

Queensland response to the draft Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priorities

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Introduction

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), in partnership with Education Queensland (EQ), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft cross-curriculum priorities. Queensland supports the development of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

This response is a summary of the collated Queensland feedback from:

- representative curriculum and learning area committees of the QSA
- professional associations
- representatives of the three school sectors, representing and advocating for 1400 EQ schools, 290 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Queensland's consultation identified strengths and a range of issues and concerns for ACARA's consideration when redrafting the cross-curriculum priorities.

This response is organised in the following way:

- an overview of the key strengths, issues and concerns
- an analysis of the key issues and concerns with suggested ways forward
- an analysis of specific details about each of the three cross-curriculum priorities and a way forward for each identified issue and concern.

Key strengths

The QSA, EQ, QCEC and ISQ agree that the draft cross-curriculum priorities show the following strengths.

- The cross-curriculum priorities are strongly aligned to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). They foreground key attributes of active and informed citizenship that will ensure young Queenslanders are well prepared for their future life roles.
- The online features of the Australian Curriculum website clearly tag cross-curriculum priorities to content descriptions in Phase 1 learning areas, enabling teachers and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to explore these contexts. In some Phase 1 learning areas, topics or texts provide for deeper learning in these priorities.
- Queensland educators have an existing awareness of the three priorities.
- The three-level structure of the priorities — global, regional and local — is supported by Queensland educators.
- Benefits for teachers and curriculum officers who support schools include:
 - broad descriptions that provide flexible approaches to their implementation across the curriculum as well as in a particular learning area
 - a limited number of organising ideas that capture key ideas and enable a range of interpretations that can be contextualised to a particular learning area.

Key issues and concerns

The following general key issues and concerns have been identified for consideration in the redrafting of the cross-curriculum priorities:

- the nature of the cross-curriculum priorities
- opening and learning area statements
- the organising ideas
- the regional context — Asia and the Pacific
- the relationship between the cross-curriculum priorities and the content descriptions
- resourcing
- special education considerations
- senior years of schooling.

Analysis of key issues and concerns

1. The nature of the cross-curriculum priorities

1.1 Representation of priorities

Queensland educators are concerned about how the cross-curriculum priorities are represented. There is agreement that all are important and deserving of prioritisation. However, the priorities, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sit mainly in the elaborations rather than in the content descriptions.

The representation of the priorities is disjointed across the learning areas and phases of learning. They are not across the curriculum or across the phases equally. As a result, it is likely that these priorities in their current form will not gain traction.

Way forward

- Provide a framework that links the cross-curriculum priorities to the learning areas and phases.
- Ensure the priorities are obvious within content descriptions, where appropriate.
- Provide greater clarity regarding how the priorities are embedded across the curriculum.

1.2 Juncture advice

The cross-curriculum priorities have no juncture or phase advice for teachers, making it challenging to implement. Primary teachers especially would appreciate such advice. Because the general capabilities have advice for teachers at junctures, there is a common view that this reflects they are of higher importance than the priorities.

Way forward

- Provide juncture advice for teachers.
- Explain how each priority is to be prioritised in each phase within each learning area.

1.3 Relationship with the general capabilities

As mentioned in Queensland's response to the draft Australian Curriculum general capabilities, there is continuing concern about the two groupings of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities and their impact on teacher planning, especially in primary and special education settings. There are also obvious curriculum connections between these two groupings which demand further layers of interpretation and application for teachers.

It needs to be made clear how the cross-curriculum priorities link with the general capabilities to support teachers in meeting the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration*.

Way forward

- Explain the relationship between the cross-curriculum priorities and the general capabilities.
- Consider creating a diagram to describe this interrelationship, and the connection to the various learning areas.

2. Opening and learning area statements

2.1 Structure of the opening statements

The opening statements lack an obvious structure that includes the “what” and the “why” of the cross-curriculum priorities. The language of the priorities is very broad and needs some consistency. Where the priorities have a close relationship with the learning areas, this should be clearly explained and relationships with the learning areas should not be forced.

Way forward

- Make clearer the structure of the opening statements and their links to the learning areas.

2.2 Learning area statements and the phases of learning

The text that describes each cross-curriculum priority’s alignment to the learning areas is positioned more towards the secondary phase of learning. The way in which the learning area statements are written uses terminology and approaches that align more closely to secondary schooling and may not provide clear messages to primary and early years teachers.

Way forward

- Consider writing learning area paragraphs within the organising ideas that connect each priority to F–2, Years 3–6 and Years 7–10 phases of learning.

3. The organising ideas

3.1 Links between organising ideas and content descriptions

The organising ideas are not tracked through to the content descriptions. In many instances, it is difficult to ascertain where the links between some organising ideas and the content descriptions exist. Similarly, it is difficult to see an alignment between many organising ideas and the elaborations. It is also difficult to discern whether the organising ideas serve any real ongoing purpose for teachers or if they act as a framework for writers.

Way forward

- Identify and map how the organising ideas are linked to the content descriptions.

3.2 Rationale for the codes

There seems to be no rationale for the codes associated with the organising ideas.

Way forward

- Provide a rationale for the codes.

3.3 Terminology

Some of the organising ideas include phrases that require clarification, explanation or exemplification, e.g. in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures:

- “special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place” (OI.2)
- “unique belief systems” (OI.3)

Way forward

- Provide a glossary or similar to explain specific terms.

4. The regional context — Asia and the Pacific

4.1 *Acknowledge the Pacific region*

Queensland favours an Asia–Pacific cross-curriculum priority. It is acknowledged that other states may not see the Pacific Islands as a regional priority for geographic reasons or as an economic priority due to the islands not having the “power and influence” of large Asian nations. The Pacific Islands, however, have been and will continue to be an active part of Australia’s regional community with shared engagement in trade, investment, tourism, education and humanitarian assistance.

Way forward

- Adjust the context from “Asia” to “Asia–Pacific”.

5. The relationship between the cross-curriculum priorities and the content descriptions

5.1 *Concept of “embedded” is unclear*

Educators are informed that the cross-curriculum priorities are “explicitly included” or “embedded” in the curriculum through the elaborations. It is extremely difficult to see this embedding in the content descriptions in most cases. In many instances, the elaborations do not clearly reflect the priority or the organising ideas either. Refer to Appendix A for examples of where priorities are tagged to content descriptions and given an elaboration to justify tagging. These examples reflect questionable tagging or embedding.

Way forward

- Ensure all elaborations that are intended to connect a cross-curriculum priority with a content description are transparent.

5.2 *Tagging the content descriptions*

The tagging of the content descriptions to a cross-curriculum priority should be accompanied with a link to an organising idea or sub-concept of the organising idea.

Way forward

- Provide an organising idea or sub-concept of an organising idea when tagging content descriptions. Tagging content descriptions to the priorities should not be forced or tokenistic.

6. Resourcing

6.1 Need for resource support

While the three cross-curriculum priorities are identified, there is minimal information that supports teachers to make them priorities. There are no descriptions or continua to indicate how each priority should be featured at a juncture level.

Identifying appropriate curriculum resources to support teaching of the cross-curriculum priorities in Foundation to Year 12, across all learning areas, is an emerging issue. Culturally appropriate resources will be critical to successful teaching of the local and regional priorities, for example resources to support the teaching of the Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia priority in Mathematics and Science are hard to locate.

Generalist teachers and teachers who have not engaged with the cross-curriculum priorities in all learning areas may need more assistance with teaching and learning ideas, identifying subject matter, identifying culturally appropriate resources and assessment of the priorities as part of the learning areas.

Way forward

- Consider developing glossaries, statements of protocol, a continuum of learning, mapping that connects learning area content to the organising ideas, work samples, resource banks, and hyperlinks to relevant resources for the cross-curriculum priorities.
- Write further explanations in relation to the conceptual statements for teachers in all phases of learning.

7. Special education considerations

7.1 Bolt on or in-built

There is a concern that there is a “bolt-on” approach to considering the needs of special education students through the learning area content descriptions, the general capabilities and the cross-curriculum priorities. This is not in keeping with Goal 1 of the *Melbourne Declaration*.

No information is provided as to how the cross-curriculum priorities may be considered by educators when planning for students with special education needs.

Way forward

- Provide information that assists educators to support students with special education needs.

8. Senior years of schooling

8.1 Lack of information about the senior years of schooling

There is a lack of information in relation to the cross-curriculum priorities and the senior years of schooling, beyond Year 10.

Way forward

- Provide statements indicating the intent to include the priorities up to and inclusive of the senior years of schooling.

Analysis of the cross-curriculum priorities

Opening statement

Strengths

- The opening statement:
 - is brief
 - links to the *Melbourne Declaration*
 - identifies the three cross-curriculum priorities
 - reaffirms that they are embedded in the learning areas
 - explains the tagging process
 - introduces the purpose of the elaborations
 - offers links to Phase 1 learning areas.

Issues and Concerns

- The opening statement states that “the curriculum gives special attention to these three priorities”. While it is agreed that the cross-curriculum priorities receive extra attention, it is debatable that they receive “special attention”, especially when compared to the general capabilities, which provide juncture advice. A common view is that teachers will have to do a lot of work beyond the brief and generic advice provided by ACARA to ensure the priorities are given special attention.
- There is no reference in the opening statement to each of the three cross-curriculum priorities being aligned to a global, regional and local perspective.
- The use of the phrase “embedded in all learning areas” is problematic. A search of the links between the cross-curriculum priorities and the content descriptions reveals a lack of consistent embedding across the learning areas and phases of learning. It is more appropriate to say the priorities “relate” to the learning areas in varying degrees.
- The opening sentence refers to the “skills, knowledge and understanding” of the Australian Curriculum. The fourth paragraph refers to the “knowledge, understanding and skills of the cross-curriculum priorities”. The following needs to be considered:
 - the reasons for reordering these aspects of the curriculum
 - how the “knowledge, understanding and skills” of the content descriptions are different from the “knowledge, understanding and skills” of the cross-curriculum priorities.
- The idea that one format and one set of information is applicable to the needs of all audiences is disputed. It is concerning that the story of the development of each of these cross-curriculum priorities is held by so few. A stronger rationale that connects to broader education policy goals, current research and a curriculum framework would provide more direction to curriculum officers and educators.

* No term or heading, e.g. “introduction” or “overview”, is used in the cross-curriculum priorities to indicate introductory information. For the purposes of collating feedback on the initial information provided about the priorities, “opening statement” is used.

- The cross-curriculum priorities present different and conflicting challenges to educators. Challenges include:
 - broad descriptions that do not connect with all learning areas, and favour humanities and social sciences, English, languages and the arts
 - organising ideas that do not identify strongly with all learning areas, that is, there is limited connection with technology, health and physical education, science and mathematics
 - opportunities for repetition or omission of content as no scope and sequence exists.
- The online mapping tool for Phase 1 of the Australian Curriculum shows uneven representation of the cross-curriculum priorities in the learning areas. For example, in Science:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures does not appear evenly in all Science strands; it appears twice in Science Understanding, ten times in Science as a Human Endeavour and not at all in Science Inquiry Skills or in Years 9 and 10
 - Sustainability is evident in fifty-six content descriptions, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia is present in seven content descriptions, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures occurs in twelve content descriptions.

While this is acknowledged by ACARA, the nature of the cross-curriculum priorities implies a greater evenness across the curriculum.

- The organising ideas within the cross-curriculum priorities may not be helpful to all groups working with the Australian Curriculum. For example:
 - writers and members of ACARA advisory committees need comprehensive information about how the priorities relate to each learning area
 - curriculum officers implementing the Australian Curriculum need to see how the priorities are developed within and across the learning areas over Foundation to Year 12, particularly how repetition is avoided and learning opportunities accentuated
 - developers of resource materials for the Australian Curriculum need to see how the priorities are scoped within and across the learning areas over Foundation to Year 12
 - schools with a whole school approach to one of these priorities need to see how the priority is developed within and across the learning areas over Foundation to Year 12, particularly over the phased implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
- If these priorities are to be cross-curricular they must connect explicitly with all learning areas in all phases.

A way forward

- Clarify how the curriculum gives “special attention” to the cross-curriculum priorities, especially in comparison to the general capabilities.
- Explain the global, regional and local orientations of the priorities in the opening statements.
- Reconsider the use of the term “embedded” and its generic meaning.
- Ensure the use of the terminology “knowledge, understanding and skills” is used consistently; otherwise explain the differences in use.
- Consider the evenness of distribution of the priorities across the learning areas and phases of learning.
- Reconsider the different groupings of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities including how they are presented, resourced and likely to be interpreted across the curriculum and across the phases of learning.
- Consider how curriculum advisers will use the opening and learning area statements, and the organising ideas, to further support teachers across the phases of learning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Strengths

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is a deserving priority in Australian education.
- This priority has a strong connection with the History learning area, which includes a depth study in Year 10.
- This priority can be closely linked to the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have well-established practices for sustainability.
- The expectation that students will study literature by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers is supported.

Issues and concerns

Opening statement

- The opening statement is philosophically rich but may be misinterpreted by readers. A common view of Queensland educators is that there is not enough detail for it to be easily understood by all. For example, there is not an existing common interpretation of “deep knowledge traditions” and “Country/Place” held by educators.
- There is no mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being the first Australians or original custodians.
- The framework diagram is supported in intent. However, there needs to be more information to explain the diagram components, for example:
 - How Living communities overlap the three elements of Country/Place, Culture and People
 - How Living communities are embedded in the organising ideas
 - How Identity connects to the three elements
 - How Identity is embedded in the organising ideas.

- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators have questioned the diagram for its cartoon style design.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures could be described in the global context of indigenous cultures to develop understandings of the shared features of indigeneity.

Organising ideas

- Some phrases require further explanation to ensure teacher understanding, e.g. “Country/Place”, “unique belief systems”, “ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing”.
- It is difficult to track how the organising ideas are connected to the learning areas, i.e. how they are “embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area”. In many instances there seems to be little flow through to the learning areas, especially in the early years.
- All organising ideas have an obvious knowledge or understanding orientation. The skills are not easily identifiable.
- Wording refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander “communities” (OI.2) and “societies” (OI.4). Are these terms interchangeable?

Learning area statement — English

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- The text specific to English has minimal links to the organising ideas.
- Review the use of the term “Aboriginal English” as it is too general and does not reflect the diversity and range of language difference. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples speak contact language varieties that are distinct languages, termed as “creoles”, such as Torres Strait Creole, Kriol or Yarric Lingo. It is suggested that an explanatory term such as “contact language varieties” be used, and followed by some examples (Aboriginal English, Torres Strait Creole).
- Only one content description in English (Year 8 Literature: Literature and context) explicitly uses the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander”. A few descriptions use the term “culture”. This does not reflect a commitment to the priority.

Learning area statement — Mathematics

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- The first paragraph mentions “sophisticated applications” yet these are not explained or followed through to the content descriptions and are not clearly evident in the elaborations.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the statement “Students will deepen their understanding of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through the application and evaluation of statistical data” from the perspective of ownership of and ethical interpretation of data. Historically such data may not present balanced perspectives. Such an example in the learning statement seemed unnecessary.
- A list of topics is included which have little connection to the framework and organising ideas.
- No content description in Mathematics explicitly uses the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander”. This does not reflect a commitment to the priority.

Learning area statement — Science

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- The statement:
 - identifies “longstanding scientific knowledge traditions” yet these are not included in the content descriptions
 - refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander processes and methods, yet no Science Inquiry Skills are tagged as linking to this priority. Why is there such an obvious disconnect?
- In the elaborations, there are only two references to this priority in the Science Understanding strand and ten references in the Science as Human Endeavour strand.
- No content description in Science explicitly uses the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander”. A few descriptions use the term “culture”. This does not reflect a commitment to the priority.
- There is no tag to science learning in Years 9 and 10.
- Most Australians, including teachers, have very little knowledge of the real depth of scientific understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Learning area statement — History

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- Teachers need to be supported more by explicitly linking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures to the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand of the History curriculum.
- The effective integration of this cross-curriculum priority in the subject of History will be dependent on the availability and selection of appropriate resources.

A way forward

Opening statement

- Provide more detail and explanation, especially in relation to the framework and diagram.
- Add the word “resilient” in the opening sentence so that it reads: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong and *resilient*, rich and diverse.”
- Ensure a more even representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures across the learning areas if it is to be a cross-curriculum priority.
- Ensure the priority is evident in each phase of learning authentically.
- Consider including the following:
 - An understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures underpins the capacity of Australian students to be active and informed citizens working to build harmonious local, regional and global communities, and build Australia’s social, intellectual and creative capital.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is concerned with:
 - developing knowledge, skills and understanding about Australia’s history, cultures, arts, literature and languages
 - fostering social inclusion in the Australian community
 - developing communication skills that reflect cultural awareness and intercultural understanding.
- Consider the terminology “first Australians” or “original custodians” when introducing this priority.

A way forward

- Consider links to global indigenous cultures.
- Seek affirmation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that the diagram is appropriate.

Organising ideas

- Develop a stronger alignment between the framework elements, organising ideas and each of the learning area statements. This should follow through to the content descriptions. Provide a tool to reveal that alignment.
- Edit OI.9 so that it reads: “Australia acknowledges the significant *contemporary* contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and globally.”
- Create resources to explain the elements of the framework and the main concepts within the organising ideas. Statements of protocols for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority should also be made available.
- Include a skills orientation within the organising ideas.
- Explain the reasons for the difference between “communities” (OI.2) and “societies” (OI.4).

Learning statements

English

- Describe the relationship between the priority and English in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas, the elements of the framework and the concepts within the learning area.
- Reconsider the use of the term “Aboriginal English”. Replace it with “contact language varieties” and follow with some examples, e.g. Aboriginal English, Torres Strait Creole.
- Provide clearer links (and tagging) to the content descriptions in all phases.
- Ensure elaborations are not tokenistic and reflect the intent of the organising ideas.
- Use the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” in specific content descriptions, where appropriate.

Mathematics

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Mathematics in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas, the elements of the framework and the concepts within the learning area.
- Provide clearer links (and tagging) to the content descriptions in all phases.
- Explain or exemplify “sophisticated applications”.
- Use the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” in specific content descriptions, where appropriate.

Science

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Science in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas, the elements of the framework and the concepts within the learning area.
- Provide clearer links (and tagging) to the content descriptions in all phases.
- Rewrite the sentence in the first paragraph so that it reads: “It acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have longstanding scientific knowledge traditions *and practices*.”
- Reconsider the need for the example mentioning “statistical data” within the learning statement.
- Use the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” in specific content descriptions, where appropriate.
- Tag science inquiry skills that relate to the processes described in the learning area statement.
- Reconsider the content descriptions in Years 9 and 10 and how they relate to this priority.

A way forward

- Create or link to resources to support teacher understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scientific knowledge and processes.

History

- Describe the relationship between the priority and History in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas, the elements of the framework and the concepts within the learning area.
- Provide clearer links (and tagging) to the content descriptions in all phases.
- Reconsider the first sentence in the History section, which currently reads:
“The Australian Curriculum: history values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as part of the shared history belonging to all Australians.”

The word “celebrated” in this sentence should be replaced with a more respectful term, for example “acknowledged”. References to “celebrated” and “ensuing contact” in the learning area statement glide over critical periods of history from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspective. All students should develop an understanding of the history of colonisation, settlement, frontier conflict, and migration to Australia and how this has influenced contemporary Australian society.

Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia

Strengths

- This cross-curriculum priority is regularly included in content descriptions in the Science and History learning areas.
- The opening statement is clearly expressed and structured.
- The expectation that students will study literature about Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia is supported.
- The What encompasses Asia? section is very helpful, although the term “encompasses” is problematic.

Issues and concerns

Opening statement

- Queensland educators would prefer to see an Asia–Pacific priority reflecting geographic as well as economic influences.
- The preferential identification of China and India is unnecessary. By only highlighting two relationships we are sending inappropriate messages that favour growth over other factors.
- The claim that Asia literacy “enables students to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia” is a significant claim. We are unsure if this is supported enough through the content descriptions to justify this claim.
- The learning statement provides a clear explanation of the Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority. However, a stronger rationale situating the priority within broader policy goals and current research would provide more direction to educators. For the past thirty years, a range of federal and state government reports and policies have advocated for the inclusion of studies of Asia in school curriculum and for Australian students to be “Asia literate”. The opening statement

should more effectively unpack “Asia literacy” within the context of the whole curriculum. For the vision of this opening statement to be realised, it needs to be described in a comprehensive way through a scope and sequence or framework.

- The opening statement states that “Asia literacy develops knowledge, skills and understanding about the histories, geographies, cultures, arts, literatures and languages of the diverse countries of our region”, yet not all of these elements are explicit in the organising ideas and they are developed in an ad hoc way in the Phase 1 learning areas. Furthermore, it is highly likely that most Australian students will not engage with one Asian language, so the expectation that they will engage with the “languages” of the Asian region across the curriculum is unrealistic.
- Educators working in the area of Asia literacy advocated a more even representation of the priority in the learning areas and each phase of learning.
- The opening statement and its organising ideas could do more to engage students with contemporary Asia and develop students’ critical appraisal of Australia’s relationship with Asia.
- A description of What encompasses Asia? is supported in intent, though the inclusion of countries bordering the Urals would allow for the inclusion of some countries from the Middle East, acknowledging places from where there has been significant migration to Australia in recent years. The geographic focus, however, is a narrow interpretation of “encompass”.
- The scope of the opening statement is quite broad and does not clearly articulate the capacity of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia to deliver as a cross-curriculum priority.

Organising ideas

- While the opening statement to the organising ideas states that they reflect “essential knowledge, understandings and skills”, only broad statements of knowledge are identified. Consideration should be given to articulating understandings and skills as well, particularly ideas of globalisation, world knowledge and global understanding. For example, a recent publication of the United States based Asia Society, *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (<http://asiasociety.org/files/book-globalcompetence.pdf>, p.11) identifies globally competent students as being able to perform the following four competences:
 - Investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research.
 - Recognise perspectives, others’ and their own, articulating and explaining such perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.
 - Communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.
 - Take action to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively.
- It is difficult to track how the organising ideas are connected to learning areas, i.e. how they are “embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area”. In many instances there seems to be little flow through to the learning areas, especially in the early years.
- Teachers’ own knowledge and understanding of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia will be fundamental in their ability to build meaningful contexts for learning.

- Several of the organising ideas require clearer focus:
 - OI.2 — the meaning of this statement is ambiguous.
 - OI.4 — the use of the word “significant” is considered too strong as it refers mostly to metropolitan regions. Some rural communities would have little exposure to Asian literature and arts.
 - OI.5 — this statement implies a one-way process. The choice of wording in “good regional and global citizens” is questioned.
 - OI.7 — the wording may be viewed as egocentric.

Learning area statement — English

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- The statement for English does not provide clarity for teachers as different aspects of the priority appear in different parts of the curriculum, rather than as a coherent whole.
- The statement refers more to the general capabilities, languages and the arts, than to identifiable concepts within English. A stronger focus on English is preferable.
- No content description in English explicitly uses the term “Asia”. A few descriptions use the term “culture”. This does not reflect a commitment to the priority.

Learning area statement — Mathematics

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- No content description in Mathematics explicitly uses the term “Asia”. This does not reflect a commitment to the priority.
- Concern has been expressed that the statement presents stereotypes, i.e. Asians are good at mathematics, and their games are those of chance.
- More direction could be provided. For example, the inclusion of additional statements could:
 - highlight more extensively the contribution of Asian countries to the development of mathematical knowledge
 - suggest examples of the contemporary applications of mathematics across Asia.
- Many elaborations appear tokenistic. For example the content description in Year 1 Number and Algebra (Number and place value) is:

“Develop confidence with number sequences to and from 100 by ones from any starting point. Skip count by twos, fives and tens starting from zero.”

The elaboration is: “using the traditional Korean counting game (sam yew gew) for skip counting”.

Learning area statement — Science

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- No content description in Science specifically mentions Asia and the elaborations are often forced, e.g. Year 6 Science as a Human Endeavour (Use and influence of science): “researching the use of methane generators in Indonesia”.

- Sweeping generalisations are included in the statement, in particular those relating to the Asia region’s “leadership role” and “contributions to the application of technology”.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures statement about Science describes a way of understanding the world. In contrast, the Asia statement mentions specific knowledge and does not provide an overview/big idea.

Learning area statement — History

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- The inclusion of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia in the Foundation to Year 10 History learning area is effective, providing several opportunities for students to explore the contribution of Asian countries to world history as well as examining Australia’s relationship with Asia. However, in the compulsory years of schooling, opportunities for students to explore China and India in the 20th century (highlighted in the *Melbourne Declaration*, p. 4), and Australia’s relationship with them have been missed.
- Within the entitlement units to Year 10, there is no opportunity to study Asia in the 20th century except in terms of Australia’s involvement in World War 2. This does not align with the intentions stated in the opening statement and organising ideas. It would benefit students to leave school with an understanding of modern Asian history.

A way forward

Opening statement

- Re-contextualise the priority to have an Asia–Pacific focus.
- Reconsider targeting specific countries in the opening statement.
- Develop resources to support understanding and implementation of this priority. For example, a curriculum framework, similar to the approach used with the general capabilities, would provide more direction to curriculum officers and educators.
- Ensure the distinction between Asia and how Australia’s engages with Asia is carried through into resources as well as the tagging process within the curriculum.

Organising ideas

- Ensure the organising ideas include obvious knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Develop a stronger alignment between the organising ideas and each of the learning area statements. This should follow through to the content descriptions. Provide a tool to reveal that alignment.
- Rewrite the organising ideas to overcome problems identified within the Issues and concerns section.

Learning statements

English

- Describe the relationship between the priority and English in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.
- Modify specific content descriptions to more explicitly connect to this priority.

Mathematics

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Mathematics in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.
- Review the examples of the connections with Asia as they are not mathematically significant and do not reflect the intent of the organising ideas. Reference to such aspects as “Asian games” is considered a token attempt to make real connections.

A way forward

- Be careful of stereotypes in examples, e.g. Asian games are games of chance.
- Modify specific content descriptions to more explicitly connect to this priority.

Science

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Science in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.
- Modify specific content descriptions to more explicitly connect to this priority.
- Provide more direction. For example, the inclusion of additional statements could:
 - highlight more extensively the contribution of Asian countries to the development of scientific knowledge
 - promote awareness of collaboration between Australia and selected countries of Asia in scientific research
 - exemplify contemporary applications of science across Asia.

History

- Describe the relationship between the priority and History in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.
- Consider the missed opportunity for students to explore China and India in the 20th century (highlighted in the *Melbourne Declaration*, p. 4).
- Within the entitlement units to Year 10, establish an opportunity to study Asia in the 20th century.
- Modify specific content descriptions to more explicitly connect to this priority.

Sustainability

Strengths

- This priority has a clearly written opening statement. It highlights the common goal of all people and sectors to sustain environment, culture and the economy for future generations.
- Including social justice (OI.6) is a positive statement.
- The opening statement states clearly why the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority is important. It provides a clear focus on action for individuals and local and global communities, and is socially just and futures-orientated.
- The Systems element is supported as system understanding and human dependence on healthy ecosystems is fundamental to an understanding of sustainability.
- There is an obvious strong connection to the Science learning area.
- The inclusion of Sustainability in the Foundation to Year 10 History learning area is effective, culminating with a Year 10 depth study exploring this issue.

Issues and concerns

Opening statement

- The opening statement should address active and informed citizenship as expressed in Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration*.

- It needs to provide more information or link to resources to assist teachers embed this priority in their teaching in a meaningful way.
- Teaching disjointedly across the curriculum is not appropriate for this priority. The interdependence and interrelationships of sustainability with economic and social aspects are not given enough precedence.

Organising ideas

- The organising ideas are not always evident in the content descriptions so their impact may be limited.
- It is difficult to track how the organising ideas are connected to the learning areas, i.e. how they are “embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area”. In many instances there seems to be little flow through to the learning areas, especially in the early years.
- The messages of the organising ideas can be fine-tuned to better reflect current concepts. They require a clearer focus.

Learning area statement — English

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- No content description in English explicitly uses the term “sustainability”.
- Tagging to content in English is very forced and seems to just draw on English as a vehicle rather than the ideas and concepts that will lend themselves to this cross-curriculum priority.

Learning area statement — Mathematics

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- No content description in Mathematics explicitly uses the term “sustainability”.
- The statement tends to indicate the use of data to prove or justify, rather than to inform future actions.

Learning area statement — Science

- The learning area statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.

Learning area statement — History

- The learning statement is oriented toward the secondary phase of schooling. The statement provides little direction for teachers in all phases.
- Minimal content descriptions in History explicitly refer to this priority.

A way forward

Opening statement

- Consider the minor addition of the word “informed” before “action” in the last sentence of the second paragraph. The sentence would read:
“It is futures-orientated, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through *informed* action that recognises the relevance and interdependence of environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations.”
This rewording aligns to Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration* that supports students to become “active and informed citizens”.

Organising ideas

- Ensure the organising ideas include obvious knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Develop a stronger alignment between the organising ideas and each of the learning area statements. This should follow through to the content descriptions. Provide a tool to reveal that alignment.

Editorial suggestions

Systems

- **OI.1:** The concept of finite resources within dynamic systems and the fact that ecosystems’ services and resources sustain all life on Earth is not explicit in this organising idea. It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“The biosphere is a dynamic *and finite* system providing conditions, *services and resources* that sustain life on Earth.”
- **OI.2:** The placement of the OI within the table is supported; however we suggest adding the words “and survival” at the end of the sentence. Wellbeing commonly refers only to human systems; the term “survival” is commonly used to refer to flora and fauna. It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing *and survival*.”
- **OI.3:** Consider modifying the wording by removing the words “closely related” and “environment” and replacing them with “linked” and “ecosystems” respectively. Replacing “closely related” with “linked” reflects more appropriate system wording. It also implies a two-way flow and is subjective. Replacing “environment” with “ecosystem” clearly defines the focus on natural rather than built environments (the term “environment” is too generic and can be interpreted in a number of ways). It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“Sustainability of social and economic systems is *linked* to sustainability of *ecosystems*.”

World view

- There is no single world view. Students need to understand that, when studying Sustainability, they will be confronted with multiple perspectives which they will need to reflect on. Change the title element from “World View” to “World views”.
- **OI.5:** The wording indicates that the intent of this section is to introduce an element of scale, i.e. interconnections at a global level. While the reference to scale is supported, a broader context is needed to include a focus on local, national and global scales and their interconnection (“think global, act local”). Hands-on environmental actions in schools are predominately undertaken at the local level with social action at the global; however the current wording is not seen to be suitable. It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“Understanding local, national and global perspectives is important to ensure effective and equitable actions for sustainability within communities.”
- **OI.6:** Students need to understand that there are multiple world views and that many, but not all, assist in moving toward sustainable futures. The current wording is not seen to be suitable. It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“World views that recognise diversity and promote social justice, effective social action and human dependence on healthy ecosystems are essential for achieving sustainability.”

A way forward

Futures

- **OI.7:** Removing the words “is designed to” and changing the word “intervene” to “intervenes” would create a clearer and stronger statement. It is recommended that the OI be changed to read:
“Sustainability action *intervenes* in ecological, social and economic systems in order to develop more sustainable patterns of living.”
- **OI.8, OI.9 and OI.10:** Too much overlap exists in OI.8, OI.9 and OI.10 — the wording is too generic and covers the entire action process making it difficult to scope and sequence. It is suggested that these be rewritten and reduced to two ideas:
 - OI.8. — This OI should focus on the first stage, i.e. proposing ideas for change which is based on individual and collective values. It is important to consider both individual and collective action and, as behaviours are an embodiment of our values, for students to investigate both components. Therefore it is recommended OI.8 be changed to read:
“Sustainable futures are shaped by individual and collective values and behaviours that lead to healthy ecosystems and human wellbeing.”
 - OI.9 — It is recommended this be changed to read:
“Products, built environments and technologies can be assessed, imagined, designed and/or managed to improve both people’s wellbeing and environmental sustainability.”

Learning statements

English

- Describe the relationship between the priority and English in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.

Mathematics

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Mathematics in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.

Science

- Describe the relationship between the priority and Science in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.

History

- Describe the relationship between the priority and History in phases. This will give teachers in each phase a clearer focus for the priority.
- Connect the learning statement to the organising ideas and concepts within the learning area.

Appendix A: Examples of unclear links between the cross-curriculum priorities and the content descriptions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

English

- Year 3 *Literature:* Create texts that adapt language features and patterns encountered in literary texts, for example characterisation, rhyme, rhythm, mood, music, sound effects and dialogue
- Year 7 *Literature:* Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches

Mathematics

- Foundation *Number and Algebra:* Represent practical situations to model addition and sharing
- Year 5 *Measurement and Geometry:* Compare 12- and 24-hour time systems and convert between them

Science

- Year 3 *Science as Human Endeavour:* Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions
- Year 8 *Science as a Human Endeavour:* Science understandings influence the development of practices in areas of human activity such as industry, agriculture and marine and terrestrial resource management

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

English

- Year 2 *Literacy:* Discuss different texts on a similar topic, identifying similarities and differences between the texts
- Year 7 *Literature:* Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches

Mathematics

- Year 2 *Number and Algebra:* Group, partition and rearrange collections up to 1000 in hundreds, tens and ones to facilitate more efficient counting
- Year 8 *Number and Algebra:* Solve a range of problems involving rates and ratios, with and without digital technologies

Science

- Year 4 *Science Understanding*: Earth's surface changes over time as a result of natural processes and human activity
- Year 6 *Science Understanding*: Sudden geological changes or extreme weather conditions can affect Earth's surface

Sustainability

English

- Foundation *Literacy*: Deliver short oral presentations to peers
- Year 3 *Language*: Examine how evaluative language can be varied to be more or less forceful
- Year 9 *Literacy*: Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts

Mathematics

- Year 4 *Number and Algebra*: Count by quarters halves and thirds, including with mixed numerals. Locate and represent these fractions on a number line
- Year 10 *Statistics and Probability*: Investigate and describe bivariate numerical data where the independent variable is time

Queensland Studies Authority

154 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane

PO Box 307 Spring Hill

QLD 4004 Australia

T +61 7 3864 0299

F +61 7 3221 2553

www.qsa.qld.edu.au
