

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2014-2015

**Agency - Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA)**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0308\_15**

**Senator O'Neill asked on 4 June 2014 , Hansard page 69**

#### Question

##### Benchmarking progress

Senator O'NEILL: So will the funding for doing this—publishing reports et cetera—be diverted from the continuing development of curriculums, or is it embedded as part of the process? Dr Lambert: Exactly. It is incorporated into part of the normal process. Senator O'NEILL: Would it be possible to get an indication of the benchmarking that is complete? Mr Randall: Yes. They are on our website. Senator O'NEILL: Just a list of those. Any access would be really good. And a forward program of what you are anticipating in terms of the rest of the curriculum rollout. Mr Randall: I want to be clear on that so we do not misunderstand that. Our forward program is that we have languages curriculum work being developed. At the moment, in terms of active curriculum development, I think that is all. We are developing some proposals for further senior secondary work, which will have to go to the council. Is that what you mean? Senator O'NEILL: The ones that are already implemented and completed I am sure you are doing some benchmarking with. Basically, I am trying to get a timeline of what is going on with regard to the development and implementation of the curriculum. Mr Randall: Of our activity? Senator O'NEILL: Benchmarking the curriculum and reporting of the same. Mr Randall: Yes, we can. Senator O'NEILL: So a bit of a structure of that.

#### Answer

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has provided the following response:

The following table provides information about the development and endorsement of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum.

Learning areas	Subjects	Endorsement by the council of federal, state and territory education ministers*
English	English	Content descriptions endorsed in December 2010 (with achievement standards endorsed in October 2011).
Mathematics	Mathematics	
Science	Science	
Humanities and social sciences	History	Endorsed in May 2013.
	Geography	
	Economics and business	Awaiting final endorsement. Noted in November 2013 and agreed that curriculum could be made available for state and territory use.
	Civics and citizenship	

The arts	Drama	Endorsed in July 2013, subject to further consultation with Western Australia and agreement of senior officials. This consultation is now completed.
	Dance	
	Media arts	
	Music	
	Visual arts	
Technologies	Design and technologies	Awaiting final endorsement. Noted November 2013 and agreed that curriculum could be made available for state and territory use.
	Digital technologies	
Health and physical education	Health and physical education	
Languages	Chinese (three pathways)	Awaiting final endorsement. Noted in April 2014 and agreed that curriculum could be made available for state and territory use.
	Italian	
	Indonesian	
	French	
	Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Vietnamese	Under development
	Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages	Under development
	Work Studies Year 9-10	Under development. Approved by the ACARA Board for forwarding to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC).

Information about the curriculum development process is available at [http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum\\_design\\_and\\_development.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum_design_and_development.html).

Further work will be undertaken to determine the process and timelines for developing Australian Curriculum in the additional languages of Auslan, Hindi, Turkish, Classical Greek and Latin).

### **Benchmarking and research**

Research and the benchmarking of draft curriculum against that of high performing nations help to ensure that the curriculum being produced is world class. Both research and benchmarking processes are an integral part of ACARA's curriculum development process for each new curriculum.

Research and the benchmarking for each learning area typically involved:

- conducting an environmental scan of existing state, territory and international curricula for the learning area
- mapping the draft curriculum against existing state and territory curricula
- mapping the draft curriculum against international curricula
- identifying and analysing similarities and differences in content coverage and cognitive demand
- making recommendations for change if required.

For some areas a formal national and / or international benchmarking process was undertaken by external consultants. These areas were F-10 English, mathematics, science, history, geography, civics and citizenship, and economics and business.

Examples of published benchmarking work can be found at:

- [\*Comparing Current State and Territory Intended and Enacted Curriculum against the Final Australian Curriculum\*](#) (English, mathematics, science and history)
- [\*Comparing International Curricula against the Australian Curriculum\*](#) (English, mathematics and science)

In other cases the products of the research and benchmarking were unpublished documents that were provided to writing teams and / or advisory groups.

The research and benchmarking process varied across learning areas, particularly in relation to international comparisons. In some cases the nature of the learning area did not lend itself to easy international comparison due to the importance of local and national context such as history. In some newer learning areas such as technologies and health and physical education the research and curriculum base is new and emerging. In comparison, in English and mathematics, there is a much stronger body of research and practice supporting the discipline.

### **Implementation and monitoring**

Decisions about the [\*implementation in schools of the Australian Curriculum\*](#) are made by relevant authorities in each state and territory.

The monitoring and evaluation processes, noted by education ministers in November 2013, have been developed initially for the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. The processes have been designed to be flexible enough to be responsive to educational needs and developments that may arise, whilst providing curriculum stability for schools, the community and education authorities.

[\*Monitoring and evaluation of the Australian Curriculum\*](#) paper describes processes for systematically collecting feedback and analysing data on the effectiveness of the Australian Curriculum and reporting these findings to the ACARA Board in the second half of each year. The ACARA Board will determine if any findings require further evaluation and change. These processes will involve partnerships with state and territory curriculum and school authorities where subject data gathering is required.

In 2014 feedback is being collected about each F-10 curriculum that is available on the Australian Curriculum website. ACARA is focused on monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum and not its implementation.

State and territory authorities have been invited to contribute feedback to the monitoring process, in accordance with their established implementation processes and procedures.

Other sources of data for monitoring purposes includes feedback from stakeholders, feedback buttons on the Australian Curriculum website and through the Scootle Community, media trends, trends emerging from national and international assessment programs, contemporary research in discipline and cross-discipline areas, national and international research and benchmarking reports.

The first monitoring report will be considered by the ACARA Board in October 2014.