

# Citizenship education

In deciding to focus on citizenship education in the 1998 National Report, Ministers acknowledged the importance of this aspect of the curriculum to the development of young Australian citizens. Its purpose derives from Goal 7 of the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia:

To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.

## Discovering Democracy

One of the reasons for making citizenship education a focus area in 1998 was that, in May 1997, the Commonwealth Government announced details of Discovering Democracy, a national program of civics and citizenship activities. Under this program the Government allocated \$18 million to raise students' levels of civic knowledge by the provision of appropriate curriculum materials for students and a set of professional development activities for teachers.

## Curriculum materials

During 1998, considerable progress was made in the development and publication of the curriculum materials. Curriculum Corporation undertook the development of two kits of materials related to civics and citizenship education, one for primary schools and one for secondary schools. The materials were developed in consultation with education systems and sectors, teacher associations, schools and relevant civic and citizenship organisations. The Civics Education Group, chaired by Dr John Hirst, was appointed by the Commonwealth Minister to oversee the program.

Central to the materials are 18 units of work – four each for middle primary, upper primary and lower secondary years, and six for the middle secondary years of schooling. The units are devised around four themes: Who Rules?, which looks at issues related to sovereignty and citizenship; Law and Rights, which examines the rule of law; The Australian Nation, which looks at Australia's democratic system and civic identity; and Citizens and Public Life, which examines ways Australians participate in civic life.

Accompanying the units are two CD-ROMs: *Stories of Democracy*, which provides a range of narratives and inter-

active experiences related to each unit and *Parliament at Work*, which contains interactive experiences related to parliamentary processes and ideas.

Each kit includes videos and posters to supplement the units, and *Discovering Democracy – A Guide to Government and Law in Australia*, a reference book for teachers and senior students.

In addition to the kits, the Discovering Democracy webpage <<<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy>>> has been established on Curriculum Corporation's website. This webpage is regularly updated and includes a database of resources, classroom activities and information relating to civics and citizenship education.

The kits were distributed free to all government and non-government schools in Australia in November 1998. Further materials will be distributed in late 1999 and mid-2000.

## Professional development

The professional development component of the program was allocated \$4.6 million over the four years and in 1998, operated through the education authorities in each State and Territory. The funds were used to assist teachers to understand the purpose and scope of Discovering Democracy, and to equip them to make effective use of the curriculum materials being developed.

## Progress in States and Territories

Most States and Territories established cross-sectoral coordinating structures that ensured all teachers had access to the activities and that there were strong links between State and Commonwealth initiatives.

## New South Wales

During 1998, the New South Wales Board of Studies completed work on three new syllabuses incorporating the study of civics and citizenship education into the K–10 curriculum. A human society and its environment syllabus for years K–6 was distributed to primary schools at the end of 1998 for implementation in 1999. New syllabuses in history and geography Stages 4 and 5 (years 7–10) were also distributed for implementation, commencing with year 7 in 1999.

Discovering Democracy provided a range of programs for teachers and students across all school sectors during 1998, including:

- workshops on the Discovering Democracy program, held by the NSW Discovering Democracy Professional Development Committee and attended by over 1,300 teachers.
- the writing of three 'occasional papers', which were distributed to schools in early 1999
- the development and trial of an advanced professional development course for primary teachers. The course will be made available to coalitions of universities and professional teachers associations for delivery across the State in 1999
- provision of grants to over 50 schools for the incorporation of Discovering Democracy materials into school programs. A further round of grants is planned for 1999. Negotiations are continuing for the development of a website to publish the products of the school grants.

A test in Australian history and Australian geography, incorporating civics and citizenship has been introduced into the School Certificate. Trials of this test commenced in 1998 and will continue until 2002, when the test will be mandatory for all School Certificate candidates.

During 1998, the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Board of Studies and the University of Sydney continued to develop civics benchmarks for years 6, 10 and 12. A second draft of the year 6 and 10 benchmarks with students' work samples will be issued during 1999.

## Victoria

The major achievements and initiatives within the government sector of Victoria included:

- establishment of civics and citizenship education school and teacher awards to recognise and celebrate their achievements
- establishment of a primary parliament for year 6 students
- implementation of the Discovering Democracy Professional Development Strategy
- implementation of a Year 11 Schools Constitutional Convention Program, covering regional conventions, a State convention and selection of students for the National Schools Constitutional Convention
- establishment of the Civics and Citizenship Network of extension education officers, including officers from the Law Institute of Victoria and the Parliament of Victoria

- promotion of student leadership and decision-making through continuing growth of the Victorian Youth Development program and Student Action Teams for 1999
- collection of information for the Civics and Citizenship Baseline Survey conducted by Deakin University
- continued promotion of the Multicultural Policy for Victorian Schools
- development of cultural diversity resource materials for primary and secondary schools in the key learning area of studies of society and the environment.

The Discovering Democracy Professional Development in Civics and Citizenship for Victorian Teachers project involved two network leaders assisting primary and secondary Catholic schools in Victoria to design and implement civics and citizenship programs within the SOSE Curriculum Standards Framework and based on the Discovering Democracy school materials.

## South Australia

The program devised by the South Australian Department reflected its belief that its schools and preschools face three challenges in implementing civics and citizenship education:

- effecting a cultural shift in education where civics and citizenship education is central to learning
- reducing the alienation of many students and children from government structures and processes
- encouraging students and children to participate in active citizenship programs, in learning programs and school, preschool and community life.

In 1998, student forums were conducted throughout South Australia. The theme for the forums was 'Strengthening Community'. A representative group of students met with the executive group of the Department of Education, Training and Employment to present a summary of the findings of the forums. The students identified a range of issues for future policy development:

- increased student involvement
- improved career information and stronger links between TAFE and schools
- better technology links for isolated schools
- equitable distribution of hardware and software
- better trained IT teachers

- a focus on environmental issues and support for environmental projects
- a commitment to reconciliation.

To support teachers in developing effective models of civics and citizenship education, the Discovering Democracy project for years 4–10 was taken up by schools. Key civics and citizenship education teachers in 16 project schools around South Australia developed and promoted examples of effective practice and classroom materials.

Late in 1998, curriculum materials for SOSE and English – *Civics and Citizenship: We Will Take Part* and the companion glossary *The ABC of Being a Critically Literate Citizen* – were distributed to all South Australian schools with a year 4–7 population. A number of professional development seminars took place to support classroom use of the materials. The materials support students to understand and deal with citizenship issues such as identity, rights and responsibilities, relationships with others and optimism about diversity. The department materials complement Curriculum Corporation's Discovering Democracy materials.

## Western Australia

Most independent schools in Western Australia engaged in some form of citizenship education, spending an average of a little more than an hour per week on it. These schools usually incorporated their teaching of citizenship with other studies, such as social studies or society and the environment, but also used music, art, English, literature, religious education and the like as vehicles.

Programs and activities they undertook during 1998 included:

- multicultural studies (Indigenous, Japanese, Asian and Indonesian)
- anti-racism activities (including reconciliation programs)
- community services, including raising money for local, national and international appeals, but also practical involvement in community projects
- parliamentary/government education through visits to Parliament House, local electoral offices or the Constitutional Centre in Perth
- guest speakers, debates and student meetings to increase awareness of community needs and responsibilities and an understanding of democracy.

The majority of independent schools provided opportunities for developing their students' leadership skills and building

character through extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, working with socially disadvantaged people.

Multiculturalism anti-racism and anti-discrimination projects were vehicles for promoting students' understanding of these concepts.

## Australian Capital Territory

Australian Capital Territory government schools provided units on social and democratic participation, cultural tolerance and participation in the world of work. Two workshops on Discovering Democracy themes were held for teachers from government and non-government schools at a summer school convened by the ACT SOSE Professional Association.

A pilot course for primary and secondary teachers was developed and run by the Australian National University Political Science Department on behalf of the ACT Department of Education and Community Services. Teachers from government and non-government schools attended. A program of grants is planned for schools to develop innovative implementation models, including across curriculum approaches to civics and citizenship.

Students in government schools participated in decision-making through student representative councils, class parliaments, school boards, the School Board Forum and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Government Schooling. Student leadership was also encouraged through involvement in the ACT Government Schools Student Network. The network gave student representatives an opportunity to discuss issues at monthly meetings with department senior executives. Other forums in which students were involved included district network meetings and the School Board Forum. Workshops were organised for network members to enhance their ability to participate in decision-making.

ACT Catholic schools participated in trials of the draft Discovering Democracy kit, delivered kits to all schools and provided training for teachers in implementing Discovering Democracy materials.

ACT independent schools incorporated their teaching of citizenship with other studies. In primary schools these included SOSE, literature, Christian living, history and geography. Initiatives included:

- programs focussed on the cultures of other countries
- anti-racism activities

- anti-discrimination activities integrated into units and discussed at whole-school meetings called to formulate codes of conduct
- involvement in a range of charities and community activities
- parliamentary education via Student Representative Council meetings, parliamentary excursions, role-playing and the election of prefects.

## Evaluation

An important element of Discovering Democracy is the collection of data on the learning outcomes of years 6 and 10 students. The first survey, to collect national baseline data, will be conducted in 1999, prior to the introduction of the Discovering Democracy curriculum materials to schools. With the cooperation of States and Territories, the sample survey will be replicated each year, to measure subsequent changes in student learning outcomes and to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of Discovering Democracy. During 1998, the assessment instruments to be used in years 6 and 10 were developed and all States and Territories participated in their trials in November. By the end of the year the assessment instruments were ready for the main survey, which is scheduled for early 1999.

## Multicultural education

Most Australian school systems include multicultural education as part of their consideration of civics and citizenship.

In support of multicultural education in New South Wales' schools in 1998, the department developed and implemented the Education for Cultural Diversity: Curriculum Development project in 43 schools across the State. Work was commenced on the development of teaching units with multicultural perspectives in the key learning areas of human society and its environment, creative arts, and personal development and health and physical education. The 1998 Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition attracted 1,155 entries from years 3/4 and years 5/6 students in 335 schools.

The continued promotion of the Multicultural Policy for Victorian Schools was enhanced in 1998 by the development of cultural diversity resource materials for primary and secondary schools in the key SOSE learning area. In Victoria's independent schools there was also a focus on the multicultural aspect of citizenship. This was pursued using a range of strategies, including guest speakers, multicultural events, special studies and Australian history.

Education Queensland included its Access Asia program as part of its approach to citizenship education. This follows from a belief that Australia's expanding relationships with Asia and our increasing interaction with the peoples of Asia add urgency to the need for increased knowledge and understanding by Australian citizens of the nations and cultures of Asia. Under this program during 1998:

- a State adviser was appointed to coordinate the professional development activities of the program
- five Queensland teachers were selected to participate in the Teacher In-country Fellowships in Asia Scheme, which provides teachers with an opportunity to visit an Asian country and participate in its education system
- professional development workshops were conducted on Vietnam, 'Young People/Old Country' and 'Into India/Raining Surprises'
- a conference was held in July to support the aims of the program and to provide teachers with further professional development. The conference was jointly developed by Education Queensland and the Catholic and independent sectors.

## Parliamentary education

During 1998, this aspect of citizenship education received considerable attention. In South Australian independent schools a number of election-related learning activities extended the menu of civics and citizenship education at the time of the federal election with a special focus on anti-racism and anti-discrimination. Teachers reported an increased understanding of government processes, including our political system, and heightened awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, as products of this curriculum area.

Independent schools in the Northern Territory also made use of current events such as the federal election. As well, this sector conducted a National Youth Reconciliation Convention for 330 delegates from 80 schools representing every State and Territory. The formal output from the convention, The formal output from the convention, the *Youth Charter for Reconciliation*, was made available on a website to schools and colleges throughout Australia.

The Queensland Parliament conduct an extensive parliamentary education program that includes seminars, educational activities and educational tours for students and teachers at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. During 1998:

- more than 2,000 students from senior secondary, tertiary and TAFE levels of education accessed the parliamentary education program
- 95 secondary teachers participated in a professional development program for teachers of legal studies
- 27,500 students from primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education participated in the parliamentary tour program
- more than 2,000 resource kits were distributed to teachers and students from the primary and secondary levels of education.

The Commonwealth Parliament's Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) also provides an important service to Australian schools. In 1998, three components of the PEO's program were relevant to schools:

- the Education Centre program
- curriculum development
- outreach.

The Education Centre program is widely regarded by many schools as the most important educational component of their trip to Canberra. A formal survey of the centre's clients conducted during the year confirmed the very high level of satisfaction with the centre's programs, and provided an array of data on how the programs were integrated into schools' curricula.

The Education Centre program is staffed by a team of part-time educators who are responsible for both the delivery of the program and the writing of the activities. In 1998–99, 2,037 groups of primary and secondary students, totalling 66,910 students, visited the Education Centre. Of these student groups, 471 groups (representing 19 per cent of total student visitors) travelled to Parliament House under the auspices of the government-subsidised Citizenship Visits Program described below. The number of students taking part in Education Centre programs has increased in every reporting period since it commenced in 1989–90, and seems to be levelling off at around 67,000 students per year.

The Citizenship Visits Program (CVP), administered by the Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Representatives, continued to attract significant number of school groups to the Education

Centre. The subsidy scheme, for schools located more than 1,000 kilometres from Canberra, caters to students who might not otherwise be able to enjoy the benefits of the Education Centre.

The PEO continued to receive around 2,000 requests a year from students, teachers and the general public for a wide variety of information. Curriculum materials were sent out to match the requests but increasingly people are being referred to the Internet, where the majority of PEO material is easily accessible. In May 1998, the PEO launched its new website and during 1998, a substantial array of additional material was loaded onto the site. A considerable amount of redesign was also undertaken to improve the attractiveness of the site and its ease of use by teachers and students.

In 1998, the Discovering Democracy initiative led to additional demands on the PEO in terms of making further contributions to teacher professional development, and to workshops for school principals. The PEO maintained a close working relationship with Curriculum Corporation, being represented on the Discovering Democracy steering group, and assisting with the development of materials for adult learning circles. Assistance was also given to the National Museum of Australia to develop a Prime Ministers CD-ROM.

A set of curriculum resources for upper primary schools, which was developed during 1997–98, was published in both hard copy and on the Internet. The resources cover the three levels of government, law-making and representation. A booklet containing examples of best practice in the establishment of school and class parliaments was also produced. Text and images for use by primary students doing projects on parliament were assembled and loaded on to the website.

As part of a commitment to supporting broader and more effective participation by students in the governance of their schools and in general community activities, the PEO began developing video and print resources showcasing models of student participation, via school parliaments and student committees.

The 1998–99, the Outreach program was further expanded, with visits to Perth, Albury Wodonga, Geelong, Horsham, Brisbane, Adelaide, Roxby Downs, Woomera, Quorn, Leigh Creek and Lismore.

**Table 3.21 CVP visits by State and Territory, all schools, 1998–99**

<i>State and Territory</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>WA</i>
No. of groups	48	15	268	48	37	7	48

Source: Parliamentary Education Office, Parliament of Australia

During the year, the restructured Parliamentary Teaching Fellowship Scheme was implemented. The Fellowship scheme is designed to increase levels of knowledge of parliamentary political processes within the teaching profession.

Parliamentary Teaching Fellows participated in a five-day program in Parliament House, where they were introduced to parliamentary routine and procedure, parliamentarians and parliamentary officers. They then planned and wrote a curriculum project, unit of work or research project relating to parliamentary and civics education.

## Anti-discrimination activities

In 1998, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training conducted a number of joint activities with the Anti-Discrimination Board to celebrate 21 years of anti-discrimination legislation in New South Wales. The joint activities raised the profile of anti-discrimination issues and obligations within the school sector. Activities included:

- conducting a State Student Representative Council Conference in August 1998 focussed on anti-discrimination with the theme ‘A Fair Go for All’. About 130 students elected by their peers from across the State met in Sydney for a four-day program of activities related to all forms of unlawful discrimination
- the distribution of a *Celebrate the Difference* poster and pamphlet package and an invitation for schools to submit work samples. Winning entries in age groups from early childhood to senior students were presented with prizes by the President of the Anti-Discrimination Board. These entries were placed on the department’s website
- the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board provided prizes for the Karl Cramp debating competition in which all topics for the final series of debates related to discrimination issues

- training for student welfare consultants to support schools on anti-discrimination issues.

In support of anti-racism education the NSW Department of Education and Training continued to deliver two statewide anti-racism training programs during 1998:

- Challenging Racism: Anti-racism Policy Statement and Grievance Procedures training for Anti-Racism Contact Officers in schools. Approximately 370 teachers and principals were trained in the Anti-racism Policy Statement and Grievance Procedures in 1998
- Whole School Anti-Racism Project training programs were attended by teams of teachers, students, parents and community members from 211 schools.

In South Australia, 1998 saw the commencement of the development of curriculum materials called *Countering Racism – An Aboriginal Perspective*. The materials are for use by teachers of students in years 8–10 and include strategies for a whole-school approach to countering racism, teaching and learning materials and support information. Teachers and support personnel were involved in seminars and activities on countering racism through cultural understandings, culturally inclusive education and multiculturalism in preschools, schools and childcare.

South Australia also produced the nationally distributed *Towards Reconciliation* materials. An initiative of the Coordinators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education from each State and Territory, these materials were launched in South Australia at the Reconciliation Convention jointly convened by the Department of Education, Training and Employment and the Australian Education Union.