

Queensland response to the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*

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Queensland Studies Authority

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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: Civics and Citizenship*. Queensland supports the development of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

This paper is a summary of the collated Queensland feedback submitted from:

- representative curriculum and learning area committees of the QSA
- Queensland teachers from across the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area
- 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 and a range of issues and concerns for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) consideration when redrafting the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* (the shape paper).

The Queensland response is organised in the following way:

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

1. Key strengths, issues and concerns

1.1 Strengths

Participants in the Queensland consultation were generally supportive of the positions taken in the draft Shape paper. There is strong evidence that the feedback provided previously from Queensland stakeholders has been considered and incorporated into this draft.

The Queensland consultation participants identified the following strengths in the draft Shape paper:

- Overall, the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* provides an appropriate framework for developing an Australian Curriculum in Civics and Citizenship.
- The Context for the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship is comprehensive, summarises the important considerations for developing a detailed curriculum, and recognises values education.
- The return of the *Informing Principles* section is supported and adds significantly to the paper.
- The *Rationale* generally provides appropriate coverage and direction.
- The *Organisation* of the curriculum into two strands — *Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding*, and *Civics and Citizenship skills*, is highly appropriate and most of the essential elements to be developed as curriculum content are identified.
- The descriptions across Foundation to Year 12 provided in *Learners and Learning: F–12* should assist in the development of appropriate content that builds students' knowledge, understandings and skills from Years 3 to 8 with some guidance for Years 9 and 10 and senior secondary.

1.2 Issues and concerns

- A more comprehensive, contemporary definition of “civics” may assist curriculum development.
- Civics and Citizenship curriculum should acknowledge the importance of values, attitudes and dispositions in the development of key conceptual understandings and active citizenship at local, national and international levels without necessarily prescribing what students' values, attitudes and dispositions must be.
- There is a strong bias in both the section on *Informing Principles* and the *Aims* towards students “knowing” about civics and not enough “doing” within citizenship descriptions.
- All subjects within the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area may benefit from a common structure and greater consistency in the way subject-specific inquiry processes are described.
- It is recommended that the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* promote the use of key questions throughout the curriculum to support an inquiry approach and the development of active citizenship.

- The identified knowledge and understandings are important and appropriate. However more explicit and authentic exploration of global perspectives and greater consideration of other forms of government and how democracy operates in other countries is recommended.
- It is recommended that the skills to be incorporated in curriculum content include the skill of “evaluating” and further describe the processes of collaborative problem-solving and decision-making.
- While the content overview will assist in the development of appropriate content for Year 3 to Year 8, it is recommended that content outlines for Years 9 and 10 be expanded to ensure the curriculum developed for these years is valued and supports the preparation of students for senior secondary study in the Humanities and other areas.
- The importance of leadership and the interrelatedness of Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics need to be acknowledged in the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*.
- Explicit references to General capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities throughout the content overview might ensure they are appropriately and meaningfully integrated across the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship curriculum.

2. Section-by-section analysis

The following provides a section-by-section analysis of the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*. It particularly focuses on the clarity, coherence, appropriateness and structure of the draft shape paper.

2.1 Context

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the Context.

- The inclusion of the appropriate reference to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) at the beginning of this section is supported.
- The references to global perspectives and the interconnected world are important and link to broader notions of citizenship and civic understanding.
- The idea that schools are the most appropriate place to develop pedagogy and organisational approaches is supported, as is the idea that schools and teachers have the exciting and challenging opportunities to deliver this curriculum.
- The “front-ending” of active and informed citizenship, awareness and understanding of diversity, inclusive attitudes and beliefs and challenging stereotypes is supported.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Context.

- This section does not refer to the National Sample Assessment / National Assessment Program in Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC). The NAP–CC has significance to education broadly and civics and citizenship has been assessed since 2004. This is an important contextual element that needs to be noted within this section.
- The “context-based approach” described in Point 7 needs to be defined for greater clarity.
- Point 8 needs to be changed to “the diverse Australian and global society” as the students may not live in a community that models the wider diversity of society. The wording needs to be less personal and not based solely on the child’s experience.
- This section needs more emphasis on “attitudes, values and dispositions” that are described later in the paper.
- It is important that the Context outlines that Civics and Citizenship is a component of the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area, and describes the contribution that the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship makes to the learning in this learning area. A reference to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008, p.14) would be appropriate. This may assist schools and teachers to make sense about how the subjects in the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area connect and thus inform whole school planning.

- While the Context is broad and places this curriculum in a wider context, the suggested time frame of 20 hours per year will be challenging, especially if there is to be community involvement. Schools will need to be creative with how they integrate this into their whole school program. It is possible that the importance of the topics could be lost. The Context should recognise the scope of what this curriculum can actually achieve and not give the impression of facilitating all the civics and citizenship learning that will take place in schools.

Way forward

- **Refer to the National Assessment Program in Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC).**
- **Review to ensure more emphasis in this section on “attitudes, values and dispositions” described later in the paper.**
- **Rewrite Point 7 and 8 as suggested above.**
- **Include a point on how Civics and Citizenship is a component of the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area, and the contribution that the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship makes to the learning in this learning area.**
- **Determine the scope of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship according to realistic time available to deliver this curriculum.**

2.2 Informing Principles

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the Informing Principles.

- The inclusion of the Informing Principles is supported and builds on the Context.
- The Context states: “An Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship will consolidate and strengthen links between students and local, national, regional and global communities.” This aspect of the Context is acknowledged in 10c, i.e. “Young people are members of ...global communities” but further explicit and authentic consideration of global perspectives throughout the document is recommended.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Informing Principles.

- A curriculum about civics and citizenship in Australia needs to have as a principle that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first citizens of this land.
- The last sentence of 10a needs to be rewritten to not be such an absolute.
- The values listed in 10b should include “peace” and “the role of the individual and freedom”. “Social justice and equality” needs changing to “social justice and equity”. “Active citizenship” needs strengthening to show how it is possible “to be empowered to bring about change”. This dot point would be better expressed if it started with “Investigate the values”. It is also noted that the wording used in the informing principles is not consistent with the wording used in the remainder of the document and this needs to be attended to.
- In 10c the section “and opportunities to appreciate and participate in Australia’s multi-cultural and multi-faith society” should be deleted as it does not add any purpose to the statement.

- In 10e the last phrase should be changed to “across school communities including on-line communities” so the intent is clearer.
- This section could be strengthened with the addition of a principle about alternate methods of government and operations of societies and the strengths and weaknesses of these different systems. It is important that this curriculum is not just about democracy and liberal democratic values and that students have the opportunity to explore alternative political philosophies to understand the value and weaknesses of their own system.

Way forward

- **Include a principle that states Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first citizens of this land.**
- **Rewrite the last sentence of 10a as “Australia’s democracy can be sustained and strengthened with its citizen’s commitment to and participation in civic life”.**
- **Review and rewrite statements 10b, c and e as suggested above.**
- **Consider including a section on alternative methods of government and operations of societies and the strengths and weaknesses of these different systems.**

2.3 Rationale

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the Rationale.

- The inclusion of Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australia* (2008) is supported.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Rationale.

- The Rationale is far too long and repetitive. The Rationale should clearly state the purpose of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship and contain a series of key messages about **this curriculum** not civics and citizenship education generally.
- Global perspectives and references are minimal in the Rationale.
- The purpose of this curriculum should not only be the preservation of the current system but instead equipping our young people to participate in and positively shape our society. The following changes would reflect this:
 - In 11a replace “attitudes, beliefs and values” with “dispositions”
 - In 11b remove “well-established” to add objectivity
 - Remove 11d as this point is covered by the first sentence in 11c.
 - Remove 11e as the point is better covered by 11f.
- Consider rewording 11c “Civics and Citizenship education in schools helps citizens to sustain their democracy” to better reflect the important role of civics and citizenship education. Goal 2 of the Melbourne Declaration attends to much more than democracy (an egalitarian form of government).

- Consider rewording 11d as the current wording suggests the only requirement for democracy to “thrive” is a citizenry committed to and participating in civic life and democracy. One key to democracy is “informed citizens” and there are other equally important elements.
- As with the Informing Principles, the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first citizens needs to be included in the Rationale.

Way forward

- **Review the Rationale to focus on the purpose of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship.**
- **Review the Rationale for global perspectives.**
- **Rewrite specific points in the Rationale based on the suggestions provided above.**
- **Include a statement about the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first citizens.**

2.4 Aims

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the Aims.

- The Aims generally capture the essence of the learning area.
- Point 12 is a clear statement of aims for the curriculum.
- Point 13c is strongly supported as it emphasises Aboriginal Peoples’ and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ historical and contemporary experience of, participation in and contribution to Australian civic identity and society.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Aims.

- As a general design consideration, the Aims should be restructured to better reflect the structure of the proposed curriculum – knowledge and understanding, skills, and values, attitudes and dispositions.
- Greater emphasis on “active participation” is recommended.
- The Aims include the “doing words” of developing and building an “appreciation of” curriculum elements. Students can have an appreciation of something without ever challenging their own behaviour to do anything different from what they have always done. Appreciation is needed but there should be an expectation that students will reflect on their current actions, challenge their preconceptions, act decisively to bring about change, evaluate their actions and make judgments about what impacts they had.
- Consider rewording and re-ordering 13a – 13d to place greater importance on “participation” and to offer greater clarity.
- The Aims could be reworded in part to ensure any exploration of our “democratic heritage” is critically evaluative as well as positive and optimistic. Our “democratic heritage” includes the White Australia policies, unfair dictation tests, “stolen generations” and indigenous Australians not having the right to vote in some states until 1962. While this can be inferred from existing statements, it must be evident that these issues can be critically explored in the curriculum.

- Remove “and commitment to” from 13b as it seems unattainable as an absolute – curriculum and the teaching and learning based on the curriculum can only provide knowledge, understandings and skills that offer the opportunity to commit in an informed manner.
- Suggest rewriting 13d in two statements. It could read “...intercultural understanding. Particular consideration should be given to the historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.”

Way forward

- **Review and redraft the Aims to better reflect the structure of the proposed curriculum – knowledge and understanding, skills, and values, attitudes and dispositions.**
- **Consider the suggestions listed above to inform reordering and editing the Aims to clarify the intent of the curriculum and to elaborate the Informing Principles and contents of the Rationale**

2.5 Defining Civics and Citizenship

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about Defining Civics and Citizenship.

- The reference to previous definitions of this curriculum area is supported as it builds on current understandings.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about Defining Civics and Citizenship.

- It is acknowledged that the definition for Civics “needs to be extended”. A more comprehensive, contemporary definition would support curriculum development. It would be preferable to have a new definition that includes the listed perspectives.
- Consider removing “Australia’s” from the definition of Civics and include local, regional and global perspectives.
- The definition of Citizenship needs to be shorter and tighter. The suggestion that Citizenship is a complex concept that has been extensively debated does not progress broad understanding. The term “active and informed citizenship” should be part of the definition.
- The last two sentences of the Citizenship definition could be replaced by the definition of “multi-dimensional citizenship” that appears in the glossary.
- It is important to note that definitions of citizenship often include a fourth component, “identity” which is absent from this definition and subsequently from the shape paper. Citizenship needs to be conceptualised in a broader way to recognise the ideas of culture and identity and thus genuinely embed multi-faith, and religious and cultural diversity. It should also recognise that young people are connected and global citizens.

Way forward

- **Review and redraft both definitions to include the suggestions listed above. In particular:**
 - **extend Civics to include local, regional and global perspectives**
 - **refine Citizenship to balance the formal definition with the four components: civil, political, social and cultural (to include the ideas of identity).**

2.6 Organisation

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the Organisation.

- The curriculum structure, based on the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains is supported as are the two organisational strands of Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding and Civics and Citizenship skills.
- It is acknowledged that the organisational strands have links to the organisational frameworks of the Australian Curriculum: History and Geography. This is a distinct strength and particularly important for planning and assessment in primary schools.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Organisation.

- If Point 17 preceded Point 16 and perhaps if Point 19 preceded Point 18, this would enhance the flow of logic in this section.
- The values, attitudes and dispositions described in Point 19 are more wide-ranging than “the foundation of Australia’s parliamentary liberal democracy and responsible civic action”. These are the foundations of Civics and Citizenship education generally. The subsequent listing 19a to 19c should be organised and titled as values, attitudes and dispositions and it should be clear that these are “embedded” in the two Civics and Citizenship strands: knowledge and understanding and skills, i.e. they will be evident in the content organised under these strands.
- Consider the following issues and the suggested solutions in the organisation:
 - Reword 19a to reduce duplication of ideas and to include other values curriculum writers might be expected to attend to, such as freedom of assembly, press, religion and free markets.
 - Refine the wording of 19b for greater clarity. The term “appreciation” should be removed as the curriculum must challenge students to move beyond appreciation to positive, affirmative action.
 - Delete the bullet points from 19c. While they are intended to provide examples of dispositions, they may be construed as limited and not sufficiently inclusive.
 - In 20d remove “democracy” and change to “Knowledge of other political systems and how they function...”
 - In 20f the right to dissent, critique and communicate should be expressed as “included” in human, political and social rights.
 - Reword 20g to give a global perspective, e.g. consideration of the role of social media in unstable dictatorships.
 - In 20e replace “contributes to democratic principles” with “upholds and contributes to democratic principles”.
 - In 20f add “empowerment to bring about change”.

- In 20 add a new point about Australia’s obligations to others including international law, international conventions, and treaties to highlight our rights and responsibilities in the global community.
- In 21b although the sub-heading is “analysis” there is no reference to it in the section that follows.
- In 21c the term “intercultural competence” appears for the first time. This is an important concept and its development in students is critical to moving students beyond simply “appreciation” of cultures. However there has been no scaffolding provided up to this point in the paper that indicates what this might look like, how students achieve it, how it might be taught or where it fits in the curriculum.
- Reword 21c to emphasise the elements of problem solving and decision making such as defining the problem, generating options, conducting research/developing evaluation criteria, selecting an option, implementing, monitoring, renegotiating if necessary, and taking leadership.
- Point 21c needs to be amended as it currently reads “resolving conflict resolution”.
- Consider deleting the words “in modern democracy” in 21d because students need to explore the importance of communication across borders, regardless of political regimes.
- Point 22 seems redundant and this text would be better positioned in the stem of Point 21.
- In 23 terminology use is inconsistent with History and Geography. It is suggested the following changes be made to the Civics and Citizenship skills to inform the rewrite of Point 21:
 - Change “Inquiry and research” to “Questioning and research”
 - Change “Analysis and synthesis” to “analysis and evaluation”. This would include problem-solving and decision making.
 - Include “Interpreting and concluding”
 - Include “Reflecting and responding, including active citizenship” as the fourth sub-strand of Skills.
- The table in Point 23 serves little purpose if there is no overarching framework of skills for the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area. This is essential work for ACARA to assist with the implementation of the four subjects that make up the learning area.

Way forward

- **Review and redraft this section to include the suggestions listed above. In particular:**
 - **the position, structure and messaging related to values, attitudes and dispositions**
 - **the clarity of Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding**
- **the structure of the Civics and Citizenship skills and the relationships to other Humanities and Social Sciences subjects.**

2.7 Learners and Learning: F–12

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about Learners and Learning.

- The structure of this section is an improvement on previous drafts and each phase is clearly described under the nature of the learners and the learning in Civics and the learning in citizenship.
- The outline of the scope and parameters in Points 24 to 27 is clear and sets the scene clearly for curriculum writers. This section should be replicated in the curriculum to inform forward planning by schools.
- In Years 5–6 the connections to school processes and the Australian Curriculum: History are strongly supported.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about Learners and Learning.

- Consider restructuring this section in a tabular format that uses the structure of Civics learning and Citizenship learning as well as the strands of knowledge and understanding and skills.
- The amount of content to be covered for Years 3–8, as described in each phase is extensive. Given that Civics and Citizenship will account for the equivalent of approximately half an hour a week in teaching time, the amount of content to be learnt and understood means that students will not have time to meaningfully engage in active citizenship opportunities. Students will not have time to deeply explore the knowledge and understandings and to be involved in engaging inquiry processes. The amount of content described must be reviewed and significantly reduced.
- The shape paper needs to make clear the relevant learning that has occurred and the understandings that have been developed through other learning areas in F–2 to guide the curriculum writers developing the curriculum from Year 3. In F–2, the descriptions of learning are more about dispositions than knowledge. For all learners F–4, the dispositions discussed form part of the routines, whole-school processes and behaviour policies of all schools.
- There is a need to explore the notion of leadership as part of this formal curriculum. All stable, thriving societies require good leadership.
- While assumptions have to be made about the shape of the Economics and Business curriculum, the Civics and Citizenship curriculum should acknowledge the importance of the economy in any stable democracy. Understandings about international issues and interdependencies must include consideration of economics such as national debt and, the impact on global financial issues on societies and nations. For example, Point 45 mentions History and Geography but not Economics and Business.
- The cross-curriculum priorities, in particular, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia and general capabilities should be more evident in Paragraphs 24–48, and should not only be addressed in subsequent or separate paragraphs.
- Point 28 is important and needs to be foregrounded earlier and with more explicit examples of how schools can provide opportunities for students to be active citizens. Schools should have guidance about developing a scope and sequence of these genuine, meaningful opportunities.
- In Point 35 “religious tolerance” needs to be changed to “religious understanding” as “tolerance” does not imply that children would have any understanding of difference.
- The content for Years 7 and 8 is disjointed. It might be assisted by a table showing its internal connection as well as connections to other subjects.

- The purpose of the last sentence in Point 42 is unclear as it seems to be one of the underpinning ideas for the whole document and not something just taught at this stage.
- In Years 9 and 10 there is an absence of different political philosophies and the political spectrum.
- In Years 7–10 it is unclear how this is to fit with the rest of the school curriculum and as a result it will cause significant timetabling issues.
- In Years 7–10 the time allocation of 20 hours per year and the lack of connection with other learning areas and subjects will mean that this curriculum will be difficult to timetable and could be lost completely past Year 8. This content is important for all students so more advice needs to be given on how this curriculum connects to for example, Years 9–10 History depth studies or Geography topics.

Way forward

- **Review the content described in each phase of schooling to significantly reduce the amount to be covered.**
- **Describe the links between the Civics and Citizenship learning and other learning areas, especially the Humanities and Social Sciences subjects for each phase of schooling.**
- **Review and redraft this section to include the suggestions listed above.**

2.8 Civics and Citizenship and the cross-curriculum priorities

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the cross-curriculum priorities.

- Care will be required to balance cross-curriculum priorities and subject-specific curriculum demands within the time allocated.
- The first sentence in Point 50 is unclear and needs to be rewritten.
- Points 50–51 fail to acknowledge issues of contemporary Australia. It will not be enough to “understand the contemporary Indigenous experience”. Students will need to understand the problems (health, education, housing, employment, incarceration rates) and assume shared responsibility for combatting them.
- Civics and Citizenship provides an excellent opportunity for students to question assumptions about governance, ownership, rights, wrongs, and our cultural traditions and values towards and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their lands and seas. This needs to be made more evident in the shape paper.

Way forward

- **Review Points 50–51 as indicated above.**
- **Strengthen questioning assumptions throughout the document.**

2.9 Civics and Citizenship and general capabilities

Strengths

The following strengths were identified in consultations about the general capabilities.

- The previous feedback on Ethical behaviour has been attended to and the descriptions in Points 62–63 represent a much improved outline of embedding this general capability.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the general capabilities.

- In Critical and creative thinking, there should be some reference to “withholding or delaying judgment”.
- In Personal and social capability, point 61, there is an opportunity to ensure that students learn to understand themselves and appreciate and value their own insights and perspectives as well as those of others.
- Numeracy, point 69, overemphasises the numeracy demands of voting and polling. Statistics relating to social media use, other measures of the “health” of a society (infant mortality, average life span, per capita GDP) are as worthy of mention as political opinion polls.
- In Information and communication technology (ICT) competence (Points 70 and 71) the role of ICTs could be enhanced if supporting social action and leadership initiatives were more explicitly acknowledged, for example, social media. The aim should be for active, informed student-citizens to do more with ICTs than communicate ideas or exchange information.

Way forward

- **Review each capability as indicated above.**

2.10 Links to other learning areas

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the general capabilities

- Paragraph 74 omits Years 7–8.
- It is recommended that the multiple opportunities for links to Economics and Business (as well as History and Geography) be strengthened.

2.11 Conclusion

There is a need to recognise that democracy is only one form of government and it has strengths and weaknesses. Students must be encouraged to look critically at other forms of government and legal systems if they are to make evaluations of their own society in comparison to others. This comparative approach is largely missing. It is also important that students understand that in a democracy, there is a fundamental right to oppose decisions and to debate government policy.

2.12 Key Terms and Definitions

The inclusion of the Key Terms and Definitions is supported and seen as a valuable part of the shape paper.

Issues and concerns

The following issues and concerns were raised in consultations about the Key Terms and Definitions.

- Key terms and definitions could be expanded to strengthen shared understandings and to inform the Glossary in the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship curriculum.
- It is recommended that the key terms and definitions be expanded to include constitution, *political community*, *ethics*, *authoritarianism*, and *communism*, and the following definitions be improved — *rights*, *responsibilities* and *liberal democracy*.

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