

Dr John White
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

25 May 2012

Dear Dr White

Re: Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Thank you for your inquiry received on 8 May 2012 with requests for additional information on behalf of members of the Standing Committee on:

1. How/has the National Curriculum been developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?
2. How will the new curriculum content include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories and cultural knowledge?
3. How/will the National Curriculum incorporate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages?
4. What English as Second Language/Dialect support materials have been developed by ACARA to complement the National Curriculum and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' linguistic and learning needs?
5. What/is ESL training for teachers required under the National Curriculum?

I provide a summary of information below with further details attached in relation to the additional information sought by members.

1. How/has the National Curriculum been developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

ACARA has worked in collaboration and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities across the scope of Australian Curriculum development in the following ways:

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group was appointed in April 2010. Members were selected for their expertise and experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The group has responsibility for:
 - providing advice to writing teams at defined stages throughout Australian Curriculum development
 - providing advice on the groups or individuals who are to be consulted during the curriculum development process
 - reviewing documentation prepared during the curriculum development process
 - providing advice to the General Manager, Curriculum on the suitability and quality of curriculum documents.

The list of Advisory Group members is provided at **Attachment 1**.

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Senior Project Officer has responsibility for project management of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority, including:
 - chairing and liaising with ACARA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group
 - consulting with state and territory Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies
 - providing guidance across ACARA's Curriculum group about cultural awareness and protocols for consulting and collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - leading teams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers/academics as writers for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority in the development of the Australian Curriculum.
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- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and academics have contributed to development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority (**Attachment 2**), providing advice on its inclusion within the Australian Curriculum learning areas/subjects and in curriculum writing activities
- Face-to-face consultation meetings have been held across Australia specifically focussing on development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority. Invitations were sent to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and community members and extended through State and Territory Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies and Education Authorities. A total of 230 people attended these consultation forums.

Specific processes for collaborating and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been undertaken by ACARA in developing the framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages as part of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, including:

- A forum of experts in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages field was convened in January 2010 to provide advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages as part of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. The forum comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages teachers, community members, linguists, curriculum experts, and curriculum writers.
- Dr Jakelin Troy – from the Ngarigu group of southern NSW, currently Director of Research, Indigenous Social and Cultural Wellbeing at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AITSIS) was appointed to write the sections of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages paper relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages.
- A small expert group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages was established to provide advice to the writers on the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages sections of the initial advice paper, and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages paper.
- Two members from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages expert group were appointed to the overarching Languages Advisory Panel.
- 32 delegates (21% of the total 150 participants) represented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages at the Languages National Forum held on 25 October 2010 to consult on the Initial Advice paper for Languages.
- As part of the public consultation on the draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, written submissions were received from Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander individuals and groups including the Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee. Presentations and consultations were also made through the AITSIS public seminar series which were webcasted around Australia, and the WA State Indigenous Languages Conference in Geraldton.

- As support for writing of the Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages:
 - members of the advisory panel and the writing team have been appointed to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages teachers, community members, linguists, curriculum experts, and curriculum writers
 - a register of interest for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages has been developed so that ACARA can call on specific expertise throughout the development of the Framework.

2. How will the new curriculum content include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories and cultural knowledge?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is a cross-curriculum priority within the Australian Curriculum. Content for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority is embedded in learning area content as appropriate and is guided by the overview, organising ideas and learning area statements for the priority (**Attachment 2**).

Learning area writers are also provided with a sequence of learning for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority. Writers incorporate the priority within both content descriptions and content elaborations.

Inclusivity checks occur at key points during the curriculum development process to ensure that curriculum content addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures has been included appropriately in each learning area/subject and in a way that reflects the overview, organising ideas and learning area statements for the priority (**Attachment 2**).

3. How/will the National Curriculum incorporate local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages?

The development of a framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages is underway as part of the first stage of development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

Programs types to be developed include:

- first language maintenance and development
- second language learning
- language revival (including language revitalisation, language renewal, and language reclamation).

The Framework will elaborate on the program types, content, and achievement standards related to each, as well as the protocols that must be followed in

decision-making in learning and teaching Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages.

There will be some examples of how the Framework is realised in specific languages for each program-type.

Language-specific curriculum development will be undertaken by state/territory jurisdictions in consultation with the relevant communities.

4. What English as Second Language/Dialect support materials have been developed by ACARA to complement the National Curriculum and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' linguistic and learning needs?

In 2011 ACARA published the English as an Additional Language or Dialect: Teacher Resource (http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/EALD_teacher_resource.pdf) to help classroom teachers make the Australian Curriculum accessible for their EAL/D students. The resource draws on but does not replace existing state and territory resources which remain important references for more detailed and specialist information.

The resource includes an overview of the characteristics of students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) and their particular needs; an EAL/D learning progression to help teachers identify the English language levels of their EAL/D students; and general advice for teachers to consider when teaching the Australian Curriculum to EAL/D students. This advice is inclusive of considerations for students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background whose first language is not standard Australian English.

In May 2012 examples of student work that illustrate characteristics of students at each phase on the EAL/D learning progression will be published. This collection contains a small number of work samples from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The collection will be added to as teachers implement the Australian Curriculum.

Annotations to content descriptions in the English, Mathematics, Science and History learning areas will also be published in May. These describe the linguistic and cultural considerations implied by content descriptions and suggest strategies to better enable EAL/D students to access the learning described in the Australian Curriculum. Where necessary, annotations make specific reference to important considerations when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

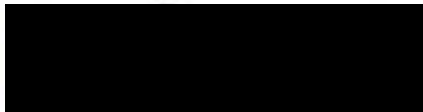
In addition, a key focus of the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages being developed by ACARA is broader literacy development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language is not standard Australian English.

5. What/is ESL training for teachers required under the National Curriculum?

State and territory school authorities are responsible for implementing the Australian Curriculum. As they do now, they will continue to monitor and support the professional learning needs of their teachers and provide specific advice about the assessment of EAL/D students. The needs of teachers in each state and territory will depend on the nature and extent of the differences with their current curriculum offerings. Specialist support teams in each state and territory are best placed to identify these needs.

ACARA's English as an Additional Language or Dialect: Teacher Resource contains advice that trained EAL/D teachers or teachers aspiring to work in the field could reference along with the specialist resources in each state and territory.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Robert Randall.**Robert Randall**

Acting Chief Executive Officer
General Manager, Curriculum
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

Attachment 1

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS
Ms Dyonne Anderson	Principal	Cabbage Tree Islander Primary School Cabbage Tree Island
Professor Peter Buckskin	Dean & Head of School	David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research University of South Australia
Mr Will Davis	Professional Learning Support Teams Coordinator	Stronger Smarter Institute Queensland University of Technology
Ms Michele Hall	Director	Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate NSW Department of Education and Communities
Professor Paul Hughes	Emeritus Professor	University of South Australia
Mrs Judy Ketchell	Principal	Tagai State College Thursday Island
Mrs Dianne Kerr	Curriculum Advisor	Educational Services Australia
Mr John Page	Koori Transition Officer	Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood
Dr Kaye Price	Independent Educator	
Professor Mark Rose	Chair of Indigenous Knowledge Systems	Deakin University
Dr Grace Sarra	Senior Lecturer	Queensland University of Technology
Ms Myra Singh	Lecturer	Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges University of Southern Queensland

Attachment 2

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, rich and diverse. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity is central to this priority and is intrinsically linked to living, learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, deep knowledge traditions and holistic world view.

A conceptual framework based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique sense of Identity has been developed as a structural tool for the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Australian curriculum. This sense of Identity is approached through the interconnected aspects of Country/Place, People and Culture. Embracing these elements enhances all areas of the curriculum.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.



Organising ideas

Code	Organising ideas
Country/Place	
OI.1	Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place throughout all of Australia.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have unique belief systems and are spiritually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
Culture	
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.
OI.6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived in Australia for tens of thousands of years and experiences can be viewed through historical, social and political lenses.
People	
OI.7	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies encompass a diversity of nations across Australia.
OI.8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have sophisticated family and kinship structures.
OI.9	Australia acknowledges the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and globally.

Learning Area Statements

English

The Australian Curriculum: English values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It articulates relevant aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, literatures and literacies.

All students will develop an awareness and appreciation of, and respect for the literature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples including inscriptional and storytelling traditions (oral narrative) as well as contemporary literature. Students will be taught to develop respectful critical understandings of the social, historical and cultural contexts associated with different uses of language and textual features.

Students will be taught that there are many languages and dialects spoken in Australia including Aboriginal English and Yumplatok (Torres Strait Islander Creole) and that these languages may have different writing systems and oral traditions. These languages can be used to enhance enquiry and understanding of English literacy.

Mathematics

The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It provides opportunities for students to appreciate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have sophisticated applications of mathematical concepts.

Students will explore connections between representations of number and pattern and how they relate to aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. They will investigate time, place, relationships and measurement concepts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. Students will deepen their understanding of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through the application and evaluation of statistical data.

Science

The Australian Curriculum: Science values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have longstanding scientific knowledge traditions.

Students will have opportunities to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have developed knowledge about the world through observation, using all the senses; through prediction and hypothesis; through testing (trial and error); and through making generalisations within specific contexts. These scientific methods have been practised and transmitted from one generation to the next. Students will develop an understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have particular ways of knowing the world and continue to be innovative in providing significant contributions to development in science. They will investigate examples of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander science and the ways traditional knowledge and western scientific knowledge can be complementary.

History

The Australian Curriculum: History values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as part of the shared history belonging to all Australians.

Students will examine historical perspectives from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoint. They will learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples prior to colonisation by the British, the ensuing contact and its impacts. They will examine key policies and political movements over the last two centuries. Students will develop an awareness of the significant roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in Australian society.