

# National Curriculum

## A Resource or a Curriculum for Excellence?

A I S S A



ASSOCIATION *of*  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS *of* SA

Institute of Educational Research  
9 September 2008

# National Perspective on Curriculum

- > National goals for schooling
- > Australian Qualifications Framework
- > National Statements and Profiles
- > National Languages Program
- > Statements of Learning
- > Common five point scale for reporting senior secondary subjects
- > Australian Certificate of Education proposal
- > National Testing Schedule

# National Perspective on Schools

- > Student well being – Drug education, National Safe Schools Framework
- > Teacher professional development
- > Status of teaching
- > School leadership development
- > Quality schools

# Drivers for National Perspective

- > National consistency
- > Efficiency-duplication of effort
- > Mobility
- > Political Motives
- > Accountability
- > Growth of international education
- > National 'conscience' in education
- > State/Territory – National Governments role in education and training
- > National accountability linked to receipt of funding

# Some Key Differences

- > Terminology
- > Assessment and reporting
- > Requirements of certification
- > What is taught in particular subjects
- > How vocational learning is incorporated

# Recent National Developments

Three major projects:

- > Senior Secondary reporting: Common reporting scale and achievement standards
- > Nationally Consistent curricula: Conceptual Framework
- > National Statements of Learning

## Statements of Learning : (e.g. English)

*'...it is not a curriculum in itself. Instead, it contains a series of statements about essential opportunities to learn in this particular domain which education jurisdictions have agreed to implement in their own curriculum documents. As such, this document is primarily intended for curriculum developers. It is not the express intent that the document is promoted directly with teachers or the general community.'*

# Remit Statement

The National Curriculum Board (NCB) remit statement indicates its primary role is to develop a national curriculum that:

- > Sets *core content and achievement standards* that are expected of students at each year of schooling starting with English, mathematics and science and history;
- > Provides *flexibility* for jurisdictions, systems and schools to implement curricula for students to achieve these standards;
- > Establishes the *standards as the basis for the national testing and measurement* program to be agreed by governments, to measure student progress;



## Remit Statement cont.

- > *Broadens options for students* considering different futures, preparing students for further study in all areas of future employment across the trades and technical and professional fields and in new and emerging areas of knowledge; and
- > Ensures that *student achievement is reported on the same scale* and in a similar way nationally.

National curriculum will apply from kindergarten (the year before Year1) to Year 12.

Languages and Geography will constitute the second phase of development.

National curriculum in the four key learning areas will be developed by 2010 and implemented **from** 2011.

# Content and Achievement Standards

NCB publications indicate that the curriculum should make clear to teachers:

- > What has to be taught and to students what they should learn (core content) and
- > The level of knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to achieve at each stage of schooling (achievement standards).

# Key Curriculum Questions

- > What would it mean for curriculum to be 'futures oriented'?
- > How could curriculum take account of the great variation in rates of students' development and still be useful to teachers who work with students group in classes by age?
- > How could national curriculum at primary level best be linked with various system curricula for other learning areas to work in an integrated way across subjects if they wished?
- > What would be the appropriate length and degree of specification for a curriculum document to be useful for teachers?
- > In what ways might curriculum most usefully be described in curriculum documents?

## Key Curriculum Questions cont.

- > How might core curriculum be specified, in what ways should it be referenced to stages of schooling and in what way and to what extent should provision be made for regional and local variation?
- > How could expected achievement standards that take sensible account of the wide variation in student achievement levels?
- > How could acceptance of wide variation be managed so that it does not lead to acceptance of poor achievements and the establishment of low expectations for some students?
- > What cross-curricular competencies and perspectives should be addressed in national curriculum?
- > In what ways might curriculum most usefully be described in curriculum documents?

## Next Key Steps

The immediate next steps in this project include:

- > The preparation of a *position paper* outlining the Board's views on key issues; this paper will be available on-line for wide consultation
- > The preparation of *framing papers* to shape the writing specifications in each Learning Area, including what should be included as core content, trends within the discipline, the organisation of content within the Learning Area across the various phases or years of schooling.
- > Preparation of writing briefs for the curriculum writers
- > On-going consultation

## Some Key Issues

- > Autonomy of Schools
- > Documents for teachers – Level of prescription
  - Content
  - Achievement standards
  - Pedagogy
  - Assessment
- > Critical success factors
- > Relationship to State developed Learning Areas
- > Connectivity to wider policy agenda
- > Teacher PD and resources
- > Leadership and bridging the gap