

Working Paper
This draft for circulation to ACACA agencies



**AUSTRALASIAN CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION
AUTHORITIES**

STRATEGY PAPER

***Role of ACACA in the Development and Implementation of
National Education Policy***

1. Purpose of Strategy Paper

The following paper outlines the strategic approach that the Australian members of the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) are committed to using in the development and implementation of national education policy.

ACACA values the contribution of its member from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. It can and does learn from international collaboration and sharing perspectives. This paper, however, has its focus on Australian national issues.

The strategy paper recognises that each ACACA agency is an independent entity and operates under the governance of its own Board and state/territory legislative framework.

Within this context, the paper identifies those areas where the linked and collaborative approach by the chief executives of the ACACA agencies to supporting the development and implementation of national education policy is in the strategic interests of each agency and furthermore will contribute significantly to the policy development and to the quality of the corresponding outcomes.

2. Strategic Context

Increasingly Australian states and territories are working collaboratively with each other and with the Commonwealth Government to develop and implement national education policy.

MCEETYA's decision in 2007 to develop nationally consistent curricula demonstrates that this commitment now extends into the area of curriculum, assessment and reporting. The release of the Future of Schooling in Australia paper also in 2007 further affirmed the commitment of the states and territories to this goal.

In the lead-up to the federal election in late 2007, the now Labor Government released a series of education policy directions papers. The fourth of these, *Establishing a National Curriculum to improve our children's learning outcomes*,

committed the government to establishing a national curriculum and introducing a National Curriculum Board. It undertook to ensure that in its first term it would achieve agreement between Commonwealth, States and Territories Ministers as well as Catholic and Independent schools to a National Curriculum in the identified priority areas of maths, the sciences, english and history by 2010.

The now federal Labor Government's policy document *Skilling Australia for the Future* further committed the government to the major expansion of places in the vocational education and training system and to making the system more responsive. The policy commits the government to school retention targets of 85% by 2015 and 90% by 2020 and to the allocation of \$2.5 billion over 10 years to build Trade Training Centres for years 9 –12 students in all of Australia's secondary schools.

At its meeting in December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to nominating representatives to the National Curriculum Board and participating fully in the development and implementation of a national curriculum in key learning areas by 2010 and to lifting the Year 12 or the equivalent retention rate to 90 per cent by 2020. At its meeting in March 2008, COAG agreed upon a common framework for reform of education and endorsed a set of aspirations, outcomes, progress measures and future policy directions in the key areas of early childhood, schooling and skills and workforce development. The specific arrangements within this framework will form part of the national education funding agreement to be introduced at the beginning of 2009.

In Australia's states and territories, the legislative authority for curriculum policy does not exclusively reside with the various state/territory government education bodies. In each state/territory, a level of legislative authority for curriculum development, accreditation, assessment and reporting rests with the respective ACACA agency and is often defined by legislation that is separate from the legislation that applies to each state's government education body.

For the ACACA agency in each state and territory, their respective legislation may vary in the definition of their specific functions and scope of responsibilities. However within the remit of each, they have in common the legislative responsibility for curriculum accreditation and certification.

Moreover the ACACA agencies are also required through their statutory responsibilities to develop and accredit curriculum and manage assessment and certification systems on behalf of both the government and non-government schooling sectors. They possess not only expertise and experience in doing so, but also enjoy the credibility and confidence of all the sectors in the manner in which they discharge this responsibility.

Therefore the involvement of ACACA members in the development and implementation of national education policy in the area of curriculum, assessment and reporting will not only contribute to the quality of that work, it is also fundamentally essential and necessary.

There are some important differences in the roles and responsibilities of ACACA agencies and these differences will affect how each member of ACACA implements this strategy.

3. Guiding Principles of the ACACA Strategy

The role of ACACA members in the development and implementation of national education policy is based on the following guiding principles:



- Each ACACA agency operates within its own separate legislative and governance framework and there are differences in the areas and extent of responsibilities
- Each ACACA agency operates within an environment directed by state policy priorities.
- The policy priorities of each ACACA agency and its roles and responsibilities set the framework within which each ACACA member works.
- Any collective activity by ACACA members is through voluntary collaboration and not as a combined, single entity.
- The involvement of ACACA members in the development and implementation of national education policy should occur at each key stage of the process.
- ACACA members will determine their strategic priority areas for action in their contribution to national education policy.

4. Strategic Priorities

As at February 2008, ACACA members identified the following strategic priority areas for their contribution to the development and implementation of national education policy:

- Clarifying and defining the relationship between the National Curriculum Board and the respective ACACA agencies
- Development and implementation of National Curriculum
- Clarifying and defining the relationship between the National Curriculum Board and the associated assessment, reporting and certification processes so they best focus on recognising and improving the quality of student learning
- Strengthening the interconnections between senior secondary curricula and vocational education and training, higher education and employment
- Enhancing national portability, recognition and credit transfer arrangements
- Revision of the National Goals of Schooling, noting the directions suggested by the Future of Schooling in Australia paper
- Strengthening the relationship between the goals of schooling and school/system performance measures
- Development of fair measures of school performance with an emphasis on value added measures
- Identification of cost, effectiveness, efficiency and timing implications of proposed arrangements for implementing national policy.

This list of priorities will be reviewed and updated at each meeting.

5. Strategic Relationships

ACACA members will work through the following strategic relationships in the development, implementation and strengthening of national education policy:

5.1 ACACA agencies: ACACA members will develop and commit to agreed protocols for their collaborative activity with each other that respects the statutory independence of each agency.

5.2 Government and non-government schooling sectors: ACACA members will work closely with both the government and non-government sectors in their contribution to national educational policy

5.3 AESOC: ACACA members will establish effective two-way processes of information sharing, strategy-development and policy-confirmation with their counterparts in their respective state/territory government education agencies.

5.4 DEEWR: ACACA members are committed to effective processes of collaboration with DEEWR.

5.5 VET, higher education and employment sectors: ACACA members will use their networks with the vocational education and training, higher education and employment sectors to strengthen the articulation between senior secondary curriculum, accreditation and certification and the strategic priorities of these sectors.

6. Modes of operation

ACACA members will use the following modes of operation in their contribution to national education policy:

6.1 Membership of working parties:

- ACACA Chief Executives will make themselves available for senior national working parties where their participation is consistent with the strategic significance of the working party, ACACA's strategic priorities and their state/territory position.
- ACACA Chief Executives will nominate officers from their agencies to other working parties according to the nature of their functions.
- The Chairperson of the ACACA Chief Executives Committee will coordinate the making of these nominations where a request has been directly made to ACACA.

6.2 ACACA Chief Executive Meetings:

- The primary focus of the ACACA CE meetings will be matters of common strategic importance to the authorities.
- Operational matters that are not strategic or mission-critical will in large part be delegated to sub-committees.

6.3 Communication:

- ACACA Chief Executives will continually brief their respective Boards on developments in national education policy, its strategic significance for ACACA authorities both individually and collectively, and the strategic approach that ACACA agencies should take in the development, implementation and strengthening of national education policy.
- ACACA Chief Executives who are nominated members of national working parties will keep each other informed of key developments and emerging issues.

GLOSSARY

ACACA

Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities

ACACA agencies

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Board of Studies, NSW

Curriculum Council of Western Australia

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Northern Territory Board of Studies

Queensland Studies Authority

Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA)

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA)

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

ACACA invites the participation of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

ACACA members

Chief Executives of ACACA agencies.

