



Australian Government

Department of Education,  
Science and Training

2005

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# NATIONAL CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

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F O R U M

*Civics and Citizenship Education:  
Local, regional and global*

May 2005

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REPORT

The *National Civics and Citizenship Forum* was held at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra on Thursday and Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2005.

The forum was organised by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) on behalf of the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

This report was prepared by Vic Zbar, from Zbar Consulting for the Conference organisers.

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This work was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training under the Civics and Citizenship Education programme.

The views expressed in the publication do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training or the Australian Curriculum Studies Association Inc.

## ***Background to the Forum***

The 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum, conducted around the theme of Good Citizenship: Local, Regional and Global Perspectives, was designed to maintain and raise the national profile of Civics & Citizenship Education in schools. This was achieved by involving participants in:

- exploring Civics & Citizenship developments and directions;
- promoting nationally consistent curriculum outcomes and national assessment;
- consulting with key stakeholders; and
- showcasing best practice in Civics & Citizenship Education and the value of such education to schools, students and the community.

Participants in the forum comprised:

- 40 fully funded teachers and pre-teachers from all sectors and states /territories along with fully funded representatives from the Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society & Environment, Australian Council of State School Organisations, Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, and the Australian Parents Council.
- partially-funded representatives from DEST, Boards of Studies around the nation, Teacher Educators/Deans, Old Parliament House, the Electoral Commission, the Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs, the Parliamentary Education Office, the National Archives, and representatives from government, independent and Catholic education sectors in each state and territory; and
- interested stakeholders who responded to advertisements to attend the forum at their own expense, including representatives who were funded by their own schools.

## ***The Purpose of This Report***

The purpose of this report is to provide forum participants and other interested parties with a synthesis of the outcomes of the forum, drawn from the keynote addresses and workshop presentations, together with the outcomes of forum discussion sessions. The report follows the structure of the forum programme.

## ***Forum Programme***

The forum programme, which includes details on each presenter, is included as an Appendix to this report.

## Major outcomes of the Forum

### *Forum Opening*

After a brief introduction from forum facilitator Tony Mackay (Executive Director, Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria and Director of the Centre for Strategic Educational Thinking), where he acknowledged the traditional Ngunnawal owners of the land, the forum was officially opened by Noel Simpson (Department of Education, Science and Training).

Welcoming participants to the forum, Simpson noted that the good thing about the day is ‘the number of new people in the room as well as the veterans of seven earlier Discovering Democracy forums.’ This first Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) forum is part of the national government’s attempt to broaden both the scope of the program from just Discovering Democracy and the audience by going beyond the organisational stakeholders involved to also include:

- 40 teachers and principals who applied to attend and were selected on the basis of their current involvement in CCE and willingness to go back and disseminate the outcomes as leaders in their communities; and
- 45 others who chose to fund their own participation.

From the Australian Government’s point of view, he explained, it recognises the continued existence of the valued Discovering Democracy materials but now is operating under ‘an agreed MCEETYA framework of CCE manifest in the national assessment that Suzanne Mellor will describe, and agreement to move towards nationally consistent outcomes reflected in statement of learning for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 which will be outlined by Di Kerr’.

So, Simpson noted, ‘we have come a long way in ten years — from a time where CCE didn’t really exist in schools to the point it is now a national priority — but there is also a long way to go, particularly in schools’. That, he observed, is part of the role of this forum and the range of activities the Australian Government will fund over the next four years.

Although CCE did exist about 50 years ago, he concluded, it was very different to what we are doing now; which he illustrated by reading from a 1940s UK book on citizenship which primarily focused on the production of student work, including reference to how the margins on the page ought be ruled. ‘Things have changed, and I would hope the next two days will continue to progress that shift’.

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David Arnold (Manager, School Programs, National Museum of Australia) then also welcomed participants to the forum venue and briefed them on the Museum’s Talkback Classroom program prior to a keynote address from Jack Waterford (Editor in Chief, The Canberra Times).

The Talkback Classroom (TBC) is, he explained, a good example of the forum theme of Civics and Citizenship Education in the local, regional and global context. TBC is a 'unique media form which gives young people from anywhere in Australia a voice in a monthly forum broadcast nationally on ABC radio and SBS television'. Each month, three students get to plan and record a 25 minute interview with 'the chief movers and shakers in the land'; including in past forums the Prime Ministers of both Australia and New Zealand. These students also get to take part in a separate three day workshop at the National Museum and Parliament House to hone their communication skills.

This is, according to Arnold, 'an opportunity to research the issues, learn the art of the interview and take the debate up to the leading decision makers in Australia and overseas'; which he illustrated with a clip from a recent session conducted in partnership with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington where Australian students interviewed a prominent US Congressman on such issues as the free trade agreement, gun control and more.

Participants were advised they can view earlier programs at [http://www.nma.gov.au/schools/events\\_and\\_activities/talkback\\_classroom/](http://www.nma.gov.au/schools/events_and_activities/talkback_classroom/) and that applications currently are open for student interview panels in the second semester of this year.

### ***Young people, the media and local, regional and global citizenship***

Waterford started by showing and reading from documents establishing Australia as a settlement including Arthur Phillips' oaths of allegiance on appointment as governor, including an oath affirming he was not a Catholic. This was included because for 99 years before that, no Catholic could be appointed to any such position within the realm.

'In my primary school years', he explained, 'most of the history I learned was focused on the United Kingdom, with the possible exception of a unit on explorers'. When he discussed this with his grandfather he was urged to study it closely and then 'go back to the constitution and understand the basis of every word'. This reflected the fact his family were Catholics and Irish lawyers were renowned for being 'the wiliest and best at using the law to achieve their own ends'; and the constitution was their tool.

Thus, while the constitution was used to persecute Catholics, it also created the democratic system we have today. To some extent, he observed in this context, 'I think we have gone too far and, although I do not want to suggest young people should learn to recite the kings and queens in order as I could, they should understand our constitutional settlement and its relationship to other settlements in places such as England and the United States'.

Switching from Ireland to Africa in 1995, Waterford described a visit he made to Rwanda and, in particular, the time he was standing at a bridge on the border and

saw a group of soldiers on the other side, standing beside a stack of machetes they had confiscated as a million people fled over the bridge to 'one of those instant refugee cities that form'. 'They fled massacre but many', he stated, 'also were implicated in it'.

Looking back from the bridge he saw a large waterfall with a tumult of water at the bottom flowing down to Lake Victoria which is the source of the Nile. He then looked in the swirling water and saw 'bobbing babies who ... people couldn't even bother to kill but merely flung in the water'. It is an image 'that still sticks with me today'.

Waterford then, he noted, spent time in the refugee camp as well and wondered about who is implicated and who not. And he also was struck by the fact 'they were just people like you and me. How could they have been involved in this? How could their society have broken down to this extent?'

Whilst he didn't claim to be entirely sure, he did suggest that, never in Rwanda's history has there been a 'system of routine law and order'. The Belgians colonised Rwanda primarily to 'pillage and rape it'. By the time of independence, they had put Tutsis into all the positions of power and authority, for no other reason than they were taller perhaps, but there was no real, codified system of law. The ordinary person in Rwanda, he explained, never had an expectation that the state would preserve the peace or look after them.

Despite the dissatisfactions or cynicism which exists in Australia, clearly our environment is totally different, and we do not assume our world will fall apart. 'Why is it so remarkable that this disparity exists?' It's not all a function of 'a superior civilisation, though it may relate to a longer time or history to develop it, but 'it is a fact we live in an environment where our expectations are different'.

Most of us, Waterford suggested, do not think about our constitution much, 'and nor should we'. But 'there's not a word in it that isn't there for a good reason'; such as Section 81 which says a government cannot spend money unless it has the approval of Parliament. That section, he explained, cost 50,000 lives to achieve in British history and required two monarchs to lose their heads.

Similarly there is a concern, he felt, about a failure in Australia to understand the politics behind our constitution. Australia was created as a federation at a time when this model was rather unusual in the world. Having agreed to different levels of government, we had to determine a distribution of powers. Then, in each of the separate jurisdictions, had to further distribute powers between the parliament, the executive and judiciary, whilst retaining some powers for 'ourselves' (the people). So there is 'a constant differentiation and negotiation of powers'.

He was not, he reiterated, urging a close reading of the constitution, but rather arguing the need to understand the history and reasons behind it as an essential part of becoming an Australian citizen — 'because that is intrinsic to ensuring Australian babies will never be bobbing up and down in the waterfall'.

'We take it all for granted to some extent', he concluded, 'but it may be more fragile than we think'. He concluded 'I am not as sure the institutions are travelling as well in Australia as our economy at this time'.

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'Given your sense of fragility, and taking for granted of our constitution', Mackay began a short question and answer session, 'what is your judgment of the level of engagement and responsibility we seek to promote through this Civics and Citizenship work?'

Australia always was a great trading nation and world citizen, Waterford responded, but sometimes we haven't always responded with the concern we ought, and 'there's a spirit of selfishness abroad that it's nothing to do with me and it's not my fault'. This is evident, he suggested, in attitudes towards Indigenous issues. 'But we can't have it that way. We are rooted in our history', which he took further in terms of the 'stolen generation' and the implications of the fact it happened with the knowledge and connivance of many people in positions of power. At a broader level, people 'didn't know at the time because they didn't care'. It is, he argued, just as possible today that people in power could decide something else is good for Indigenous peoples which 20 years later will be deplored; especially if we don't use the protections the constitution affords and education about it.

A teacher from the Northern Territory then took this further, relating it to refugees as well and raising the 'abrogation of responsibility by the media' to tackle these things given how well they are placed to fulfil that role.

By and large the media, at least insofar as the mainstream metropolitan papers are concerned is, according to Waterford, 'a liberal institution' which has been pro refugee and their rights. But plenty of people will 'tell us we are a commentariat, or the chattering class who are out of touch', and the attitude towards refugees is evidence of that.

Perhaps 'what they are in touch with', another teacher from the floor added, 'is a lack of understanding and thought because of feelings of comfort and associated lack of concern'. There is plenty of evidence, Waterford responded, of a 'dumbing down and there's lots of dumb material available'. That said, though, there also is 'much more material available full stop'.

Pursuing the theme, David Butler (Department of Education and Children's Services, SA) suggested there are lots of people who are disadvantaged in terms of 'having their voices heard. So how do we include them?' This is, Waterford acknowledged, an area where 'real effort is required'. He then described how his paper has 'lots of gateways' for this, one of which is a sort of chat line known as Your Say, where people can comment on current affairs 'and we don't even correct the spelling so their authentic voice is heard'. Sixty percent of users are, he pointed out, under the age of 20 and public bulletin boards of this sort 'have a real role to play in giving people voice'.

Libby Tudball (Monash University) then expressed 'deep concern' about the fact 'we do not find enough space in the curriculum for young people to become involved in

issues of concern and relevance to them'. Suzanne Mellor (Australian Council for Educational Research) suggested in this context a need to move beyond just expressing voice to a recognition that change comes from 'actually doing something; so people must get better at knowing how to make decisions and work a system'.

There is, Waterford replied, 'a general crisis in the community'. The old models of community engagement have 'almost entirely collapsed'. The political party system, he suggested for instance, has become 'a complete joke' and people's lives no longer are organised around such things as going to regular meetings. We haven't yet, he argued, 'found the structures to involve people and we need to invent new ways of achieving this'. Things involving young people are equally inadequate. The other factor involved is, he concluded the session, 'a loss of faith in what people can do as groups and what government or regulation can achieve. This has contributed to community paralysis', but certainly teaching about it has an important restorative role to play.

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The morning session finished with the launch of the new Civics & Citizenship Education website by Pat Hincks (Curriculum Corporation) and then a brief statement from Di Kerr (Project Manager, National Consistency in Curriculum Outcomes and Curriculum Advisor to the Le@rning Federation) on the National Statement of Learning.

The new CCE website located at [www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au](http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au) will, Hincks explained, be live within the next couple of weeks as part of the broad support for CCE to which Noel Simpson had referred.

The structure and features of the site have been based on intensive feedback received from 16 teachers about the earlier Discovering Democracy site and their unanimous agreement that:

- there is a need for practical activities for themselves and their students, including the existing Discovering Democracy materials; and
- the whole site needs to be easier to navigate.

The key features of the new site are, in this context:

- updated teaching and learning resources;
- dedicated menus that reflect current initiatives, including
  - Assessment along with professional learning activities for teachers
  - National Statement of Learning
  - National Activities
- Maintenance of
  - The Discovering Democracy units online
  - Parliament @ Work — the only database of current information on all State, Territory and Commonwealth parliamentarians and electorates designed specifically for school students.

Also under development, she explained, are online and interactive student activities that will bring the site 'up to date with the capacities that new technology affords'.

Overall the site contains 'literally thousands of teaching and learning activities and materials for use in schools, and each page has a "bread crumb trail" to ensure you won't get lost and can access all the things you need for a unit or lesson you wish to use'.

Hincks ended her brief presentation by inviting feedback and contributions from participants, especially materials to populate the student section of the site. These can be sent direct to her at [patricia.hincks@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:patricia.hincks@curriculum.edu.au) — and in an initial bit of feedback from the floor, one participant raised the importance of adding a parents and community section to the new site.

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The National Statements, Kerr explained, were first put on the agenda in 2003 when the Ministers for Education expressed concern about the lack of consistency of curriculum across the States and Territories. In response, they initiated a mapping exercise of the various curricula to determine the degree of commonality/divergence that exists which effectively justified their concern.

In this context, the Ministers established a project to develop national statements in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Civics and Citizenship and then later added ICT. The list is interesting, she suggested, for the fact it means 'CCE is making it with the big perennials of English, Science and Maths'.

Last year work was undertaken, completed and approved for the English statement, and they now are looking at how widely it ought to be printed and read. The key lesson from the English experience was, according to Kerr, the need to 'carefully bear in mind that though the project is called National Consistency in Outcomes, it is not a National Consistency in Achievement project which is more a question of item design within the assessment process.'

The statements focus on 'what the States and Territories agree they will be consistent about'. And if they can agree on something to include, it arguably is 'pretty close to being "essential", and hence will be included in some way in State and Territory curricula'. It is, then, about 'curriculum intentions and reasonable and challenging outcomes that all students will have the opportunity to achieve at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.'

The development of the CCE statement naturally will work through a mapping of what States and Territories already do, and then work closely with the assessment project about which Suzanne Mellor spoke later in the forum (see below). But it also will 'look forward to identify areas States and Territories might comfortably agree to include'.

This is, she concluded, 'really significant work that will shape what States and Territories include in the curriculum. But we should not expect it will include everything we believe important in CCE. It won't be a picture of an entire CCE curriculum, but rather a picture of what States and Territories agree is essential to be consistent about and hence include'.

Asked by a member of the audience to clarify the process involved, Kerr explained that a Writer Manager will be appointed along with two writers (one primary and one secondary) for six months of intensive work that will involve: gathering information; working through options for organising the statement of learning; writing a draft statement of learning and an accompanying professional elaboration; consultation with systems; rewriting as required; and forwarding to Ministers for approval. A steering committee chaired by Queensland oversees it all and will meet regularly through the project process with a view to completion by 1 February 2006.

## ***Outcomes of the National Assessment***

Suzanne Mellor (Senior Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research and ACER's project manager for the assessment) presented on the national sample assessment of Civics and Citizenship in years 6 and 10 and its implications for current practice in schools.

Beginning with some background to the assessment, she explained how in April 1999, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers, meeting as the tenth Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) set the scene by agreeing to a new statement on *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century*, commonly known as the Adelaide Declaration.

The National Goals provide the framework for reporting on students' achievement, and for public accountability by schools and school systems and, in terms of curriculum, specify that students should have:

*attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas: the arts; English; health and physical education; languages other than English; mathematics; science; studies of society and the environment; technology and the interrelationships between them.*

In relation to Civics & Citizenship Education in particular, Goals 1.3 and 1.4 in the declaration, which is available at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/natgoals/htm>, specify that when students leave school they should:

- be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life (1.4); and
- have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions (1.3).

'The important thing,' she explained, 'is to remember that the whole exercise is national, and that at every stage the project has been conducted nationally'.

For example, the Assessment Domain, and the items which were developed against it, were developed in consultation with the relevant State and Territory officials, informed by the outcomes of the trials.

One of the things that has happened in the context of the Assessment Domain is that 'we are dealing with an area where an increasing number of jurisdictions do have some sort of CCE outcomes which, in the absence of the national statement being developed, required us to forge an agreed basis to proceed. And we did this together. When you then start to develop items, a whole lot of State and Territory stresses can start to emerge and it is impossible to overstate the degree of engagement and effort that is required by all parties'.

### **Conducting and reporting on assessment**

The assessment of a nationally representative sample of students in schools in all States and Territories was, Mellor explained, conducted in October 2004. The sample drawn was a national sample, proportional to state/territory, and the schools were randomly selected. Students in Years 6 and 10 in approximately 590 schools in two (where possible) randomly selected classrooms were tested, using an assessment survey consisting of three parts:

- assessment of civic knowledge and understanding — Key Performance Measure (KPI) 1;
- assessment of skills and values for active citizenship participation — KPI 2; and
- a survey seeking an indication of opportunities and examples of citizenship participation by students together with relevant contextual information.

Looking at the process in more detail, Mellor explained how:

- The testing took 70 to 90 minutes of classroom time. Each selected student received a booklet of items and some background questions to answer, with four different test forms for each year level. Some items were discrete to a year level, and some ran at both year levels. Not all items were attempted by all students, but all items appeared in the two booklets, both within and across the year levels where appropriate.
- The test items had all been trialed in classroom in four jurisdictions in 2003, and then checked and revised by experts and practitioners from all education systems.
- Marking of open-ended item-responses was done by practitioner-experienced and specifically-trained markers, and data entry of 'closed' item responses was finished in December last year. Feedback from participating schools also was provided in December and data analysis was underway by February of this year.
- A standard setting meeting, involving Civics and Citizenship Education experts from all jurisdictions was held in March, and standard setting advice currently is before MCEETYA's Performance and Measurement Reporting Taskforce.

In the context of the standard setting, cut points are to be set for Year 6 and Year 10 and argument is continuing about where those cut points ought be. Until this

decision is made, she noted, settling bands for reporting of results and other matters need to be put on hold. Beyond this cut point issue, there also is 'considerable angst' about how high or low the achievement should be. It is 'well known there is inconsistent delivery of CCE in schools, which means the kids, not surprisingly, don't know it all. The achievement levels we see from the sample are what you can expect to be achieved without consistent instruction in schools; and with consistent implementation achievement surely will rise. It is, however, a dilemma the MCEETYA's Performance and Measurement Reporting Taskforce (PMRT) is struggling with as there is some concern about the gap, explicable as it may be'. The question is, she added, 'are we prepared to make the administrative changes needed to make a difference when it all happens again in three years time?'

The ACER report should, she noted in this context, should be handed to PMRT in July, depending on the resolution of the cut point issue she had noted above.

### **The Assessment Domain**

The civic knowledge and citizenship understandings, for which students are being tested, are derived from the Assessment Domain. This, Mellor explained, was developed by ACER with reference to the National Goals and in conjunction with CCE stakeholders, experts, and representatives and practitioners from all education systems.

The Assessment Domain identifies and describes 'key knowledge and understandings' and, whilst it is not a curriculum, it could inform the development of one. And in answer to a question later in the session from the floor, she wondered where else 'a different curriculum would come from', and expected 'a high degree of congruence with the National Statement being developed as outlined earlier by Di Kerr'. (See above)

The Assessment Domain, she noted, distinguishes between 'Civics' and 'Citizenship', with a key performance measure (KPM) for each. More specifically:

- ***KPM 1 — Civics: Knowledge and understanding of civic institutions and processes***

*Knowledge of key concepts and understandings relating to civic institutions and processes in Australian democracy, government, law, national identity, diversity, cohesion and social justice.*

Civic education is described in this context as 'the study of Australian democracy, its history, traditions, structures and processes; our democratic culture; the ways Australian society is managed, by whom and to what end. Such descriptions of civic knowledge indicate contested areas which will be encountered in the teaching and learning of Civics.'

- ***KPM 2 — Citizenship: Dispositions and skills for participation***

*Understandings related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.*

Citizenship education, in contrast to the way Civics education is defined, is 'the development of the skills, attitudes, beliefs and values that will predispose students

to participate, to become and remain engaged and involved in that society/culture/democracy. A rich and complex set of understandings, based on civics knowledge and attitudes or values, plus the opportunity to experience, to practise civic competencies, is required for effective citizenship education. Without civic knowledge and a disposition to engage, a person cannot effectively practise citizenship.'

Put simply, Mellor explained that 'Civics relates to civic knowledge, and Citizenship is dispositional'. That said, she observed, 'interpretation lies at the heart of all Civics and Citizenship Education'. It's a complex business.

She then provided participants with information on a range of web resources relevant to Civics and Citizenship Education, including:

- The MCEETYA National Sample C&C Assessment site, which currently has information for schools and parents, the Assessment Domain, and Early Release Items. It later will also have the national report, technical information, and further item sets with score guides for schools.  
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/taskfrce/civics.htm>
- An article she herself wrote, *Solving some Civics and Citizenship Education conundrums*, which outlines ways in which the national assessment may impact on schools and practitioners.  
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/aboutdd/assessment.htm>
- An assessment professional development unit developed and delivered by ACER staff in 2004.  
[http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/prof\\_dev/nat\\_assess/nat\\_assess.htm](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/prof_dev/nat_assess/nat_assess.htm)

She also pointed out that about half of the items used in last year's national assessment will be released and she will explore them in more depth in the report. The other half stay secure for use in 2007 as longitudinal link items.

The message Mellor left participants with, as she concluded her address, was to 'stay tuned', and remember that 'Civics and Citizenship is scheduled for national sample assessment again in 2007'.

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Responding to a question expressing concern about assessment preceding the development of the national statement, Mellor pointed out the statements are not about what ought be taught in full, but rather what we agree ought be consistent. Part of the problem for jurisdictions, she felt, is that cut off points cause discomfort because of differentials that may exist. By clarifying what ought be consistent in all curricula, it is possible to start 'creating the conditions for that discomfort to be eased'. Noel Simpson added in this context, that his understanding is that the cut off points to be identified will match the approach being adopted for Science whereby the focus is on 'proficiency' rather than 'minimum' standard as applies to the literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

The national assessment provides, Mellor indicated in response to an observation by Tony Mackay that it all will be an excellent resource for teachers to use, 'an indication of what we should be doing and the challenge for me in the report is to make the domains explicable to both systems and teachers in classrooms'.

### ***Forum workshops***

Participants were then able to choose one workshop to attend out of five workshops on offer showcasing innovative strategies in Civics & Citizenship education throughout Australia. Brief summaries of each of these workshops are provided below.

#### Workshop 1: A Case Study of Meaningful Youth Involvement in Civics Education

Erin Brook (Graduate Officer, Zero Waste, SA) and Nicola Simpson, supported by David Butler from the Department of Education and Children's Services, outlined their own involvement in the Youth Environment Council of South Australia:

- in Brook's case from 1998 when she applied as a student in Year 9 and subsequently became editor of the YEC quarterly in 2000 before studying for a Bachelor of Environmental Management and gaining her position with Zero Waste (a relatively new department in the SA Environment and Conservation portfolio with a focus on promoting waste management practices that, as far as possible, eliminate waste or its consignment to landfill and advance the development of resource recovery and recycling); and
- in Simpson's as an attendee at a number of environment camps and working with others to establish a school student environment committee.

Involvement in the YEC has enabled these presenters and others to become involved in working with many other young people who 'share a passion for environmental issues and making small changes in their communities'. In addition, they have conducted Youth for Environmental Action Workshops (Y4EA) which encourage young people to think about environmental issues in their community and to take action to involve others, using a community plan developed by the YEC and couched in language that is accessible to all.

Some of the flavour of activities undertaken through the YEC can be gained from Simpson's outline of how she led two revegetation projects in her school grounds and worked with other students and staff members to extend a paper recycling program to involve the whole school.

The YEC, the presenters explained, provided them with a group of 'like minded people' who were working to change the attitudes of the people around them, whilst enabling them to gain skills to undertake their own youth-led environmental action projects and help improve their community's environment.

One of the highlights for participants in the YEC is, they observed the opportunity to influence students, educators and government to work towards sustainable practices and achieve worthwhile outcomes.

## Workshop 2: Perspectives From Asia

Kurt Mullane (Manager, Professional Learning, Asia Education Foundation) and David Brown (Senior Project Manager, Curriculum Corporation) examined Civics and Citizenship themes as they relate to cultures and societies in Asia, and provided opportunities for participants to explore specific examples of civic action being undertaken by youth in Asian countries today.

During the workshop, participants were introduced to two new resources — *Crosscurrents* and *Australia Kaleidoscope* — that support teachers to provide additional perspectives in Civics and Citizenship Education.

*Crosscurrents* has been developed by AEF as part of the Access Asia Series, and each chapter provides a group of different texts with ideas, stories and events arranged around a particular theme. These texts include fiction, news reports, historical accounts, film scripts, speeches, poems, song lyrics, maps, photographs, cartoons, postcards and paintings. They also include stories from the past and present, young and old voices, men's and women's voices, and voices from different countries in the region. Together, the teacher and students can share their stories and points of view about the way we create, manage and participate in our civil society.

*Australia Kaleidoscope*, also developed by AEF as part of the Access Asia Series, brings to life Australia's cultural diversity, challenges students to think about what it means to be Australian, and includes a rich array of ideas for teachers to adopt. It focuses student attention on the significant contributions that Asian people, places, beliefs and traditions have made to Australian life through six specific case studies and associated teaching materials and student activities.

A limited number of copies of the latter resource were made available free to workshop participants.

## Workshop 3: Hands on Parliament

Julie Copley (Acting Research Director, Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, Queensland Parliament) facilitated this workshop based on a paper prepared by Kerryn Newton (Research Director, Palm Island Select Committee, Queensland Parliament).

In September 2003, Copley explained, the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of the Queensland Parliament recommended in its *Hands on Parliament* Report a range of 'achievable and workable strategies' to enhance the engagement of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in democratic processes in Queensland. A number of these recommendations related directly to the nature and extent of Civics and Citizenship Education for all students in Queensland schools, and the need for CCE to reflect the experience of all students.

With this as the context, the workshop then provided a forum to work together in small groups and then discuss:

- barriers to Indigenous peoples' engagement in democratic processes in Australian jurisdictions;
- the relationship between education about democratic processes and engagement in those processes; and
- relevant resources available to teachers of Civics and Citizenship including such syllabus support materials as the QSA modules on Active Citizenship and Australian Government: Australia's Democracy, and Bringing Them Home, an education module from the federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

#### Workshop 4: Civics and Citizenship Strategies For Your Classroom

Lianne Singleton's (Senior Curriculum Advisor, Civics and Citizenship, Department of Education & Training, NSW) practical workshop for primary teachers demonstrated a number of strategies for implementing Civics and Citizenship Education in the classroom.

Participants were invited to consider definitions of Civics and Citizenship Education and the reasons for teaching it, as a prelude to engaging in a number of activities designed to promote cooperation, group work and discussion in both Human Society and Its Environment/Studies of Society and the Environment (HSIE/SOSE) and Civics and Citizenship domains.

The workshop used resources such as the media and *Discovering Democracy* materials to bring together Civics and Citizenship Education and the teaching of English, with a focus on encouraging student participation and links to the community through an awareness of community issues — eg, an activity where students are asked to write the events of the Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody poem, 'From little things big things grow', in a series of boxes from bottom to top along the lines 'controlled by Vestey' at the bottom, 'protest against unfair wages' next, through to 'PM gives land rights and celebration' at the top.

Participants also had the opportunity to look at programs and strategies being implemented by some primary schools specifically to teach the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes embodied in Civics and Citizenship Education, and promote Civics and Citizenship as core to the curriculum rather than an additional area to it.

Finally, the workshop looked at links to the national Civics and Citizenship assessment being conducted, which was outlined earlier in the forum by Suzanne Mellor from ACER.

#### Workshop 5: Citizen of Humanity

John Connors (Primary Principals' Representative, Victorian Human Rights Education Committee) presented a workshop aimed at assisting primary school teachers to promote awareness of the existence and content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as an appreciation of the 'diversity of the human family'.

He presented lesson ideas, along with their sources, in the four areas of:

- What are human rights?
- One human family
- Celebrating diversity
- Justice: A fair go for all.

These areas can, he explained, be worked into a single unit of work offered to final year primary students, or addressed developmentally over a number of years. The ultimate aim, though, is that each child leaving primary school should have a good understanding of each of these areas and would qualify to receive the *Citizen of Humanity Certificate*.

Each lesson idea suggested was purely illustrative, and intended as a lesson starter so the teachers involved in fleshing it out can direct the learning according to the needs of the students in their class. The classroom context and whole school programs related to Human Rights Education then can dictate how each idea may be developed further to cover the three principal dimensions of:

- promoting knowledge about human rights;
- encouraging greater appreciation of, and affinity for basic human rights values; and
- developing students' capacity to take action to protect and promote their own rights and the rights of others in the community.

Participants in the workshop had the opportunity to explore the lesson notes provided, and engage in discussion/questions and answer session related to teaching human rights and its implications for such issues as bullying in the school.

## ***Civics & Citizenship education in practice around Australia***

Forum moderator Tony Mackay facilitated a panel of representatives from each state and territory, who outlined current Civics & Citizenship education activities underway in their respective states and territories. The panel comprised Gary Shaw (Victoria), David Boon (Tasmania), Lynette Murphy (WA), David Butler (SA), Lianne Singleton (NSW), Melissa Planten (ACT), Marcia Rouen (Queensland) and Jan-Marie Cooper (NT).

### Victoria

Lots of work had been undertaken over a long period of time in relation to CCE and Discovering Democracy prior to Shaw's arrival on the scene in Victoria which resulted in lots of resource materials and activities in a number of schools. Since entering the Department to work on values education, which links in well to CCE, the two issues have come together in the new Victorian curriculum framework which actually privileges CCE within one of its three interweaving strands (ie, a physical, personal and social development strand, a discipline strand and an interdisciplinary strand). Simultaneously, values is a prominent issue in schools as they look at this as their first task in developing their new curriculum implementation plans. It is, Shaw argued, 'an excellent opportunity for schools to develop a coherent approach to

values, Civics and Citizenship and the national history project'; supplemented by such activities as the 14 regional constitutional conventions which culminate in the whole state convention, and the roll out of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and supportive resources. 'It is', he concluded, 'a very hospitable environment right now'.

### Tasmania

Tasmania, Boon explained, has an 'essential learnings curriculum' and CCE is spread across a few areas but most explicitly in the social responsibility essential learning. Units have been developed around a teaching for understanding framework which relates back to the essential learnings, and this helps spread CCE even further. The big focus at the moment, he explained, is on assessment and reporting. 'Acting democratically' in the social responsibility essential learning is being calibrated and work units are being developed for it against which schools will report in 2006. Units are being included in an online guide, many of which explicitly address CCE. In addition, a teachers' e-line centre is being established which will help bring these resources together.

### Western Australia

'We in Western Australia', Murphy explained, see active citizenship as centring on participation, and this is reflected in the WA Curriculum Council approach. CCE is being integrated across different learning areas, which she illustrated with the example of draft samples for integrating active citizenship into both Science and the Arts. Monitoring Standards of Education (MSE) for Year 9 will commence in 2006, and will include achievement targets that relate to active citizenship, and a demonstrable understanding of democracy will also be included as an outcome for both upper primary and lower secondary students in 2007.

### South Australia

The South Australian Curriculum Standards Accountability Framework includes CCE in various fields and essential learnings but, Butler explained, schools build their own curriculum so it is difficult to state the extent to which they are engaging in CCE. Active participation is, he indicated, exemplified in such examples as the Youth Environment Council which was outlined in a workshop earlier in the day (see report above). The other thing happening through the Department of Heritage, rather than the Department of Education and Children's Services, is the promotion of sustainable schools, which he sees as 'a real opportunity to bring in CCE and make connections we sometimes neglect'.

### New South Wales

Singleton, who earlier had provided a workshop on some developments in NSW (see report above) acknowledged the NSW curriculum is different to all other jurisdictions in that it has Human Society in its Environment (HSIE) as opposed to SOSE. CCE, she explained, is embedded in primary HSIE and secondary Geography and History. It's both implicit and explicit and is actually tested at the end of Year 10. Activities to support CCE focus on such things as the Commonwealth History Project, including effective strategies for teaching CCE in primary and using the history materials in secondary schools. The Department also runs professional development for teachers together with the state Parliamentary Office with a focus on civics, and the state constitutional conventions, and continues to promote the 'excellent' Discovering Democracy resources as part of overall CCE support.

### Australian Capital Territory

With school based management and curriculum design it is, Planten explained, the task of schools to develop curriculum in the ACT and 'we are very site specific'. That said, it all is about to change with the introduction of *Every chance to learn: Curriculum for ACT schools*, to be implemented by 2008, which will require 'progress markers' for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, that have essential pedagogy, content and assessment clearly stated. This document specifies that students will develop as learners, people, community members and contributors to society, so it is expected they will be active citizens. The last couple of months, she explained, have seen a shift towards values education and her task is to make the links between values, CCE, Asia education, and the history project as well as linking up with a range of relevant non-government organisations in the ACT. Beyond this, she has worked with 15 schools over the last eight months to embed CCE in their curriculum and expects this to spread as the new document comes into play.

### Queensland

Queensland Studies Authority syllabuses for SOSE and senior secondary social science, Rouen explained, have CCE embedded in a variety of ways and often explicitly referenced. The Discovering Democracy work 'lives on' in websites and the 'goodwill in schools and professional associations who continue to use and include them'. Sitings of the Queensland Parliament outside of Brisbane, such as a forthcoming one in Rockhampton, provide an opportunity for the Department to engage with students beyond the capital city. The state's Hands on Parliament report (discussed in a workshop and reported on above) included recommendations for education that focused on strengthening CCE for Indigenous students and already the Department has conducted a zone constitutional convention for Indigenous students where two students were elected (as opposed to being selected in the past) to go to the national constitutional convention. Professional development in relation to the Commonwealth History Project and Access Asia consciously seeks to include links to CCE.

### Northern Territory

As with NSW, the SOSE (as opposed to HSIE) curriculum in the Northern Territory, Cooper explained, covers a lot of CCE which is tested at the secondary level. The Territory's Department and Legislative Assembly have also demonstrated a commitment to the area by jointly funding a liaison officer for CCE. The proportion of Indigenous students in schools 'requires us to address a range of issues such as land rights' that may well be less overt elsewhere. The focus of effort in this context is democracy and democratic processes so 'we do also genuinely celebrate democracy week in ways that engage students such as the use of mock trials, visits to parliament, and so on'. They have a Youth Parliament which involves a six day camp for students aimed at developing confidence and self esteem whilst also developing an understanding of parliamentary procedures. At a more formal level, there is a Round Table which provides an opportunity for some older students to provide advice on youth issues to the Chief Minister of the NT. Finally, there is a range of resources available, such as the 'excellent' Cockatoo Island resource that introduces the concept of parliamentary democracy to young children in interesting and engaging ways.

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'It is clear', Tony Mackay indicated in summing up the State and Territory input, that there is a vast amount of activity going on, and the overall message is about 'keeping the momentum going'.

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This array of state and territory input was followed by a facilitated round table discussion of participants on the burning Civics & Citizenship issues for schools.

Whilst a range of responses was received from table groups, the four most consistent issues raised were:

- the time constraints that apply within an already overcrowded curriculum;
- issues associated with assessment such as 'how do we assess some of the outcomes we seek such as active citizenship?' and equity issues that may be associated with a language-based assessment tool;
- the tension between consistency and diversity, and whether or not having a national statement about consistency may limit valued differences between different states and territories; and
- the training and broader professional development needs of teachers to fill a perceived knowledge gap.

Beyond these four commonly mentioned issues, other issues raised by individual groups were:

- does embedding CCE in the curriculum ensure it is explored successfully, or will we just make it another 'tick the box exercise';
- the issue of access associated with the growing placement of resources online;
- the importance of engaging students in participatory activities which use the knowledge they gain;
- the need for implementation time and the dangers of doing it all too fast;
- the need to clarify what terms mean and tease out the assessment implications of that;
- avoiding repetition between primary and secondary schools in particular, but on the other side of the ledger, making sure that CCE is taught at all;
- getting beyond the converts, such as participants in the forum, and engaging teachers who are cynical about it all; and
- ensuring that CCE is addressed in the context of a whole school approach.

## ***Cartooning in a democracy***

Cartoonist Geoff Pryor (Canberra Times) closed the first day of the forum with a description of cartoonists as 'political commentators'. Almost invariably, he suggested, they are from 'the left political persuasion, as opposed to a number of commentators who hail from the right'. And he illustrated this with reference to a number of cartoonists of note.

This, he felt, reflects the nature of the job — the fact they are acting as respondents to the government of the day which, for the most part in Australia, has been conservative at the federal level. 'Cartoonists are', he observed, 'like court jesters who can tell the king he has no clothes'.

He then looked at the issue of cartoonists and democracy at the level of the newsroom and in terms of broader society.

There has over recent years been, in Pryor's view, a 'dumbing down of the press to conform to the tabloids'. The hunt for a broader readership is on, in the context of an increased focus on profits and the bottom line. In some papers, the cartoonist 'can play an important counter (ie, democratic) role' and the newspaper allows this because of the 'court jester' view.

At the broader level, the cartoonist is also the court jester as far as politicians are concerned, and they simply 'laugh it off'. That said, cartoonists can have an impact on readers in ways which ought not be ignored.

The critical issue for the cartoonist each day therefore is, he concluded, determining the issue on which to focus. If the reader doesn't share that judgment, or the way it is presented, then sometimes they may briefly reflect on where they themselves stand.

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Responding to a question about any cartooning taboos, Pryor thought 'not really', because it is 'how you treat them'; though he did acknowledge the difficulty of dealing with disasters such as September 11 as 'its hard to find the level at which to pitch'.

Asked about the way in which politicians are caricatured and drawn, Pryor explained there are particular well-worn ways to portray the characteristics of a person, such as drawing someone smaller than anyone else in the cartoon to reduce their stature.

Commenting on his own sense of agency in the context of broader forum discussions on taking civic action, and how he differentiates for different markets, Pryor noted his own level of passion tends to rise or fall according to the issue involved. 'My action is being able to comment in my given white space. I don't really think of different markets or readers, but I do get positive feedback from young people despite not thinking about them'. In a sense he noted, in ending the short question and answer session, 'I pitch my work to an imaginary reader I know well because I have grown up in this town'.

## ***Providing information on cultural, historical and democratic institutions***

After a brief introduction from Tony Mackay, Garry Watson (Project Leader, National Capital Educational Tourism Project) managed a panel discussion involving David Headon (National Capital Authority), Glenda Smith (Old Parliament House), Senator Gary Humphries (Liberal Senator for the ACT), Camille Dunstan (Parliamentary Education Office) and Kate Thompson (Electoral Education Centre) which drew on the history and development of the national capital to examine the way in which it contributes to 'the heart of our nation'.

The 'fabric of Canberra' has, according to Headon, 'really changed over the last ten to 15 years' with the emergence of a generation that perhaps is the first to really be feeling 'the love' for Canberra, with some flow on of that to the rest of Australia. The National Capital Plan of the Commonwealth, he explained, and the Canberra Plan of the ACT Government, together are very important for the development of Canberra.

The National Capital Authority is responsible for the Commonwealth's plan, the most interesting part of which from Headon's point of view, is looking after the memorials and generating interest in them, especially at key commemorative times. Some, he noted, have been 'overwhelmingly supported', such as Anzac Avenue whilst others, such as proposed artwork marking the centenary of women's suffrage, have been more controversial with the result it was not delivered as originally envisaged.

Building on this, Smith outlined the ways in which people can explore the significance of a resource such as Old Parliament House which is 'one of the iconic symbols of our nation', and which now is used to tell the story of Australia's development as a mature democracy. The building also is used for debates involving young people and role plays, which she briefly illustrated with reference to the constitutional crisis and dismissal of 1975 and the assistance of three participants from the floor.

Humphries then outlined the role of the Senate for 'good government', with reference to the constitution and the intentions that sit behind it. The best protection against bad decision making in the pending new environment of government Senate control is, he suggested, the knowledge there will be an election each three years.

The Parliamentary Education Office, Dunstan explained, sees 85,000 students come through the building each year who engage in a role play/hypothetical parliamentary process with reference to issues they themselves raise.

She then used this, with the support of the other panellists, to look at a short hypothetical focused on constructing an Avenue of Prime Ministers' statues of increasing size according to their longevity in the post (ie, an Avenue of Proportional PMs), and the process needed to pursue this, including a mock debate in Parliament. The exercise concluded with an actual vote of the people, which Thompson put in the context of the Electoral Education Centre's role in promoting understanding of Australia's electoral system in exciting ways that 'really inspire kids'.

## ***Strengthening democracy: Citizenship and civic engagement***

Dr Christina Gillgren (Director, Citizens & Civics Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia) provided a keynote address on citizenship and civic engagement where she sought, in particular, to ‘explore some of the initiatives being undertaken in Western Australia in enhancing the strength of our democracy through civics education and the promotion of an active citizenry’. These, she explained, are being pursued in the context of a belief that ‘people are not merely voters or consumers, customers or clients’, but rather, ‘citizens and, in a democratic community, their individual and collective endeavours constitute the basic fabric of society. It is they who determine the nature and state of that society and what it stands for.’

In a healthy democracy, Gillgren argued, ‘people work in partnership with government for the benefit of all – people legitimate government AND they have confidence that the democratic process will deliver. When people, as citizens, feel recognised and valued it reinforces their self-respect, their self-worth and their human dignity – and, ultimately this reinforces the quality of community.’ Defined in this way, democracy becomes in her view, more than just the right to choose our leaders in free elections. ‘Of course voting is one aspect of democracy but the involvement of citizens once every three or four years is not enough. Democracy requires more than that.’

Commentators and others are, in this context, becoming increasingly interested in the notion of democratic citizenship. ‘Democratic citizens know about their nation’s democratic traditions, institutions, and constitution ... (and are) “inquisitive participants in their community”.’ But what lies behind this growing trend?

### **Drivers for change**

Regardless of where people stand on globalisation there is, according to Gillgren, ‘no denying that we have seen an increase in the importance of markets and an increase in the mobility of things and people’. There has, in this context, been ‘a realisation that governments do not have the resources, expertise or influence to solve all issues’ with which people are concerned. Increasingly governments become more involved in ‘steering’ than ‘rowing’ the course. To do this successfully, however, ‘requires citizen input — to identify the issues, to make known the consequences and impacts, and to proffer solutions or alternatives. Put simply’, she argued, ‘those that are affected by the decisions of policy makers must be given the opportunities to have a say in those decisions.’

That said, the current reality is that ‘citizens continue to feel increasingly remote and disconnected from the processes that affect their lives and they are beginning to express their frustration at this disconnection and disengagement’. Evidence for this could include increased levels of cynicism in the community, some recent mass protests around the globe, and a loss of faith that ‘impacts on the legitimacy and acceptance of government decisions, in fact, on the ability of government to deliver’. This loss of faith, she explained, has prompted ‘a search for remedies’; which in

Western Australia has in part taken the form of the establishment of the Citizens and Civics Unit responsible for:

- advising the government on citizenship, civics and strengthening democracy;
- identifying information, skills and mechanisms required for effective participation by citizens in public life and decision making; and
- fostering dialogue between the people of WA, their government(s) and other institutions.

### **Capital ‘C’ and small ‘c’ citizenship**

The unit recognises, Gillgren explained, that there are two aspects to citizenship: ‘ the formal aspect, a legal status that confers rights and responsibilities within a polity ... (and) the idea of “citizens” as participants in a common political enterprise — basically citizenship as practice’.

In simple terms the distinction between the two formulations can be summed up as: to be a citizen and to act as a citizen; with the focus in WA being very much on the latter.

To advance this aim the Unit has developed a whole-of-government / whole-of-community citizenship strategy, *A Voice for All: Strengthening Democracy*, built on such key questions grounded in people’s experience as: ‘What do citizens do? What is needed in order to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship? How are the necessary attributes of citizens developed? How do we ensure that citizen input results in better decision making, more relevant to community needs? What structural/ institutional/ governance frameworks are required for a civic culture to thrive, so that citizens are really respected and valued partners in policy formulation and implementation?’

The goal of the strategy is ‘a community where all Western Australians are valued as citizens, where they play a more significant role in setting policy priorities and where they help shape the nature of the society in which they live.’

It centres on the four key objectives:

- ***Knowledge and Understanding: Informed Citizens in a Learning Community*** — addressing practical knowledge and understanding of how ‘the system’ works, and the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and government.
- ***Inclusion: All Citizens Count & Have Opportunities to Play a Role*** — including existing anti-discrimination, access and equity measures, but extending beyond this to facilitate citizens realising their potential and becoming full and active members of their political and social community.
- ***Participation: Proactive Citizens Taking the Initiative & Making a Difference*** — focusing on partnerships between government and citizens for active engagement by citizens with matters of policy, and also partnerships between different layers of government and between government and other stakeholders such as business and the non-government sector.

- **Democracy: Developing Public Trust & Confidence in Democratic Institutions** — aimed at developing public trust and confidence in democratic processes and institutions, including through legislative and electoral reform, principles of good governance, ethical government, and fostering civic debate and cross sectoral dialogue.

Being an active citizen in this context, Gillgren noted, 'requires developing an understanding of rights and responsibilities — both citizens' and those of governments.' Rights, she pointed out, are generally well understood, but responsibilities somewhat less so.

### **Civic responsibilities**

In citizenship terms governments, Gillgren suggested, have a number of responsibilities to:

- be open and accountable;
- consult with all citizens – including young people — to find out their needs;
- provide appropriate services to address these needs;
- ensure all citizens, regardless of age are able to input to decision-making especially as it relates to them and to ways of determining what their needs are; and
- build the sense of worth and value of all citizens

These responsibilities go hand in hand with citizen responsibilities. Aside from voting and paying taxes citizens, she argued, also have a responsibility to:

- be informed on issues of concern;
- participate as they see fit in decision-making that affects them and beyond; and
- recognise that their behaviours and actions influence – in fact create the type of society we are, that is they define our Australian citizenship.

'By becoming more informed and more active in community activities and decision making, active citizens play a role in keeping governments honest, open and accountable. It is not simply about providing checks and balances nor about "policing" the governors — it is about collaboration between citizens and their government. To do this we need to build the capacity of **more** citizens to participate **more** effectively so that they feel empowered to shape the nature of their environments — both physical and psychological.'

And the unit's approach to capacity building is, she explained, 'to see democracy as a way of doing and being, not as a page from a political textbook'; which she illustrated with the example of how bullying in schools is best tackled 'through democratic and inclusive practices involving the school children, their parents and teachers'. In one school she cited, involving the students in the design of strategies was crucial since it made sure the school "'got it right", just as their (and your) involvement in government decision-making can ensure that governments "get it right".'

## **A significant shift**

This type of approach, Gillgren argued, represents ‘a shift from the top-down managerial model (the school interprets the problem and assigns the solution) to one that is based more upon collaboration and partnership’, which builds confidence in civic engagement and ‘validates all citizens as equally legitimate stakeholders in society’.

One means of encouraging greater civic engagement the CCU has adopted is the creation of a Citizenscape web portal; ‘a web site designed to strengthen our democracy by assisting citizens, community groups, government agencies, businesses and civic institutions to explore and gain an understanding of citizenship in WA, Australia and the world.’ Gillgren highlighted some of the features of the site <http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au>.

Beyond this, the CCU is closely involved with a number of organisations that are also promoting citizenship issues, such as the Constitutional Centre of Western Australia (‘the only one of its kind in Australia’) which enables students and others to ‘learn about their political inheritance and understand how they can make a contribution to the State's democratic development.’

And this is only the start, with much more planned. One project the unit is keen to establish in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training and the Office of e-Government is directed towards starting ‘a dialogue on public issues with the youth of Western Australia ... (and) involving students in deliberating on real issues in a web-based forum of peers from around the country.’

Although still in the planning stage, ‘we envision that the program will guide students from dialogue to inquiry and then to action. They will learn how to research issues, and how to express and act on their opinions, how to actively engage on real issues that they are interested in. ‘This is’, she noted, ‘what I referred to earlier when I said that we need to teach democracy by doing.’

## **A summary of our work**

In summary, Gillgren explained, the Western Australian Citizenship Strategy is about ‘empowerment of the citizen.’ A key element of this is building citizenship capacity — through knowledge and understanding, through addressing barriers and impediments to participation, through providing mechanisms for engaging, and through promoting deliberative democratic practices.

‘In building citizenship capacity, citizenship education should practice what it preaches, providing not just information, but experiences of engaging in democracy. Citizenship capacity building is about developing people’s capacity to participate in forging a common good. It is about rights and responsibility: and that includes the responsibility to be reflective about one’s actions and their impact on the social environment we create.’

There is, she concluded, ‘an increasing recognition by governments that citizens are well situated to provide solutions to modern day challenges and to ensure positive outcomes. With the complexities of modern life, it makes sense for governments to

tap into the wealth, knowledge and experience of citizens. In other words, there should be strong and healthy connections between people and their governments. And young people are an integral part of the picture.

‘The seeds of democracy we plant today, we will harvest in the future as a healthy inclusive society.’

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During a very brief question and answer session following her address, Gillgren agreed with one participant’s observation that ‘we need to talk to students about democracy as an ideal which we then illustrate in practice’, and noted this is why ‘we focus so strongly on promoting active citizens who create the type of society we deserve’.

### ***The student voice***

Tony Mackay then interviewed five students to gain a sense of what Civics & Citizenship Education means to them and their views on local, regional and global Civics & Citizenship Education. The students were drawn from primary, secondary school and colleges in the ACT and from the government, Catholic and independent sectors. For reasons of privacy this report has not identified the students by name.

Asked to introduce himself and say something about his current activity to get a sense of where he is engaged, a student from Telopea Park School who is 14, explained he is going overseas soon, to New York where his father has a job, and he is learning ‘what it means to be an Australian so I can answer questions about it when I am there’. He is not heavily involved in civics activities, ‘but I would like to be’.

The 17 year old student from Radford College, who anticipates soon joining the Young Libs, explained how he recently was involved in the Talkback Classroom where he interviewed New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, as well as a participant in the National Constitutional Convention. The Clark interview, he explained, ‘gave me a greater sense of New Zealand and the commonalities and differences we have’.

Whilst the student from Curtin Primary School is only 11, and feels she ‘isn’t very involved’, she did recently attend a leadership convention, ‘where I heard speakers who spoke about being a leader and what it means and found that very interesting’.

The student from Lake Tuggeranong College, who is 17 years old, attended the National Constitutional Convention and ‘really enjoyed it’. She has had what she described as ‘a long involvement’ in politics and debating, but her major interest is as a senior wildlife carer for the RSPCA. This, she suggested, ‘may not seem connected with Civics and Citizenship’, but it goes beyond democracy to encompass how ‘we look after our country and our community’.

The student from Marist College who is 17, also attended the National Constitutional Convention and enjoyed it as well. The main thing he took from it, he explained, was the inspiration he received from the dinner address by young Victorian of the Year, Mathew Albert. As a result, he now has become more involved in his school and also in broader organisations including Amnesty International, St. Vincent de Paul and the Marist Justice Society through which he helps promote justice in his own school.

Asked about how he generates interest at the school level, the student from Marist College explained that the school is based on the Marist traditions of 'education for community life' and hence they do 'lots of projects to promote justice issues such as promoting National Sorry Day recently'. This means the students are 'informed about what they otherwise would not know'. That said, he felt that 'teaching citizenship doesn't necessarily work, because it goes in one ear and out the other, but participation does'.

The Lake Tuggeranong College student agreed, pointing to the need to 'engage people more'. Though she did find in her own experience that things like mock parliaments and trials, and debating teams 'always involves the same small group and doesn't really touch the others'. This may, she thought, require an approach where we 'show them how what they do is being a good citizen or not ... For example, if there is a student with a passion for engineering, show them how it is important for society and makes a positive contribution'.

In response to a question about whether there are things she really wants to know about as well as having an opportunity to become involved, the Curtin Primary student indicated 'I think so, but I also know some things after attending the convention'; but she agreed with others about the 'need to go out and do things'.

Asked specifically about the role of Student Representative Councils, the Radford College student pointed to a range of ways in which students in his school can exercise leadership and become involved. This includes an elected (primarily Year 12) prefect system where prefects act as mentors to younger students; the SRC for Years 5 to 10 which makes recommendations to the school for improvement; and a newly-created Awareness and Service Campaign which, for example, organised an envoy of students together with other schools to go to Sri Lanka to view the impact of the tsunami and 'how we can help in more practical and aware ways than just giving money'.

The Lake Tuggeranong College student's school also has an SRC that is 'very real'. At her school there are, she explained, older students who can and do drive, but had no free parking available so had to pay for the service nearby. The SRC lobbied the ACT government and succeeded in getting two rows of free parking for the students.

For all of that, the student from Telopea Park School felt a need for more education beyond the introduction of SRCs which, in his school, haven't any real decision making power, expressing instead a desire to become involved in 'something that really affects the students'.

Asked about whether she sees her involvement as primarily Canberra-focused or beyond, the student from Lake Tuggeranong College indicated she sees herself 'first as a citizen of the world, then an Australian, and then as a member of the local

community. I take on the catch-phrase to “think globally and act locally”.’ The Marist College student expressed a similar view. ‘As humans, we have a responsibility to others, not just in a religious, but also a cultural sense, to promote human advancement’.

Invited to speculate about where Australia will be in 50 years time, the Lake Tuggeranong student explained she and her classmates recently considered exactly this question in their critical thinking course. ‘With all the expectations of more globalisation’, she commented, ‘I don’t see Australia just becoming part of a broader, global world because I think people do want to hold on to our national identity’.

Whilst the Curtin Primary school student’s youth meant she thinks more in terms of ‘computers that talk to you and flying cars’, the Telopea Park School student felt ‘there will be fewer borders like the Europeans and increased power of corporations that leave workers’ rights out a bit’. Whilst the Radford College student had spoken in the Clark interview about the potential for closer Australia/New Zealand integration, he didn’t see Asia being as ‘stable’ as Europe, and therefore felt that ‘increased relationships won’t really lead to integration in the same way’.

Asked by Mackay about the advice he would give the forum on what we need less of to promote CCE and what requires more, the student from Marist College talked of the need for ‘a change in the way of thinking — not brainwashing them, but informing students about their responsibilities’ and the centrality of ‘values and ethics to society’. There is a need, he felt, to tackle what could be described as the ‘excessive influence of American culture which leads to an increased focus on yourself instead of the world.’ It’s a matter of convincing students, he argued, that ‘it’s not all about getting the “A” you want to progress at school; that’s not what education is about’.

The Lake Tuggeranong College student ‘completely’ agreed, and returned to her earlier point about making people aware of what they are doing and the implications this has, ‘so they think beyond their own goals to its impact on the community’. Having discussed the different treatment of, and education about Indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand in the Talkback Classroom, Radford College student felt ‘we got a sanitised education which left things out’ and this led him to disagree with the view ‘you can’t teach Civics and Citizenship. You can’, he suggested, ‘provide information and enable people to make up their own minds’.

Commenting on a final question about the extent to which their schools actually support participation and things like an SRC, the Lake Tuggeranong College student explained how in her school it is not a case of ‘popular election’, but rather interested people just joining and becoming involved. This college experience contrasts with her high school experience and it is an approach she prefers. The Curtin Primary school student’s school ‘asks us a lot about our opinions and we have an SRC, but it doesn’t really meet much and is filled with the most popular kids who don’t do much and just sleep’.

## ***Forum workshops***

Once again participants were able to choose one workshop to attend, out of six workshops on offer, showcasing good practice in Civics & Citizenship education. Brief summaries of each of these workshops is provided below.

### Workshop 1: Exploring Teaching & Learning Strategies to Engage Students in Civics

Libby Tudball (Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Monash University), who has been actively involved in teacher professional development in Civics and Citizenship Education for over a decade, conducted a hands-on workshop for participants which involved:

- an initial exploration of the possible scope of the ‘civics’ component of Civics and Citizenship Education;
- an opportunity to share views and briefly audit ‘civics’ in a range of policy documents; and
- a look at a range of resources that may be able to be used in the future.

A particular feature of the workshop was an examination of a number of case studies of classroom practice for civics which participants could consider for use in their own school contexts; such as one that involved a group of Year 9 and 10 students in the Western suburbs of Melbourne working in student action teams to understand and reduce the incidence of truancy in their school.

Each of the case studies was discussed with reference to a whole school approach that embraced:

- school programs and policies;
- classroom teaching and learning;
- school ethos and environment; and
- community links and partnerships.

### Workshop 2: Assessment for Learning

Toni Glasson (Senior Project Manager at Curriculum Corporation) who is responsible for the management and development of the Assessment for Learning website ([www.curriculum.edu.au/assessment](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/assessment)) used her workshop to:

- Outline the role of Assessment for Learning — ie, formative assessment or, as the Assessment Reform Group in the UK put it in 2002, ‘... the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there’ — in the classroom;
- Examine the research (Black and Wiliam, UK, 1998 and OECD, 2005) which confirms the impact of assessment for learning strategies in improving student achievement and suggests that assessment for learning is part of effective planning, focuses on how students learn, is central to classroom practice, is a key professional skill for teachers, is sensitive and constructive, fosters motivation, promotes understanding of goals and criteria, helps learners know

how to improve, develops the capacity for self-assessment, and recognises all educational achievement; and

- Explore specific examples of classroom practice which can be accessed on this Curriculum Corporation site centred on such assessment for learning strategies as effective feedback, strategic questioning, student self-assessment, sharing learning intentions and assessment criteria and making formative use of summative assessment.

Taking strategic questioning as an example, Glasson explained how teachers can use it to: prepare the questions they want to ask; ask fewer and better questions; use appropriate language and content in their questions; distribute questions around the class; give students 'thinking time'; use prompts to help students respond; use students' responses — even the incorrect ones; encourage students to ask questions; listen, and acknowledge students' responses positively; and frame questions that pose different cognitive demands.

Glasson also outlined the next phase of the Assessment for Learning project which involves the development of video examples of classroom practice and further research on: the impact of formative assessment on general student achievement as well as its impact on underachieving students; what works for students in different socio-economic or demographic groups; the connection between students' emotions and learning; and the success of various dissemination and implementation strategies

### Workshop 3: Promoting Peace in the Classroom and School

Melissa Conley Tyler (Program Manager, International Conflict Resolution Centre) focused her workshop on promoting peace in the classroom and school.

Teachers and schools are, she argued, being asked to do more to ensure safety in the school community and to promote citizenship amongst their students. This is evident in policies such as:

- the National Safe Schools Framework which makes schools responsible for preventing and responding to bullying, violence and abuse ; and
- the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools which asks schools to develop student responsibility in local, national and global contexts.

This is, she explained, all part of a wider international movement which is seeing school-based education as indispensable to the promotion of a global culture of peace; and she shared her own experiences of working in Vietnam in this regard and throughout the workshop.

In this context, the workshop was designed to help teachers and schools develop strategies to promote the values of peace through five different types of peace education — conflict resolution education, human rights education, environmental education, international education, and development education.

Participants were then provided with practical examples of possible classroom activities and school programs they could use, along with the opportunity to draft a

plan for implementing peace education in their own schools, which was then shared with the workshop as a whole.

Further resource information can be found at <http://www.unesco.org> and <http://www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/icrc>, and from Conley-Tyler herself who can be contacted at [m.conleytyler@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.conleytyler@unimelb.edu.au).

#### Workshop 4: Voting Interest in Young Australians

Dr Larry Saha (Reader, School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University), outlined the Youth Electoral Study which aimed to provide insight to the cause of youth disengagement from political involvement, with a focus on students who are 17 or older since young people can get their names on the electoral roll at 17 (pre-enrolment).

More specifically, it seeks to respond to the fact that at any given time, there are around 300,000 young adults, 18 and over, who do not enrol or vote. The project is an attempt to find out why, and whether policies can be developed to make young people more aware and engaged with the political life of society.

The nature of the ARC grant which funded the study was then described, along with the methodologies adopted for it which included:

- group interviews of senior secondary students in 16 electoral districts;
- two national surveys of senior secondary students, one in 2004 and another that will be conducted in 2006; and
- research workshops being conducted in 2005 with a team of experts from different aspects of the broad youth studies field.

Saha then outlined the key findings from the 'enormous amount of data' being collected, with reference to the first two preliminary reports from the study to date which either are, or soon will be available on the Australian Electoral Commission's website, <http://www.aec.gov.au>

#### Workshop 5: Aboriginal People and Citizenship Rights

David Arnold (Manager, School Programs, National Museum of Australia) explained that the National Museum will, in 2005, launch the second in its Australian History Mysteries series designed to enable students to discover:

- (Case study 1) the disappearance of Smithy;
- (Case study 2) the bombing of Darwin;
- (Case study 3) the mysteries of Maralinga nuclear testing;
- (Case study 4) the freedom ride and 1967 referendum; and
- (Case study 5) the death of Juanita Nielsen.

This second series of case studies in 20<sup>th</sup> century Australian history, follows the focus on 19<sup>th</sup> century history in the first, and is a print and video/DVD resource drawing on materials from a variety of museums, historic collections and historic sites, to present students with a rich array of evidence for their investigations. It specifically

is designed for use at middle secondary school level in History/SOSE courses around Australia.

The workshop then took a look in particular at the struggle for citizenship rights faced by Aboriginal people as explored through this new NMA curriculum resource and both discussed and provided feedback on Case study 4. This also provided an opportunity to explore ways in which students can investigate such issues as racist attitudes to Indigenous peoples in the 1960s, the successful outcomes of the 1967 referendum, and the more recent contentious issue of mutual obligation, using such tools as a simplified decision making matrix the participants tried out.

#### Workshop 6: Working the Curriculum — Enabling good global citizens in the classroom

Yabbo Thompson (Consultant and Teacher at TAFE) has a background which includes coordinating the *TASDEC-Global Learning Centre*, a non-government resource and education centre where she delivered professional development to teachers, student teachers and school students on the incorporation of global perspectives in the classroom.

Her interactive workshop involved a combination of discussion and activities focused on assisting students to become good global citizens whilst, at the same time, addressing the needs and expectations of the school curriculum.

More specifically it included a focus on:

- understanding what civil society means;
- gaining a global perspective;
- concepts of participation; and
- practical steps towards a concept of citizenship

all with reference not only to broader philosophical/values perspectives, but also to issues that teachers and students could pursue in the classroom.

### ***The way forward***

The preceding day and a half of formal input was followed by a managed discussion in table groups on the way forward for civics education, preluded by a brief outline from Noel Simpson of Australian Government support for action over the next four years.

The Australian Government has, Simpson explained, provided \$4 million for CCE over the next four years. The key elements of the program are:

- This forum which will be an annual event ‘as a peak activity to discuss current developments at all levels, and also as a form of professional development’.
- Maintaining the national website launched at the forum as ‘a key point of contact and information about what is going on, as well as a resource base’.

- Funding Celebrating Democracy Week each year. In 2005, he explained, Celebrating Democracy Week will span 12 to 19 October. It starts on a Wednesday and finishes the following Tuesday Parliament is sitting in the first week, which means it can be launched with Ministerial involvement, and the second is a non-sitting week, enables Parliamentarians to engage with their schools. There are two things schools can do in Celebrating Democracy Week. They can apply for grants (up to \$500 for an individual school and \$1500 for a cluster) to showcase what they are doing in CCE to their local communities; and/ or students can seek to participate in a student voice forum in Canberra, called *Every Voice Counts*, where 32 Year 10 and 11 students will be brought from across the country, and from each school sector, selected according to the applications they make.
- Funding a \$15 per head subsidy for students to come to Canberra under the National Capital Tourism Project which was outlined in the opening session of the forum that day.
- Funding the Simpson Prize for Year 9 and 10 students with the winners to go to Gallipoli for Anzac Day each year.
- Funding the National Schools Constitutional Convention for 120 or so students from Years 11 and 12 who are leaders in their schools.

The other thing Simpson noted for participants, 'in anticipation of questions about professional development', is the existence of the Australian Government's Quality Teaching Programme which is being substantially funded for the next four years. This money, he explained, primarily goes to State and Territory authorities on the basis of the bids that they make. 'So if you want money for professional learning, I suggest you need to influence those bids, given that CCE is now one of the priorities of the QTP'.

### ***Key areas for development***

Drawing the formal proceedings to a close, forum facilitator Tony Mackay conducted a round table discussion on the key areas for development arising from the previous discussion on the way forward for civics education in Australia.

'Noel Simpson', Mackay explained, 'has outlined the purposes of gathering to get a progress report, share best practice, take the opportunity to develop our own capacities and serve as a catalyst for next practice'.

The messages he identified as emerging to that point in the forum were:

- That there has been 'lots of progress and lots of promise about this work and the environment is more hospitable than it even has been, which is not to say that concern and caveats do not exist. That said, there is much more to do'.

- There are a lot of additional ‘compelling reasons to feel we need to go another step given the national, regional and global challenges we face’.
- Whilst we need ‘to further develop and fine tune what we do now and a relentless focus on implementation, if we do not build our capacity in innovative ways to move from pockets of excellence we won’t meet the new challenge’.

In that context, he specifically asked table groups to focus attention on the last of these tasks — ie, what is the kind of preferred future we want in ten years time, and hence what kind of capacity and innovation, or ‘next practice’, do we need to build? Put simply, ‘where should the energy be placed, not just by systems, but also in schools?’

•••••

Table groups reported back without repeating ideas from earlier groups so a picture of what is required progressively was built up. The key messages to emerge in this context are briefly summarised in the dot points below.

- CCE needs to be ‘hands-on, practical and experiential to avoid what a student referred to as going in one ear and out the other’. This needs to be accompanied by efforts in schools to ‘convert the non-believers’, which in turn occasions a need to ‘integrate CCE in all key learning areas to demonstrate it is integral to all aspects of life’.
- In one word, ‘audit’. There is a need to go back to schools and audit ‘everything that occurs that amounts to CCE activity’. Then we can disseminate good ideas throughout the system and develop ‘a richer marketplace of sharing’. Beyond that, Civics and Citizenship is not particularly catchy, and we may need a new catch-phrase and language to which students and others can become attached. ‘A competition perhaps the Commonwealth can run’.
- Focusing still on changes to terminology, one group talked of ‘empowerment and community’. Getting there, they felt, requires a major shift in teacher education, both pre-service and professional development, with the support of professional associations to pioneer taking CCE out of the classroom to also involve parents and homes.
- There is a need to clarify through teacher education that CCE is a professional study ‘for all, and not just something that is subject specific’. The audit suggestion raised above could also help avoid ‘fragmentation and duplication’ not only in schools, but between them to ‘strengthen cohesion’. This can help foster partnerships to access QTP funds.
- Reflecting on the achievements of the last seven years as well as projecting out the next ten, suggests the area needing most improvement may be the modelling by schools of CCE in the way they behave. Systems then need to support this, including through professional development to shift thinking and provide ‘licence to teachers to try new ideas in the classroom and keep learning themselves’. Teacher time always is a problem in this context, sometimes because ‘we don’t reflect on what we should and shouldn’t do’.
- Perhaps we can support the shift in thinking that has been proposed by ‘shifting walls in schools to support connection’. It also is critical to involve school leadership teams to ‘carry the momentum along’.

- There is a need to ensure in a crowded curriculum that CCE is shared across the school and not just the province of SOSE.
- There is a need for stronger partnerships between schools and non-government organisations to encourage student service and action, so they see 'they can make a difference'. We need, in this context, to extend beyond just Australia, to our region as well and be inclusive of a wider range of voices, particularly the students who ought to be democratically involved.

Finishing off the forum, Mackay observed that perhaps the CCE website could include a 'futures page' so these and other ideas can be shared and a conversation about the next steps can be promoted with many more voices involved.

## PROGRAM

Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005

10.15am Visions Theatre Foyer	Registration – Morning tea and coffee on arrival
10.30am – 11am Visions Theatre	Introduction and Welcome – Tony Mackay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ngunnwal Elder</li> <li>• Craddock Morton, Director, National Museum of Australia</li> </ul> Official Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noel Simpson, Department of Education, Science &amp; Training</li> </ul>
11am – 12noon Visions Theatre	Key Note address – Introduction: Tony Mackay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack Waterford, Editor in Chief, The Canberra Times <i>Young People, the media and local, regional and global citizenship.</i></li> <li>• Questions for the speaker</li> </ul>
12 noon – 12.20pm 12.20pm-12.45pm Visions Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pat Hincks, Curriculum Corporation <i>Launch of New Civics &amp; Citizenship Education website</i></li> <li>• Di Kerr, Curriculum Corporation <i>National Statement of Learning</i></li> </ul>
12.45 - 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm – 2pm Peninsula Room	Suzanne Mellor, Australian Council for Educational Research <i>The National Assessment</i>
2pm – 3pm  Bunyip Room  Yowie Room Peninsula Room  Biami Room  Visions Theatre	Workshops showcasing innovative strategies in Civics and Citizenship Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Environment Council of South Australia: Erin Brook, Nicola Simpson with David Butler, South Australia Dept. of Education &amp; Children's Services <i>A Case Study of Meaningful Youth Involvement in Civics Education</i></li> <li>• Kurt Mullane, Asia Education Foundation <i>Perspectives from Asia</i></li> <li>• Julie Copley, Queensland Parliament – <i>Hands on Parliament</i></li> <li>• Lianne Singleton, NSW Department of Education &amp; Training <i>Civics &amp; Citizenship strategies for your classroom</i></li> <li>• John Connors – Human Rights Education Committee, Victoria <i>Citizen of Humanity</i></li> </ul>
3pm – 3.30pm	Afternoon Tea
3.30pm – 3.50 pm Peninsula Room	Panel: Facilitated by Tony Mackay  What's happening in the states/territories in Civics and Citizenship education? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gary Shaw (VIC)</li> <li>• David Boon (TAS)</li> <li>• Lynette Murphy (WA)</li> <li>• David Butler (SA)</li> <li>• Lianne Singleton (NSW)</li> <li>• Melissa Planten (ACT)</li> <li>• Marcia Rouen (QLD)</li> <li>• Jan-Marie Cooper, Manunda Terrace Primary School (NT)</li> </ul>
3.50pm – 4.15 pm Peninsula Room	Roundtable Discussions. Facilitated by Tony Mackay. <i>Civics &amp; Citizenship Education: What are the Burning Issues in Schools?</i>
4.15pm – 4.30pm	Reporting Back
4.30pm – 5pm Peninsula Room	Geoff Pryor – <i>Cartooning in a Democracy</i>
7pm	Forum Dinner, the Hall, University House

Friday May 27, 2005

8.30 am	Arrival Tea and Coffee
8.45am – 9.30am Visions Theatre	Introduction: Tony Mackay Garry Watson: Providing information on cultural, historical and democratic institutions. What the Australian Electoral Commission and the Parliamentary Education Office do. With guest Senator Gary Humphries, Liberal Senator for the ACT.
9.30am – 10.30am Visions Theatre	Introduction: Tony Mackay Keynote address – Dr Christina Gillgren - <i>Strengthening Democracy – Citizenship &amp; Civic Engagement</i> • Questions for the speaker
10.30am – 11am Visions Theatre	Student Voice – An interview with Tony Mackay  Student Views on local, regional and global Civics & Citizenship.
11.00am – 11.30am	Morning Tea
11.30am –12.30 pm  Broadcast Studio  Biami Room Peninsula Room  Visions Theatre Yowie Room Bunyip Room	Workshops showcasing good practice in Civics and Citizenship Education  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libby Tudball, Monash University <i>Exploring Teaching &amp; Learning Strategies to Engage Students in Civics</i></li> <li>• Toni Glasson, Glasson &amp; Carroll Consulting <i>Assessment for Learning</i></li> <li>• Melissa Conley Tyler, International Conflict Resolution Centre, University of Melbourne <i>Promoting Peace in the Classroom and School</i></li> <li>• Dr. Larry Saha, ANU – <i>Voting interest in young Australians</i></li> <li>• David Arnold, National Museum <i>Aboriginal people &amp; Citizenship Rights</i></li> <li>• Yabbo Thompson, Education Plus Consulting <i>Working the Curriculum – enabling good global citizens in the classroom</i></li> </ul>
12.30 pm– 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30 pm– 1.45 pm  Peninsula Room	Civics and Citizenship Education- the way forward  Noel Simpson, Department of Education, Science & Training <i>Celebrating Democracy Week - Every Voice Counts</i>
1.45 pm– 2.45 pm Peninsula Room	In the light of forum discussions - identify key areas for development. (Round table discussion). Facilitated by Tony Mackay
2.45pm – 3.15pm Visions Theatre	A liberal dose of Shortis & Simpson
3.30pm Front of Museum	Leave by bus for Government House
4.00pm-5.00pm	Reception at Government House hosted by the Governor-General
5.00pm	Bus leaves Government House to return to University House.

Handout from Suzanne Mellor

Senior Research Fellow,  
Australian Council for Educational Research

2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

National Museum of Australia  
May 26 & 27, 2005

## **National Civics & Citizenship Forum: Canberra 2005**

### **Background to the Civics and Citizenship National Sample Assessment: 2004**

In April 1999, the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education, meeting as the tenth Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), agreed to the new *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (the Adelaide Declaration). The National Goals provide the framework for reporting on student achievement and for public accountability by schools and school systems.

The National Goals for Schooling specify that in terms of curriculum, students should have:

- *attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas: the arts; English; health and physical education; languages other than English; mathematics; science; studies of society and environment; technology and the interrelationships between them.*

The Adelaide Declaration on *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* is available from the following web site: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm>.

Goals 1.3 and 1.4 specify that when students leave schools they should:

- *be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life (goal 1.4).*

Moreover, students should

- *have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions (goal 1.3).*

#### **Conducting and Reporting on the Assessment**

The Assessment was undertaken in a sample of Australian schools, in all states and territories in October 2004. The sample was proportionally-weighted by jurisdiction and the schools were randomly-selected. Students in Years 6 and 10, in approximately 590 schools, in 2 (where possible) randomly-selected classrooms per school, were tested.

- The testing took 70-90 minutes of classroom time.
- Each selected student received a booklet of items and some background questions to answer.
- There were four different test forms for each year level. Some items were discrete to a year level, some ran at both year levels. Not all items were attempted by all students, but all items appeared in 2 of the booklets, both within and across the year levels where appropriate.
- The test items were all trialled in classrooms in 4 jurisdictions in 2003, checked and revised by experts and practitioners from all education systems.
- Marking of open-ended item-responses, done by practitioner-experienced and specifically-trained markers, and data entry of 'closed' item responses, was finished in December.
- Participating school's feedback was provided in December.
- Data analysis was underway by February.
- A standard setting meeting, involving CCE experts from all jurisdictions, was held in March.
- Standard setting advice is currently before MCEETYA's Performance and Measurement Reporting Taskforce (PMRT).
- ACER Report should be handed to PMRT in July.

## **The Assessment Domain Distinguishes between 'Civics' and 'Citizenship'**

The civic knowledge and citizenship understandings for which students are being tested are derived from the Assessment Domain. This was developed by ACER, referencing the National Goals, in conjunction with CCE stakeholders, experts and representatives and practitioners from all education systems. The Assessment Domain identifies and describes key knowledge and understandings. It is not a curriculum, but could inform the development of one.

### **KPM 1: Civics: Knowledge & Understanding of Civic Institutions & Processes**

*Knowledge of key concepts and understandings relating to civic institutions and processes in Australian democracy, government, law, national identity, diversity, cohesion and social justice.*

(Civic education is the study of Australian democracy, its history, traditions, structures and processes; our democratic culture: the ways Australian society is managed, by whom and to what end. Such descriptions of civic knowledge indicate contested areas which will be encountered in the teaching and learning of Civics.)

### **KPM 2: Citizenship: Dispositions & Skills for Participation**

**Understandings related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.**

(Citizenship education is the development of the skills, attitudes, beliefs and values that will predispose students to participate, to become and remain engaged and involved in that society/culture/democracy. A rich and complex set of understandings, based on civics knowledge and attitudes or values, plus the opportunity to experience, to practise civic competencies, is required for effective citizenship education. Without civic knowledge and a disposition to engage, a person cannot effectively practise citizenship.)

Thus Civics relates to civic knowledge and Citizenship is dispositional.  
But interpretation lies at the heart of all Civics and Citizenship Education.

#### ***Some relevant websites***

MCEETYA National Sample C&C Assessment: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/taskfrce/civics.htm>  
(It currently has information for schools and parents, the Assessment Domain and Early Release Items etc. It will later have the national report, technical information, further item sets, with score guides, for use by schools.)

The ways in which the national assessment may impact on practitioners has already been the subject of some publications.

'Solving some Civics and Citizenship Education Conundrums' (an article by Suzanne Mellor) is online at: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/aboutdd/assessment.htm>

An assessment PD Unit developed and delivered by ACER staff in 2004 is online at: [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/prof\\_dev/nat\\_assess/nat\\_assess.htm](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/prof_dev/nat_assess/nat_assess.htm)

So Stay Tuned!

(And remember Civics and Citizenship is scheduled for national sample assessment again in 2007.)

**Suzanne Mellor: ACER Project Manager for the Civics and Citizenship Assessment Project.**

2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

# WORKSHOPS

Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005 2-3pm

Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005 11.30-12.30pm

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 1

2pm – 3pm, Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** A Case Study of Meaningful Youth Involvement in Civics Education

**Presenter's Names:** Erin Brook and Nicola Simpson  
The Youth Environment Council of South Australia

**Location:** Bunyip Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

This workshop will highlight the Youth Environment Council as a case study of meaningful and involving civics education. It will consider what makes the Youth Environment Council so successful as an educational and environmental initiative. The group consists of young people working together with guidance from mentors to develop ways to encourage other young people to be active in caring for the environment. The young people involved develop personal group work, presentation and leadership skills as well as building confidence. Most importantly, they have a real impact on the attitudes of people around them.

#### **Presenter's Biographies:**

##### **Erin Brook**

Erin has been involved with the Youth Environment Council of South Australia since 1998. She was appointed Editor of the YEC quarterly magazine in 2000. Erin has helped run Youth for Environmental Action Workshops (Y4EA), which encourage young people to think about environmental issues in their community. She has also presented to young people, school teachers, students and various managers of government departments about the YEC, how it works, and engagement and involvement of young people with environmental issues and decision making. She currently works for Zero Waste SA.

##### **Nicola Simpson**

Nicola became involved in the YEC in 2002 after developing an interest in the environment. She has since become passionate about the value of meaningful youth involvement. Nicola has attended a number of environment camps and worked with others to establish a school student environment committee. She led two revegetation projects in her school grounds and worked with other students and staff members to extend a paper recycling program to involve the whole school.

Nicola was a youth representative to the National Summit on the Future of Australia's Cities and Towns in Canberra last year. She is currently in her second year of a combined Law and International Studies degree at Flinders University and continues to be involved in the YEC as a mentor. She also has a small position in the Environmental Education Unit of the Department for Environment and Heritage helping out the mentors of the YEC.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 1

2pm – 3pm, Thursday, 26th May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Civics & Citizenship – Perspectives from Asia

**Presenter's Names:** Kurt Mullane, Asia Education Foundation  
David Brown, Curriculum Corporation

**Location:** Yowie Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

This workshop will examine Civics & Citizenship themes as they relate to cultures and societies in Asia and provide opportunities for delegates to explore specific examples of civic action being undertaken by youth in Asian countries today. During the workshop, delegates will be introduced to two new resources, *Crosscurrents* and *Australian Kaleidoscope*, that support teachers to provide additional perspectives in Civics & Citizenship education.

*Crosscurrents* has been developed by the AEF through the Access Asia series. Each chapter offers a group of different texts on ideas, stories and events arranged around a particular theme. These texts include fiction, news reports, historical accounts, film script, speeches, poems, song lyrics, maps, photographs, cartoons, postcards and paintings. They include stories from the past and present, young voices, old voices, men's voices and women's voices, voices from China, Australian, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and a number of other countries in the region. Together, teacher and student can share their stories and their points of view about the way we create, manage and take part in our civic society.

*Australian Kaleidoscope*, also developed by the AEF through the Access Asia series, brings to life Australia's cultural diversity, challenges students to think about what it means to be Australian and includes a rich array of support ideas for teachers. It focuses student attention on the significant contributions that Asian people, places, beliefs and traditions have made to Australian life. A limited number of copies of *Australian Kaleidoscope* will be available, free of charge, for workshop participants.

#### **Presenter's Biographies:**

##### **Kurt Mullane**

Kurt Mullane is currently Manager, Professional Learning at the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) and has responsibility for the development and delivery of professional learning programs, curriculum resources, teacher study tours and various partnerships for the AEF.

##### **David Brown**

*MA (London), BA (Hons), Dip Ed, BEd*

David has a background as a teacher of English, history and drama in secondary schools and tertiary education institutes. After post graduate studies in Asian history and international relations in the Far East at the University of London he took up a teaching position in the Humanities at Ballarat TAFE. After working for several years as an executive producer and manager in the film industry, David joined Curriculum

Corporation in 1999 to manage the print, CD-ROM and video resource production for the Commonwealth's civics and citizenship education program *Discovering Democracy*. Since that time he has also managed curriculum materials development for *National History Project*, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Federal Court of Australia. In 2003 he managed the *Values Education Study* and the *Boys Education Lighthouse Schools Programme (Stage 1)* for the Australian government.

Currently he is Senior Project Manager responsible for a number of major national projects: Civics and Citizenship Education, *Values Education Good Practice Schools – Stage 1*, *Values Education Resources* and the *Success for Boys – Stage 1* professional learning resource development project.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 1

2pm – 3pm, Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Hands on Parliament

**Presenter's Names:** Julie Copley, Queensland Parliament  
Kerryn Newton, Queensland Parliament

**Location:** Peninsula Room

#### Workshop synopsis:

In September 2003, in its HANDS ON PARLIAMENT report, the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of the Queensland Parliament recommended a range of achievable and workable strategies to enhance the engagement of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in democratic processes in Queensland. A number of these recommendations related to the nature and extent of civics and citizenship education for all students in Queensland schools.

This workshop will provide a forum for the discussion of:

- barriers to Indigenous peoples' engagement in democratic processes in Australian jurisdictions;
- the relationship between education about democratic processes and engagement in those processes; and
- relevant resources available to teachers of civics and citizenship.

#### Presenter's Biographies:

##### Julie Copley

Julie is the Acting Research Director of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, a committee of the Queensland Parliament. She has worked for the Queensland Parliamentary Service for twelve months. Julie holds Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Bachelor of Arts degrees (UQ) as well as a Master of Laws (QUT). She has taught constitutional law, administrative law and criminal law at a number of Queensland universities, and has worked as a Research Officer for the Litigation Reform Commission (Qld) and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (Qld).

##### Kerryn Newton

Kerryn is currently the Research Director of the Palm Island Select Committee, a select committee of the Queensland Parliament. She has worked for the Queensland Parliamentary Service since 1995 and is on secondment from her position as Research Director of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of the Queensland Parliament. Kerryn is admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia, and has worked as a solicitor in private practice, served as counsel assisting a military board of inquiry, and worked as a part-time tutor in law. She holds the following qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Hons) (QUT); Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investment (SIA); Master of Arts in International Studies – China (GU); Master of Laws (QUT) and Graduate Certificate in Business Administration (QUT).

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 1

2pm – 3pm, Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Civics & Citizenship Strategies for Your Classroom

**Presenter's Name:** Lianne Singleton, NSW Department of Education and Training

**Location:** Biami Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

This practical workshop for primary teachers demonstrates a number of strategies for implementing civics and citizenship education in the classroom. Participants will consider definitions of civics and citizenship education, the reasons for teaching civics and citizenship education and engage with meaningful activities designed to promote cooperation, group work and discussion in HSIE/SOSE and Civics and Citizenship. The workshop will utilise resources such as the media and the Discovering Democracy materials to bring civics and citizenship education and English teaching together, encouraging student participation and links to the community through an awareness of community issues. The workshop will also look at programs and strategies whole primary schools are implementing to specifically teach the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes of civics and citizenship education, promoting civics and citizenship as core to the curriculum rather than an additional area. This workshop will look at links to the national civics and citizenship assessment domain.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

Lianne Singleton is the Senior Curriculum Adviser, Civics and Citizenship with the NSW Department of Education and Training. She is currently the project officer for the Commonwealth History Project in NSW, having been a project officer for the Discovering Democracy Program. Her background is in primary teaching but she has worked extensively from K to 10 in Civics and Citizenship professional development. Previous positions include HSIE K–6 Consultant in Western Sydney.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 1

2pm – 3pm, Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Citizen of Humanity

**Presenter's Name:** John Connors,  
Principal, St Anne's Primary School, Victoria

**Location:** Visions Theatre

#### Workshop synopsis:

This workshop will aim to assist primary school teachers in promoting awareness of the existence and content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and appreciation for the diversity of the human family. The lesson ideas are comprised of four sections and are taken from a variety of sources that are clearly identified. It is anticipated that units of work may be developed for any or all of the middle years. There are four main areas to be addressed;

- What are Human Rights?
- One Human Family
- Celebrating Diversity, and
- Justice: A fair go for all.

These areas can be worked into one unit of work offered to final year Primary students, or they could be addressed developmentally over a number of years. The ultimate aim is that each child leaving primary school would have good understandings of each of these areas and would qualify to receive the *Citizen of Humanity Certificate*. Each lesson idea is merely a suggestion and is designed only as a lesson starter. In this way, the teachers involved in the development of each unit can direct the learning according to the needs of the individual students. The context of the classroom and whole school programs related to Human Rights Education will dictate how each idea may be developed further to cover all three principal dimensions of HRE which are:

- promotion of knowledge about human rights,
- encouraging greater appreciation and affinity for basic human rights values,
- developing the capacity of students to take action to protect and promote their own rights and the rights of others in their community.

In this workshop, Forum participants will have the chance to explore the lesson notes, reflect on their suitability and perhaps even add to them through group discussion/jigsaw activity.

#### Presenter's Biography:

John Connors has been teaching for over twenty years and has had many and varied experiences. He is a member of the Victorian Human Rights Education Committee, representing Victorian Catholic Primary Principals. John is currently in his second appointment as Principal, previous roles have included Religious Education Coordinator, Gender Equity Officer, Artefacts Coordinator and Pelican. He has taught all grade levels in places as diverse as Bulleen, Vic and Balgo Hills, WA. As well as being a classroom teacher, he is a qualified music teacher with methods in voice,

keyboards, guitar and woodwind. His experience has included a lengthy tenure at the Zoo Education Services, Vic.

As well as teaching and music qualifications, he holds a Master of Education degree, with research focusing on Aboriginal Art in Mainstream Curriculum, as well as a Master of Catholic Education degree.

John's interests and hobbies include; music (particularly Baroque, but his collection also includes *Hootie and the Blowfish* and *The Offspring*), anything to do with the beach, and good food and wine. He also does the odd appearance as a Safari Guide at Victoria's Open Range Zoo.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 2

11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Exploring Teaching & Learning Strategies to Engage Students in Civics

**Presenter's Name:** Libby Tudball, Monash University

**Location:** Broadcast Studio

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

In this practical workshop, participants will first explore the possible scope of the "Civics" component of Civics & Citizenship education. There will be an opportunity to share views and briefly audit Civics in a range of policy documents. Second, the focus will be on case studies of classroom practice for Civics and finally a look at resources that may be utilised in the future.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

Libby Tudball is a Lecturer in Education at Monash University, Melbourne. She has been actively involved in teacher professional development in Civics & Citizenship education (CCE) for more than a decade, and completed her doctoral studies on improving student learning in CCE in 2004. Libby is a life member of the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers and is the vice-president of the Social Educators' Association of Australia.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 2

11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Assessment for Learning

**Presenter's Name:** Toni Glasson, Glasson & Carroll Consulting

**Location:** Biامي Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

This workshop will focus on the role of Assessment for Learning (formative assessment) in the classroom. We will look at the research (Black and William, UK, 1998 and OECD, 2005) which confirms the impact of assessment for learning strategies in improving student achievement, and explore examples of classroom practice.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

As Senior Project Manager at Curriculum Corporation Toni Glasson was responsible for the management and development of the Assessment for Learning website ([www.curriculum.edu.au/assessment](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/assessment)). She has considerable experience as a teacher, education writer, professional development consultant and curriculum manager, and is currently managing the next phase of the Assessment for Learning project – the development of video examples of classroom practice - on behalf of Curriculum Corporation. Toni also conducts professional development related to assessment for learning strategies for schools and clusters.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 2

11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Promoting Peace in the Classroom & School

**Presenter's Name:** Melissa Conley Tyler,  
International Conflict Resolution Centre, University  
of Melbourne

**Location:** Peninsula Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

Teachers and schools are being asked to do more to ensure safety in the school community and promote citizenship among students. Policies such as the National Safe Schools Framework make schools responsible for preventing and responding to bullying, violence and abuse while the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools ask schools to develop student responsibility in the local, national and global contexts. This is part of an international movement which sees school-based education as indispensable to promotion of a global culture of peace.

This workshop will help teachers and schools develop strategies to promote values of peace through five different types of peace education: conflict resolution education, human rights education, environmental education, international education and development education. Participants will be offered practical examples of possible classroom activities and school programs and will be given the opportunity to draft a plan for implementing peace education in their own schools.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

*Melissa Conley Tyler* is Program Manager of the International Conflict Resolution Centre. The quality of Melissa's work in peace education has been recognised by invitations to speak at international forums including in New York, Columbus Ohio, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and Wellington. Her research will be presented at the Global Conference on Prevention of Armed Conflict, Second Annual Conference on Conflict Resolution Education and National Civics and Citizenship Forum in 2005. Melissa is co-author of the Peace Education Bibliography at [www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/icrc](http://www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/icrc) and her work has been featured in a special peace education issue of the Association for Conflict Resolution's *ACResolution* magazine. In June 2005, Melissa is convening the 2005 Fulbright Symposium on Peace and Human Rights Education in conjunction with the Faculty of Law.

**2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum**

**Workshop 2**

**11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

**Workshop Title:** The Youth Electoral Study

**Presenter's Name:** Dr Larry Saha  
Australian National University

**Location:** Visions Theatre

**Workshop synopsis:**

In the workshop I will describe the four-year Youth Electoral Study, which is a study of the causes of youth disengagement from political involvement by students 17 years of age and older. The reason for the study, and the nature of the ARC grant will be described. I will then discuss the methodologies of the study and the data that we are collecting. The contents of our first two preliminary reports will be made available.

**Presenter's Biography:**

- Joint Investigator, Youth Electoral Study (YES)
- Reader, School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 2

11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Aboriginal People & Citizenship Rights

**Presenter's Name:** David Arnold, National Museum of Australia

**Location:** Yowie Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

In 2005 the National Museum of Australia will be launching the second in its Australian History Mysteries series for upper primary and secondary schools. In this series, students will discover the mysteries of Maralinga nuclear testing, the bombing of Darwin, the death of Juanita Nielsen and the disappearance of Smithy. They will also explore the seeming contradiction between racist attitudes to Indigenous people in the 1960s and the successful outcome of the 1967 referendum on the Aboriginal question. This workshop will take a look at the struggle for citizenship rights faced by Aboriginal people as explored in this new NMA curriculum resource.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

David Arnold was appointed Manager of Schools Programs at the new National Museum of Australia in Canberra in August 2000, having spent over ten years at the Commonwealth Parliament, first as an education officer and Assistant Director in the Parliamentary Education Office, and later as a Principal Research Officer on the Senate's Environment Committee.

David has a strong commitment to the teaching of history and culture having taught history at three secondary schools in Victoria in the 1980s. In his current position at the National Museum, David is committed to furthering the cause of history and SOSE/HSIE teaching in schools.

## 2005 National Civics & Citizenship Forum

### Workshop 2

11.30 – 12.30pm, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

**Workshop Title:** Working the Curriculum - Enabling Good Global Citizens in the Classroom

**Presenter's Name:** Yabbo Thompson, Education Plus Consulting

**Location:** Bunyip Room

#### **Workshop synopsis:**

This workshop will be interactive involving discussion and activities to assist students to become good global citizens, whilst at the same time addressing the needs of the curriculum.

It will involve:

- An understanding of what civil society means
- Gaining a global perspective
- Concepts of participation
- Practical steps towards a concept of citizenship

For teachers of Upper Primary through Secondary (High) school. Handouts and a list of resources will be given.

#### **Presenter's Biography:**

Yabbo is currently working as a consultant and a teacher at TAFE, and is a teacher of many years experience including running a small school in the late 1970s/early 1980s. She coordinated a non government resource and education centre, *TASDEC-Global Learning Centre* for over 15 years until 2003, during which time she delivered professional development to teachers, student teachers and school students on the incorporation of global perspectives in the classroom.

Yabbo also has written curriculum resources and continues to work with individuals and groups to develop programs. She has been involved in community development for many years and is passionate about enabling a global perspective both within the formal education sectors and wider community.



PRESENTATION TO

*2005 National Civics and Citizenship Forum*

*Canberra May 2005*

**Strengthening Democracy  
Citizenship and Civic Engagement**

**Dr Christina Gillgren**

Director, Citizens & Civics Unit,

Department of the Premier & Cabinet

**Western Australia**

My presentation today will explore some of the initiatives being undertaken in Western Australia in enhancing the strength of our democracy through civics education and the promotion of an active citizenry.

I will look at

- What we mean when we talk about democracy
- The changing relationship between government and citizens
- What we mean by citizenship
- The WA citizenship strategy
- Strengthening our democracy through “doing”

People are not merely voters or consumers, customers or clients. People are citizens and, in a democratic community, their individual and collective endeavours constitute the basic fabric of society. It is they who determine the nature and state of that society and what it stands for.

***‘A democracy is an open society in which all state power is derived from the people... Democracy guarantees human dignity’.***

Strasbourg Convention 1983

There is a close link between a healthy democracy and human dignity. In a healthy democracy people work in partnership with government for the benefit of all – people legitimate government AND they have confidence that the democratic process will deliver. When people, as citizens, feel recognised and valued it reinforces their self-respect, their self-worth and their human dignity – and, ultimately this reinforces the quality of community.

In recent years we have seen “democracy” become a feature of political rhetoric and rationale across the globe. We hear what democracy can deliver. “Democracy” invokes a particular vision of society – a society where, among other things, people have not only the opportunity, but the right to choose their leaders in free elections. Of course voting is one aspect of democracy but the involvement of citizens once every three or four years is not enough. Democracy requires more than that.

Commentators and others are becoming increasingly more interested in the notion of democratic citizenship. Democratic citizens know about their nation’s democratic traditions,

institutions, and constitution. But they will also be “inquisitive participants in their community”<sup>1</sup>. This interest has been sparked by a number of factors that have eroded our sense of community, our sense of worth as citizens and our confidence in the ability of government and major institutions to deliver the type of society we want. We need to understand these factors before we can begin to reclaim our sense of worth and community.

### Drivers for Change

Whether you subscribe to theories of globalisation there is no denying that we have seen an increase in the importance of markets and an increase in the mobility of things and people. The effects of globalisation can be seen in:

- the declining ability of individual governments to solve all problems or address all citizen demands
- the rise of the multi-national corporation with a widening circle of influence
- the divesting of previously governmental functions and responsibilities to the non-government and private sector
- an increasing tendency to interpret social problems as economic ones, and
- in the shifting language of multiculturalism accommodating an increasingly diverse population.

In these we see that both the role and practices of government change. There has been a realisation that governments do not have the resources, expertise or influence to solve **all** issues. Increasingly governments become more involved in ‘steering’ than ‘rowing’ the course. To do this successfully requires citizen input - to identify the issues, to make known the consequences and impacts, and to proffer solutions or alternatives. Put simply, those that are affected by the decisions of policy makers must be given the opportunities to have a say in those decisions.

As the influence of the state declines we see a corresponding increase in the level of influence of other sectors. The non-government sector, and the corporate sector have become incredibly significant in influencing community life. Added to this has been the devolution of responsibility from higher tiers of government to the local level.

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<sup>1</sup> Wise, Rodney R (2000) *Deepening Australian Democracy, What Can Schools Do?*. PhD thesis, Department of Education Policy and Management, The University of Melbourne

Nevertheless, there is a strong expectation from the public that government ought to be more effective, operate with greater efficiency, display higher levels of accountability and offer a more highly coordinated approach to service delivery.

The current reality, however, is that citizens continue to feel increasingly remote and disconnected from the processes that affect their lives and they are beginning to express their frustration at this disconnection and disengagement.

Mass protests across the globe against some of the once respected institutions – the World Bank, the G7 group, as well as powerful governments and organisations - grab the headlines when they occur. These protests attest to an erosion of confidence and trust in key public institutions - from government to corporate institutions, religious bodies to charities. They are also evidence that citizens everywhere – of all ages – are demanding to have more of a say, to have a fuller, more active and influential role in decision-making.

The loss of faith that we see impacts upon the legitimacy and acceptance of government decisions, in fact, on the ability of government to deliver. We see this in the increasing number of public challenges to government decisions. This loss of faith has prompted a search for remedies.

In Western Australia the Citizens and Civics Unit was established within the Department of Premier and Cabinet under the Minister for Citizenship, in the first instance the Premier. The main role of the Unit is to act as a catalyst and facilitator through:

- Advising the government on citizenship, civics and strengthening democracy;
- Identifying information, skills and mechanism required for effective participation by citizens in public life and decision making;
- Fostering dialogue between the people of WA, their government(s) and other institutions.

#### Capital 'C' and small 'c' citizenship

We recognise that there are two aspects to citizenship: the formal aspect, a legal status that confers rights and responsibilities within a polity. The second aspect is the idea of 'citizens' as participants in a common political enterprise – basically citizenship as practice.

In simple terms the distinctions between the two formulations can be summed up as: to be a citizen and to act as a citizen.<sup>2</sup>

At a State level, our focus is the latter.

#### WA Citizenship Strategy Title

To advance this aim the Unit has developed a whole-of-government / whole-of-community citizenship strategy, *A Voice for All: Strengthening Democracy*.

The citizenship initiative is built on a series of key questions grounded in people's experience: What do citizens do? What is needed in order to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship? How are the necessary attributes of citizens developed? How do we ensure that citizen input results in better decision making, more relevant to community needs? What structural/institutional/governance frameworks are required for a civic culture to thrive, so that citizens are really respected and valued partners in policy formulation and implementation?

The goal of the citizenship strategy is a community where all Western Australians are valued as citizens, where they play a more significant role in setting policy priorities and where they help shape the nature of the society in which they live.

The Citizenship Strategy is comprised of four key objectives:

#### Knowledge and Understanding

##### ***Knowledge and Understanding: Informed Citizens in a Learning Community***

This dimension of the strategy addresses the need for practical knowledge and understanding of how 'the system' works, and the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and government

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth Lister distinguishes between 'being' and 'acting' as a citizen in this manner: 'Citizenship as participation can be seen as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents. I want, however, to draw a distinction between two formulations -- to be a citizen and to act as a citizen. To be a citizen means to enjoy the rights necessary for agency and social and political participation. To act as a citizen involves fulfilling the full potential of the status. Those who do not fulfil that potential do not cease to be citizens.' (Lister, 1998:228-9)

(Education as the key). These are essential pre-requisites to active participation. At the same time, access to appropriate information regarding the issues of the day is indispensable to effective citizen participation.

#### Inclusion

***Inclusion: All Citizens Count & Have Opportunities to Play a Role***

This strategy area includes but goes beyond existing anti-discrimination, access and equity measures. Through recognising the rights of all citizens to be treated equitably as valued individuals, it is concerned to facilitate citizens realising their potential and becoming full and active members of their political and social community. This strategy area captures the government's progressive legislative reform agenda.

#### Participation

***Participation: Proactive Citizens Taking the Initiative & Making a Difference***

Participation is concerned with partnerships between government and citizens. The focus is on mechanisms for active engagement by citizens with matters of policy. The government's whole-of-government / whole-of-community approach is foundational to this dimension of *A Voice for All*.

A second focus is the cross-sectoral nexus and potential for partnerships between the State government and local government, between government and the third sector, between government and business – particularly with respect to triple bottom line reporting, sustainability and corporate citizenship.

#### Democracy

***Democracy: Developing Public Trust & Confidence in Democratic Institutions***

The fourth domain of the WA Citizenship Strategy is democracy - developing public trust and confidence in democratic processes and institutions. The focus includes legislative and electoral reform, principles of good governance (including accountability, openness and transparency – especially in decision-making), ethical government, fostering civic debate and cross sectoral

dialogue. This includes posing the question of what it means to be a citizen of Australia, who we are and what we stand for as Australian citizens. It was just this sort of question that was being addressed during the Preamble Quest in 1999. In asking for comments about a revised preamble the respondents were defining their vision for the country and for the citizens of that country. They were expressing the values that they considered important for the people of Australia

Being an active citizen requires developing an understanding of rights and responsibilities - both citizens' and those of governments.

There tends to be a general understanding, if not agreement, about our rights (eg. freedom of speech and religious expression, equality before the law) although debate in this regard is essential in developing some underpinning principles that bring people together in a democracy.

Responsibilities can be more problematic. In citizenship terms, governments have a number of responsibilities to:

- be open and accountable

- consult with all citizens – including young people - to find out their needs

- provide appropriate services to address these needs

- ensure all citizens, regardless of age are able to input into decision-making especially as it relates to them and to ways of determining what their needs are

- build the sense of worth and value of all citizens

### Government Responsibilities

The responsibilities of government go hand in hand with citizen responsibilities. Aside from voting and paying taxes citizens also have a responsibility to:

- be informed on issues of concern

- participate as they see fit in decision-making that affects them and beyond.

Recognise that their behaviours and actions influence – in fact create the type of society we are, that is **they** define our Australian citizenship

By becoming more informed and more active in community activities and decision making active citizens play a role in keeping governments honest, open and accountable. It is not simply about providing checks and balances nor about 'policing' the governors – it is about collaboration between citizens and their government. To do this we need to build the capacity of **more** citizens to participate **more** effectively so that they feel empowered to shape the nature of their environments - both physical and psychological.

Our approach to capacity building is to see democracy as a way of doing and being, not as a page from a political textbook.

*"We teach reading, writing and maths by having students do them, but we teach democracy by lecture".*

Let me give you a good example of learning by doing from the schoolyard – reducing bullying behaviour. Research has shown that the best way to combat bullying in schools is through democratic and inclusive practices involving the school children, their parents and teachers. Broadly, countering bullying was seen as requiring a restructuring of the school environments in such a way as to discourage bullying behaviour while maintaining a warm, supportive school ethos. The involvement of students in the design of strategies was crucial to the success of the program.

*"Using democracy as the basis for their bullying programs, Norway was able to reduce school bullying by 50% — for an entire country"*

A concrete example of this: One school's response to bullying on routes to and from school was to introduce character education into the curriculum. The students didn't particularly like character education and the problem with bullying behaviour didn't go away. It was only after students became involved that the real problems were addressed. The faculty and students conducted a survey in which most thought that the school should be doing something specific about the routes to and from school. The student council looked at the data and created a program of supervision. The students could see that their thoughts and recommendations were actually heard. Local government and the police became aware of the survey data and this led to better lighting, community watch programs, creating corridors of safety with teachers and

parents, and even using older students from the high school to help secure the routes to and from school (from <http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/features/5-6/astor.html>).

Through this type of engagement the students were educated to become active citizens through doing. Their involvement made sure that the school 'got it right' just as their (and your) involvement in government decision-making can ensure that governments 'get it right'.

#### Vigoda's Continuum

This type of approach represents a shift from the top-down managerial model (the school interprets the problem and assigns the solution) to one that is based more upon collaboration and partnership - on wider civic engagement.

And the benefits of wider civic engagement are not limited to changing negative behaviours. It also promotes greater communication and connection between and across gender, culture, age and location. It builds confidence in engaging and breaks down barriers as myths about young and old and stereotypes – especially about cultures - are challenged. Civic engagement validates all citizens as equally legitimate stakeholders in society.

The CCU has been working since its inception to develop many of the initiatives originally identified in the Citizenship Strategy. As one of the primary aims is to encourage greater civic engagement we have been involved in developing the means by which citizens can access information and provide input. To this end we have created the Citizenscape web portal, an online web site designed to strengthen our democracy by assisting citizens, community groups, government agencies, businesses and civic institutions to explore and gain an understanding of citizenship in WA, Australia and the world.

Citizenscape contains a information on many important areas of citizenship, governance and democracy, a section on how government works – with links to parliament, tips for effecting change as well as promoting events which would benefit from greater citizen involvement, for example, local government elections.

I would like to highlight some of the more influential areas on this web site today.

The first is the Consultation Catalogue. This lists consultations being conducted by State Government departments and agencies across the state. The catalogue contains the name of the consultation, which department or agency is responsible for it, who is being consulted, the aim of the consultation, contact details and a link to the responsible agencies web page. The Consultation Catalogue provides citizens with single entry point at which they can find out about consultations in their geographic area or their area of interest and take steps to become involved.

With citizen participation central to our vision the Citizenscape portal also offers guidance for consultation practitioners and participants. We have now developed three Consulting Citizens Guides – A Resource Guide, Planning for Success and Engaging with Aboriginal Western Australians. Shortly we will also be releasing e-Guidelines, which provides guidance on consulting citizens using information and communication technology. Going by the success of the first three guides we anticipate that this will also be taken up enthusiastically across government.

A third area contained on the Citizenscape that I'd briefly like to mention is the 'Boards and Committees' area. The inclusion of this area reflects our interest in promoting greater community representation on the increasing number of Boards and Committees across government. People are invited to sign up through the Interested Persons Register or, for the younger age groups, the Youth Register.

For the youth we have also provided resources for students and teachers as well as links to educational resources on citizenship, democracy, environmental issues, and participation.

The CCU is closely involved with a number of organisations that are also promoting citizenship issues. We have the Constitutional Centre of Western Australia, the only one of its kind in Australia. Visiting the Constitutional Centre enables students and others to learn about their political inheritance and understand how they can make a contribution to the State's democratic

development. It provides information about our systems of government and, like us, encourages greater participation in these systems.

Within the Constitutional Centre there is also the Electoral Education Centre where students can take part in a mock election. Nearby is the Parliamentary Education Office where visitors can gain a clear understanding of parliamentary processes and procedures. Students also have access to the Francis Burt Law Education Centre. Some of the projects that this centre is involved in are mock trials to learn about the legal system, and they also sponsor the Youth Civics Leadership Award for Year 10. This Award builds leadership skills and civic awareness in its recipients.

So you can see that in Western Australia many initiatives are in progress that seek to enhance the opportunities and prospects for wider, more informed citizen participation in democratic processes.

We are planning more. One project that we are keen to establish in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training and the Office of e-Government is directed towards young people. Our vision is to start a dialogue on public issues with the youth of Western Australia. We are looking at involving students in deliberating on real issues in a web-based forum of peers from around the country. Of course, just as people outside of schools need motivation to become involved we will need to ensure that the issues are of interest to the student – perhaps one that will have an impact on their lives – like the bullying example I outlined before it will need to be an issue where they can see the links between it and their lives. It may even be an issue that the students raise themselves. Details are yet to be finalised.

Although still in the planning stage we envision that the program will guide students from dialogue to inquiry and then to action. They will learn how to research issues, and how to express and act on their opinions, how to actively engage on real issues that they are interested in. This is what I referred to earlier when I said that we need to teach democracy by doing.

Involvement in a project such as this will provide students with skills that they will carry with them into their adulthood. Skills that will enable them to think in a critical and systemic way; to reflect on their actions and the consequences those actions might have, to build responsibility; to understand and accept differences; in short, to be active in the events that surround and affect them.

This project that we are hoping to develop can extend the work that has been undertaken during the Level 2 Professional Development Program, developed by the Discovering Democracy Team in Western Australia.

While these types of projects are valuable ends in themselves, the overarching objective is to develop knowledge and understanding of democratic citizenship.

The media continues to report that young people (generation X and generation Y) are “cynical, distrusting, self-absorbed and distant from government, largely ignorant and apathetic about politics”<sup>3</sup>. The fear that comes from this is that there will be a whole generation of people who may never vote because they are not acclimatising themselves to participating in the democratic process habitually when young. Our challenge is to ensure that young people are given the opportunities and the impetus to become involved early in their lives. They must be able to see the point of the actions. The education system is one place where this can be achieved.

We must remember that the federal, state and territory governments have endorsed civics and citizenship education as one of the four pillars of knowledge along with English, maths and science. Our proposal will contribute to this education.

Schools that are democratic environments are places where understanding and engagement have the opportunity to grow. Students who are valued as citizens (members), whose ideas count, develop a sense of their own self worth and acknowledge the worth of others. Schools therefore constitute environments in which acclimatisation to democracy can begin.

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<sup>3</sup> Jones, J. 2002, ‘Wired, disenfranchised but not necessarily out of touch: youth attitudes towards mediated democracy’, available online at <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/departments/media-communications/pdfs/janetjones-paper.pdf>.

### *Concluding Remarks:*

In summary, the Western Australian Citizenship Strategy is about empowerment of the citizen. A key element of this is building citizenship capacity - through knowledge and understanding, through addressing barriers and impediments to participation, through providing mechanisms for engaging, and through promoting deliberative democratic practices.

In building citizenship capacity, citizenship education should practice what it preaches, providing not just information, but experiences of engaging in democracy.

Citizenship capacity building is about developing people's capacity to participate in forging a common good. It is about rights and responsibility: and that includes the responsibility to be reflective about one's actions and their impact on the social environment we create.

There is an increasing recognition by governments that citizens are well situated to provide solutions to modern day challenges and to ensure positive outcomes.

With the complexities of modern life, it makes sense for governments to tap into the wealth, knowledge and experience of citizens. In other words, there should be strong and healthy connections between people and their governments. And young people are an integral part of the picture.

The seeds of democracy we plant today, we will harvest in the future as a healthy inclusive society.

### References

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