



Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission

*everyone, everywhere, everyday*

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# Human rights education in the national school Curriculum: Position Paper of the Australian Human Rights Commission

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2 June 2011

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# 1 Introduction

The Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) welcomes the development of a national school curriculum (the Curriculum). We believe that the development of the Curriculum is a unique opportunity to ensure all young Australians develop an understanding and appreciation for human rights.

While the existing draft Curriculum includes some elements that reflect human rights principles and values, it is the Commission's view that this needs to be further strengthened.

This document outlines the Commission's position on why human rights education is an important component of the Curriculum and our suggestions for how human rights education can be further strengthened in the Curriculum.

## 2 Background to the national school curriculum

### 2.1 Who is writing the Curriculum?

In 2008, federal and state and territory governments mandated the drafting of a national school Curriculum for Foundation<sup>1</sup> to Year 12. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was appointed to oversee the development of the Curriculum.

ACARA appoints writers who have expertise in specific areas to draft each learning area. ACARA has adopted a consultative approach to the development of the Curriculum and engages in wide public consultations with the education community (including parents, teachers, principals and professional organisations) and other stakeholders. These consultations take place at several points throughout the drafting of each learning area. All submissions are publically available on their website.

### 2.2 What is the scope of the Curriculum?

The development of the Australian Curriculum is guided by two key documents; the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*.

The Curriculum outlines the content that all students in Australia should be taught. It provides explicit advice on the achievement standards that all students should be meeting. It also provides teachers and parents with a clear understanding of what needs to be covered in each subject at each year level, while giving teachers the

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<sup>1</sup> The term Foundation Year has been used by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority as a nationally consistent term for the year of schooling prior to Year 1 for the purpose of the Australian Curriculum. It does not replace the equivalent terms used in states and territories – Kindergarten (NSW/ACT), Prep (QLD/VIC/TAS), Pre-primary (WA), Reception (SA) and Transition (NT). At <http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum.html#1> (viewed 13 May 2011).

flexibility to shape their classes around the curriculum essentials. The Curriculum does not prescribe how to deliver the content – this remains the responsibility of the relevant state and territory authorities and the schools themselves.

The Curriculum affirms the importance of discipline-based knowledge and skills (learning areas) as well as general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. The general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are integrated into the content descriptions and achievement standards for each subject to ensure they are taught within each learning area. The general capabilities cover seven areas:

- literacy
- numeracy
- information and communication technology competence
- critical and creative thinking
- ethical behaviour
- personal and social competence
- intercultural understanding.

The three cross-curriculum priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- sustainability.

Additionally, the Curriculum aims to cater for the diversity of students and most students with special needs.

### **2.3 What stage is the curriculum development at?**

The Curriculum is being developed in three phases. On 8 December 2010, all Education Ministers endorsed Australia's first national curriculum for the four Phase 1 subjects – English, mathematics, science and history.

The development of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities is underway and consultations are expected to be held on these in June 2011.

The second phase of ACARA's work involves the development of curriculum for languages, geography and the arts. Work on these learning areas has begun and ACARA will be holding consultations on each of these learning areas through 2011.

The third phase will focus on the learning areas of health and physical education, information and communication technology, design and technology, economics, business, and civics and citizenship. It is anticipated that consultations on these areas will take place in 2012.

### 3 What is human rights education?

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that all people are entitled to.

They are rights that we all have whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all related to one another, dependent upon one another and indivisible from one another.<sup>2</sup>

Human rights are closely related to Australian values – values such as justice, equality, a fair go and democracy.

Human rights education aims to build an understanding and appreciation for human rights through learning *about* rights and learning *through* rights.<sup>3</sup> Human rights education is inextricably linked with the pedagogy of teaching. It requires not just imparting knowledge about human rights but also applying a human rights-based pedagogy to ensure young people learn in a rights-respecting environment – an environment that respects their rights and promotes the rights of others.

There are three main elements of human rights education:

- first, the acquisition of knowledge and skills about human rights
- second, the development of respectful values and attitudes and changed behaviour that reflects human rights values, and
- third, the motivation of social action and empowerment of active citizenship to advance respect for the rights of all.<sup>4</sup>

Human rights education encourages using **human rights as a frame of reference in our relationships with others**. It encourages inquiry, forming arguments, deciding, cooperating, evaluating, sharing and living according to values.<sup>5</sup> Human rights

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<sup>2</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948* (at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>); *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966* (at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>); *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966* (at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>)

<sup>3</sup> Julie McLeod and Ruth Reynolds use the term 'peaceful pedagogy' to describe a model for learning about, through and for human rights. Julie McLeod and Ruth Reynolds, *Peaceful Pedagogy: Teaching Human Rights through the Curriculum* (2010). Similar language is used in United Nations General Assembly, *Draft Plan of Action for the First Phase (2005–2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, UN GAOR, 59<sup>th</sup> session, UN Doc A/59/525/Rev.1, 2 March 2005, which sees 'three task fields of human rights education: learning over, by and for human rights'.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Draft plan of action for the second phase (2010-2014) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, A/HRC/15/28, 27 July 2010. At <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/secondphase.htm> (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>5</sup> K Frantzi 'Human Rights Education: The United Nations Endeavour and the Importance of Childhood and Intelligent Sympathy' in *International Education Journal*, Vol 5, No 1 (2004) p 7. At <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v5n1/Frantzi/paper.pdf> (viewed 13 May 2011).

education encourages us to critically examine our own attitudes and behaviours and, ultimately, to transform them in order to advance respect for the rights of all.<sup>6</sup>

## 4 Why is human rights education in the national school Curriculum important?

### 4.1 Positive impact on students and the school environment

Children's attitudes, ideas and characters are formed at a young age and these are heavily influenced by their environment, including their school education. Human rights education in school is an effective means to assist children to incorporate human rights values into their attitudes and behaviours.<sup>7</sup> Assisting young people to incorporate these values into their daily lives is a concrete way to prevent bullying, discrimination and promote inclusion and respect for diversity. Human rights provide a valuable framework for good inter-personal relations and for making informed and proportionate decisions – from the playground to government and public policy, it starts with human rights education in schools.

Research in Australian schools shows that where education around values is embedded in the content and pedagogy of the classroom, there is evidence of improved student engagement with schooling, better learning outcomes, and enhanced social and emotional wellbeing.<sup>8</sup> As a result of values education, schools have reported increased empathy, tolerance and respect, and increased student confidence to address bullying.<sup>9</sup> Schools have also reported a reduction in disciplinary measures, an increase in school attendance, and positive shifts in classroom and playground relationships as well as relationships at home.<sup>10</sup>

In the United Kingdom, UNICEF has been pioneering a program called the 'Rights Respecting Schools Awards' (Program).<sup>11</sup> The Program awards schools that have incorporated the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>12</sup> into their planning, practice

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<sup>6</sup> Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education *Play it Fair: Human Rights Education Resource for Children*, (2008). At <http://equitas.org/en/what-we-do/children-and-youth/play-it-fair-canada/toolkit-download/> (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Frantzi, note 5, p 3.

<sup>8</sup> Education Services Australia, *Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project*, October 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Education Services Australia, *Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project*, October 2010; Department of Education, Science and Training, *National Values Education Forum Report*, April 2004; Australian Curriculum Studies Association, *2007 National Values Education Forum - Values Education in Practice: Making Connections*, May 2007. See also research from primary schools in the United States of America, A Furco, *Unpacking the Nature of Values Education in Primary School Settings* (Speech delivered at the National Values in Education Forum in May 2007) as quoted in J McLeod and R Reynolds 'Exposing Issues: Exploring Values. Education for human rights in the classroom' in C Newell and B Offord *Activating Human Rights in Education: Exploration, Innovation and Transformation* (2008) p 41.

<sup>10</sup> See note 8.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF United Kingdom, at <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/> (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>12</sup> *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, At <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> (viewed 13 May 2011).

and ethos. This includes teaching and learning about the Convention, creating a rights-respecting culture and empowering children to become active citizens. In doing so, it has improved self-esteem, behaviour and relationships; reduced bullying and discrimination; increased discussion and engaged children in planning and reviewing their own learning. Moreover, it has provided schools with a framework of common values.

## **4.2 Creating a human rights respecting culture in Australia**

The Commission believes that creating a society where all human rights are respected and promoted must start with human rights education in school. A 'human rights respecting culture' seeks to embed respect and responsibility for the realisation of rights through all levels of society. Human rights education is about fostering a rights respecting culture – where human rights become integrated in society at many levels, both personal and institutional. It is also about embedding an understanding of human rights and Australian values as a cornerstone of our social fabric and national ethos that informs all aspects of our nation as well as our attitudes and behaviours.

The importance of creating a human rights respecting culture was strongly affirmed in the National Human Rights Consultation where “a considerable number of the submissions the Committee received referred to the need for greater human rights education for the development of a human rights culture in the community”.<sup>13</sup> In particular, participants identified the need to incorporate human rights into the national school Curriculum.<sup>14</sup> In response, Australia’s Human Rights Framework (the Framework) affirms the importance of fostering a rights respecting culture and recognises that “a human rights culture carries with it responsibilities – not just on government, the Parliament, courts and tribunals but on all members of the community – to recognise and respect the human rights of others”.<sup>15</sup> If all members of society feel ownership of rights then rights in general tend to be better protected.<sup>16</sup>

## **4.3 Fulfilling on Australia’s national and international commitments to human rights education**

The delivery of human rights education in schools also fulfils Australia’s international and domestic human rights commitments. At the international level these commitments are detailed in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*,

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<sup>13</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Human Rights Consultation Report* (2009). At [http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/RWPAttach.nsf/VAP/\(4CA02151F94FFB778ADAEC2E6EA8653D\)~NHRC+Report+\(Prelims\).pdf/\\$file/NHRC+Report+\(Prelims\).pdf](http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/RWPAttach.nsf/VAP/(4CA02151F94FFB778ADAEC2E6EA8653D)~NHRC+Report+(Prelims).pdf/$file/NHRC+Report+(Prelims).pdf) (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Allen Consulting Group, *Summary Analysis of Options Identified During the Consultation*, p 3. At [http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/RWPAttach.nsf/VAP/\(4CA02151F94FFB778ADAEC2E6EA8653D\)~NHRC+Report+\(Appendix+D\).pdf/\\$file/NHRC+Report+\(Appendix+D\).pdf](http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/RWPAttach.nsf/VAP/(4CA02151F94FFB778ADAEC2E6EA8653D)~NHRC+Report+(Appendix+D).pdf/$file/NHRC+Report+(Appendix+D).pdf) (viewed 13 May 2011)

<sup>15</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia’s Human Rights Framework*, 21 April 2010, p 4. At <http://www.ag.gov.au/humanrightsframework> (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>16</sup> L Briskman and L Fiske ‘Teaching Human Rights at University: Critical Pedagogy in Action’ in C Newell and B Offord *Activating Human Rights in Education: Exploration, Innovation and Transformation* (2008) p 66.



Article 29 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and Article 13 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

At the national level the Framework affirms the government's commitment to deliver human rights education in primary and secondary schools – “developing an understanding of rights and responsibilities, including human rights, will be an integral part of curriculum development”.<sup>17</sup> The integration of human rights education in the Curriculum is identified in the Framework as a critical opportunity through which this commitment can be achieved.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians reflects the importance of human rights education. Goal 1 of the Declaration commits to promoting equity through schooling. It recognises the importance of ensuring a school environment free from discrimination and the central importance of schooling in contributing towards a socially cohesive society that respect and appreciates cultural, social and religious diversity.<sup>18</sup> Goal 2 of the Declaration commits to ensuring all young Australians become active and informed citizens who act with moral and ethical integrity, appreciate diversity, are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, participate in Australia's civic life and are responsible global and local citizens.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the bi-partisan support for human rights education in Australia, reflected in statements by the Opposition leader, Mr Tony Abbott,<sup>20</sup> and Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training, Mr Christopher Pyne,<sup>21</sup> strengthens the case for the integration of human rights education in the national school Curriculum.

## **5 How should human rights education be integrated into the Curriculum?**

While the draft Curriculum developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) includes some information related to human rights, it is the Commission's view that this needs to be further strengthened.

The Commission believes *that human rights should be a highly visible and cross-cutting element of the Curriculum*. Human rights and Australian values need to be integrated in a meaningful and explicit way throughout the Curriculum and understood as core and cross-cutting ideas which inform all learning areas as well as become embedded in students skills and attitudes.

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<sup>17</sup> Attorney-General's Department, note 15, p.5.

<sup>18</sup> Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians*, December 2008 p 7. At [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf) (viewed 13 May 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, above, p 9.

<sup>20</sup> Abbott, T. 'Message to the University of Western Sydney for the *International Human Rights Education Conference*', November 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Pyne, C, *What government should do to advance a human rights culture*, speech delivered at the University of Western Sydney *International Human Rights Education Conference*, 5 November 2010.



The Commission believes the best way to strengthen the human rights focus of the Curriculum is to ensure all young Australian's gain an understanding and respect for their human rights and responsibilities through the following complimentary approaches. Each of these are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections:

- **inclusion of a specific general capability or cross-curriculum priority focused on human rights and Australian values**

The inclusion of a general capability or a cross-curriculum priority focused on understanding and applying human rights and Australian values will ensure that human rights feature as a visible and central priority of the Curriculum.

A general capability on human rights and Australian values will contribute towards every student gaining the knowledge and skills, as well as developing attitudes and behaviours consistent with human rights and Australian values. This will provide young Australians with the opportunity to integrate human rights values such as respect, acceptance and inclusion into their daily lives.

A cross-curriculum priority on human rights and Australian values will ensure every student understands the historical and contemporary importance of human rights to all aspects of Australia – from our legal and political systems to our national ethos.

- **integration of human rights principles and values in the descriptions of relevant existing general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities**

While the existing draft Curriculum includes some references to principles and values that complement human rights principles and values, it is the Commission's view that human rights needs to be explicitly integrated into existing general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. The integration of human rights into existing relevant general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities will ensure the relevance and importance of human rights to students' learning – both as a body of knowledge and as values and principles to guide attitudes and behaviours – is highlighted throughout the Curriculum.

- **the inclusion of relevant human rights issues and examples in each learning area**

While human rights and Australian values will be touched on in some learning areas including civics and citizenship and history, this alone is insufficient to impart an understanding of human rights and Australian values as a cornerstone of our social fabric and national ethos that informs all aspects of our nation as well as our attitudes and behaviours. It is important that the relevance of human rights and Australian values to all learning areas is reinforced – from using mathematics as a lens to address questions around equity and fairness, to using English to encourage an appreciation of the diversity of cultures in Australia and globally.

In the absence of a specific general capability or cross-curriculum priority focused on human rights, at a very minimum, the Commission believes that a focus on human

rights and Australian values needs to be integrated into existing general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities and across all learning areas. Annex A provides suggestions for how this could be done (based on a submission to ACARA dated 14 February 2011).

## 5.1. What would a general capability on human rights and Australian values look like?

Outlined below is the proposed content for a general capability on human rights and Australian values. It follows the format of the elaborations of the general capabilities drafted by ACARA.

### Human rights and Australian values

**Keywords:** human rights, values, principles, universality, human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, participation, respect, responsibility, inclusivity, difference, perspectives.

<b>Human dignity</b>	Human dignity affirms that all people deserve to be respected simply because they are human beings.  Regardless of age, culture, religion, ethnic origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, ability, social status, civil status or political convictions, <b>all individuals deserve respect.</b>
<b>Universality</b>	Human rights are <b>fundamental rights</b> that belong to <b>every</b> person simply because they are a human being. Human rights are based on the principle that every human being is born equal in dignity and rights. All human rights are equally important and they should not be taken away under any circumstances.
<b>Equality and non-discrimination</b>	Equality affirms that all human beings are born free and equal. Equality presupposes that <b>all individuals have the same rights</b> and deserve the same level of respect. All people have the <b>right to be treated equally</b> . Sometimes it may be necessary to treat people differently to achieve equality. This is because differences between people may make it difficult for them to enjoy their rights without support. For example, everyone may have the right to employment but without accessible transport and facilities for people with physical disabilities, they may not be able to enjoy this right.  <b>Non-discrimination</b> is an integral part of the principle of equality. It ensures that no one is denied their rights because of factors such as age, ethnic origin, sex, etc. The failure to account for differences between people with a view to ensuring that

	everyone is able to enjoy their rights may also be discriminatory.
<b>Respect and responsibility</b>	<p>Human rights entail both <b>rights and obligations</b>.</p> <p><b>Respect</b> is recognising that every person is important and must be treated with dignity. In the context of human rights, respect does not need to be earned; it is the right of every person in all circumstances. It includes recognising and appreciating differences between people.</p> <p><b>Responsibility</b> means that we need to also respect the human rights of others. All people have human rights and we all have a responsibility to respect the rights of others.</p>
<b>Accountability</b>	The government is accountable to all people in Australia as well as the international community through the United Nations human rights system, for ensuring that everyone in Australia is able to enjoy their human rights.
<b>Participation</b>	Everybody has the right to participate fully and on an equal basis with others in all areas of life. Full and equal participation enables everyone to <b>reach their full potential</b> .

## Overview

Human rights and Australian values involve students developing the knowledge and skills, as well attitudes and behaviours of human rights. It includes understanding and applying in all aspects of their lives (including their interactions with others) human rights and Australian values and principles including: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, universality, respect, responsibility and participation. It also includes understanding and respecting the equal value of all people regardless of differences; understanding how to ensure that all people are included and not discriminated against because of differences; how to recognise and address human rights concerns; and generate a desire and capacity to ensure human rights values and principles are upheld throughout society.

Human rights and Australian values incorporate three interrelated elements of learning:

- Understanding human rights principles and recognising human rights violations
- Demonstrating attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with human rights principles
- Skills in recognising human rights in different situations and taking action to address human rights concerns.

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Human rights and Australian values are based on an understanding that there is a gradual development of human rights understanding as students develop their own self awareness, understanding of their relationship to others, society, the world, knowledge of social issues locally, nationally and globally and their cognitive capacities.

**Understanding human rights principles and recognising human rights violations**

Students will gain a sound understanding of core human rights principles and Australian values including: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, universality, respect, responsibility and participation. This involves both an understanding of the concepts as well as understanding of how these should be applied in practice. Students will also be able to recognise violations of these principles and through this gain an appreciation for the value of respecting human rights. For example, what does equality mean in different situations and how do we know that the right to equality has been respected?

**Demonstrating attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with human rights principles**

This involves developing a keen understanding and appreciation for human rights principles such that students reflect human rights values in their attitudes and behaviours. It involves the knowledge and skills to put human rights into practice and an appreciation for the value of doing this. It also involves encouraging students to generate a human rights environment at school. For example, how would you modify a game so that all students are able to participate in a particular game including students with a physical disability and students not fluent in English?

**Skills in recognising human rights in different situations and taking action to address human rights concerns**

Developing the skills to apply human rights in different situations and address problems from a human rights perspective involves being able to understand human rights on a practical level and adopt human rights perspectives and behaviour. It includes analysing a situation from a human rights perspective, identifying what steps one would need to take to ensure that the human rights of all people are respected and taking action to advance human rights. For example, taking steps to address a situation where another child is being bullied because of their disability. Or, taking steps to address a situation where the school captain/student representative for the last five years at your school has been a student from an Anglo background despite the fact the student population has over 50% of students from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

By engaging with the elements of a human rights and Australian values learning sequence, students gain an understanding of the relevance and importance of human rights and Australian values to their everyday lives. They also gain an understanding of how human rights and Australian values relate to interactions with others, as well as to national and world affairs. Students recognise and gain an appreciation for the human rights that they enjoy, and gain an understanding that not everyone enjoys these same rights. Students develop an understanding of their role in respecting human rights and Australian values and the value of contributing towards creating a human rights respecting culture in Australia.

Students identify and investigate human rights dimensions in current and historical issues and events, develop an increasingly complex understanding of human rights principles, recognise human rights violations and build skills, behaviour and attitudes to address human rights concerns and respect human rights in all aspects of their lives and relationships with others.

### **Human rights and Australian values by stage of schooling**

Following is an overview of the key competencies and skills students will gain during each stage of schooling.

#### **End Year 2**

By exploring everyday situations, issues and problems, students develop an understanding of human rights and Australian values and learn to identify how these are relevant in familiar situations and settings. Students learn what 'fairness' means in different situations, what it means to treat someone unequally and why it is wrong, and the importance of inclusion and respect for others regardless of differences such as sex, race or disability. Students learn to recognise situations as human rights violations and identify how a situation would look different if human rights were respected.

Students investigate human rights principles in familiar settings. For example, they explore values such as equality and non-discrimination in the context of the games they play identifying how they could make them more inclusive of everyone.

#### **End Year 6**

Through exploring human rights and Australian values, students learn to apply human rights to different situations related to their lives as well as more complex situations in their community, society and globally. They explore values such as universality (for example they consider when it is ok to curtail particular rights of individuals or groups of individuals, such as prisoners freedom of movement) and explore equality and non-discrimination (for example understanding that equal treatment and equality are not always the same thing such as in situations where it is necessary to put in place affirmative action or quotas to bring about equality between men and women).

#### **End Year 10**

Students explore the nature of different rights and duties/obligations. They develop an understanding of how rights translate into entitlements and obligations.

Students gain an understanding of the origins of human rights, the international instruments and mechanisms through which they are codified and how these have been translated into laws and policies in Australia. They also gain a more nuanced understanding of human rights issues and dilemma's in Australia and globally, and gain the skills to apply human rights principles towards finding a resolution for these problems.

## **5.2. What would a cross-curriculum priority on human rights and Australian values look like?**

Outlined below is the proposed content for a cross-curriculum priority on human rights and Australian values. It follows the format of the elaborations of the cross-curriculum priorities drafted by ACARA.

### **Human rights and Australian values**

The human rights and Australian values priority brings a focus to the core values and principles that underpin an Australian ethos – values such as fairness, equity, justice and democracy are all close equivalents of human rights. An understanding of, and commitment to, these values and the development of the skills to uphold and promote them throughout society provides an opportunity for students in Australia to be active and informed citizens who act with moral and ethical integrity.

This priority is concerned with building a culture of human rights – a culture which respects and appreciates diversity, values everyone as equals, and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

By engaging with the elements of human rights and Australian values learning sequence, students gain an understanding of the relevance and importance of human rights and Australian values to their everyday lives, their interactions with others as well as to national and world affairs. Students recognise and gain an appreciation for the human rights they enjoy and gain an understanding that not everyone enjoys these same rights. Students develop an understanding of their role in respecting human rights and the value of contributing towards creating a human rights respecting culture in Australia.

In the context of increasing diversity within our community these values foster social inclusion and cohesion in the Australian community. Human rights and Australian values develop skills, attitudes and behaviours of students that reflect human rights and Australian values and that promote a fairer, more inclusive and more respectful Australia.

### ***What are human rights and Australian values?***

See table above in Section 5.1 outlining core human rights and Australian values.

**Organising ideas**

Code	Organising idea
<b>Human rights history and Australia</b>	
OI1	The significance of WWII in the development of modern human rights
OI2	Australia’s pivotal role in the development of human rights following WWII
OI3	Milestones in Australia’s human rights history: Indigenous rights movement, women’s rights movement and the civil rights movement
OI4	The close equivalence between human rights and Australian values
<b>Understanding human rights and Australian values</b>	
OI4	Unpacking the meaning of human rights and Australian values
OI5	Developing skills to recognise and promote human rights and Australian values in society and generating attitudes and behaviours which reflect human rights and Australian values
<b>Significance of human rights and Australian values to Australia</b>	
OI6	Recognising human rights dimensions of contemporary local, national, regional and global issues
OI7	The role of human rights and Australian values in creating a culture of respect, inclusion and fairness

**Learning Area Statements (for Phase 1 subjects only)**

**English: Human rights and Australian values**

The Australian Curriculum: English provides students with the skills required to effectively participate in society and to contribute to and promote human rights and Australian values. It encourages an appreciation for Australian culture as well as other cultures through literature and builds understanding and skills among students of their role and potential in contributing to and shaping Australian culture.

**Mathematics: Human rights and Australian values**

The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics provides a lens through which students can address questions around equity, equality and fairness. It can encourage students to use mathematical concepts to understand and address social issues. Students will examine current socio-economic and political



issues from a mathematical perspective learning to apply mathematical concepts to find resolutions which promote equality and fairness.

**History: Human rights and Australian values**

The Australian Curriculum: History provides students with an understanding of the past which lays the foundations for a deeper understanding and appreciation of where we are and how the future can be shaped. To ensure students become active and engaged citizens who value and promote Australian values and human rights they must understand the context within which universally accepted human rights emerged and the contemporary significance of human rights and Australian values. History provides students with an understanding and appreciation for different human experience and perspectives and enriches students’ appreciation of the nature of change. These skills foster inclusivity and respect for difference – key human rights and Australian values.

**Science: Human rights and Australian values**

The Australian Curriculum: Science is a continually evolving body of knowledge and skills that provides students with understandings about the world we live in and the role we play in shaping it. It can encourage critical thinking and an appreciation for different interpretations and opinions. It can also encourage students to consider ethical questions around the use of science and scientific methods.

**5.3. What would human rights and Australian values look like when embedded in a specific learning area?**

Following are suggestions for how human rights and Australian values could be integrated into the Geography curriculum as an example of how human rights and Australian values can be integrated into learning areas. The suggestions are integrated into the format of the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Geography* paper. They are based on the Commission’s submission to ACARA *Human rights in the Australian Curriculum: a guide to integrating human rights in the Geography Curriculum*, 14 February 2011. Suggestions are inserted into the text and highlighted in *italics*.

**Years K – 2                      Examples of possible content**

<b>Conceptual focus</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b><i>Human rights elaborations</i></b>
<b>Geographical knowledge and understanding</b>	Building up students’ geographical vocabulary  Investigating the local area  Learning	Learning about weather and seasons  Investigating the resources of the	Observing how features are arranged in space	<i>Gaining an awareness of the differences in the way people live in the local area</i>

	about more distant places	biophysically environment		
<b>Major concepts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place</li> <li>• Risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order</li> <li>• location</li> </ul>		
<b>Geographical skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observation</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• understanding location, direction and distance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making and using simple plans</li> <li>• using images and globes</li> <li>• locating places visited on an outline map</li> </ul>		

**Years 3 – 4                      Examples of possible content**

<b>Conceptual focus</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Human rights elaborations</b>
<b>Geographical knowledge and understanding</b>	<p>Finding out the location of places that students hear about <i>including in Australia and abroad</i></p> <p>Investigating the population of their place</p> <p>Comparing different places</p>	<p>Investigating how people alter their environment in using its resources</p> <p>Thinking about what it means to use the environment sustainably</p> <p>Investigating how water, wind and rocks shape the land</p>	<p>Explaining why things are located where they are</p>	<p><i>Investigating the differences between people in their community including in terms of cultural and linguistic differences and differences in the socio-economic means of people in their community and the importance of inclusivity</i></p> <p><i>Exploring the different human rights and citizenship opportunities afforded to individuals</i></p>

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				<i>and communities in different places</i>
<b>Major concepts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• space</li> <li>• centrality and remoteness</li> <li>• environment</li> <li>• interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• similarity</li> <li>• diversity</li> <li>• <i>inclusivity</i></li> <li>• time</li> <li>• causation</li> </ul>		
<b>Geographic skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding the way with large-scale maps</li> <li>• using geographical terminology to describe the location and position of places</li> <li>• using atlases and remote sensing images and explore places</li> <li>• measuring distances on a map</li> <li>• making observations and measurements</li> <li>• doing fieldwork</li> </ul>			
<b>Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comparative analysis</li> <li>• locational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local interaction</li> </ul>		

**Years 5 – 6                      Examples of possible content**

<b>Conceptual focus</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Human rights elaborations</b>
<b>Geographical knowledge and understanding</b>	<p>Understanding cultural differences between places and countries</p> <p>Finding out how local community issues are managed</p> <p>Exploring places in the world with similar characteristics to those of the students'</p>	<p>Investigating the local environment</p> <p>Investigating a local environmental project</p> <p>Investigating Australian and world climates and human adaptation to them</p> <p>Studying an extreme environment</p>	<p>Investigating how places are connected to each other</p> <p>Finding out how retailing and transport produce spatial patterns of towns and commercial centres</p>	<p><i>Exploring the differences between different peoples ability to influence their natural and built environment because of factors such as their social and economic status and where they live</i></p> <p><i>Investigating</i></p>

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	own place	Learning about environmental hazards		<i>how some cultures/communities adapt and work with their environment such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</i>  <i>Exploring the different human rights and citizenship opportunities afforded to individuals and communities in different places</i>
<b>Major concepts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• system</li> <li>• spatial distribution</li> <li>• culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation</li> <li>• Perception</li> <li>• evaluation</li> </ul>		
<b>Geographical skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding the way around countries and the world with small-scale maps</li> <li>• mapping land surfaces, human settlement and circulation</li> <li>• using maps to investigate locational and movement patterns</li> <li>• planning geographical inquiries</li> <li>• fieldwork</li> <li>• interviewing</li> <li>• using maps, photographs, statistics and literacy sources</li> <li>• classifying and interpreting data</li> <li>• constructing climate graphs</li> <li>• using aerial photographs and satellite images to identify patterns</li> <li>• interpreting isopleth maps</li> </ul>			
<b>Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spatial interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spatial analysis</li> </ul>		

**Years 7 – 10                      Examples of possible content**

<b>Conceptual focus</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Human rights elaborations</b>
<p><b>Geographical knowledge and understanding</b>  <b>Year 7</b></p>	<p>Investigating the population and community structure of the neighbourhood</p> <p>Comparative analysis of the local place with other local-scale places</p>	<p>Investigating the environmental impact of housing and household consumption</p>	<p>Investigating the places and spaces that students use</p> <p>Investigating online spaces</p>	<p><i>Exploring the responsibility to respect the environment and natural environment in the context of unequal access and enjoyment of resources</i></p> <p><i>Explaining the role of everyone in shaping the natural and built environment around them and the rights and responsibilities which accompany this to bring about a fair and just society and world</i></p> <p><i>Exploring the different human rights and citizenship opportunities afforded to individuals and communities in different places</i></p>
<p><b>Geographical knowledge and</b></p>	<p>Comparative analysis of places and countries;</p>	<p>Understanding and explaining environmental systems and</p>	<p>Investigating topics such as sport, tourism,</p>	<p><i>Exploring concepts of privilege, disadvantage</i></p>

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<p><b>understanding</b> <b>Year 8 and 9</b></p>	<p>deeper study of selected countries</p>	<p>environmental change</p> <p>Exploring the concepts of environment, nature and wilderness</p> <p>Studying world biomes and their ecosystem health</p> <p>Investigating environmental resources and human dependence on them</p> <p>Exploring the perception and use of environmental resources</p> <p>Undertaking an in-depth study of water and one or more other resource</p>	<p>surfing, popular culture, food, retailing, crime and cyberspace</p> <p>Understanding the local economy</p> <p>Explaining the distribution of employment</p> <p>Identifying the effects of changing transport and communication technologies on local economies</p> <p>Explaining population distribution and urban concentration</p> <p>Explaining population mobility and its consequences</p>	<p><i>, equality and discrimination in the context of inequality in access to and distribution of resources and socio-economic rights (for example, comparing the situation of rural and urban communities in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and/or developed and developing countries)</i></p> <p><i>Explaining why people migrate and the rights of migrants and responsibilities of states</i></p> <p><i>Exploring the different human rights and citizenship opportunities afforded to individuals and communities in different places</i></p>
<p><b>Geographical knowledge and understanding</b></p>		<p>Understanding and investigating environmental sustainability</p>	<p>Investigating migrant settlement</p> <p>Explaining the spatial</p>	<p><i>Understanding and investigating how inequality and</i></p>

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<p><b>ng</b> <b>Year 10</b></p>		<p>Undertaking in-depth studies of one or more of climate change, urban environments, forests, land and marine resources</p>	<p>pattern of economic and social wellbeing, and its consequences</p>	<p><i>discrimination contribute to differences in economic and social wellbeing</i></p> <p><i>Explaining the challenges faced by migrants and asylum seekers and responsibilities of the state as well as all society towards migrants</i></p> <p><i>Investigating and explaining the challenges faced by environmental refugees through the study of recent or current movements</i></p> <p><i>Exploring the different human rights and citizenship opportunities afforded to individuals and communities in different places</i></p>
<p><b>Major concepts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scale</li> <li>• behaviour</li> <li>• risk</li> <li>• power</li> <li>• linear and non-linear change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Representation</li> <li>• Time-space compression</li> <li>• Agglomeration and dispersal</li> </ul>		



<b>Geographic skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measuring environmental, demographic, economic and social phenomena</li> <li>• Using maps to develop and test generalisations</li> <li>• Constructing and interpreting mental maps</li> <li>• Constructing, interpreting and analysing graphs and diagrams</li> <li>• Statistical analysis</li> <li>• Using computer mapping software to create statistical and other maps</li> <li>• Interpreting simple remotely sensed images</li> <li>• Understanding a GIS and its uses</li> <li>• Evaluation of information</li> <li>• Reflection</li> </ul>	
<b>Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human agency</li> <li>• Scalar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural/social constructivist</li> </ul>

## 6 What are the next steps?

Since August 2010, the Commission has worked closely with ACARA to strengthen the inclusion of human rights and Australian values in the national school Curriculum (including through co-organising a roundtable discussion and submitting suggestions for how to strengthen the human rights content in specific areas of the Curriculum).

The Commission will continue to work closely with ACARA to ensure human rights is embedded in the general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities and in specific learning areas. The Commission will be submitting recommendations during the consultations on each of these areas and encouraging other relevant stakeholders to do the same.

The Commission will also continue to advocate for the inclusion of a specific general capability or cross-curriculum priority focused on human rights and Australian values.

## 7 Appendix

### ***Strengthening human rights in the Australian Curriculum through the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities***

Submitted to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 14 February 2011

#### **Strengthening human rights in the general capabilities**

While the general capabilities do not explicitly use human rights language, three of the general capabilities closely relate to human rights. These are: ethical behaviour, personal and social competence, and intercultural understanding. These general capabilities focus particularly on attitudes and behaviours and the promotion of common ethics, values and inter-personal relations which contribute towards a human rights respecting culture. These general capabilities aim to instil in students attitudes and behaviours that relate to human rights values and principles including those of equality, non-discrimination, respect, responsibility, human dignity, universality and participation. They do this through integrating explicit and tacit learning of these values throughout the curriculum.

The following are suggestions for how the elaboration of these general capabilities could further reflect the importance of human rights.<sup>22</sup> These suggestions are highlighted in *italics*.

#### **Ethical behaviour**

##### **Overview**

Ethical behaviour involves students understanding and acting in accordance with ethical principles. Ethical behaviour includes identifying right and wrong, recognising the complexity of many ethical issues, and having the determination and capacity to make reasoned moral judgements and argue the case for improvement. It includes understanding the role of ethical principles, values and virtues in human life; acting with moral integrity; acting with regard for others; and having a desire and capacity to work for the common good.

*Human rights are a moral and ethical framework which provide a frame of reference for addressing moral and ethical dilemmas. Human rights have been accepted and adopted by Australia as common values and many of these have been incorporated into Australia's laws and policies. Core human rights principles and values include: human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, universality, respect, responsibility, and participation. When students understand these principles and values they demonstrate these in their attitudes and*

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<sup>22</sup> The following text is extracted from ACARA's 'General capabilities: Advice for writers' dated 3 August 2010.

*behaviours and are able to better engage with ethical and moral dilemmas.*

### **Understanding ethical concepts and recognising the moral domain**

*Suggested insert after paragraph 1:*

*Understanding and addressing dilemma's within the moral domain is assisted by understanding core human rights principles and values and having the skills to apply these to address moral and ethical dilemmas. Students are assisted by understanding how human rights should translate into behaviours, attitudes and actions. For example, should differences between people give rise to different treatment, and if so, in what circumstances?*

### **Knowledge of accepted values and ethical principles**

This refers to knowledge of a range of values commonly accepted in social contexts, while knowledge of ethical principles refers to general normative (e.g. 'should' or 'ought) commitments that form the guiding basis for moral judgement, for example 'act fairly', 'act to maximise the common good' and so on. These principles are in turn often supported by theories such as utilitarianism, but are nevertheless contentious.

*These values and principles can be interpreted and understood using a human rights framework as a particular moral and ethical framework which has been accepted by the international community including Australia and which reflects many universal values.*

### **Engagement in reasoned moral decision-making**

This involves developing tools to engage critically with the ethical and moral domains, including interacting with others.

*Using human rights as an ethical and moral framework, students develop the skills to apply human rights principles including equality, non-discrimination, respect, responsibility and human dignity in all actions as well as interactions with others.*

### **Knowledge of common virtues**

Virtues are character traits that are socially valued. Knowledge of common virtues involves not only engaging with the meaning of specific virtues, but issues associated with the idea of virtues as a way to foster ethical behaviour and respect for human rights.

### **Other suggestions for material to include:**

- Insert after paragraph 6 on page 91: *"The examination of these issues through the stages of schooling also provides students with an understanding of how human rights principles are applied in everyday life and how their application fosters an environment of mutual respect, harmony and dignity for all".*
- End Year 2:  
Paragraph 2: Students investigate accepted values and ethical principles in familiar settings. They explore values such as respect (for example, regard for the truth, respect for other's feelings, *and the importance of inclusion*) and the value of the peaceful resolution of differences. Students investigate issues of ethical principle, such as questions of fairness in terms of equal

sharing, *treating everyone equally* and the importance of rules for conduct. Students become aware of the relevance of a range of values and ethical principles in resolving moral problems.

- End Year 6:

Paragraph 2: Students investigate (accepted) values and ethical *and human rights* principles in more complex settings. They explore values such as respect (for example, by considering the extent to which intention and action should respect the truth), ~~and~~ the peaceful resolution of conflict (for example, the importance of considering everyone’s motives and interests), *and the importance of inclusion and non-discrimination (for example, learning ways to modify an activity so that everyone can participate equally to accommodate differences such as a disability, shyness or a language barrier)*. Students investigate issues of ethical principles, such as the distinction between a rule and a principle and what to do when principles conflict. They also explore principles of fairness (for example, *the problems with an ‘eye for an eye’ or ‘first come, first served’*) and the issues and problems involved in appealing to consequences and duty when making moral decisions in everyday contexts. Students recognise that there are issues and problems in using values and ethical principles to resolve moral problems (e.g. ‘you should always tell the truth’) *and gain skills and judgement about how to apply these ethical principles in a way which respects and furthers human rights values and principles.*

- End Year 10:

Paragraph 2: Students critically investigate accepted values and *ethical and human rights* principles in complex settings *including contexts relevant and close to their lives and experiences*. They explore truth and deception, the relation of truth to human welfare and truth as a means and as an end. Students investigate the role that values, virtues and principles may play in resolving difference, such as in large scale human conflict *and competing rights between individuals or groups of individuals (for example Indigenous Australian communities and mining companies)*. They investigate issues of ethical principle (for example, whether there are cross-cultural principles) and the application of principles of distributive and retributive justice. Students expand their understanding of issues involved in the appeal to consequences (for example, in defining the wider common good *and the application of human rights principles including equality and non-discrimination*) and duties (for example, of citizens, governments and other institutions) to resolve moral problems. Students explore complexities in moral issues and in particular the conflicts that may arise in moral judgments. *They learn to apply human rights values and principles to resolve these.*

**Ethical behaviour continuum by stage of schooling and by element with illustrative examples**

**Element: Understanding ethical concepts and recognising the moral domain**

**End Year 2**

**End Year 6**

**End Year 10**

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<p><b>English:</b> students explore moral problems in fairytales, for example the different meanings of good in ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students identify a time when they felt hurt by the attitudes or behaviour of someone else and a time when they think they may have hurt someone else’s feelings. Students then reflect upon the value of mutual respect, equality, inclusion and other ethical and human rights values.</i></p>	<p><b>English:</b> in small groups, students discuss what they think would be the three most important rules for conducting class discussion. They bring their suggestions back for a class discussion. Are any of these rules moral rules? Why?</p> <p><b>History:</b> <i>Students examine a historical incident involving mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and explore the different ways in which the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not respected.</i></p>	<p><b>English:</b> Students use an appropriate UNICEF 1 minute Youtube video on CROC as a basis for discussion and writing. What happened in the video? What does that mean to you? How do you think these children feel and why do they feel that way? What might be done to improve the situation?</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students watch Youtube video ‘Do the Test’ and then have a class discussion about different perceptions and views relating this to broader social issues around stereotypes and inclusion.</i></p>
<p><b>Element: Knowledge of accepted values, ethical and <i>human rights</i> principles</b></p>		
<p><b>English:</b> using a text such as <i>Herbert and Harry</i> as stimulus, students discuss what causes fights among brothers and sisters or among friends. Students role-play fights, and then role-play alternative responses that could avoid conflict.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students develop a set of rules for the playground which will ensure everyone is included on an equal basis.</i></p>	<p><b>Science:</b> students write a newspaper article on whether a cancer research centre should accept a donation from a tobacco company.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students celebrate an internationally recognised human rights day such as International Human Rights Day on 10 December or International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Harmony Day) on 21 March or International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (White Ribbon Day) on 25 November. Students</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> in groups, students play two employers from the industrial revolution, one advocating for improved conditions for workers and the other not. A student observer acts as a reporter summing up the arguments and drawing conclusions.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students develop a bill of rights for their classroom and the whole school which reflects human rights values and principles and creates a code of conduct for all personal and inter-personal</i></p>

	<p><i>organise an event which enables them to creatively communicate human rights values and principles to the local community – each class could choose a different right and find creative ways of teaching others about this including through posters, plays and testimonies and stories from students and others in the local community.</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students should suggest the rights they think they need in order to live a healthy and full life and then read the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and compare this to their list, differentiating between needs, wants and rights.</i></p>	<p><i>relations.</i></p> <p><b>History:</b> <i>Students examine the issue of compulsory subscription into the army during the Vietnam War in Australia and consider the various human rights dimensions.</i></p> <p><b>Science:</b> <i>Students research the most common infectious diseases globally and analyse which regions of the world are most affected by these. Students should consider questions around inequality in access to medicine and the roles and responsibilities of different actors (such as pharmaceutical companies and government).</i></p>
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**Element: Engagement in reasoned moral decision-making**

<p><b>Mathematics:</b> <i>in groups, students find solutions for problems involving sharing. For example, if there are 4 of us and 3 apples then how could we share the apples fairly?</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students identify an issue (either individually or as a class) in their local community which represents a violation of human rights values and principles and develops and implements a plan of action for addressing this problem.</i></p> <p><b>Mathematics:</b> <i>play</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> <i>students appeal to criteria to make judgments about the acceptability of a range of historical scenarios highlighting the treatment of Aboriginal people.</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students choose two articles from the opinion column in the newspaper addressing the same social issue from different perspectives. Students analyse the different opinions and debates and form a view on the best way to address it based on ethical and human rights principles explaining their</i></p>	<p><b>Mathematics:</b> <i>Students distinguish equality from equity in order to resolve a problem. Eg. Mario and Susan have begun a small business in which Susan invested \$60,000 and Mario \$50,000. Both have worked equally hard and made a profit of \$40,000. As their accountant, decide how the profit should be divided and be prepared to justify your response at your next meeting with them.</i></p> <p><b>Science:</b> <i>students are</i></p>
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<p><i>musical chairs removing a chair after each round. After a few rounds of students being eliminated, all students re-join the game and the teacher instruct the students to find a way to ensure no student is eliminated from the game (i.e. by finding creative ways of sharing the chairs) and continue the game.</i></p>	<p><i>reasoning.</i></p>	<p><i>asked to debate the ethical dimensions in relation to deciding where resources for medical research should be allocated or a user-pays model of provision of healthcare.</i></p> <p><b>History:</b> <i>students debate Australia’s involvement in either WWII or Vietnam war canvassing the different opinions at the time and today about our involvement and the ethical and human rights considerations involved.</i></p>
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**Element: Knowledge of common virtues**

<p><b>English:</b> Students explore virtues and vices in behaviours of characters in stories such as <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i>.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students read nursery rhythms and other texts and identify different ethical and human rights values enshrined in these.</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> Students study totems in Aboriginal life and consider their own totem – explaining what it is, if they have one, or what they would like it to be if they could chose one.</p> <p><b>History:</b> <i>students chose an Australian human rights champion from our past (for example Caroline Chisholm, Jessie Street, Doc Evatt and Eddie Mabo) and research his/her contribution to the recognition and protection of human rights in Australia.</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> students write a play exploring whether Ned Kelly was a hero or villain</p> <p><b>History:</b> <i>students read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and analyse whether the rights have the same meaning today as they did when it was drafted and if human rights have improved or regressed in Australia since it was drafted.</i></p>
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<p><b>Personal and Social Competence</b></p>
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Suggested insert after paragraph 1:</p> <p><i>It is important that the learning environment and pedagogy used in schools reflects</i></p>



*and emulates the values that students are being taught. Students develop personal and social competence by learning about values, through applying values and by exploring alternative actions and interactions that reflect the values. Maximum learning is facilitated through the use of contexts for values teaching which are derived from the lived experiences of the students.<sup>23</sup>*

Suggested insert after paragraph 2:

*It also contributes towards building a human rights respecting school environment and society.*

**Social awareness** (page 107)

Social or relational awareness entails students perceiving and understanding other people’s emotions and viewpoints and showing understanding and empathy for others. It also includes appreciating and understanding what others are feeling, being able to take their perspective and interacting positively with diverse groups. Social awareness involves being able to interpret and understand others perspectives, emotional states and needs, which results in inclusive interactions and respect for individuals and group differences. It also involves identifying the strengths of team members, *appreciating and valuing differences* and defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Ideally this will result in a desire to be of service to others *and to respect the principles of inclusivity, equality and non-discrimination*. In summary, social awareness primarily consists of the following skills and abilities:

- Empathy
- Appreciation of the perspectives of others (*respect and responsibility*)
- Service to others
- Understanding relationships
- *Valuing differences and inclusivity*

**Personal and social competence continuum by element with illustrative examples**

**Element: Social awareness**

End Year 2	End Year 6	End Year 10
<p><b>English:</b> How families commemorate past events that are important to them.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>research the number of different languages that students in your class or school speak and do a collage of ‘hello’</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Australian nation.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students are asked to spend a day at school ‘putting themselves in someone else’s shoes’</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> significant social movement and changes concerning women, migration, religion, land rights and the environment.</p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students are asked to review</i></p>

<sup>23</sup> J. McLeod and R. Reynolds, ‘Exposing Issues: Exploring Values. Education for human rights in the classroom’ in C. Newell and B. Offord (eds) *Activating Human Rights in Education: Exploration, Innovation and Transformation* (2008), p 43.

<p><i>in each of the languages</i></p>	<p><i>reflecting and recording the challenges that particular groups of people face on an everyday level such as people with a disability or people not fluent in English. They are then asked to reflect on if these groups also face these same or different challenges within the school and classroom (including in terms of their ability to participate in all school activities, social exclusion and bullying) and develop steps for addressing this (for example re-designing activities to ensure they are inclusive, putting in place school or classroom policies, and educating other students about respect for difference).</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>students write a play about bullying and how it can be addressed</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students develop a charter of students rights and responsibilities for their school</i></p>	<p><i>newspaper commentary on a current political issue in debate in Australia such as asylum seekers or same-sex marriage and develop an understanding of the many different arguments in the debate. Students are then asked to research international human rights law on the issue and apply human rights values and principles to understand and propose a solution for the problem from a human rights perspective.</i></p>
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**Intercultural Understanding**

**Social Learning Element  
 Responsibility**

Students accept responsibility for their interactions with others, within and across cultures. They build a sense of their own cultural identity and insight into the cultural values that underpin Australian society (*such as fairness, equality, non-discrimination and inclusivity*) to become responsible local and global citizens. *They develop an appreciation for the differences between cultures and benefits of interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. They also develop an understanding of the commonalities between the underlying values across all cultures including common human rights values.* They use intercultural understanding to contribute to and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous

and non-Indigenous peoples.		
<b>Intercultural understanding continuum by stage of schooling and element with illustrative examples</b>		
<b>Element: Social Learning</b>		
<b>End Year 2</b>	<b>End Year 6</b>	<b>End Year 10</b>
<p><b>Science:</b> <i>people from a range of cultures have knowledge that relates to science (e.g. researching traditional bush food and natural remedies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and where they are found</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>find out about the significant days of another cultural groups in your school and lead your classes celebration of these days (for example, Eid and Chinese New Year)</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students read the fairytales or folklore from other cultures to gain an appreciation for the differences and similarities between the ethical and human rights principles within different cultures.</i></p>	<p><b>History:</b> <i>identify points of view, perspectives, values and attitudes in historical sources (viewing past events from more than one perspective e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and white settler attitudes to natural environment).</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students interview other students or people in their local community from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as conduct other research to gain an understanding and appreciation for the differences and commonalities between cultures and then present this to their class. This exercise could be designed to coincide with National Harmony Day (21 March).</i></p>	<p><b>English:</b> <i>Analyse embedded perspectives in a text to identify the author’s beliefs, assumptions and motives.</i></p> <p><b>English:</b> <i>Students identify instances of stereotyping in the media, in a text currently being examined in English, or a historical event, and reflect and report on the impact of this stereotyping for the individual/group being stereotyped as well as the broader community.</i></p>

### **Strengthening human rights in the cross-curriculum priorities**

Similar to the general capabilities, the cross-curriculum priorities are embedded throughout the Curriculum learning areas. They support the relevance of the learning content to students’ lives and address contemporary issues.

The cross-curriculum area relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, directly reflects a focus on human rights through instilling an appreciation of the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history to contemporary Australia. Furthermore, the cross-curriculum priority relating to Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia incorporates a respect for the diversity of people and thus also reflects a human rights focus.

Following are suggestions for how the elaboration of all the cross-curriculum priorities could further reflect the importance of human rights.

Suggested insertions to the overview of each cross-curriculum priority are highlighted in grey shade (Found at: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities> as at 24 January 2011)

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority encompasses the concepts of Country and Place, People, Culture and Identity. These are interconnected and cannot be separated as each relies on the other.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priority involves students actively engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures and the principles and virtues that are deeply embedded within these communities. These principles include caring for Country, caring for each other and respecting the systems embedded in the concepts of Country and Place, People, Culture and Identity, including the links and lessons from the past. The priority provides opportunities for learners to understand the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before colonisation and investigate the shared histories and resulting relationships since colonisation. *The priority also enables an understanding of the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders today (including socio-economic disadvantage and persistent discrimination) and the role of past and present policies and actions in shaping this.*

Students will be able to deepen knowledge of their country and to appreciate the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australia. The priority involves understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of interpreting and being in the world and appreciating that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are intrinsically linked to living and learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

#### **Illustrative examples**

**End Year 2:** *Students learn about the concept of 'caring for country' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the value of this.*

**End Year 6:** *Students examine the right to equality and equal participation in public life and track the historical and contemporary enjoyment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of these rights including the 1967 referendum, the stolen generation, and the present lack of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in politics.*

**End Year 10:** *Students examine in depth a particular human right which they are interested in (for example the right to health, education or political participation) and explore in depth the historic and contemporary enjoyment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of this right including through using primary and secondary sources.*

### **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**

The Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority provides a regional context for learning in all areas of the curriculum. This understanding underpins the capacity of Australian students to be active and informed citizens working together

to build harmonious local, regional and global communities, and build Australia's social, intellectual and creative capital.

This priority is concerned with Asia literacy for all Australian students. Asia literacy develops knowledge, skills and understanding about the histories, geographies, cultures, arts, literatures and languages of the diverse countries of our region. It fosters social inclusion in the Australian community. It enables students to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia *based on principles of respect and equality*, so they can effectively live, work and learn *in Australia and the region*. Australia now has extensive engagement with Asia in areas such as trade, investment, immigration, tourism, education and humanitarian assistance and these are vital to the prosperity of all Australians.

### **Illustrative examples**

***End Year 2:*** Students learn about and celebrate a day of significance to an Asian culture (for example the new year dates and celebrations of different Asian cultures).

***End Year 6:*** Students are tasked to identify the various influences of Asian culture on Australian culture (for example, consumables, cuisine, sports, medicine and films) and reflect on the value of this to Australia and everyone in Australia.

***End Year 10:*** Students write a short article on their vision of what Australia's engagement with Asia and Asian cultures will look like in 20 years and how Australia can best foster a relationship based on mutual understanding and appreciation.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is concerned with the ongoing capacity of the Earth to maintain life.

Actions to improve sustainability aim to reduce our ecological footprint while simultaneously supporting a quality of life that is valued—the 'liveability' of our society. Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability is both an individual and a collective endeavour often shared across communities and nations necessitating a balanced but different approach to the ways humans have interacted with each other and with their biophysical environment.

Sustainability learning draws on and relates learning across the curriculum. It leads to students developing an overall capacity to contribute to a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations. *It also leads students to recognise issues around the inequality of access to and distribution of resources and generate a sense of responsibility to preserve and share the environment and resources with others.*

### **Illustrative examples**

***End Year 2:*** Students plant a vegetable garden at school and donate the produce to a local 'soup kitchen' or other charitable organisation.

***End Year 6:*** Students are tasked to identify the ethical and human rights responsibilities attached to use of natural resources through an analysis of inequality in access and distribution of resources in Australia. Students discuss issues such as the water usage by farmers along the Murray-Darling river, water

*restrictions on households and business, and the role of the individual in addressing climate change.*

***End Year 10:*** *Students examine the inequality in access to and enjoyment of basic resources (which are also basic human rights such as the right to food) between people in developed and developing countries and reflect on what Australia's role as a developed country should be in promoting equality of access and enjoyment of these rights.*