI4P01) – this terminology is ambiguous, and the elaborations provide little clarity.
- Control structures (e.g. AC9TDI4P04) – this could be more specific (as it is in the current curriculum).
- Comparison operators (branching) (AC9DTI4P02) – this doesn't appear in the implementing content description which follows in the curriculum.
- Common tools (eg AC9TDI4P06) – further clarity/examples of what 'common tools' might refer to would be helpful.
- Explain how digital system represent all data using numbers (AC9TDI6K03) and explore how data can be represented by off and on states (zeros and ones in binary) (AC9TDI6K04) - these content descriptions include too much duplication.
- Explain the creation and permanence of their digital footprint and consider privacy when collecting user data (AC9TDI6P10) – teachers feel this should be included in Year 3/4 as well.

In 7-10, secondary teachers reported that moving the designing of a user interface and user experience to the sub-strand generating and designing is a better fit. The splitting of data collection and storage from the analysing and visualising sub-strand in Year7 to 10 ensures both of these skills are valued independently. Additionally, the splitting of designing and generating algorithms from validating and testing outputs is also a welcomed change.

In Years 7-10 there was feedback about content descriptions regarding:

- too much content in Year 9 and 10 to be able to push students learning deeper, particularly when these subjects become an elective; and
- a need to support teachers deliver new learning content such as cyber safety and cyber security.

Content Elaborations

Teachers would like more authentic examples of how to implement the curriculum in an integrated way with other learning areas especially in F-6 in the elaborations.

Design Technologies

The elaborations are practical examples of the content descriptor. It is recommended that the content elaboration in Year 1 and 2 relating to rice be removed as an elaboration as the mathematics required to measure large quantities of volume does not align with the expectations of the Year 1 and 2 Mathematics curriculums.

Digital Technologies

The elaborations in the Year 3 and 4 bands regarding peripherals and transmitting data related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curricular priority does not feel authentic and could create confusion for teachers. The elaboration does not align with the scientific understanding taught in the Years 3 and 4 Science curriculum.

Overall feedback

The revised technologies curriculum is clearer and simpler, particularly within the primary years as it provides more support and direction for teachers. Teachers were generally positive about changes to the achievement standards which make the integrations between knowledge and understanding and process and production skills easy to plan. Teachers in F-6 welcomed the 'split' in F-2 and the relocation of some data content to mathematics. Teachers in secondary contexts responded favourably to the changes, particularly the shift to single paragraph achievements.

The new wording was well received. As stated by one of our teachers, 'As a migrant with English as a second language, and although I could understand the words used in the previous version, it was still too academic. The simpler words in the new version make my flow of understanding a lot better.'

In regard to areas for improvement, feedback has indicated that the technologies curriculum has been refined and realigned; however, it has not been 'decluttered', making it difficult to implement in the time available. Some F-6 respondents believe while the language has improved there are still concerns about the amount of content included in both the content descriptions and elaborations. Both primary and secondary respondents felt ill-equipped to implement the curriculum because of time constraints. As one teacher stated, 'subject time allocations and other influences limit the depth of learning opportunities, causing some content to be covered at a superficial level.'

Teachers requested further examples of quality practice embedded into the curriculum, particularly around integration with other learning areas.

Languages

Rationale

It was felt that it is essential to highlight the crucial role that the study of languages plays in the development in the intercultural capability. This aspect is clearly foregrounded in the rationale of the current version of the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

The rationale mentions 'reflecting on their experience'; however, more emphasis is required on the importance of the reflective aspect of studying languages and cultures and the relationships between the world of the students and the world of others.

Overall, the intent is clear, but it could unpack some of the concepts more effectively. There is a sense that there are limited opportunities to develop intercultural understanding in the revised curriculum. This capability needs to be explored in a pertinent way that reflects a more contemporary view of the need to develop an intercultural capability through the learning of languages and cultures.

Aims

This is generally a clear statement about the major learning that students will demonstrate.

It is suggested that "… understand themselves as communicators" be changed to "…understand themselves as communicators **within and across cultures**".

Organisational structure

Feedback received from teachers indicates a high level of satisfaction with the proposed organisational structure. However, there was discussion around the viability of changing the order of the levels/ descriptions ie. begin with the big picture, then move to the:
- content structure
- core concepts
- strands and sub-strands
- band level descriptions
- achievement standards
- content descriptions
- content elaborations

The general consensus is that the revised languages curriculum has been 'refined, decluttered and reduced' as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

The renaming of the strands is supported as it makes their purpose clearer.

The reduction in the number of sub-strands has also been well received by most. However, the removal of the 'translating' and 'reflecting' sub-strands has been a source of debate as these

are key components in the learning of languages. Some felt that the reflecting sub-strand should be reinstated both as a reflection of self as a learner of language, and a reflection of experiences.

While the strands/sub-strands and core concepts are clear about what is important in the learning of languages, two concerns were strongly voiced:

The sub-strand 'mediating meaning' does not clearly define the intention of the sub-strand. 'Mediating' was found to be an ambiguous word in this context. The table presented on pages 7 and 8 was found to be unwieldy, repetitive, ambiguous, and does not value add.

Key Connections

This new section received widespread support but with some comments that should be considered.

The majority of respondents concurred that the key connections section identifies the most relevant general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities but also felt that there is a place in languages for ethical understanding. This capability goes hand in hand with intercultural understanding. In communicating with people from linguistically and/or culturally diverse backgrounds, ethical understanding plays a significant role in making sure the meaning being made is respectful of the ways of thinking and speaking, values and practices of others.

Similarly, the vast majority of respondents agree that the key connections section identifies the key learning areas with which languages can connect. However, there are other clear opportunities for languages to connect with mathematics and science that should be considered.

Key Considerations

The key considerations section is a welcome addition to the document, as is the language guide. It would have been useful to have this resource while reviewing the proposed curriculum.

The proposed languages curriculum document is more user friendly in its format and makes it more of a centralised one-stop-shop.

Curriculum Elements

The proposed format is more user friendly and concise in the description. The generic nature of the descriptions and thus consistency across languages has been generally supported; however, the loss of identity and specificity of each language was noted.

Year /band/level descriptions

The generic nature of the band level descriptions assumes that all languages can cover the same amount of content in the same timeframe; in reality this is not the case, particularly

between alphabetic and non-alphabetic languages in the primary and middle years. Refer to comments below:

- *….reasonable vague and flexible but not always realistic*
- *….clear but ambitious given the allocation of time for Languages in the timetable, particularly in the primary school.*

Achievement standards

The removal of language-specific examples from the achievement standards has been well received as it makes the standards more concise, clearer to read and understand. These examples, now integrated in the content elaborations, will support teachers to use them more effectively.

Consistency across languages through a generic achievement standard has been generally well received by the majority of respondents. The challenge here is how to apply consistency across languages without losing the specificity of individual languages and cultures which can impact on the type of learning that occurs and the time it takes to learn a particular language.

Generally, respondents agree that the achievement standards adequately reflect a clear developmental progression; however, it is important to clearly show different levels of progression for students learning alphabetic based versus character-based languages. It was felt that with too much refining / decluttering of the achievement standards and removing language-specific examples, there is a danger that this will lead to loss of the individual nature of each language.

Content descriptions

The majority of respondents agree that the content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that should be learned, even though at times, the amount of content seems unrealistic. It was felt that this is predominantly due to an inadequate amount of time allocated to languages in the timetable.

Most respondents agree that the content descriptions make it clear to teachers what should be taught. It was felt that the reduction in the number of content descriptions provides greater clarity and understanding of what needs to be taught/learnt.

On the whole, the respondents agree that the amount of content can be covered in each year/band. Teachers are generally pleased with the perceived reduction of content to be taught. However, a significant number disagree with this, making it a contentious issue. A reduction in the number of content descriptions does not necessarily mean that the content listed in the proposed curriculum can be covered; this is once again related to the amount of time and the frequency of lessons allocated to languages in the timetable. Teachers commented:

- *It is difficult to answer what content should be removed to make it more manageable as going through each content description, all seem valuable; however, to teach the students well you need more time than one lesson a week.* (Italian)

- *The number of lessons provided are minimal in some cases.* (Italian)

- *The expectations of what to cover and teach in the Languages is too high. In most Primary schools Languages only get 1 lesson (i.e. 40 minute lesson) per week. Trying to cover the expected content is impossible. The amount of language content needs to be reduced.* (Italian)

- *Depends how much time is allocated to languages per year level.* (French)

- *The challenge is that there is no specified time allocation for Languages.* (Chinese)

As such, it was strongly suggested that ACARA revisit and republish the guidelines (table) given to writers, illustrating the suggested percentage of time to allocate to each learning area to ensure students achieve the intended curriculum outcomes.

Specific feedback on subjects

General aspects of the revised learning area/subject that have improved

Chinese:
- Overall, the suggested improvements will make Chinese much easier and more comprehensive.
- Having fewer sub-strands is going to make it easier. They make a clear connection between languages and culture as they are interconnected.
- The rewording of 'creating' to 'creating text' and the new elaborations will make task setting and assessment for writing much more realistic and achievable.

French:
- The number of tasks/activities needing to be completed in French has increased, which is excellent. There used to be a lot of reflection in English and now there is a bit more focus on the language.
- There is a shift back to communicative language, which is great. They align well with the performance standards in the senior secondary curriculum - flows on well into the senior years - much decluttered.

Italian:
- The language is more concise.
- Fewer content descriptions, less overlap, more concise.
- Fewer content descriptors saying similar things.
- The condensing of content descriptions makes it a lot easier when planning to write up learning intentions and success criteria for students.
- Reducing the number of sub-strands has decluttered and reduced overlap. The content descriptions are much more simplified and easier to understand.
- There were far too many sub-strands so the reduction in the number of these is a great improvement.
- The new Foundation Year content better supports learning in the early years and makes it clearer what should be achieved in this year level.

- Overall, I think the document is much easier to work with and the introduction of the Foundation Year is a huge positive for the early years.

Japanese:
- It is a fantastic change/update/revision.
- Removing specifics from the achievement standards will help enormously.

General aspects of the revised learning area/subject that need further improvement

Italian:
- The key issue is that the amount of content does not always align with the amount of time allocated to the teaching of languages in schools. One respondent noted: *the level of language expected to be reached by the end of Year 6 is too high considering most Primary schools only allocate 1 short lesson per week for languages*

- It would be great to have specific resources and units of work that relate to specific elaborations. When you are new to the learning area it can be very difficult to gather resources. You are also generally the only language teacher in the school making it even more difficult to collaborate when planning units of work.

- Content descriptions are lacking explicit examples. This does not support new teachers to the subject who need the specific example and clear guidelines.

Japanese:
- The proposed sub-strands 'water down' the multilingual and intercultural orientation and this is not an improvement.

- The proposed new structure makes the intercultural less obvious, and more 'open to interpretation' as to what to teach about culture. Culture is still mentioned but the 'intercultural' aspect is less prominent and therefore less clear and more open to a range of understandings of culture.

Band/level specific feedback

Aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that have improved

General:
- The content elaborations are clearer and more realistically suited to the cognitive level of development.
- The content displays show good linguistic progression.
- More realistic use of language for the targeted bands.

French:
- Year 10 - AC9LF10EC08 - It is great to see a shift from creating glossaries to just applying and using the words - this is actually the goal; the glossary wasn't necessary.
- Year 8 - AC9LFEC03 - It is a great transition from performing language to communicating in language, this is a good shift. Some good flow-on into the senior secondary Performance Standards.

Italian:

- The content has been reduced – there are less repetitive content descriptions .

Aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that need further improvement

General:
  - strands & sub-strands.
  - the repositioning of the intercultural.

French:
  - Year 10 - AC9LF10EC01 - do students not need to be able to talk about global issues anymore? It seems to have changed to "others' personal world" but this could mean anything. At Year 10 level would we not expect them to be able to talk about some 'big picture' things?
  - Year 8 & Year 10 - AC9LF10EU05 - need to add "and Francophone" in the proposed version as there is no acknowledgement of the distribution and diversity of French-speaking communities

Italian:
  - The achievement standard sections for these bands in the current curriculum are much clearer in what the students will need to learn/achieve. The new achievement standard sections in the revised curriculum appear vague - less clear about the specifics of what the students will achieve by the end of the band.

Content Elaborations

The content elaborations were seen as useful. The inclusion of more language-specific examples is supported and welcomed. Greater availability of examples seems to help unpack the content.

Whilst it is supported that the content elaborations provide a range of contexts that support teachers to meaningfully integrate the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, richer examples are needed. Several respondents felt that the general capabilities and the cross curriculum priorities are not explicitly addressed in the content elaborations.

Overall feedback

Most respondents agreed that the revised Australian Curriculum in languages is an improvement on the current version. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the introductory sections provide important information and there has been improvement in the quality of content descriptions, achievement standards, and content elaborations. However, some commented felt that the general capabilities and the cross-curriculum priorities are not explicitly addressed in the content elaborations.

Most agreed that the curriculum content overall had been refined, realigned, and in some subjects reduced. The key issue is that the amount of content does not always align with the amount of time allocated to the teaching of languages in schools.

The Arts

Most respondents agreed that the proposed curriculum changes would be an improvement on the current curriculum, especially for primary teachers. There is a strong impetus to make the arts curriculum more manageable for primary levels.

Overall, respondents agreed with the draft introductory elements providing clear and important information about the arts. The new organisational structure reclassifying the sub-strands as strands was positively responded to and the key connections and key considerations elicited a positive response in most subject areas. However, there was a concern, especially from secondary teachers, that the proposed curriculum does not allow for deep knowledge and exploration of the specialist field of practice due to the limitations imposed by the generic organising strands.

Rationale

Teachers agreed that the rationale establishes the importance of the subject; however, it was noted that the rationale also refers to non-tangible elements which are difficult to teach and assess.

Aims

The general consensus is that the aims identify the major learning that students will demonstrate.

Organisational structure

Teachers agreed that the use of strands to organise the content descriptions was a positive and a useful proposed change. However, it was noted that the four strands - exploring and connecting, developing skills practice and ideas, creating, and sharing and communicating - are more connected to skills and abilities than knowledge and understanding. Some secondary teachers reported that the adoption of these strands as key organisers privileges practical making over critical inquiry.

In media arts, some teachers commented that the labelling of the strands could be refined, with suggestions of splitting 'developing skills and practices' into two strands. Teachers reported that the strand 'sharing and communicating' require more consideration, particularly of the legalities and consequences regarding the distribution of media arts products and engaging with audiences.

There was concern by some secondary teachers that the core concepts were too broad and fail to provide guidance to teachers on the fundamental skills and depth of content required in the curriculum.

Key Connections

Further feedback on this element indicates teachers believe that not enough connections were made with other learning areas and the general capabilities. Several teachers commented that the digital literacy capability should be listed in the key connections, as the arts rely heavily on the use of technologies to create artworks. Further feedback on this element suggests more reference should be made to embed histories and cultures of the Pacific Islands and Middle East to encompass the full scope of Australia's broadly multicultural society.

Key Considerations

Feedback suggests that this area needs refinement. The statements are broad and not specific to teaching and learning in the subject area. The statements in the bands are generic, yet the elaborations are quite specific. Several teachers commented that this could potentially lead to misinterpretation about what needs to be assessed.

Curriculum Elements

Across the curriculum elements, most teachers responded in a positive way to the draft proposal of content descriptions and elaborations. However, feedback suggested that improvements could be made to the alignment between the content descriptions and the achievement standards. Many teachers also commented that they needed to use the content elaborations in conjunction with the content descriptions to understand what is needed to be taught.

Year /band/level descriptions

Some teachers identified that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture content set at band 7/8 across the arts is incorrectly placed as it does not fit authentically into the curriculum or match the cognitive development at this stage. It has been suggested that this could be better placed at band 5/6, where a more integrated approach could be taken across all art forms, or at band 9/10 in preparation for senior secondary subjects.

Achievement standards

Teachers reported on the whole that the achievement standards are more concise. The splitting of the Foundation band from the Year 1/2 band was seen as a positive change. Additionally, highlighting words such as 'play' and 'co-create' for the Foundation band was seen as appropriate for this stage of development and the teachers who will be teaching this content.

Teachers reported that there are some alignment issues with the content descriptions. For example, in dance, safe dance practices are in the Year 9 and 10 achievement standards but not in the content descriptions.

In music, the Year 7/ 8 band for music were suggested to be too difficult, with the expectation that students 'analyse' artworks at this level. 'describe and identify' were suggested to be more appropriate for an achievement standard cognition at this level. Several teachers brought

attention to the high level of cognitions in the Year 7/8 band which omit the term 'identify'. Teachers commented that there is a need for students to develop the skills of identifying, describing and then analysing to allow them to develop analytical and evaluative skills required at the Year 9/10 band. It is recommended that analysing should be added to the achievement standards in the Year 9/10 band, alongside evaluating. This will provide progression from analysis to evaluation.

Content descriptions

The number of content descriptions has increased in the arts largely due to Foundation becoming a separate band and the exploring and connecting strand having two distinct focus areas.

There was consistent feedback regarding the content descriptions being 'too broad', therefore not allowing students to build skills to show higher-order cognitions in the content descriptions. While specific content can be found in elaborations, teachers commented that these are optional, and teachers may choose not to use the elaborations to unpack the content descriptions.

Media arts teachers expressed concern with the content descriptions being too generic. There was also concern that content descriptions do not always align well with the achievement standards. For example, in the Year 2 achievement standards in media arts, 'identify where and why media arts are made and consumed' - the why does not align with the content descriptions.

Primary teachers in music expressed concern with the focus on 'describing and communicating ideas, feelings and meaning'. Inadequate music literacy knowledge and experience with music from different cultures makes this difficult for primary students to achieve. Several teachers commented that the emphasis on music in primary school should be on laying the foundation for further study in music in secondary school through a focus on skills development.

Significant concerns were raised by secondary music teachers who identified the absence of the 'manipulation of musical elements' across Year 7-10 bands as a major flaw, as it is core to the teaching of music. Music notation has also been removed from the curriculum which disadvantages those students who need to understand the fundamentals of standard notation. There is also criticism from music teachers that the proposed curriculum stipulates fewer technical terms than the previous version and this could impact the teaching of specific skills and music terminology.

Visual arts teachers raised that exploring and connecting in Years 3-4 and exploring and connecting in Years 5-6 only references First Nations People and exclude other cultures, and this is viewed as limiting. Secondary visual arts teachers commented on the over-emphasis on artmaking and the absence of art critical interpretation and art historical study where students learn to represent points of view through studying and writing about art.

Content descriptions specific to First Nations histories and cultures were positively received. Teachers acknowledged and respected the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island artworks in a more appropriate way than previous iterations of the curriculum. However,

teachers also indicated that there is an opportunity to develop resources that are suitably aligned with the content descriptions and band levels of learners. Furthermore, some respondents suggested that including specific texts, artworks and learning activities in support materials would be beneficial for teachers who lack confidence in embedding First Nations content into their teaching programs.

Content Elaborations

The content elaborations were described by teachers as explicit, relevant and useful to teachers. Some teachers suggested that more guidance on suitable texts, artworks and learning experiences would be helpful. Feedback indicated clarification of terms in each specialist subject area's glossary illustrating what 'improvise', 'refine', 'explore' looks like in each band and/or subject would be helpful for teachers.

Overall feedback

Overall, the feedback has been positive regarding the proposed changes, especially with the changes to the strands. The language used for each strand (exploring and connecting) is easier to understand and apply especially for primary teachers. While the strands may be appropriate in the primary context there is some concern from some secondary teachers that the strands default to a formulaic process-based approach to content across the arts.

Feedback has emerged that further work needs to be done on making the content descriptions less broad so teachers can understand what needs to be taught. Currently, the content elaborations, rather than the content descriptions, have become the de facto curriculum.

Teachers have responded positively to the changes proposed regarding the First Nations histories and cultures content but would like resources to help them embed and sensitively address the content in the arts curriculum.

General Capabilities

Critical and Creative Thinking

Overall, teachers agree or strongly agree to the changes made to the general capability critical and creative thinking. It is felt that it is important to have clear examples and links between critical and creative thinking and content descriptions/elaborations for each learning area.

Introductory description

The introductory description is clear about the importance of this general capability. Feedback indicated that the description of critical thinking could emphasise that this is a form of convergent thinking and creative thinking is a form of divergent thinking. The structural diagram is informative and concise.

It is suggested that within the element of inquiring there should be a precursor to the sub-element 'develops questions'; this should be curiosity, as learners need to explore what they are curious about before they can formulate questions. The word curiosity only appears in the Level 1 Foundation continua, but it is believed that it should go across all levels of the continuum.

Respondents who disagreed noted that the introductory description could be strengthened by a clearer rationale for why the capability is important in life beyond schooling as well as the need to build transfer skills. Many of the descriptions talk about learning tasks and school processes which are more academic than creative.

Continuum

The changes to the elements and sub-elements have improved the continuum and the descriptions from Level 1 to Level 6 form a logical developmental sequence. Teachers welcomed the addition of transfer of learning, which is important for student learning.

Regarding specific feedback on the Continuum

- Sub-strand - Develops questions: children can engage in solving authentic problems in the primary years, not just from Year 7 on.
- Strand – Generating: it is recommended that this should include the developmental process of students generating ideas (brainstorming, ideating) through levels of sophistication.
- Sub-strand - Considering Alternative: Level 6, Years 9 to 10 includes the ability to revise and modify ideas. It is felt that students have the capability to do this from the early years right through to Year 10. We see students revising and modifying their ideas in the early years through play-based pedagogies.

- Interconnections, perspectives, and ways of knowing are not included in the elements until level 6 - these should be included at every level.

Overall Comment

The refinement of the four elements - inquiry, generating, analysing and reflecting - and the description of their corresponding sub-elements are more accessible. The inquiring, generating, and analysing section of critical and creative thinking has improved significantly and provided more detail on what is intended to be taught. Levels 1-6 are presented in a logical order that can be easily followed. The critical and creative thinking general capability can more easily be embedded across the curriculum.

Areas for improvement include:
- The reflecting element still requires more work. The descriptions from levels 1-6 do not demonstrate the same logical progression that is evident in the other elements.
- Element: Reflecting, sub-element: Think about thinking: Level 4 and Level 5 possibly need to include alternative perspectives before considering criticism.
- The consultation version of the analysing section is wordier and more difficult to navigate. The old version was easier as the lexical density is less. The expectations at Years 7 and 8 are quite demanding.

Digital Literacy

Overall, teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the changes made to the general capability digital literacy. Teachers expressed a very strong desire that quality examples of practice and explicit links between content descriptions/elaborations and the general capability be available as part of the implementation process for the revised general capability.

Introductory description

In general, teachers were positive about changes to the definition for the digital literacy general capability. The change of name to digital literacy has been well received as has the inclusion of knowledge and skills elements into the definition. The original definition focused on the skills, but the new definition brings in the knowledge needed to critically select and use digital devices and systems. The move to what we do with technology rather than just learning about technology is a welcome shift.

While the revised changes to digital literacy are clearer and more concise there has been a missed opportunity to clearly emphasize the importance of this general capability in improving student learning outcomes. There needs to be a stronger narrative explaining why digital literacy is essential for students to know and the importance of being able to demonstrate a good understanding of the five elements of *Practicing digital safety and wellbeing, communicating and collaborating, investigating, creating and managing and operating.*

Continuum

On the whole, most descriptions from F-10 form a logical sequence, with the exception of sub-elements: Create content, and Respect intellectual property.

Practising digital safety and wellbeing

The reframing of the element from 'social and ethical protocols' to the much more direct 'Practicing digital safety and wellbeing' was welcomed by teachers. The movement from limiting risks to protecting safety was viewed as a more proactive approach to managing student wellbeing and online safety.

This element relies on the digital literacy of the teacher to be able to specifically teach the required skills and knowledge. The element could be improved by more explicit outcomes.

Regarding specific feedback and considerations:

- Level 2-Sub-element, Manage Online Privacy and Safety- *Developmentally too advanced.*
- Level 3-Sub-element, Manage Online Privacy and Safety- *Need identification of who - trusted persons.*
- All levels-Sub-element, Manage Digital Identity- *Add the line: Digital Identity exists forever.*

Communicating and collaborating

In *Communicating and collaborating*, the shift from collaborating to exchanging in this element highlights the importance of developing students' skills when communicating and indicates both giving and receiving. This also helps to change the focus on using a specific technology to using 'tools'. These changes ensure that any platform and/or apps can be used. The progression towards using appropriate tools by Level 6 is logical.

The connection between communication and practicing digital safety and wellbeing reinforces the importance of safety when communicating and collaborating and exchanging. Some teachers wanted further clarity around what is meant by 'exchanging information'. Concern was also raised about the terms synchronous and asynchronous communications being removed; teachers feel this is important for students to understand in a 'post-COVID' world.

When collaborating, students in all years should be 'working in team roles' but this is only shown in later years. Collaboration should start from Foundation (Level 1)

To ensure consistency across the progressions, the concept of 'safely' should remain in the descriptions in Level 6.

Investigating

Teachers welcomed the simplification of language in the *Investigating* sub-elements. Some would like to see the inclusion of sub-elements related specifically to planning for investigation. The inclusion of the Evaluation sub-element is a welcome addition as it goes further than the previous version by explicitly teaching evaluation skills in an era of misinformation.

The terminology of 'search engine' can be made more inclusive of a range of technologies by acknowledging that searching information using technology happens in more ways than what is traditionally considered search engines. eg Siri, Alexa.

Creating

Creating Content is articulated with appropriate language which is easy for teachers to interpret and understand. The removal of the word 'digital' within this element has provided the opportunity for a broad application across the curriculum and other learning areas. The inclusion of ethical considerations earlier in the progression is welcomed. There were some concerns expressed that intellectual property should sit within all elements, not just creating. The differences between 'creating' in digital literacy vs creating in digital technologies were raised and further clarity is needed to illustrate these differences in the continuum.

The descriptions for the sub-element Create Content in Level 4 are ambiguous compared to Levels 1 - 3. It is unclear what is expected across these progressions and how they differ from each other. Plan and develop in Levels 5 - 6 refers to 'use independently selected' and 'use appropriate tools'. This may be modified by demonstrating in the progression that choosing an appropriate tool is a skill that happens before independently selecting.

Managing and operating

Managing and operating the language and specificity of the sub-elements will make it easier for classroom teachers to interpret and apply skills in the classroom.

The use of occasional technical terminology that is challenging for teachers to interpret could be supported by a glossary.

Regarding specific feedback:

- Level 1 Foundation-Sub-element, Select and Operate Tools- needs to be more specific eg search, upload etc, schools have different expectations.
- Level 4, 5/6-Sub-element, Select and Operate Tools- the word 'using' is incorrect, at this stage students are creating.
- Level 4, 5/6-Sub-element, Select and Operate Tools- it does not make sense to have: 'complete tasks' by Year 6 Schools expect F students to complete tasks to an appropriate level eg take photos, upload, etc.

Overall Comment

The renaming of the general capability to digital literacy is a positive outcome and aligns with current research to encompass the knowledge and skills students need throughout school and beyond. Teachers reported that the language is generally clearer and more succinct in both the elements and sub-elements. The inclusion of digital safety and wellbeing is welcomed by teachers.

Ethical Understanding

In the main, teachers welcomed the revision and refinement which has resulted in key changes to the ethical understanding general capability.

Introductory description

In general, teachers were supportive of the introductory description for the ethical understanding general capability.

While the revised introductory description for ethical understanding is clearer and more concise, the description provides a sketch of the importance of the general capability rather than a fully developed rationale for its inclusion in the Australian Curriculum.

Religious traditions and beliefs have been the source of significant ethical thought, understanding, and wisdom for centuries. Ethical understanding as a general capability would be strengthened by the inclusion of religion.

There needs to be a stronger description explaining why ethical understanding is essential for students to develop a robust understanding of the elements and sub-elements and how this understanding supports student learning.

Structure

The revised structure, which has reduced the number of elements from three to two as well as realigned and refined the sub-elements from eight to six, was welcomed and supported by teachers. The revised structure adds to the clarity and ease of use for teaching and learning of ethical understanding across the year levels.

The renaming of sub-elements, together with the realignment of some sub-elements into the two new elements, provides an improved description of the key skills and knowledge expected of students and a more coherent structure for the general capability.

An exception was the removal of the connection between reason and ethical decision making. The language of the sub-element 'Making and reflecting on ethical decisions' requires a stronger connection to reasoning, both in the name of the sub-element and in the overall structure.

The organising elements graphic provides a solid representation of the structure of the learning which is required in the general capability.

Continuum

The revised structure of the general capability supports a more understandable learning continuum that will be easier for teachers to use.

In the main, the descriptions in the continuum form a coherent, logical and appropriate developmental sequence. A notable exception is the removal of the connection between reasoning and decision-making identified in the structure section above leading to an almost complete absence of descriptions focused on the importance of reasoning in decision-making.

Overall Comment

The revised ethical understanding general capability improves on the current structure and learning continuum for the general capability.

Further development of the Introductory description to support the importance of the general capability for student learning, and further refinement of some parts of the sub-elements and learning descriptions is still required.

Intercultural Understanding

In general, there is agreement for the changes to the intercultural understanding general capability. The document is constructed using a positive tone devoid of any terminology which could be considered negative or emerging from a deficit model. The concepts of perspective, balance, stereotyping, bias and discrimination are proposed along the continuum at appropriate developmental points. Within the revised consultation curriculum enhancements have been made whilst some questions remain.

Introductory description

There is a view that the introductory description does not adequately describe the importance of Intercultural Understanding. This general capability is about understanding what happens and what to do when cultures intersect and develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions to reflect, engage and navigate cultural and linguistic diversity and contexts. Religious beliefs and traditions form an important part of communities' cultural identity. This has not been clearly articulated in the document.

Continuum

The cognitive verbs used across the elements and sub-elements followed a continuum and flowed well. The specificity of each descriptor has been well received being predominantly far less vague than the current version. Including thoughts and feelings for Level 1 learners appropriately reflects developmental ways of learning.

Although the concept of respect is articulated in the elaborations of the sub-elements, there are some levels in which the concept is not mentioned at all. It first appears in the element Reflecting on culture and cultural diversity in Level 2 (Years 1 and 2) and then in Level 5 (Years 7-8) leaving a considerable developmental void for the concept of respect within intercultural understanding. Respect is next referred to within the element Engaging with cultural and linguistic diversity in Level 5 (Years 7-8) and finally within the third element Navigating intercultural contexts in Level 1 (Foundation). This reference is in identifying how people listen and show respect. Additional explicit reference to respect within every level would enhance this general capability.

It is recommended to review the naming of the element *Reflecting on Culture and Cultural Diversity* and restore a higher profile of respect to the title. A suggestion could be Respecting and Reflecting on Culture and Cultural Diversity.

Regarding specific sub-elements:

- Level 1: Examine cultural perspectives and worldviews- *Identify how family and friends express opinions about what they value* is considered too demanding for this level and may elicit responses that may not be intended to progress intercultural understanding.

- Level 1: Engaging with cultural and linguistic Diversity- *Notice their own feelings and those of others in familiar intercultural contexts* may need further refinement and guidance to ensure that negative feelings are appropriately contextualised. This would assist learners at the foundational level. who engage with many new experiences in their early learning journey, for which different cultural aspects may not be familiar and thereby be considered different. It may be an assumption to decide what is familiar to a particular cohort of diverse learners.
- Level 2: Explore the influence of cultures on interactions- *Describe how their cultural identities influence interactions with others* may be more clearly articulated in the current curriculum: *describe how the use of words and body language in interactions may have different meanings for various cultural groups.*

Overall Comment

Opportunities to develop this general capability are provided within English, science, humanities and social sciences, the arts and languages. Although the health and physical education consultation curriculum does refer many times to cultural groups, influences, awareness, factors, issues and knowledge, intercultural understanding is not directly or clearly linked. Potentially there is a lost opportunity of incorporating this capability within mathematics as another window through which to build intercultural understanding.

Personal and Social Capability

Introductory description

The description of personal and social capability is clear in its aim to develop students' understanding of themselves and others, managing their relationships, lives and work and learning more effectively. The aim of supporting students' social and emotional skill growth for them to develop self-management, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, collaboration and resilience skills and to feel positive about themselves reflects the growing need for focused attention in this dimension of the Australian Curriculum.

However, the introduction does not sufficiently and strongly elaborate the rationale underpinning the role of the personal and social capabilities in students' capacity to engage with the curriculum. For example, a regulated student is able to engage in higher-order thinking and a student with social skills can engage in collaborative learning. The personal and social capability forms the foundation for active academic engagement. Without this rationale clearly elaborated, there is a high risk that this capability is not prioritised with the explicit attention it demands.

The terminology used aligns with the wellbeing language that is predominantly in learning plans and social/emotional support plans.

Continuum

The four elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management help to group the fourteen sub-elements, effectively encompassing the skills to be developed within this general capability.

Some of the descriptions of the continuum pose further questions:

- Sub-element - Emotional regulation (see page 10):
  - The sequencing of this sub-element is a problematic verb sequence/progression – recognise (1a), express (1b), moderate (2), manage and moderate (3), manage (4), manage (5), regulate (6)– this sequence is developmentally challenging. The verbs 'moderate', 'manage' and 'regulate' will need to be well defined, differentiated and clear for teacher use to reflect a developmental learning progression from Level 1a to Level 6. Feedback from respondents is that many of the personal and social capabilities seem to be too difficult for the age they are meant for. Level 1a is not seen to capture the needs of students with disabilities, particularly those who are developmentally well below foundation level.
  - 1b – *express emotions in social settings with respect for others* – there are some students that are deeply respectful and fully internalise situations that still require support with emotional regulation. Additionally, there is no other reference in this progression which relates to respect for others. The word respect appears twice on the entire continuum: Self-management, emotional regulation sub-element 1b and Social management, collaboration sub-element Level 3.

- Level 5 – *manage emotional impulsivity* – does not consider students who are so anxious they are immobilised. They too need to manage their emotions to be productive.

- Sub-element – Social awareness (page 11)
  - 1a demonstrate an awareness of the feelings and needs of others – how does a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) move beyond 1a, in acknowledging the issues of Theory of Mind and its subsequent impact, predominantly characterised by the limited capability of these students to infer the mental states of themselves and others.
  - Within column 1a, some sub-element statements/descriptions are internalised actions and others are external; for example, show an awareness is an internalised action that is potentially very difficult for some students to achieve and even more so for some teachers to observe; whereas the external actions are easier to observe and achieve, such as communicate intentionally. For column 1a, a level of consistency in terms of ease of observation and checking for success (internalised actions/externalised actions) is important as this informs teacher evaluation of student progress.
  - Some students with ASD may never achieve some sub-elements in 1a. Such an example is found within social awareness – empathy- demonstrate an awareness of the feelings and needs of others. Knowing the challenges that Theory of Mind present for students with ASD may mean that this is not achieved prior to the Level 2 description of describing similarities and differences between themselves and others' perspectives, cultures and backgrounds. For typically developing students, 1a is accessible so it is important to get this right for the range of students for whom this may be used.

In a pandemic world of uncertainty and disruption, it is essential that along with the elements and sub-elements already included, that the personal and social capabilities articulate and support an optimistic outlook for our students. Optimism is an essential attribute and to neglect its inclusion here will be a profound oversight. Confidence, resilience and adaptability are included in the continuum but these do not encompass optimism. The revised Australian Curriculum needs to reflect the contemporary needs of our learners and truly support them to gain the skills, knowledge and perspective they require to be *confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners…and empower learners to overcome barriers* as stated in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

Overall Comment

Changes to the personal and social capability continuum provide, in most instances, discernable differences and predominantly logical cognitive progression across the levels. The revised language in the sub-element descriptions generally enhances the clarity of the level statements. However, not all of the level 1-6 descriptions form a logical developmental sequence. The inclusion and progression of empathy is welcomed and endorsed.

The acknowledgment that some students are sporadically spread through this area of growth needs to be carefully understood by relevant stakeholders so that labelling does not occur based on levels of development.

It is recommended for Level 1a to be reviewed as it requires students to have metacognition and articulation of their skills. Level 1a is not seen to be as incremental as it needs to be. Each capability in Level 1a appears to require multiple subskills for students. Students with disability need to be brought into clear focus within the considerations given to the review of this capability.

Cross Curriculum Priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Introductory description

The Australian Curriculum strives to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians, acknowledging the gap in learning outcomes between First Nations Australian students and non-First Nations people. Through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, the Australian Curriculum …*provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the ability to see themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in the curriculum; and allows all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.* Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, 2019, p.10.

The ongoing use of the current conceptual framework of Country/Place, Culture and People is endorsed. Consultation with advisory groups and stakeholders helps build assurance that the decisions made in formulating these draft cross-curriculum priorities will authentically reflect core aspects of Country/Place, People and Culture for now and into the future.

The need to ensure that this proposed revised Curriculum becomes more culturally responsive is stated in the overview noting that 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal' are broad terms imposed on Australia's First Nations Peoples without consultation and that the terms 'First Nations Australians' and 'Australian First Nations Peoples' are widely accepted to collectively refer to both distinct groups of peoples. This then raises the question as to why the cross-curriculum priority remains named Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures? Should it also be now known as 'Australian First Nations Peoples Histories and Cultures' to achieve and maintain consistency in using respectful and culturally responsive language?

Increasingly, there is a growing awareness of the many First Nations across Australia. Teachers are aware that in their teaching, stereotypes are to be avoided and therefore actively seek reliable and authentic resources which have been endorsed for classroom use. Securing such resources for teachers will ensure these understandings and knowledge components for this cross-curriculum Priority are taught with fidelity, consistency and confidence.

Continuum

Specific learning areas of the Australian Curriculum explicitly develop student understanding of one or more of the organising ideas from each cross-curriculum priority through their content descriptions. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture cross-curriculum priority is positioned as best incorporated into history and the arts.

There is evidence that within the proposed reviewed science curriculum, intercultural inquiry practices have been introduced to reflect actions within the Australian scientific community to

adhere to protocols for accessing Country or Place to work collaboratively with and protect the intellectual property of First Nations Australians. Additionally, within the elaborations of the 'All elements' F-10 Science Consultation Curriculum, the term 'first nations' appears 115 times. Therefore, science should also join history and the arts on the list as a learning area for which this cross-curriculum priority is best incorporated. This also applies to English as another key learning area which also provides culturally relevant and engaging contexts for all students through literature appreciation and examination of texts with 129 references to First Nations Australian authors illustrators, texts, histories, perspectives, identities, languages and cultures.

The new section *Key Considerations* in the proposed reviewed Science Curriculum refers to the key matters teachers should consider when planning for and teaching the curriculum and include appropriate cultural protocols for engaging with First Nations Australians. Unfortunately, the consultation version of the F-10 Australian Curriculum does not include 'tagging' to show where general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are incorporated in the content descriptions and elaborations.

The content descriptions within Years 1 and 2 The Arts Curriculum show how this priority is incorporated into this Learning Area:

- Dance - identify how First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (AC9ADA2E02)
- Media Arts - identify ways First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (AC9AMA2E02)
- Music - identify how First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (AC9AMU2E02)
- Visual arts - identify ways First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (AC9AVA2E02)

Would this cross-curriculum priority be best embedded within elaborations rather than content descriptions in order to declutter? Such detail in the content descriptions means that there is a high need for supportive resources. In addition, there will be a requirement for schools to know local histories and cultures and to seek permission to share from those with cultural authority in the area.

Overall Comment

This is a key priority that will support not only improved learning outcomes for Australian First Nations students but also as a foundation for building and enhancing cultural understanding and positively impacting national Reconciliation. To achieve these goals, the prescribed links, knowledge and skills must be articulated clearly and consistently. As well as this cross-curriculum priority, there is evidence that authentic links have been considered in other learning areas such as science which has introduced key considerations. These list safety, ethics and protocols for engaging with First Nations Australians within that learning area. A curriculum with clear links to learning areas which authentically and relevantly address this priority is affirmed.

A concern is the presence of the divisive use of the terminology 'First Nations Australian and non–First Nations Australians' found, for example, in the English Curriculum, appearing twenty-five times. The use of this term reduces the Australian population to be identified as either one of two 'types', potentially leading to reinforcing an 'us and them' perspective, thereby erasing all goals and aspirations for reconciliation, inclusion, embracing diversity and community which this cross-curriculum priority strives to achieve. The use of these terms risks increased divisiveness.

If this cross-curriculum priority is reviewed to ensure the use of respectful and culturally responsive language such as 'First Nations Australians' and 'Australian First Nations Peoples', as an essential component of reconciliation and strengthening relationships between Australian First Nations Peoples and the wider Australian community, then it is critical for consistency of language to be embedded. The decision to change this terminology but leave the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures' title unchanged for this Cross-Curriculum Priority does not appear to be consistent.

Appropriate resourcing of this cross-curriculum priority is essential. However, it is difficult to source. There are serious issues with gathering Indigenous elder approval to resources used, to source data that can be used without usurping the leadership of elders when it comes to teaching about Indigenous culture, language, beliefs, data etc. Provision with links to elder-approved resources which link to various parts of the syllabus in different curriculum areas are urgently needed, rather than a comment that it would be ideal to teach about a particular indigenous concept without any way of finding out about these ideas.

It is noted that this priority would benefit from not only a historical focus but also an emphasis on current and future perspectives.

Further clarity is also sought for the curriculum to define and clearly articulate the key areas which are considered to be the core building blocks for Australia's journey to Reconciliation. How do the changes in the proposed revised Curriculum assist schools in contributing to the Reconciliation journey and improve upon the current curriculum?

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

Introductory description

Respondents affirmed that the introductory description highlights the importance for young Australians to have the capacity to examine issues of local, regional and global significance, understand and appreciate different perspectives and worldviews, establish positive interactions with people of different backgrounds and take constructive action through connection and collaboration.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia aligns with humanities and social sciences (HASS) and languages learning areas as they explicitly develop student understanding in one or more of the organising ideas. A risk exists that students not studying any social science element or language in their selected secondary subjects will not have further opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, capabilities, values and attitudes in this cross-curriculum priority. However, the inclusion in English of Asian stories shared through the literature strand supports the articulated goal for this cross-curriculum priority to understand and appreciate different perspectives and worldviews. The strand promotes a clear understanding of the connections between past, present and future development.

Continuum

The three revised organising ideas of Knowing, Understanding and Growing engagement with Asia set a positive tone and direction.

Earlier iterations of the proposed revisions had omitted reference to religion, but this has been restored in this proposed revision. This is found stated in the revised organising idea for Knowing Asia and its diversity: People of the Asia region are diverse in backgrounds, experiences, religions, beliefs and perspectives. This inclusion is strongly supported.

The second organising idea within Growing Asia-Australia engagement: Australia and Asia are interdependent through linked histories and contemporary realities, may still require rewording. Would the word interconnected rather than interdependent be a better articulation of this idea? The Overview itself states the interconnection:

Australia is increasingly looking to Asia strategically, politically and culturally as well as economically. Our people, environment, economies, technology, security, culture and history are **interdependent**. *These deep* **connections** *are reflected in our contemporary relationships and those stretching back thousands of years*.

A question is whether Australia and Asia are interdependent or interconnected through linked histories and contemporary realities? Additionally, how is the term 'contemporary realities' defined?

Overall Comment

This cross-curriculum priority has clear links within learning areas of the revised Australian Curriculum. However, a risk remains that engagement with this cross-curriculum priority and additional chances for students to develop knowledge skills and capabilities, values and attitudes to enable young Australians to navigate their world, could end earlier for some students than for others as it is reliant on subject selections in secondary school.

The title of *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* could also benefit from a review to be more contemporary. Perhaps Australia's *Regional Engagement, Australia's Engagement with Asia or Asia-Australia Engagement.*

Sustainability

Introductory description

Overall, the overview is clear about the importance of the cross-curriculum priority. However, strong arguments could be made for more explicit content and links to global climate change.

Most respondents strongly agreed that the overview's intent to develop students' knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to a more sustainable future was met. Recognising interdependent and dynamic systems, respecting the diversity of worldviews, designing sustainable solutions and building the capacity to think and act for a sustainable future are essential concepts. However, an opportunity has been missed in the overview to explicitly mention 'climate change' which is a complex environmental, social and economic challenge for all countries. The primary curriculum makes mention of endangered species, renewable energy and natural disasters but the term climate change is absent.

Explicit links to the topic of climate change are found within the secondary (Years 7 to 10) humanities, geography and science learning areas; however, many of the links are in optional subjects. This piecemeal or fragmented approach does not sufficiently address the challenge at scale. Recent national student demonstrations have shown that this issue is a critical one for students and needs to be tackled on a global scale. Current generations of students are aware that they will need to deal with the environmental consequences of their everyday actions in very different ways than before. It is recommended that the terms 'climate change' be stated in the overview as it is a critical 21st century environmental challenge.

Respondents strongly support the addition of a new category, 'Design' in the revised version. The sustainability curriculum is divided into four categories: Systems, World Views, Design (new) and Futures. Expanding the focus on sustainable design of products, environments and services is strongly supported as it allows students to understand how sustainable design can provide social and economic benefits while protecting health, welfare and reducing environmental impact.

Continuum

The organising ideas reflect the essential knowledge, understandings and skills for the priority, which are embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area as appropriate. Under the revised changes there are now ten 'organising ideas' (previously nine) for sustainability. The revised organising ideas interpret sustainability well beyond the environmental to embrace acting critically and systemically in relation to social, cultural, economic, political and ecological domains. While the inclusion of sustainable design has increased the number of organising ideas, it is a strongly supported addition.

Respondents strongly support the inclusion of organising ideas in content descriptions for humanities and social sciences, science, and technologies and links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and acknowledge that their inclusion adds depth and context to the content of the learning areas. Teachers need guidance on where sustainability

should be integrated into teaching practices, especially in learning areas of subjects where the link is not as clear.

Overall Comment

Teachers generally agreed with the proposed revisions to the sustainability cross-curriculum priority, despite what appears to be unjustified reduction in critical content. Teachers reported that the language has been simplified and the content has greater specificity making it easier to incorporate into units of work across subject areas. Incongruously, several teachers conceptualised sustainability as an environmental issue with strong links to science, highlighting that the link or connections to other learning areas are often not been made. Making these links explicit in learning areas will help teachers embed sustainability in learning areas.

The new design element has been well received and its alignment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals is a strength.