Queensland response to the draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

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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 *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education*. Queensland supports the development of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

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

- representative curriculum and learning area committees of the QSA
- representatives of the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (Qld.), the peak body for the Health and Physical Education profession in Queensland
- representatives of the Home Economics Institute of Australia (Qld.)
- representatives from The University of Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland
- representatives of the three school sectors, representing and advocating for 1400 EQ schools, 292 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Queensland's consultation identified strengths, issues and concerns for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) consideration when redrafting the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (the shape paper).

The Queensland response is organised in the following way:

- key strengths of the draft shape paper and broad issues and concerns, with suggested ways forward
- specific feedback on each section of the ACARA consultation questionnaire, with suggested ways forward.

1. Key strengths, issues and concerns

1.1 Strengths

Queensland consultation participants propose that the draft shape paper:

- is clear, easy to read, forward thinking and provides a strong direction for the development of a quality curriculum
- · is well-researched and based in current thinking around the disciplines
- clearly sets out five propositions to guide the contemporary directions and future priorities of the Health and Physical Education curriculum in Australia
- uses a strengths-based approach and proposes a model to focus the curriculum on factors that support health and wellbeing
- clearly positions Health and Physical Education as part of a curriculum of learning across all levels of schooling, with sport operating separate to the Health and Physical Education curriculum
- has an integrated two strand structure that directs the curriculum to core elements of Health and Physical Education.

1.2 Issues and concerns

The following key issues and concerns have been identified for consideration in the redrafting of the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education.*

The inquiry approach

The draft shape paper suggests the use of an inquiry approach, which is generally considered a pedagogical rather than a conceptual or theoretical base for student learning. An inquiry approach may restrict access to a range of paradigms offered within a sociocritical approach that are effective in exploring the social, cultural and political factors proposed within the curriculum.

Imbalance of the strands

The draft shape paper gives a perception of an imbalance between the strands of Movement and physical activity and Personal, social and community health. The imbalance is produced because the aims do not succeed in conveying a sense of balance between the two strands, even though balance is evident throughout the draft shape paper. A perceived imbalance of the strands may also result from attempts to align both strands to a strengths-based approach. Moving to a new direction offered by the strengths-based approach in Health and Physical Education curriculum necessitates additional information and direction for writers.

Inclusion of specific environments and programs

In outlining the strands of the proposed Health and Physical Education curriculum, a range of environments and health and wellbeing issues or programs are suggested. That the draft shape paper may move away from describing environments, issues and programs with a broad scope that allows schools to meet their communities' requirements with flexibility is concerning. Queensland respondents raised issues related to access, resourcing, exclusion and privileging that may result from the inclusion of specific environments, issues or programs in a redrafted version of the shape paper.

The Queensland response notes that representatives from the EQ schooling sector expressed an alternative view, where concern was expressed over the broad categories. EQ suggested that the Health and Physical Education curriculum should include specific reference to topics such as drugs and alcohol, sun safety and the role of families.

- Reinstate the socio-critical approach as indicated in the Initial Advice Paper.
- Review the aims of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education to clarify intent, balance, and cohesion.
- Ensure environments, health and wellbeing issues or programs in both strands are expressed broadly in terms of range or scope. This offers schools the flexibility to construct programs and choose environments to suit their context. Specific examples should be included in a more comprehensive list within the glossary or appendixes. The list should include drug and alcohol awareness, sun safety, road safety, the role of family, and aquatic skills and safety.

2. Section-by-section analysis

2.1 Clarity and coherence of the Introduction

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the Introduction section of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education makes clear the important contribution of the Health and Physical Education curriculum to students' education.

Strengths

- The Introduction provides a clear, concise and well-reasoned rationale for a Health and Physical Education curriculum. It gives a well-rounded set of statements focused on a strengths-based approach.
- All areas of a comprehensive Health and Physical Education curriculum are referenced in the Introduction, with strong supporting statements and clear links to understandings from the broader general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities of the Australian Curriculum.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns regarding the clarity and coherence of the Introduction were raised in consultations.

- Elements of the Introduction should be more apparent in other sections of the draft shape paper. For example, the description of the Personal, social and community health strand within the Structure of the Health and Physical Education curriculum section should include the elements described in the Introduction.
- Paragraph 5 (p. 2) refers to developing resilience. The draft shape paper continues to address resilience, but in an implicit way. A more explicit reference would give greater direction to the writers.
- The factors influencing health, wellbeing and physical activity patterns outlined in the Introduction appear to be narrower than the broader factors of "human biology, personal behaviour, physical environment and psycho-social environment" mentioned later in paragraph 33 (p. 7). The inclusion of these in the Introduction, in particular the "psychosocial" category, would benefit the coherence of the draft shape paper.
- Throughout the draft shape paper, terms are generally well used and defined. However, the use of the term "needs" should be realigned to a strengths-based approach. "Needs", as a term, is more consistent with a deficit medical model.

- Ensure that elements noted in the Introduction are clearly developed and give direction to the writers through strong representation throughout the draft shape paper.
- Remove the term "needs" and replace it with strengths-based terminology.

2.2 Nature of the Health and Physical Education learning area

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if:

- the five propositions of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education give clear direction for curriculum development
- student diversity is included appropriately
- having a healthy school environment section is a relevant inclusion.

Strengths

- The nature of the Health and Physical Education learning area is recognisable and contemporary.
- Queensland strongly endorses the five propositions included in the Nature of the Health and Physical Education learning area section. Proposition (b), Focus on educative outcomes, is commended as an important inclusion. Proposition (d), Learning in, about and through movement, is commended for drawing attention to students' actively experiencing learning and developing lifelong connections to physical activity.
- The draft shape paper provides a broad framework for the development of a 21st century curriculum that is cognisant of student diversity.
- The draft shape paper highlights the importance of the broader healthy school environment and its impact on the delivery of an effective Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns about the Nature of the Health and Physical Education learning area section were raised in consultations.

- The draft shape paper proposes a curriculum based in biophysical, sociological and behavioural sciences with learning opportunities that are contemporary, inquiry based, learner-centred and relevant to students and the communities to which they belong. Concern was expressed that an inquiry-based approach is suggested, as this is a broad term which can be applied to most research processes and offers a pedagogical, rather than a conceptual or theoretical, base for student learning.
- Concern was expressed that an inquiry-based approach may restrict access to a range
 of paradigms offered within a socio-critical approach that is effective in exploring the
 social, cultural and political factors proposed within the curriculum. Students' use of a
 socio-critical perspective to question influencing factors is essential when the stated role
 of the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to educate students to optimise their
 potential for health and wellbeing.
- The inclusion of "active recreation" and varied contexts for activity would help prepare a broader range of students for lifelong physical activity, including sport. Throughout the draft shape paper, particularly in paragraphs 6 (p. 2), 19 (p. 4) and 27 (p. 6), where "physical activity and sport" is referenced, "active recreation" should also be included.
- The use of the term "physical activity" in paragraph 18 (p. 4) is considered limiting and should be amended to "a range of physical activities". The sentence would read: "The movement knowledge, skills and dispositions students develop in Health and Physical Education will encourage them to become lifelong participants in a range of physical activities".

- Broad agreement was expressed on the strengths of the Inclusive practices in Health and Physical Education, and Importance of a healthy school environments sections. However, concerns were raised about their generality. Specifically, it was felt that:
 - the Inclusive practices in Health and Physical Education section would be enhanced by the inclusion of examples that better show how the Health and Physical Education curriculum will address this area
 - the description of "diversity" should include specific references to "disability", "locality", "access" and clarify the meaning of "inclusive" as it affects primary and secondary school contexts. In particular, the terms "students with disability" and "access" should be added to paragraph 22 (p. 5) so that the first sentence reads: "... of all students, *including students with disability*", and the second reads: "... all students to *access* and remain engaged in their learning"
 - it is unclear how the statements around a healthy school environment will inform the writing of the curriculum. The Introduction requires a statement to foreground this section. It could describe the context that leads to successful implementation of the Health and Physical Education curriculum, particularly health-promoting policies and practices of the school
 - the wording of paragraph 25 (p. 5) could imply that Health and Physical Education is solely accountable for a healthy school environment. The paragraph should be amended to read: "... the physical and social environments in schools *should* reflect the health message to be delivered in the Health and Physical Education curriculum".

- Reinstate the socio-critical approach suggested in the Initial Advice Paper for Health and Physical Education. Or, position the inquiry-based approach as social inquiry, which more strongly suggests an approach that develops conceptual understanding and critical and reflective thought.
- Include examples to show how diversity will be addressed in the curriculum.
- Include a statement of intent in relation to the Importance of a healthy school environment section in the Introduction.
- Amend paragraphs 6 (p. 2), 19 (p. 4) and 27 (p. 6) to include reference to "active recreation".
- Amend paragraph 18 (p. 4) to include the term "range of physical activities" instead of "physical activities".
- Amend paragraph 22 (p. 5) to include "students with disability" and "access".
- Amend paragraph 25 (p. 5) to read "the physical and social environments in schools should reflect the health message to be delivered in the Health and Physical Education curriculum".

2.3 Aims of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the aims of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education make clear the intended learning for students.

Strengths

- The aims listed are highly relevant to the contemporary context and the nature of the Health and Physical Education learning area that is proposed.
- The aims provide the foundation to develop a Health and Physical Education curriculum that enhances and promotes students' own and others' health and wellbeing across a lifespan and in varied and rapid changing contexts.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns about the aims of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education were raised in consultations.

- Queensland responses related to the aims were varied, and aligned to the strand of
 most interest to the respondent. Some respondents suggested that the Movement and
 physical activity strand was under-represented, others suggested that important areas of
 health had been overlooked, or that the intent of the aims had privileged the Movement
 and physical activity strand. Positional responses such as these may indicate that the
 aims do not:
 - do not succeed in conveying the same general sense of balance between the two strands that is apparent and accepted in other sections of the draft shape paper
 - do not make clear the explicit links between stands.
- "Health literacy" and "resilience" are included in the Introduction section and are included conceptually within the aims. However, the terms are not foregrounded. Using the terms in the first two dot points would make connections to their usage in the Introduction.

Way forward

- Include a statement that clarifies the intent, balance and structure of the aims.
- Where possible, indicate both strands within the aims statements to show their link.
- Consider rewording the aims to more explicitly include the terms "health literacy" and "resilience".

2.4 Proposed structure of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the two strands — Personal, social and community health and Movement and physical activity — provide a useful organisational structure, and if the description of each strand provides clear direction for the learning that will take place.

Strengths

- The structure of the Health and Physical Education learning area into two strands that focus on the core elements of Health and Physical Education is strongly endorsed.
- The focus placed on the explicit links between each strand to facilitate connected learning programs and a holistic approach is a strong feature of the proposed curriculum structure.

• The descriptions provided in each strand are generally clear, coherent and wellsupported by current research, and will provide clear direction for the learning intended in each strand.

Issues and concerns

The following issues about the proposed structure of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education were raised in consultations.

- The term "balance" lacks elaboration when used to describe the interrelationship of the strands. The balance suggested should be made explicit without compromising a philosophy of flexibility for individual school contexts.
- Queensland respondents welcomed the integration of the two strands. However, concern was expressed over the challenges that may be experienced at a school level. While this is an implementation issue, concern could be minimised by providing a clear indication in the draft shape paper of how the integration of the strands will be addressed in the curriculum. Respondents also suggested that this section would benefit from an elaboration on the related subjects within each strand.

Way forward

- Consider further elaboration of "balance" in relation to the two strands of the Health and Physical Education learning area.
- Strengthen the message in paragraphs 30 (p. 7) and 31 (p. 7) to suggest that opportunities for integration will be made explicit and exemplified in the development of the curriculum.

2.5 Proposed organisation of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the development of the Health and Physical Education curriculum into seven learning bands is appropriate, and if both proposed strands should be taught in each year from Foundation (F)¹ to Year 10.

Strengths

- Queensland strongly supports the proposed designation of both strands as part of the curriculum entitlement of all Australian students and supports the curriculum being delivered in each year level across F–10. This endorses the value of studies of health and studies of movement.
- The proposed organisation of Health and Physical Education into seven learning bands, which focus the learning area in purposeful but not normative units of content, is commended. The inclusion of a single band for Foundation is a welcomed strength.
- The organisation of the F–12 Health and Physical Education curriculum into seven learning bands will provide flexibility to develop a curriculum that suits the diverse cognitive, emotional, social, physical and developing strengths of students.
- The importance of foregrounding the understanding that the Health and Physical Education curriculum does not include extracurricular school sports is acknowledged.

¹ The Foundation Year (F) of the Australian Curriculum is Prep (P) in Queensland and refers to the year before Year 1. Children beginning Prep in January are required to be five years of age by 30 June.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns about the proposed organisation of the F–12 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education were raised in consultations.

- The development of the Foundation level a single level is a strength that acknowledges the nature of learning for young children and their transition to a school setting. However, the term "needs", used in paragraph 40 (p. 9), is not consistent with a strengths-based approach and positions young children as being "in deficit". This is a disconnection with the nature of learning for young children and is not consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework that is a reference point for the Australian Curriculum.
- Queensland respondents were concerned that paragraph 40 (p. 9) does not connect with the knowledge, skills and dispositions that children bring with them to the school environment. Children at Foundation level have specific motor and social skill requirements. They also have varying knowledge, skills and understanding that should be provided for in the inherent flexibly of the curriculum. The current wording of paragraph 40 should include the understandings from paragraph 41 (p.9). That is, at Foundation level, the curriculum should be flexible and meet the diverse cognitive, emotional and social development requirements of students.

Way forward

- Consider replacing the term "needs" in all instances with strengths-based terminology.
- Consider altering paragraph 40 (p.9) to acknowledge the continuation of learning from prior-to-school settings and following on from the Foundation Year.
- Acknowledge that Foundation level students are also entitled to a curriculum that provides flexibility to present knowledge, understanding and skills in a way that meets the diverse cognitive, emotional and social development requirements of students.

2.6 Proposed scope and sequence of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the scope and sequence of the Health and Physical Education learning in each band level F–10 is appropriate and the progression from one band to another is logical. ACARA also asks if it is appropriate at a senior secondary level to select one subject from each of the bands.

Strengths

- The descriptions of each of the bands of learning in the Scope and sequence section are comprehensive, appropriate and logical given the terms of the learning area outlined earlier in the draft shape paper.
- Queensland strongly endorses the proposal for Health and Physical Education to be represented by two subjects in the senior secondary years, one with a focus on the health dimensions of the learning area and the other with a focus on the movement dimensions.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns about the scope and sequence of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education were raised in consultations.

• In both strands, a range of environments, health and wellbeing issues or programs are suggested. Concerns were raised that the draft shape paper may move away from providing a broad scope to inclusion of specific environments, issues or programs in redrafting after consultation. The inclusion of environments, programs and issues as

examples, rather than direct curriculum inclusions, is a preferred option. Queensland respondents generally agreed that the specific naming of environments, issues or programs in the proposed curriculum leads to:

- a restrictive interpretation of range or scope
- exclusion or privileging of particular areas or programs
- inclusion of environments, issues or programs that cause a resourcing, access or philosophical difficulty for schools
- advocacy for inclusion by interest groups
- restrictions of the curriculum to the prominent issues of today and decreased capacity to be responsive to change and future issues.

The draft shape paper will have more strength if environments, health and wellbeing issues or programs in both strands are expressed broadly in terms of range or scope. Importantly, this will offer schools the flexibility to construct programs and choose environments to suit their context and to focus their curriculum on a strengths-based, rather than a risk-based, approach.

- The listed examples (not directed inclusions) of environments, health and wellbeing
 issues or programs for schools to consider should be more comprehensive and included
 in the glossary or appendixes. A more comprehensive but not exhaustive list should
 include areas such as drug and alcohol awareness, sun safety, road safety, personal
 and peer safety, the role of families, and aquatic skills and safety.
- Important elements outlined in paragraphs 33–37 (p. 7) as structuring devices for each
 of the bands are not easily seen or followed within the structure of the scope and
 sequence. The elements are usually included but are not explicit enough to provide
 adequate direction to writers. The risk is that important elements, such as applying,
 goal-setting, reflection and evaluation, could be overlooked in parts of the scope and
 sequence. A different presentation showing links to the structuring concepts would
 enhance readability across the bands and assist in tracking development and
 complexity.
- The Movement and physical activity strand is not always clear in the scope and sequence and could be more strongly represented. A clearer skills continuum would increase the strand's visibility.
- Limited reference is made to nutrition and healthy food choices within the scope and sequence.
- Foundation and Years 1–2 in the scope and sequence:
 - lack the important reference, shown in paragraph 71 (p. 12), to the opportunity for students in F–2 to experience a range of physical environments. In a strengths– based approach, children are considered capable and should have opportunities to learn through a range of environments. If examples of environments are named within the draft shape paper, then the Foundation and Years 1–2 curriculum should include the same opportunities as other year levels
 - outlines the nature of purposeful play-based learning in paragraph 53 (p. 10) this should be addressed as the first dot point of the Foundation scope and sequence
 - should include reference to contexts in paragraph 54 (p. 11) so that the sentence reads: "... students are given the opportunity to begin to develop competency in a wide range of movement skills *in varied contexts*"
 - should encompass fine- and gross-motor skills across the Foundation and Years 1–2 levels of movement, as in paragraph 55 (p. 11), and draw attention to the important non-movement motor skills of sitting and sustaining posture.

- Years 3–4 in the scope and sequence no signification issues or concerns were identified.
- Years 5–6 in the scope and sequence:
 - would benefit from the inclusion of a paragraph similar to paragraph 73 (p. 13) from the Years 3–4 descriptions regarding tactical solutions to increase their sense of success
 - should provide more knowledge and skills in some topics to align with secondary years topics to provide for a smooth transition to secondary school.
- Years 7–8 in the scope and sequence:
 - tends to focus on urban and coastal contexts in paragraph 90 (p. 15). This paragraph would benefit from additional examples suited to rural and remote settings.

Way forward

- Within each band, include a research-based preamble about the typical student at this level, followed by statements on how the curriculum will provide for students within each band of the strands.
- Organise each band so the structuring elements are visible. Suggestion: Use *acquire*, *apply* and *evaluate* for the Movement and physical activity strand.
- Make it clear that the listed examples in paragraph 71 (p. 12), and similar references throughout the draft shape paper, are not specific inclusions. Consider providing a more comprehensive list of examples of environments, health and wellbeing issues and programs in the glossary or appendixes. Consider amending paragraphs 52 (p. 10), 62 (p. 11), 78 (p. 13), and 94 (p. 16) to reflect sun safety, school safety, road safety and personal and peer safety.
- Provide a clearer skills continuum for the Movement and physical activity strand.
- Include reference to nutrition and healthy food choices within the scope and sequence.
- Indicate a range of environments in the Foundation and Years 1–2 scope and sequence, similar to paragraph 71 (p. 12).
- Emphasise fine- and gross-motor skills across the F–2 bands by including a paragraph similar to paragraph 55 (p.11) from the Foundation band in the Years 1–2 bands.
- Reference postural skills as a part of the Movement and physical activity strand in the Foundation and Years 1–2 bands.
- Amend paragraph 54 (p. 11) to include reference to a range of movement skills in varied contexts.
- More closely align Years 5–6 content with some secondary school topics.
- Amend paragraph 90 (p. 15) to include examples suited to rural and remote areas.

2.7 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education and the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

ACARA seeks clarification and asks if the broad descriptions of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities provide appropriate direction to inform the development of a detailed curriculum.

Strengths

• The statements about the general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities outline a strong, accurate and reasonable description of the interrelationships between Health and Physical Education and other important aspects of the curriculum. They also provide appropriate direction to inform the development of the curriculum.

- The broad description of the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority emphasises Health and Physical Education's contribution to sustainability and provides appropriate direction to inform the development of the curriculum.
- The use of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priorities as vehicles to promote the cultures and histories of other societies and backgrounds.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns about the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education in relation to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities were raised in consultations.

- The broad descriptions of the general capabilities lack a balance of examples to clarify and demonstrate how each of the strands of the Health and Physical Education curriculum might contribute to the general capabilities.
- The broad description of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority does not encompass strong Indigenous perspectives, particularly in relation to traditions, histories and experiences. The description incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a priority of learning, giving students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of these histories and cultures. However, the description does not capture the importance of understanding and appreciating Indigenous perspectives about these issues. The description should include:
 - gaining knowledge of Indigenous perspectives
 - ownership and cultural appropriateness so that schools avoid developing a curriculum that stereotypes Indigenous health issues and investigating Indigenous health issues without considering Indigenous perspectives.

The draft shape paper itself makes this statement in Paragraph 13 (p. 3) when referring to a strengths-based approach.

 The term "Place" is usually referred to as "Country/Place" when used in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture. The singular usage "Country" relates to Aboriginal peoples, and "Place" to Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- Include examples from each strand of the Health and Physical Education curriculum to demonstrate how they contribute the general capabilities.
- When describing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priorities, encompass the importance of understanding and appreciating the perspectives of the groups involved.
- Revise paragraph 129 (p. 22) to align to a strengths-based approach and use a less stereotypical example.
- Correct the usage of the term "Country/Place" in paragraph 127 (p. 22).

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