

# School Education: Civics and Citizenship Education for the Future

National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum

May 2007

REPORT

The National Civics and Citizenship Forum, entitled *School Education: Civics and Citizenship Education for the Future*, was held at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra on Monday and Tuesday, 28 and 29 May, 2007.

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 Forum organisers.

The views expressed at the 2007 National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Science, Education and Training or the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

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

The 2007 National Civics & Citizenship Forum built on similar forums in earlier years and specifically sought to maintain and raise the national profile of civics and citizenship education (CCE) in schools by:

- addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2004 national sample assessment report;
- highlighting and promoting the website resources available at [www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au](http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au) ;
- exploring the relationship between the National Assessment to be held later in 2007 and the Statements of Learning; and
- providing exemplars of good practices in civics and citizenship.

Keynote addresses from Bishop Tom Frame, Associate Professor Bain Attwood, Dr Elizabeth Kwan, Mr Anthony Ryan, the Hon John von Doussa (President, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission), along with workshops, panels and other stakeholder presentations provided the impetus for discussion at the forum about current and future directions in CCE in Australia.

## ***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, Centre for Strategic Education), participants were welcomed to country by Matilda House from the ACT Ngunnawal Land Council and to the museum by Gabrielle Hyslop (Acting General Manager, Audience and Programmes, National Museum of Australia).

The forum then was officially opened by The Hon Michael Ferguson MP, Member for Bass and Secretary of the Government's Education Policy Committee, on behalf of The Hon Julie Bishop, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Mr Ferguson, who is a former teacher of Mathematics, Science and ICT, reflected on the government's role in relation to CCE and its show of support for the work being undertaken in 'this important area'.

The government, he observed, 'takes its national leadership role in this area very seriously', through the \$44 million it has provided since 1997 when the first awareness raising step was taken through the Discovering Democracy project that was launched. The whole programme, he suggested, is premised on a conviction that CCE is 'central' to the maintenance of Australia's democracy, and it put 'leading edge resources' into all Australian schools.

It took five years of further progress until the adoption by MCEETYA in 2002 of CCE as a key priority along with English, Mathematics, Science and then later, ICT. In October 2004, a sample group of primary and secondary students took part in the first 'real test of CCE' through the national assessment that was undertaken. Similarly, the National Statements of Learning are contributing to the development of nationally-consistent curriculum approaches to CCE.

The first national assessment report, Ferguson, acknowledged, indicated there is still 'much we can do' in the explicit teaching of CCE given what were 'frankly disappointing results'; with young people knowing much less about Australian history than 'we would have wanted'. When he visits schools he notices there is often a lack of knowledge regarding Australian symbols. When looking at the Australian flag for example, he often takes flags with him and talks about the importance of the flag, not just in a content-focused way, but to say something 'about us as a nation, and about us as Australians'.

He finds it disturbing in this context to find that students generally know about the Union Jack, but don't really know about the stars that make up the rest of the flag, with the result he has 'to set them straight'. For Ferguson, this shows the importance of not just knowing but understanding in relation to CCE. As the Prime Minister, who he quoted, suggested in a speech earlier in May 2007, 'education provides the seeds for informed citizenry'. A nation cannot, he argued, 'know where it is going if it doesn't know where it has come from'. CCE supports the development of skills, values and attitudes that are needed for informed participation in a democratic society.

Yesterday, Ferguson noted, 'we celebrated the important fortieth anniversary of the 1967 referendum'. As one of only eight out of 44 successful referenda it is, he suggested, an important topic of focus for this forum agenda along with key aspects of our history and how we think of ourselves as Australians.

Given the range of topics on the agenda, he expected participants to have 'a very interesting conversation, which is reflective of the very subject we are seeking to promote'.

In closing, he acknowledged the key stakeholders present who are 'working collaboratively to develop civics and citizenship education resources', and the fact the work in this domain is 'richer for their involvement and support'.

## ***Existential questions and the study of history***

Taking the view that there are 'many diverse possibilities for gaining some understanding of the human condition, (and that) history and theology are among them', Bishop Tom Frame (Director, St. Marks National Theological Centre) sought to set the scene for what followed by making 'a few observations, before moving to some interpretations and then closing with a few exhortations' to inform the two days.

### ***Some observations***

His first observation was very broad and meant to convey 'a sense of empathy'. There are, according to Frame, 'few areas of public policy provoking greater interest at the moment than education'. Since the vast majority of Australians have been subjected to more than a decade of primary and secondary schooling, 'they believe their first hand experience entitles them to strong beliefs about what is relevant in preparation for adult life and allows them to have firm opinions about the ways in which knowledge, skills and attitudes ought to be imparted to young people'.

Many of these individual experiences, he noted, 'are dated and partial, reflecting a range of factors that have little to do with teaching or learning. But this seldom hinders most Australians from complaining about what is wrong with the education system and explaining how it can be easily fixed'. The burdens being carried by primary and secondary teachers, and university lecturers are increasing as a result, with 'growing demands being applied to "institutions of learning" from parliaments, the press and the population'. It seems as if 'every social deficiency and every cultural tension will be fixed by, in, with or through education'. Frame doubts this is true, and hence empathises with those educators who feel they are carrying greater burdens than previously was the case.

A serious disconnect exists, according to Frame in outlining his second observation, 'between the enormous amount of history being done in the community and', as he understands it, 'its place and presentation in schools' where it struggles to compete with other subjects. And he then proceeded to analyse this 'from the perspective of the discipline of history'.

Most teachers, he argued, are aware that there are lively debates about many events and most aspects of Australian history. Beyond these debates, he suggested, 'the narrative is being quietly filled out in quite remarkable ways. If I take my two particular interests as an example: maritime and religious history – the field has expanded considerably over the last twenty years when I started writing and publishing'.

As a member of the Prime Minister's History Prize advisory committee he was, he explained, 'staggered by the number and surprised by the quality of entries'. They included books, CD-ROMs, databases, websites and drama; which means 'a small army of people are investing a great deal of themselves in producing history. The fruits of their labours', he added, 'are not dull, dry, academic or arid. There is an obvious eye to visual presentation and production values'. This volume of work is,

however, 'both a blessing and a bane. Keeping up with the amount of new material and piecing things together has become a real challenge not made easier by historians'.

Many writers of history in Frame's view, 'do not help us to grasp the significance of their work by failing to place it in context and within existing scholarship'. Having been criticised himself for having lengthy prefaces and substantial introductions to his books he believes 'they are vital in helping the reader to understand why I have written what I have written and where my contribution fits into the extant body of published work'. Beyond this, it is regrettable in Frame's view that 'many historians shy away from writing large single-volume comprehensive accounts of Australian life. We still need general histories – they appear from time to time – which bring together the fruits of specialist projects. They are not usually welcomed by members of the discipline because they involve generalisations, approximations and summaries, and difficult decisions about what to include and what to overlook'.

That said, he was encouraged to detect 'a renewed willingness on the part of publishers to invest in "big books" and this is very welcome'. With these two observations in mind, Frame then appealed to forum participants, and in fact all teachers 'to foster links with university history departments or "public historians" to ensure they remain familiar with what is being produced in the discipline, and in seeking some help with making judgements about quality and utility of recently published material'.

### ***Some interpretations***

There has, Frame noted, been a great deal of welcome talk about history curricula over the past twelve months; albeit not without 'an element of controversy with the Commonwealth Government linking the prospect of increased Federal funding with the incorporation of certain elements in the curriculum'. The Minister's belief that Australian children need to know about some people and events, places and patterns that have imparted to Australia and its people a sense of identity and destiny is something with which Frame would agree. It makes sense in this context, 'for those with responsibility for the history curriculum to be involved in conversation about content'.

That said, there is, in his view, another emphasis that must not be overlooked. '*How you teach is as significant as what you teach; how you learn affects what you learn; where you learn will influence what you do with whatever you have learned*'. This is something which, he conceded, educators have long known. 'From what I can discern, standing behind the desire for a certain body of information and ideas to be taught is a fear of indoctrination; that Australian children will believe the wrong things rather than the right things (however you may wish to determine or describe right and wrong in this context) and this will affect their attitudes and actions as citizens. The word indoctrination', he acknowledged, 'has very nasty connotations attached to it. In the minds of many people, to indoctrinate is to engage in an activity not all that different from propagandising, conditioning and brainwashing. These are deplorable activities with nothing to commend them. But can indoctrination be prevented by gaining control of the curriculum?'

Indoctrination, for Frame, is not something that is simple or clear cut. It cannot, for example, simply be defined by the methods employed to impart information and ideas. Some methods of learning, he explained in this context, 'bypass a person's reasoning process, such as the recitation of multiplication tables, but this kind of activity would not be deemed indoctrination. And indoctrination cannot be defined simply by someone's intention. While a person might try to impose his or her beliefs, their success is determined only by the readiness of others to accept the beliefs being propagated'.

In Frame's view, 'indoctrination is defined chiefly by its consequences. Indoctrination has occurred whenever a person has accepted beliefs, opinions and ideas that they place beyond public assessment or rational critique. This', he noted, 'is not the same as believing something by faith. A person can hold beliefs for which they cannot give a comprehensive explanation without it being said that they had been indoctrinated. An indoctrinated person can, however, give compelling reasons for what he or she believes without being willing to have those reasons questioned or challenged'. The crucial distinction for Frame is 'the holding of beliefs in such a manner that they form a closed circle resistant or impervious to critical assessment'.

While he was not arguing that the content of teaching does not matter, since clearly it does, 'the methods by which content is explained, conveyed and imparted is perhaps more significant in terms of the things that worry politicians'. The result in his view is that 'the so-called "culture wars" are . a distraction from critical engagement with what I would refer to as the "competence conflict".'

The point is, he argued, that 'well-trained and properly prepared teachers and lecturers are the best defence against indoctrination and its awful consequences'. The emphasis on curriculum, which is obviously of particular interest to forum participants must, therefore, be accompanied by 'continuing attention to teacher training, so that teachers are able to make the most of the debates being conducted at a national level about what ought to be in the history curriculum, and then convinced about why it is there. The benefits of a national curriculum discussion can and will', he suggested, 'be dissipated by inadequate or flawed teaching methods'.

### ***Some exhortations***

'Why', Frame asked, 'is it important to teach history?' And his simple answer was, 'because it is important to study history'; which he illustrated with reference to being adopted himself and his pursuit of his own past. 'When you are denied your past, the task of making sense of the present is that much more difficult'.

We live in a world in which personal narrative is important. Because, in Frame's view, 'we all ask the same two existential questions "who am I?" and "what am I to make of my life?"', the absence of information about the past or uncertainty about the accuracy of what we think we know, makes answering these two important questions that much more difficult and demanding'.

Having pieced together as much of his own history as the evidence permitted, Frame then turned his hand to two other projects:

- 'how has my history been shaped and influenced by world events which have affected my ancestors and me?'; and
- 'because I believe the second existential question "what am I to make of my life?" needs to be recast as "what questions is life asking of me", it is vital that I understand the world in which I live as I negotiate its challenges.'

Both involve a reliance on the content and methods of history. 'What has happened in the world of which I am a part and why did it happen that way?' This led him to suggest in concluding his address, that the often asked question 'why do we teach history?' must then be answered 'in the light of each person's unique experience in relation to the universality of all human experience. My life is my own but it is connected to everyone else's'. That is why and how Frame feels 'personally enthusiastic about history'; and he expressed the hope that others might find encouragement in that approach when dealing with students, particularly those with interesting family trees.

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Responding to a question from forum facilitator Tony Mackay about 'destiny' as well as 'history and identity', Frame observed that 'people tend to say "history shows that ...", but I doubt it'. That said, he acknowledged, 'you can see certain directions in the broad flow of history which may be useful at times ... But the world continues to surprise us', which calls into question the 'Manning Clark-type of history as prophet role'. Events in Frame's view always will surprise, though history can be a 'reliable guide about broad trends'. The real point for him is that historians may need to be 'more humble and tentative' than some recently have been.

Asked whether history is about a story or a series of stories, which then often can be portrayed as 'propaganda', Frame responded by noting that one of the purposes of history is to 'tell you what happened'. When one goes beyond this, however, 'you want to portray a particular view about what happened, why and so on'; which he illustrated with reference to his own biography of Harold Holt. There always will be 'clashing stories' which is why historians should, in his view, say who they are and also where they are seeking to take their readers. Then one can read it knowing 'where I as a writer am coming from'.

But isn't the point, another questioner asked, that we never can know what is the truth? There are some things, Frame suggested in response, we can say with certainty, such as the fact that Harold Holt said 'all the way with LBJ' on the White House lawn. Why he said it, however, 'takes us into different territory'. We shouldn't however, in Frame's view, 'shy away from the question what is truth?'

Frame acknowledged in response to the final question in the session related to teachers only being able to cover 'so much', thereby raising issues of 'selection', that he doesn't have the expertise to provide an answer. Rather he thought that is what curriculum designers should do, in ways that are open to 'critical assessment' rather than the sort of indoctrination against which he earlier had warned.

## ***The 1967 Referendum, Citizenship Rights and the Constitution of Australia***

Forty years ago, Associate Professor Bain Attwood (School of Historical Studies, Monash University and Adjunct Professor in the Centre for Cross Cultural Research, the Australian National University) explained, the majority of Australian electors and states voted 'yes' in a referendum to alter two clauses in the Constitution regarding Aboriginal people. That referendum was unusual not only because it actually passed when most don't, but because it achieved the highest vote ever recorded; 90.77 percent.

The commonly-held belief is that this referendum was 'the moment when Aboriginal people were granted the rights of citizenship such as the vote, when racially-discriminatory laws were repealed, when the Commonwealth acquired the right to legislate for Aborigines, and when the responsibility for Aboriginal affairs was transferred from the states to the Commonwealth. That belief, according to Attwood, not only is wrong, but what he refers to as 'a myth'.

Why, he asked, does it matter that the 1967 referendum is widely misinterpreted and, as a result, misunderstood? The referendum he believes, in starting to construct his response, is a subject that can 'tell us much about the nature of citizenship and citizenship rights in Australia. As such, a knowledge of it should be part of an education in civics that every child in Australia has the opportunity to receive'. Teachers, he suggested, have 'a particular responsibility to provide students with accurate information about this historical event ... and its significance'.

## ***The Constitution itself***

Attwood's starting point in outlining his story was the Constitution itself and a legal approach to it. Put simply, he suggested, 'a reading of the words of the Constitution would suggest that the changes proposed by the referendum could have had none of the four outcomes claimed for it — citizenship rights for Aborigines, the overthrow of racist laws, the power of the Commonwealth to legislate regarding Aborigines, and Commonwealth control of Aboriginal affairs'.

Striking out Section 127 of the Constitution, for instance, meant that Aboriginal people could be counted in the following national census, but that was all. 'In other words, this alteration to the Constitution did not bestow citizenship rights upon Aboriginal people ... (because) The Australian Constitution, unlike the more famous American one, makes no reference to citizenship whatsoever. It is simply not that kind of constitution'. In addition, by 1967 most Aboriginal people had already been granted the rights of Australian citizens after a raft of specific federal and state laws discriminating against Aboriginal people had been repealed.

Attwood then turned to the second of the two constitutional clauses at stake in the referendum — Section 51 (xxvi) which refers to 'what has come to be called "the race power"'. This part of the Constitution stated that the Commonwealth had 'power to make laws ... with respect to ... (the) people of any race ... for whom it (was) deemed necessary to make special laws'. Aboriginal people were not, however, included in this provision he explained. 'In other words, the Commonwealth had the power to pass special racial laws, but not in reference to Aboriginal people'. The 1967 referendum proposed the amendment of this section so the scope of the Commonwealth's race power would include Aboriginal people which meant that 'the Commonwealth would acquire the power to enact "special laws" in respect of Aboriginal people in particular circumstances; ie, when it was "deemed necessary to make special laws" regarding them.'

The endorsement of this constitutional change, Attwood argued, 'has led many to claim that the referendum resulted in the Commonwealth Government securing for the first time a power to pass legislation regarding Aboriginal people. This is incorrect. The federal government already had some powers in this regard, indeed it had them since federation in 1901'. The 1967 referendum did not grant the Commonwealth power to legislate in regard to Aboriginal people for the first time, but rather 'granted the Commonwealth power to pass legislation specific to Aboriginal people'; the significance of which he returned to later in his address.

In relation to the 'fourth ... popular misconception about the referendum', the amendment of Section 51 (xxvi) of the Constitution, Attwood explained, did not transfer power in Aboriginal affairs from the states to the Commonwealth because 'this change to the Constitution did not compel any federal government to assume a greater role in Aboriginal affairs; let alone take over responsibility for these from the states'.

## ***The creation of the myth***

Given that none of the claims commonly made about the referendum seem to be true in terms of a legal interpretation of the Constitution raises two important questions in Attwood's view: 'why is the referendum regarded as such a significant event in Australia's history, and why do we have those claims being made about it when they seem to be incorrect?'

Together with his colleague Andrew Markus, Attwood has set out to investigate why 'a myth about the referendum was being created and circulated'. When they began the process, he explained, they assumed the misconceptions arose later, but through their research surprisingly found that they

actually were 'evident in the ten year struggle for the referendum ... (and) that those misconceptions had dominated the campaign for the yes vote ... in May 1967'. Why, they now pondered, 'did those most responsible for fighting for this referendum, which was the leaders of the organisation that came to be called FCAATSI, the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders represent the constitutional changes entailed by the referendum in terms of citizenship rights for Aborigines, the repeal of racially discriminatory laws, the power of the Commonwealth to pass laws, and the transfer of Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth, given that ... these matters had nothing to do with the Constitution, legally speaking?'

Attwood advanced a set of historical and strategic reasons in response.

### ***Historical reasons***

When the post-war campaign to change the clauses of the Constitution in respect of Aboriginal people began in earnest in 1957-8, few Aboriginal people in Australia had any citizenship rights. In all states and territories, there was 'a plethora of special racial laws discriminating against Aboriginal people and denying them the rights other Australian citizens enjoyed'. The Commonwealth government played relatively little role in Aboriginal affairs outside of the Northern Territory, and a group of campaigners, who formed FCAATSI, 'were convinced that the key to changing this situation ... lay in the Commonwealth having a greater role in Aboriginal affairs because it had greater resources and because it was primarily responsible for Australia's reputation that was now at risk as the forces of anti-racism and decolonisation gained strength around the world'.

That still begged the question of 'what on earth' the Constitution had to do with it? The answer, according to Attwood, lay in 'a particular story that came to be told about the Constitution', which he illustrated with reference to the prominent socialist and feminist Lady Jessie Street.

Street, he explained, 'became convinced that the time was ripe for a new campaign to address the plight of Aboriginal people'. More particularly, she 'convinced herself that this task required changes to the Australian constitution ... because she believed that the Constitution barred the Commonwealth from the right to legislate and to take charge of Aboriginal affairs in such a way as to overturn racially discriminatory laws, and that the Constitution specifically denied Aboriginal people the rights of citizenship'; even though these were, as Attwood earlier had outlined, erroneous beliefs.

The first of these beliefs he noted, is 'relatively easy to explain'. Since 1901 the states and not the Commonwealth had been responsible for Aboriginal affairs and it frequently was claimed that this arrangement was determined by Section 51 (xxvi) which, although wrong, was generally assumed to be right.

The second belief, however, is more difficult to explain. When Street first made the claim that the Constitution denied Aboriginal people the rights of citizenship, she was unable to consult the Constitution and relied instead on someone else's advice. However, Attwood explained, 'a lawyer and civil libertarian, Brian Fitzpatrick, soon provided Street with the relevant sections of the Constitution, and this would or should have made clear to her that there was no clause ... that referred to citizenship rights or the denial of citizenship rights for Aboriginal people'. But that made little difference to her view. The reason why goes to a 'chain of assumptions' she made about the nature of citizenship. She assumed that:

- citizenship was not only a matter of civil rights that were determined by legal arrangements, but it was a matter of social and economic rights that were usually determined by political arrangements;
- social and economic rights were more important than civil rights; and

- Aboriginal people suffered social and economic disabilities and these could best be redressed by the Commonwealth.

‘Putting these assumptions together with the unremarkable assumption that Street had about the Constitution (ie, that Section 51 (xxvi) barred the Commonwealth from playing a greater role in Aboriginal affairs)’ arguably, in Attwood’s view, ‘would have led Street to the following further chain of assumptions’:

- If the Constitution was amended, the Commonwealth could assume greater responsibility for Aboriginal affairs; and
- thus, the social and economic disabilities of Aboriginal people would be overturned, and hence Aboriginal people would become citizens in effect.

What he was suggesting, then, is that Street might have ‘come to accept that the Constitution made no reference to citizenship in a formal, legal sense, but she persisted in casting constitutional change in terms of “citizenship” and “rights” because she presumed Aboriginal people would gain the economic and social rights that are associated with being a citizen once the Commonwealth assumed greater power in Aboriginal affairs as a result of changing the Constitution’.

Regardless of which explanation one accepts, two points probably are in Attwood’s view indisputable. First, that although Street’s story about the Constitution ‘was not strictly correct in formal or legal terms, in political terms it did make sense’. What is more, in spelling out the logical chain Street and her supporters adopted, ‘you can see the ways in which the myth of the referendum is actually closer to the truth than one might originally assume’.

In 1957 Street ‘impressed her beliefs upon a small circle of people in an organisation called the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship which sponsored the first petition to the Commonwealth parliament calling for constitutional change, and in 1958 the organisation that became FCAATSI was founded, and when it took over the cause of constitutional change it inherited a good deal of Street’s approach’.

Attwood then turned to FCAATSI and the nature of its conception of rights for Aboriginal people, ‘since a consideration of this is fundamental to the meaning of the 1967 referendum and more generally to the meanings of citizenship in Australia’. When FCAATSI was founded in 1958, he explained, it adopted ‘principles which it described as “the basis for a common policy for the advancement of aborigines throughout the Commonwealth”’. These principles had a two-fold nature:

- Non-discrimination of anti-racism, which was ‘dominant at the point the Council was founded and remain so for the next five years at the very least’. They were expressed in calls for the ‘repeal of all legislation, both Federal and State, which discriminates against the aborigine’, and amendment of the Federal Constitution ‘to give the Commonwealth the power to legislate for aborigines as for other citizens’.
- A ‘positive rather than negative emphasis on what we might call racial difference and Aboriginal people being treated differently to other Australians’.

What Attwood was suggesting is that ‘the Federal Council in 1958 was not just seeking the overthrow of special racial legislation discriminating against Aboriginal people, but also calling for the Commonwealth to have the power to pass special racial legislation that discriminated in favour of Aboriginal people’.

That said, it clearly had trouble ‘articulating or expressing the second demand for special racial laws’. It was a time of ‘fervent anti-racism in which it was held that the concept of racial difference should be discarded and that all people should be treated the same’. The combined programme of assimilation and the ideal of anti-racism meant that ‘any special laws that distinguished or differentiated between people on the basis of race were seen as necessarily bad’. It is not surprising in this context, Attwood believes, that ‘the Federal Council found it difficult to express its second demand ... and much easier to cast their demand for Aboriginal advancement in terms of a call for government to treat Aboriginal people in the same way as other Australians were treated; to apply, in other words, non-racial principles rather than applying principles that advocated the treatment of people of the “aboriginal race” differently’.

Having noted this difficulty, however, he then suggested that it can be argued that when FCAATSI sought change to the Constitution ‘not on the basis of its first principle, but on the basis of its second ... (it effectively) saw amendment of Section 51 (xxvi) as a means of realising its goal of equality’. Federal Council members such as ALP backbencher Gordon Bryant, for instance, ‘stated time and time again that Aboriginal people needed special assistance, special racial laws in order to overcome their disadvantage and that amending Section 51 (xxvi) would give the Commonwealth the power to do this’.

### ***Strategic reasons***

By 1966, Attwood explained, FCAATSI’s leading figures ‘knew that much had changed in Aboriginal affairs since 1957-8’. When they first had started calling for constitutional change, ‘most Aboriginal people in Australia had been granted the rights of citizenship in a political or civil sense of citizenship rights ... (and) all the states and territories had repealed their laws discriminating against Aboriginal people’. At the same time, these people knew that the Constitution ‘provided the Commonwealth with some legislative powers regarding Aboriginal people ... and the Constitution, in legal terms, had nothing to do with citizenship rights’. Nonetheless, they still persisted in ‘representing the referendum in terms of the four outcomes claimed by the myth’.

There were, in Attwood’s view, two strategic reasons for this. First they knew that the terms ‘citizenship’ and ‘the Commonwealth of Australia’ had ‘enormous resonance with most voters, and so it made sense to represent the referendum in these terms’. More importantly still, perhaps, they believed that ‘despite the gaining of citizenship ... Aboriginal people lacked a more meaningful form of citizenship rights, which were economic and social in nature (such as assistance to address disadvantage). They continued to reason’, according to Attwood, ‘that Commonwealth control of Aboriginal affairs was the primary means of achieving the latter set of citizenship rights ... and held that true citizenship for Aboriginal people could only be achieved when a Commonwealth government enacted “special laws” to advantage Aboriginal people economically and socially; and they knew that in order for the Commonwealth to have this power, Section 51 (xxvi) of the Constitution had to be amended’.

What this means for Attwood is that ‘when these campaigners called upon electors in the referendum to “vote yes for Aboriginal rights” they did not assume that constitutional changes in and of themselves would bestow meaningful citizenship rights on Aboriginal people. Instead, they assumed that a massive yes vote would create pressure on the Commonwealth government that would force it to enact reforms which would eventually achieve the goal of a meaningful form of citizenship for Aboriginal people’. And the referendum in this context became ‘a poll about the nature of Australia: was it the land of the fair go or was it a racist nation?’.

The actual constitutional changes the referendum comprised in this context were relatively unimportant. 'Instead, it was the ways in which Jessie Street and the Federal Council had come to tell a story to represent the matters at stake that', for Attwood, 'made the referendum so important. By telling a powerful story about racism and rights and the nature of the Australian nation, the Federal Council was able to achieve a massive "yes" vote for Aborigines, and this created a mandate for any government that wished to take advantage of it'.

In the years immediately following the referendum, Attwood concluded, the ALP 'began to cast the referendum as a mandate for the Commonwealth government to take responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in Australia ... (and) The way the Federal Council had represented constitutional change in its ten-year campaign for a referendum authorised this new role for the Commonwealth, just as it hoped it would.'

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## ***Statements of Learning and CCE assessment***

Forum participants received an update on the Statements of Learning from Di Kerr (Curriculum Advisor to the Le@rning Federation) and a report on findings of the Civics and Citizenship 2004 National Assessment from Suzanne Mellor (Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research, Project Manager of the inaugural 2004 MCEETYA, PMRT Civics and Citizenship Assessment Project and Project Director of the 2007 project) in a session moderated by Tony Mackay.

### **Statements of learning**

In 2002 Kerr explained by way of background Ministers, 'concerned about lack of consistency in curriculum outcomes between systems, initiated work to develop options for "how states can collaborate further on consistency in curriculum outcomes".'

Subsequently, in July 2003, they endorsed the development of Statements of Learning in the four curriculum domains of English, Mathematics, Civics & Citizenship, and Science, to which they later added the fifth domain of ICT. Each of these connects intimately to national assessment work which, in the case of C&C, Mellor later discussed.

Then in 2005-6 the Statements of Learning for C&C were drafted, consulted on and approved by Ministers for use by jurisdictions rather than schools. The statements are, Kerr noted, curriculum documents for implementation within jurisdictions' mandatory curriculum documentation by 1 January 2008. They are written in terms of 'opportunities to learn', not learning achievements, and begin with an introduction discussing the domain in terms of curriculum documents in Australia as they were in late 2005.

Each of the Statements of Learning then is divided into two parts:

- Statements of Learning — opportunities to learn generally presented in prose under organiser headings; and
- Professional Elaborations — presented in dot points, often with examples, written in professional language, with almost always the same organiser headings.

The organiser headings for the Civics & Citizenship statement are government and law, citizenship in a democracy, and historical perspectives. Both the Statements of Learning and the Professional Elaborations are presented in four sections called 'year junctures' — the end of Year 3, end of Year 5, end of Year 7 and end of Year 9.

By way of example, one from the Year 3 juncture she presented seeks to ‘identify and reflect on what key Australian symbols represent (eg, flags, emblems, national anthem)’, whereas one from Year 9 is designed to ‘explore principles of justice, equality before the law, presumption of innocence, the right of appeal and restorative justice’. And the different jurisdictions then translate these as appropriate to their own contexts and schools.

Beyond this, further work done for the Le@rning Federation has identified 31 sequences of opportunities to learn across year junctures (not always all) that develop a theme or big idea.

### ***Some C&C themes***

Themes that Kerr highlighted which link to the forum and its participants’ work were:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, identities and influences;
- Histories of and policies about diverse groups in Australia;
- History of government in Australia since colonisation;
- National symbols, celebrations and commemorations;
- Key people, events and movements;
- Rules and laws and their purposes;
- Values and the law including principles of justice;
- Consequences of breaking rules/laws including restorative justice;
- Human rights;
- Laws, agreements and organisations in the international context that influence Australians;
- Personal and collective rights and responsibilities;
- Celebrating diversity and countering discrimination;
- Environmental sustainability; and
- Environmental and/or civic action.

### ***C&C understandings, inquiry, reflection, discussion, evaluation and action***

The Statements of Learning contain opportunities to learn which are about understandings, inquiry, reflection, discussion, evaluation and action, each of which Kerr than briefly illustrated with material from the Statement for CCE.

Through the statement, for example, students have the opportunity to:

- ‘understand that Australia had a long Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history before the arrival of Europeans’ (Year 3 HP);
- ‘understand that key civic terms used in Australia (eg, democracy, citizen, government and parliament) have been inherited from other times and places’ (Year 5 HP); and
- ‘recognise the role of courts in upholding the law and democratic rights’ (Year 7 GL).

In terms of inquiry, students have the opportunity to:

- ‘identify consequences when people break rules ...’ (Year 3 GL);
- ‘explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ social organisation prior to 1788’ (Year 5 HP);
- ‘investigate ways in which countries cooperate to protect the environment’ (Year 7 CD); and

- ‘investigate individuals who have campaigned for expanded human rights and democracy’ (Year 7 HP).

The statements also provide students with the opportunity to reflect in that they have the chance to:

- ‘examine reasons why people care for the local environment and consider how people can sustain use of local resources’ (Year 3 CD);
- ‘reflect on the histories of cultural groups within their school and communities’ (Year 5 HP); and
- ‘examine values reflected in national celebrations and commemorations, what these represent to diverse people and groups, and how these have changed over time’ (Year 7 HP).

There will be opportunities to discuss ‘the purpose of rules in a variety of contexts’ (Year 3 GL) and ‘changes in Australian citizenship and examine reasons why people become Australian citizens’ (Year 9 HP).

Similarly they will have the chance to evaluate ‘the effectiveness of international organisations in protecting human rights’ (Year 9 GL) and ‘ways in which Australian governments address issues of sustainability’ (Year 9 CD).

And finally, there will be action opportunities to:

- ‘participate in civic or environmental action to effect positive change’ (Year 5 CD);
- ‘define, exercise and evaluate rights and responsibilities associated with being a young adult including the concept of working together for the common good’ (Year 9 CD); and
- ‘recognise that acts of racism and prejudice constitute discrimination and participate in appropriate ways to prevent or counter these’ (Year 9 CD).

### ***Implementation and implications***

As part of the Australian Government legislation, Schools Assistance (Learning Together — achievement through choice and opportunity) Act, 2004, which regulates quadrennium funding, States and Territories, Kerr explained, are required to implement the Statements of Learning, either as part of their next curriculum review, if that occurs between 2006 and 2008, or before 1 January 2008.

Ministers will have to ‘sign off’ to say that their curriculums do ‘implement’ the Statements of Learning, with the added requirement that a mapping would be provided to the Australian Government by the 1 January 2008 deadline, as evidence showing how the specific learning elements of the statements are present in their curriculum documents.

The statements represent, in Kerr’s view, ‘the first national agreement about exactly what is reasonable, challenging and appropriate for the majority of young Australians to have the chance to learn by four points in their schooling’. They raise the five domains, including civics and citizenship, to ‘pre-eminent status’ and form ‘a common national core of intended opportunities in all jurisdictions’ curriculum documents’. This in turn, she suggested, implies there will be implementation in the classroom, though this does raise questions about entitlement for opportunities to learn and when actual learning can reasonably be expected to take place.

In 2007, she concluded, educational jurisdictions are working to ensure that the Statements of Learning are incorporated in their curriculum documents, but since all these jurisdiction documents are organised in different ways, it will mean the results will look different though the opportunities to learn will be there.

## **National Assessment**

The Assessment Domain for Civics & Citizenship produced by jurisdictional experts in 2002, Mellor noted at the outset, was developed in the absence of the Statements of Learning we now have and which Kerr had outlined. (See Figure 1 below.)

### **Figure 1: The Assessment Domain**

#### **Yr 6 Civics & Citizenship Key Performance Measures**

##### **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.

*Within primary schooling this KPM anticipates that students can:*

- 6.1: Recognise key features of Australian democracy.
- 6.2: Describe the development of Australian self-government and democracy.
- 6.3: Outline the roles of political and civic institutions in Australia.
- 6.4: Understand the purposes and processes of creating and changing rules and laws.
- 6.5: Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Australia's democracy.
- 6.6: Recognise that Australia is a pluralist society with citizens of diverse ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds.

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

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

*Within primary schooling this KPM expects that students can:*

- 6.7: Recognise that citizens require certain skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic decision-making.
- 6.8: Identify ways that Australian citizens can effectively participate in their society and its governance.
- 6.9: Recognise the ways that understanding of and respect for, commonalities and differences contribute to harmony within a democratic society.
- 6.10: Understand why citizens choose to engage in civic life and decision-making.

#### **Yr 10 Civics & Citizenship Key Performance Measures<sup>1</sup>**

##### **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.

*Within secondary schooling this KPM expects that students can:*

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<sup>1</sup>The Year 10 KPMs assume the Year 6 KPMs have already been achieved by students

- 10.1: Recognise that perspectives on Australian democratic ideas and civic institutions vary and change over time.
- 10.2: Understand the ways in which the Australian Constitution impacts on the lives of Australian citizens.
- 10.3: Understand the role of law-making and governance in Australia's democratic tradition.
- 10.4: Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a range of contexts.
- 10.5: Analyse how Australia's ethnic and cultural diversity contribute to Australian democracy, identity and social cohesion.
- 10.6: Analyse Australia's role as a nation in the global community.

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

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

*Within secondary schooling this KPM expects that students can:*

- 10.7: Understand that citizens require certain knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic political and civic action.
- 10.8: Analyse the role of a critical citizenry in Australia's democracy.
- 10.9: Analyse the relationship between democratic values and social justice as an important aspect of Australia's democratic tradition.
- 10.10: Analyse the reasons Australians make choices about participating in political and civic processes.

A critical thing in this context, Mellor noted, is the division into two key areas — civics, which is about the knowledge and understandings of civic institutions and processes; and citizenship, which is about values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin civic action which is, of course, potentially contested. These are the things that students are supposed to know and be able to do. The Year 10 Key Performance Measures, it can be seen, also assume that the Year 6 ones have already been achieved.

### ***Proficiency levels***

In 2003, Mellor explained, there was a trial of items in all jurisdictions which saw a degree of item refinement resulting in the items that now can be accessed at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=17149>.

Then in 2004, the revised items were run as a sample assessment, unlike the literacy and numeracy assessments that all students at the relevant year levels take. In that sense, it is 'not so much assessing kids, as the country, and it can't therefore be tied back to individual schools'. The results of this sample assessment, which she like Ferguson earlier acknowledged were 'disappointing', led to the development of a proficiency level continuum to indicate what is expected a student at a particular level should be able to achieve. (See Figure 2.)

### **Figure 2: Proficiency levels and Standards on the Civics and Citizenship Scale**

Although the Civics and Citizenship Scale was a continuum, scores were grouped into five proficiency levels ranging from '1' (containing the least difficult items) to '5' (containing the most difficult items). After the assessment data had been analysed, civics and citizenship education experts from government, Catholic and non-government schools in all States and Territories came together to set a proficient standard for each of Year 6 and Year 10. The proficient standard was a level of performance that would be expected for a student at that year level. Students needed to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be

regarded as having reached a proficient standard. A proficient standard is not the same as a minimum benchmark standard because the latter refers to the basic level needed to function at that year level whereas the former refers to what is expected of a student at that year level. The Proficient Standard for Year 6 was set at Proficiency Level 2 (see Progress Map) and for Year 10 at Proficiency Level 3.

### **Characteristics of Proficiency Level 2**

Students who achieved at Proficiency Level 2 were able to demonstrate accurate responses to relatively simple civics and citizenship concepts or issues, with limited interpretation or reasoning. They could, for example, identify more than one basic feature of democracy or democratic process, have basic understandings of citizens' taxation and/or civic responsibilities, and recognise tensions between democratic rights and private actions.

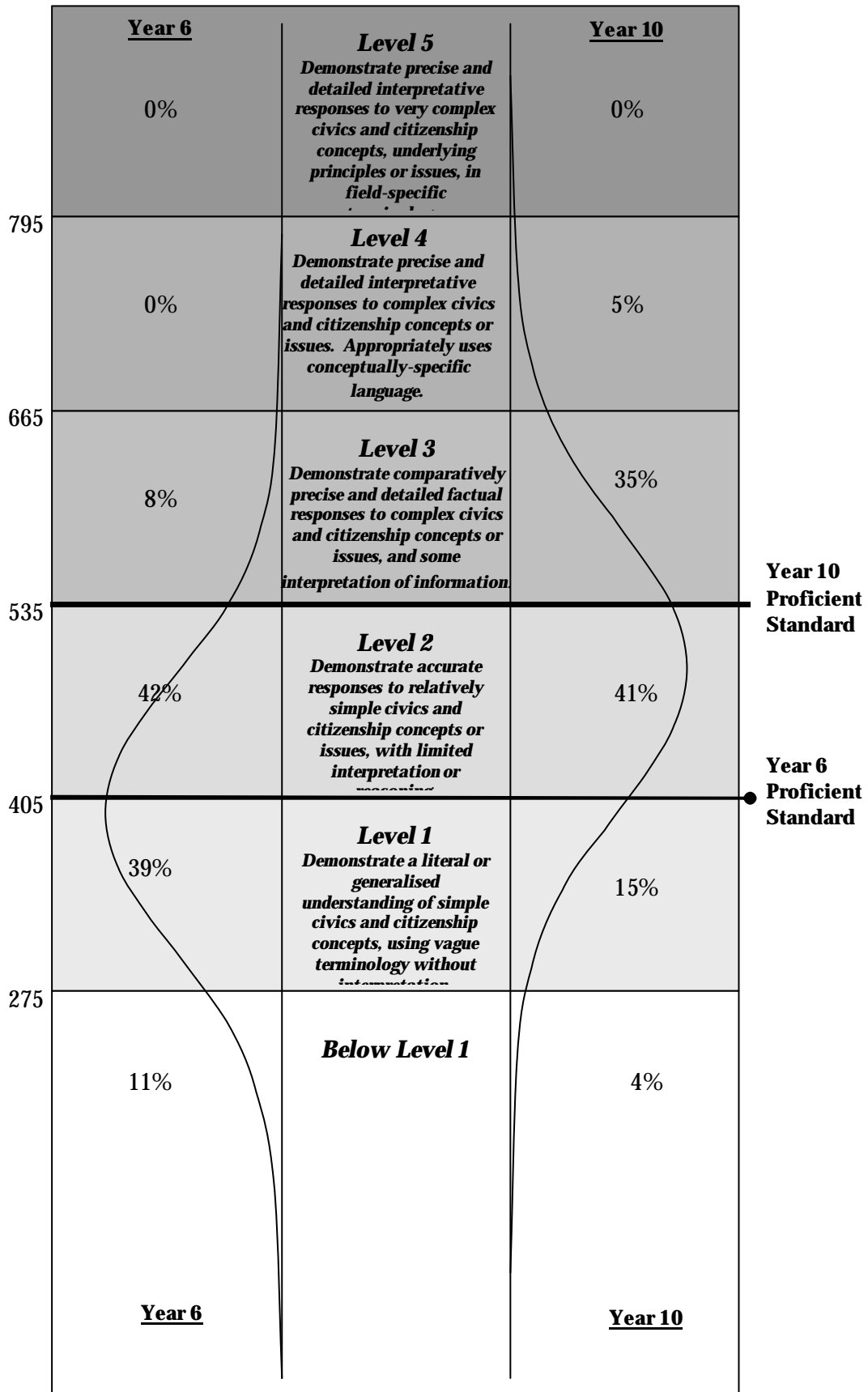
### **Characteristics of Proficiency Level 3**

Students who achieved at Proficiency Level 3 were able to demonstrate comparatively precise and detailed factual responses to complex civics and citizenship concepts or issues, and some interpretation of information. They could, for example, identify the historical event remembered on Anzac Day, clearly understand the mechanisms and importance of secret ballot, and understand the general effect of sanctions in international agreements.

(Excerpt from the Executive Summary of the MCEETYA National Assessment Programme – Civics and Citizenship Years 6 & 10 Report, 2004, available through the website.)

Identification of the proficiency levels then enabled the construction of the progress map in Figure 3 below, which is read from the bottom up. Starting with Year 6, for instance, it can be seen that 11% of students were not even defined in 2004, though they have been for 2007. A further 39% (meaning a total of 50% in all of students tested) are below the performance level identified for Year 6. Similarly, 60% of Year 10 students are below the relevant performance standard. That is why Mellor and others refer to a 'disappointing picture' which they hope will improve in 2007.

**Figure 3: Progress Map: Distribution of Years 6 and 10 Students on the Civics and Citizenship Scale**  
 (Note that percentages have been rounded)



The proficiency level descriptions in the centre of Figure 3 then have been played out in terms of item response descriptors that give a sense of the range and complexity of understanding mapped against a particular level. (Figure 4 below.)

Taking Level 5, for example, Mellor explained there are things there she would have hoped some Year 10 students would have their head around; and yet they did not. 'That's salutary'; especially given the finding from the assessment that, 'if Year 6 students had any idea, Year 10 only had a little bit more'. The growth over four years is nothing like what it is in any other area of cognitive development; which raises serious questions about what is happening in schools and the fact it is relatively easier to get CCE into primary than secondary schools.

She then specifically looked at a unit called Sorry Day comprising four questions related to a media advertisement for Sorry Day in 1998, to demonstrate that it is possible to have open-ended questions that can be assessed reliably, and to show the way in which responses to these were scored and their relationship to the proficiency levels that had been identified. Beyond this, however, the example also showed that there effectively are 'a whole lot of kids who were introduced to the concepts involved, and a whole lot of others who weren't.'

'You can ask questions about dispositions', she observed, but they are underpinned by 'cognitive knowledge which can and needs to be taught'. Often however, she argued, it is not and part of the purpose of national assessment in this context is to serve as professional development to that end.

There is, Mellor concluded, a set of early release materials that are 'really important and useful' and which are available on the website for Year 6 and Year 10 along with score guides and analyses that participants and other teachers should look at and use. It is important to do so because 'you can't expect kids to demonstrate in assessment what they haven't been taught'.

The next test will occur in October and schools involved will get their own report before the end of the year. The overall national report draft will be ready in March 2008. In three more years another assessment can be conducted and the same benchmarks will apply. And if teachers are still not teaching the material, which is why this forum has, in Mellor's view, such an important role to play, 'this will have to be said ... if system commitments in relation to civics and citizenship are to be achieved'.

Table 3.1: Civics and Citizenship Proficiency Levels

Figure 4

Level scale range	Proficiency level description	Selected item response descriptors
Level 5 ≥795	Demonstrates precise and detailed interpretive responses to very complex civics and citizenship concepts, underlying principles or issues, in field-specific terminology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain one of the principles that underlie compulsory voting</li> <li>• recognise the importance of precedent and its community impact</li> <li>• understand why refugees need to find safety in another country</li> <li>• understand the contribution of freedom of information laws in a democracy</li> <li>• analyse the tension between critical citizenship and abiding by the law</li> </ul>
Level 4 665-794	Demonstrates precise and detailed interpretive responses to complex civics and citizenship concepts or issues. Appropriately uses conceptually-specific language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comment accurately on the meaning of Anzac Day</li> <li>• explain how understanding civic process supports civic participation</li> <li>• explain why disagreement between citizens can be good for society</li> <li>• explain how governments may change laws to ensure consistency between State and Federal legislation</li> <li>• understand a democratic electoral mandate gives an elected government the power to implement its policies</li> <li>• provide an accurate definition of the term/concept 'discrimination'</li> <li>• analyse the impact on public opinion of both positive or negative media reporting of an event</li> <li>• analyse Indigenous Australians' under-representation in parliaments</li> </ul>
Level 3 535-664	Demonstrate comparatively precise and detailed factual responses to complex civics and citizenship concepts or issues, and some interpretation of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly understand the mechanisms and importance of secret ballot</li> <li>• recognise governments advertise the laws so they are known to citizens</li> <li>• explain the symbolism of the Southern Cross in the Australian flag</li> <li>• identify the historical event remembered on Anzac Day</li> <li>• know two actions that might bring about change in legislation</li> <li>• analyse and interpret evidence of attitudinal causes of government policy changes</li> <li>• identify the responsibility of government in the area of health</li> <li>• understand the general effect of sanction in international agreements</li> </ul>
Level 2 405-534	Demonstrate accurate responses to relatively simple civics and citizenship concepts or issues, with limited interpretation or reasoning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify more than one basic feature of democracy or democratic process</li> <li>• know what a referendum is</li> <li>• identify a reason why Europeans in the nineteenth century may not have recognised Indigenous laws</li> <li>• offer minimal analysis of reasons for or against compulsory voting</li> <li>• have basic understandings of citizens' taxation and/or civic responsibilities</li> <li>• assert rather than analyse views on media influence</li> <li>• recognise tensions between democratic rights and private actions</li> </ul>
Level 1 275-404	Demonstrate a literal or generalised understanding of simple civics and citizenship concepts, using vague terminology without interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify a basic feature of democracy or a democratic process</li> <li>• recognise that democratic governments are elected by the people</li> <li>• recognise some private actions open to citizens in a democracy</li> <li>• Identify appeals to legality or behaviour change in anti-littering posters</li> <li>• recognise that the right to free speech does not imply agreeing with others' views</li> <li>• provide one motivation for joining a community organisation</li> <li>• identify one possible reason for taking protest action</li> <li>• identify one example of the impact of 'neutral media coverage'</li> </ul>

## **Workshops**

Participants had the opportunity to attend one of five workshops offered on resources relevant to CCE on which teachers and others can draw, which are briefly summarised below.

Prior to the workshops, participants received a brief outline of the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) programme from Allison Sewell (DEST). The Australian Government, she explained, has provided \$10.7 million, bringing the total commitment to \$16.3 million from 2006-07 to 2009-10 for PACER to subsidise student travel to the national capital to visit the range of facilities covered by the workshops below and more. The subsidy, for Year 4 to 12 students from schools 150km or more from Canberra, supports the national Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship and helps ensure that by the time they leave school, students should be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.

Further information about PACER can be gained from <http://www.ncetp.org.au>

### ***Connecting 'Memory of a Nation', an archival collection with classroom enquiry***

Margaret Fleming (Education Manager, National Archives of Australia) described the new permanent exhibition, *Memory of a Nation*, which showcases a 'tantalising' collection with strong links to CCE that includes Barton's annotated draft constitution, immigration dictation tests, ASIO surveillance photos, the 1972 Larrikin petition and more.

New learning programmes, she explained, have been designed to develop historical and political literacy along with the exhibition. They provide a starting point for investigation into primary sources and seek to provoke learners to ask their own questions. The workshop then used the analogy of one's own birth certificate to bring to life understanding about the notion of our nation's birth certificate. This involved a consideration of the Royal Commission of Assent, the Australian Constitution, the Letters Patent constituting the office of the Governor-General and the Proclamation of Inauguration Day.

Glenda Smith (Old Parliament House) then outlined how the new Gallery of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, scheduled to open in mid-2009, is being established to 'engage and inspire' people of all ages to explore their democratic history and contribute to the democratic process. She also sought participants' thoughts and comments on these plans.

### ***Your vote counts***

Beatrice Barnett (Australian Electoral Commission) sought to address the role of schools in preparing students for their role as future electors in an election year where simultaneously there is considerable discussion about democratic responsibilities and a degree of disengagement from the electoral system particularly amongst young voters.

In this context the workshop examined, from a student's point of view, the extent to which schools are democratic institutions. This involved a look at the practices that are modelled to students that may affect their attitudes to participating in democratic processes.

The workshop then provided participants with some practical ideas and activities to implement in classrooms to help prepare students for participation as active citizens.

### ***Discovering the building block in our national identity at the Australian War Memorial (AWM)***

Roslyn Hull (Education Project Officer, Australian War Memorial) used her workshop session to address such critical questions as who are we?, what values do we hold true?, how has our national character been shaped by the conflicts involving Australians?, where can you encounter first-hand the stories of ordinary Australians involved in civic duty?, and why would you ask a Year 10 student to get dressed up?

The answers to all were explored in the session including a response to what she referred to as 'the big one' — when you are studying civics and citizenship, how can we help?

### ***Integrating an understanding of human rights into the classroom and the curriculum***

Rebecca Stuart (Education Manager, Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) explained that human rights education is concerned with helping students to know and understand their rights and responsibilities in the classroom, in the school, in the community, and on the global stage. In this context, the workshop sought to help teachers to identify methods of integrating human rights into the classroom through the use of a range of simple activities, whilst also highlighting some human rights challenges for young people today and providing an opportunity for participants to engage with the Commission's education resources and how they can be used in lessons.

A range of print and film resources were outlined which are available from the Commission free of charge to teachers, such as: *Bringing them Home* resources; a collection of resources to illustrate the impact of disability issues, sexual harassment and racism (*Youth Challenge: Teaching human rights and responsibilities [Sex discrimination, Disability discrimination, Young people in the workplace, Human rights in the classroom]*); and film grabs, role plays and other learning activities that were explored in the workshop.

One particularly useful resource outlined was *Voices of Australia Education Module* which helps combat racism and promotes a culture of respect and equality among high school students. The module is based on stories collected in celebration of 30 years since the inception of the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.

### ***Teaching about Australia and Asia***

Kurt Mullane (Manager, Professional Learning, Asia Education Foundation) conducted an interactive workshop where participants were able to explore the opportunities new curriculum resources to support CCE afford, with a particular focus on:

- *In Our Own Backyard*;
- *APEC: Strengthening our Community, Building a Sustainable Future*;
- *Asia Scope and Sequence for SOSE/HSIE* (with links to CCE); and
- *Go Korea!* Website.

Participants had the chance to examine each of these resources and identify their connections with CCE. Consideration also was given to how teaching about Asia and Australia can be incorporated effectively in CCE.

## ***Finding the flag's history***

Dr Elizabeth Kwan (Historian, Darwin, NT and author of *Flag and Nation: Australians and their national flags since 1901*, UNSW Press, 2006) sought in her illustrated address to 'mediate the maze of misinformation and mythmaking' about our flag's history.

There is, according to Kwan, a general lack of awareness about our national flag which she illustrated by asking when the flag became our national flag (federation or later) and how do we know? 'The transitions in national flag Australians made', she argued, 'and still are making, is not well known or understood. Nor are the roles played in that transition by individuals, lobby groups, political parties, parliaments, governments and schools'.

Further prompt questions which arise from this, which she feels need to be addressed, include:

- Why did Australians take more than fifty years after federation to replace Britain's Union Jack with an Australian flag, and still decades more to accept that change? Why is so little known about that history?
- How have governments, lobby groups and historians differed in explaining the flag's symbolism and history? What implications do these differences have for teachers and students learning about the flag?

### ***From Union Jack to Australian National flag***

The Australian Commonwealth at its inauguration in January 2001, Kwan explained to fill in some of the gaps, 'did not have an Australian national flag, though many Australians thought that the federation flag would soon become one. This popular flag, a British white ensign with a blue cross bearing white stars, was once used as an unofficial shipping flag along the east Australian coast from the early 1830s, and during the 1898 federation campaign the Australasian Federation League of New South Wales promoted it as the flag for the new Commonwealth with the motto "One people, one destiny, one flag".'

She then traced the evolution of the national flag through:

- early competitions, including one initiated by the Barton Government in April 1900 which saw the emergence of a design for two shipping ensigns;
- criticism and uncertainty about these which resulted in the gradual adoption of the blue ensign by the Commonwealth government, albeit accompanied by the Union Jack which still was required at reviews when vice-regal representatives were present;
- the use of all three flags (the Union Jack and the two ensigns) reflecting our dual nationality for recruiting drives in World War 1, with the Union Jack clearly regarded as the most important;
- reinforcement of the use of the Union Jack by post-war nationalists appealing to voters and especially returned soldiers, after a period where disputes over conscription and the realignment of political parties saw moves to replace it with an Australian flag;
- a period of contestation in the 1920s over which flag (the Australian blue ensign or the Union Jack) should have precedence, which fundamentally was about which was the national flag and which was won by the Union Jack; and
- a Victorian government challenge in 1940 to the prevailing assumption that the blue ensign was 'for governments and not people' when it passed legislation allowing state schools to buy that ensign.

Then in the 1950s the flag did actually change. In December 1950, Kwan explained, 'the Menzies government decided that the blue ensign should be proclaimed the national flag, enabling organisers of the jubilee celebrations to present it to every school. The *Flags Act* followed in 1953, with Queen Elizabeth II giving her assent while in Canberra in February 1954. The Australian flag now took precedence over the Union Jack'; though Australians did take 'some decades to understand and accept the change' with South Australia, for instance, choosing to continue with the Union Jack.

### ***Promoting the Australian flag***

'Menzies', Kwan explained, 'promoted the Australian national flag by having it flown every day above the entrance to Parliament House from 1964, and from government buildings on working days. The National Capital Development Commission, created by the Menzies government in 1958, erected two huge flagpoles for Australian flags on Capital Hill and City Hill.

'The federal government's practice of giving flags to schools widened to include youth groups and by the 1970s national sporting bodies. By 1980 the Australian flag had been placed in the House of Representatives and become part of the logos of the two major parties. The flag was central to the brief prepared for entrants in the Parliament House design competition of 1979, and to the winning design. Its flagpole dwarfed the previous one on Capital Hill and even more so the short central flagpole on Parliament House below it. The image became an Australian icon.

'Even so, Malcolm Fraser's Coalition government, when establishing the long-awaited Australian shipping register in 1980, could not persuade Australia's merchant marine to adopt the Australian national flag instead of the Australian red ensign, affectionately known as the red duster: it was the flag they had sailed under during the war.'

### ***Why did the transition from Union Jack to Australian national flag take more than fifty years?***

The answer, she suggested, lies in a combination of government reluctance which still persists today, and which reflects Australia's history of dual nationality. 'Until recently', she argued, 'most Australians saw themselves as Britons as well as Australians. They belonged to two nations. Henry Parkes, often called the father of federation, had urged the Australian colonies in 1890 to federate because of the British background they shared — "the crimson thread of kinship", he called it. But Australians' vote for federation also represented Australians' desire to be a nation'; though it wasn't until 1984 that Australians ceased to be British subjects.

'Not only sentiment but also fear', she suggested, 'tied Australians to the Union Jack ... Most Australians saw British ties as essential to their defence. They were only too conscious that the small egalitarian European society they were creating in this vast continent on the edge of Asia far from 'home' depended on the Royal Navy keeping at bay other European powers and, from 1905, expansionist Japan. Australia's ties with Britain, at the centre of the dispute over conscription during the Great War, became even more important to Australia in an insecure post-war world. The wearing of British defence ensigns by the Royal Australian Navy from 1911 and the Royal Australian Air Force from 1922 at Britain's insistence underlined that fact ... The closer Australia's ties to Britain, Australian governments argued, the more likely would Britain defend and promote Australian interests.'

That view, of course, became increasingly untenable 'as Labor Prime Minister, John Curtin, and later Robert Menzies recognised in seeking alliance with the United States. That the decision to present the blue ensign to all schools in 1951 was made in the midst of the Korean War is significant – a recognition that children must be taught to be Australian, rather than British. The Vietnam War, in which Britain was not involved, emphasised the point.' And by the mid-1980s, Australian governments 'found it easier to separate British and Australian sentiment and interests.'

In more recent times young people have begun wearing the flag at sports events and at Gallipoli. Australian flags at the centre of the riots at Cronulla Beach in December 2005 and at the Big Day Out in January 2006 challenged sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and historians to explain their meaning.

### ***Why is so little known about the transition in national flag from Union Jack to Australian national flag?***

‘The reluctance of governments between 1901 and 1954 to explain to Australians the relationship between the Union Jack and its ensigns’, according to Kwan, ‘left both governments and people uncertain and ill-informed about the history of the blue ensign. After 1954, when it became the Australian national flag, replacing the Union Jack, governments presented it as the uncontested national symbol since 1901’; though greater interest in the history of our flag has, as evidenced in part by her own address at this forum, more recently emerged.

More specifically ‘historians, becoming interested in the issue in the 1990s as they researched the history of the flag, began scrutinising the lobby groups’ arguments and evidence. Vexillologists, those concerned with the study of flags, also became involved, especially the Flag Society of Australia, now known as Flags Australia, with its members’ research published in its journal, *Crux Australis*.’

### ***What implications do these differences have for teachers and students learning about the flag?***

The choice for teachers and students in learning about the history of the Australian flag and its symbolism, Kwan concluded. The National Museum of Australia’s display, “The Symbols of a Nation”, acknowledges that more complex story in admitting that national symbols “are often at the centre of national debates”. Each of these symbols, the display’s introduction explains, “attempts to capture and reflect Australian values and aspirations”. Exploring their history reveals not only how they have evolved but also the changing national identity they reflect.’

•••••

### ***An interactive tour***

Day one of the forum ended with an interactive tour of icons and symbols provided by David Arnold, the Manager of the Education Section of the National Museum and other NMA staff.

As a museum about Australian History, including Indigenous histories and the impact of humans on Australia’s environment the NMA, Arnold explained, can act as a signpost to civics and citizenship issues. The question is, of course, what issues, event, themes and people in Australian history does the museum highlight and how does it do this?

Arnold also highlighted classroom resources available on the National Museum website and gave information on the 2007 Youth Challenge ([www.nma.gov.au/education](http://www.nma.gov.au/education))

Arnold and his team’s interactive tour then took small groups of participants to a variety of often symbolic and iconic artefacts which answer this question and hence can shine a light onto civics and citizenship moments in our history.

## ***Sustainability in practice***

Starting with his three year old daughter's advice to the forum to 'be nice, eat vegetables, dance, sing and listen', Anthony Ryan (Principal, Townsville Central State School) provided a national case study of sustainability in practice based not so much on the policies we write, as what schools and students experience and do.

Townsville Central, he explained, is one of the oldest schools in Queensland, now on its third site which used to house Townsville's very first prison. It is a Band 6 Prep to Year 7 school with an enrolment of around 250, which is markedly up from earlier years. It has a mixed socio-economic population and a growing mix of cultures as a number of refugees and other immigrants come to the town.

### ***A whole school framework***

The school's response to a period of enrolment decline that preceded Ryan's arrival at the school a few years ago, was to look at a range of policies and documents to make sense of them all in terms of what the school itself does. In doing so, it concluded there were three core things that it needed to address: relationships, organisation and curriculum but, importantly, with peer support at the centre of it all. That, they determined, is what would drive the school; and they badged it Relationships In School Communities (RISC).

The reason for focusing in particular on peer support, Ryan explained, involved a combination of factors including:

- 14% of 4-17 year olds have mental health problems;
- the need to improve relationships in the community;
- discipline problems;
- passive non-compliance of students; and
- the need for whole school strategies.

And when they engaged some parents in the process, one who is a plumber in the area arguably summed it all up when, in response to a question about what he really wants for his child, said, 'the real question is not what we want our students to know, or what skills we want them to develop, but what we want them to be!' It was this sort of thinking, Ryan suggested, that led them to reframe what is really important in the school.

### ***Relationships — the first step***

Relationships provided the first step to improvement and change because, as Ryan put it, 'that is what the parents were telling us'. The Peer Support Programme they implemented specifically envisions all young people as being:

- personally responsible for their own wellbeing;
- able to manage their lives positively and safely; and
- involved in, and supported by their community.

'If we were to make the school sustainable, that is the culture we had to build'. Ryan then used the analogy of starting a fire to illustrate the approach. 'You start with kindling not logs. Set the policy documents aside in favour of small conversations about how classroom activities contribute to making students better people. With this underway, you can throw on the logs of the civics and citizenship education materials, and the fire has continued to burn'.

Having started in this way, the school then identified four student outcomes they sought to develop which also were outcomes for the community as a whole:

#### A strong sense of self

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Values clarification

#### Resilience

- Resilience
- Refusal
- Assertiveness
- Conflict resolution

#### Connectedness

- Empathy
- Negotiation
- Interpersonal
- Communication
- Relationship building

#### Sense of possibility

- Planning
- Coping
- Monitoring stress
- Positive thinking

### ***The Peer Support structure***

The programme itself, Ryan explained, involves a number of elements. More specifically:

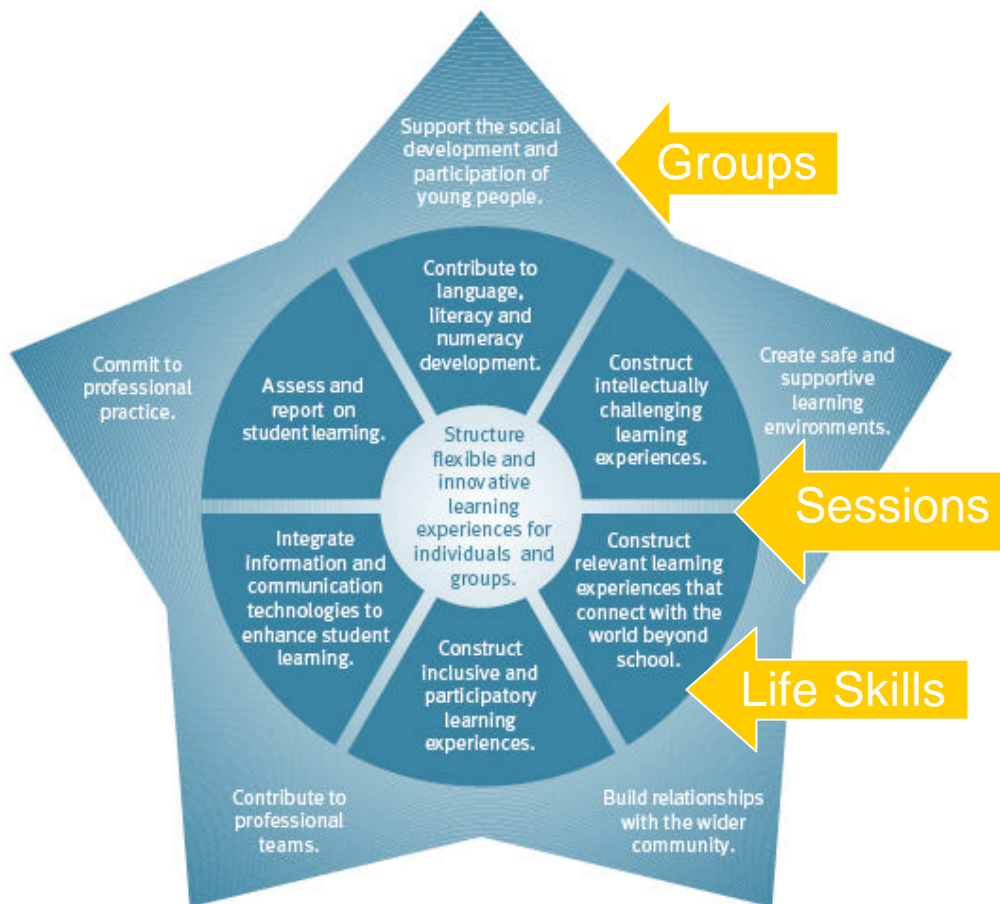
- Year 7 Leadership Training in this Prep to Year 7 school;
- Peer group selection of mixed P-7 groups of no more than ten and an avoidance of family and friends in the same group because 'sometimes it's hard to talk about them';
- Preparation time for students and involvement in unit selection;
- Briefing time before students go to their regular meetings of their peer groups;
- Peer Support time;
- Debriefing time when they come back which is very important because it enables them to share the different discussions of the common topic addressed and hence hear a range of different views;
- Inductions for new students conducted by their peer support group;
- Whole school activity days;
- Pre-school orientation; and
- (as Ryan indicated) 'the list goes on'.

It essentially is, he suggested, about 'creating a community in the school' which resulted in one parent wryly observing that 'you are using peer pressure for good and not evil'.

### ***Significant links***

The school has consciously strived to link its peer support approach to the broader professional standards approach in use in Queensland, which Ryan illustrated with Figure 5 below which seeks to 'make it all meaningful to the kids because that is what has to drive it all'.

**Figure 5: Professional Standards**

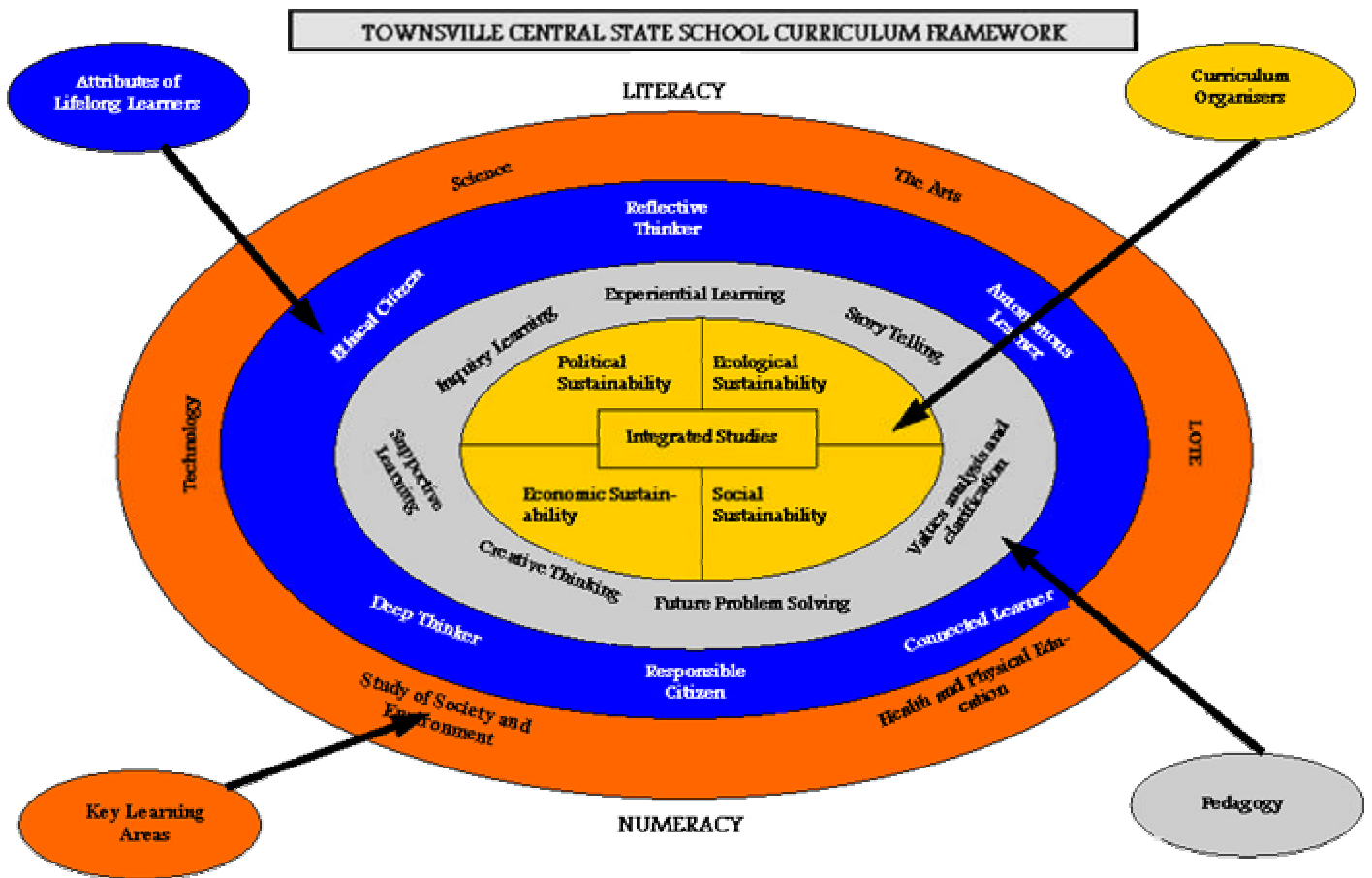


Asked what the programme actually means to them as students it was, according to Ryan, best summed up by one Year 7 Peer Support Leader who said that 'Peer Support is like a key to unlock qualities that you never thought you'd have for your life'. When students say things like that, he argued, 'you know you are doing something right'; and he then shared some other student observations which showed an interesting shift from a focus on the content of peer support in the early years, to more of a focus on the relationships later on, perhaps reflecting 'what interests them most in the middle years'.

***A curriculum framework for a sustainable school***

Ryan then outlined the school's central curriculum framework, provided as Figure 6 below, which constitutes an expression of their interest in building a sustainable school, consistent with UNESCO's approach to sustainability which involves an attempt to simultaneously address political sustainability ecological sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability and, above all, create meaningful work for students with the involvement of teachers and parents as well.

**Figure 6: Townsville Central Curriculum Framework**



Ryan then outlined some of the things the students actually have done in response to the aim of building a sustainable school such as:

- using songs like Ben Harper’s *With my own two hands* and Ben Lee’s *We’re all in this together* to demonstrate the importance of working together and their view of what their school is about, reflected in a student made video he showed; and
- a current project underway to broaden views of sustainability beyond just the environment by using eight diverse artists to work with students from a group of local schools to develop social stories and celebrate what Townsville was and is in a display for the community in an old house that visitors will be able to walk through and appreciate.

So civics and citizenship education for Ryan is ‘not just history, or geography, but is bigger than that, and we can build fires in that way’.

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Responding to a question from forum facilitator Tony Mackay about how he views his work, Ryan noted he doesn’t actually use the words civics and citizenship education, though he knows he is doing it. ‘Our focus is building relationships and developing good persons and citizens in that way’. Moving beyond words that obfuscate, in his view, to a picture of what good citizens are in different domains, whether it be the knowledge citizen, the creative citizen, the democratic citizen or whatever, is really what matters most.

## ***The value of human rights education***

This week, The Hon John von Doussa QC (President, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) noted, marks the anniversaries of two ‘crucial steps forward in Australia’s human rights journey’:

- the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 referendum that Bain Attwood had earlier discussed; and
- the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s *Bringing Them Home* report which publicly documented ‘the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families’.

Both, he suggested, were ‘days of great hope; days when injustices wrought against Indigenous Australia were brought to public attention; days when it seemed that the knowledge of injustice would surely lead to its remedy’.

While it is important to acknowledge the many steps forward that have been made ‘in the struggle to overcome a history of systematic discrimination and disadvantage’, however, the enjoyment of basic human rights is, in his view, ‘not yet a reality for Indigenous Australians; which he illustrated with reference to Indigenous health, justice and ongoing attempts to ‘deny or discredit the sorry history of the forcible removal of Indigenous children’.

The 1967 referendum did not, as is popularly believed and Attwood contested, give Indigenous Australians citizenship rights, or the right to vote, ‘just as it did not cure discrimination ... Indeed, it is fair to say that the true significance of the referendum lay not in what it did, but what Australian people wanted to do’.

### ***Civics and Citizenship Education***

In this week of anniversaries it is timely, von Doussa believes, that he addresses a group of educators about ‘a subject of utmost importance: equipping young people with an understanding of what human rights are and why they matter. This knowledge is vital to enable young people to make an active and informed contribution to civil society.’

The most obvious way to introduce human rights to students in this context in his view is through CCE. ‘Civics and citizenship cannot be taught without talking about human rights; a fact that is reflected in the National Statements of Learning’. What is more, educating young people about human rights ‘is vital to safeguard against human rights abuses’.

We need, according to von Doussa, human rights education to ‘ensure that our laws comply with human rights, our workplaces are discrimination free, our community relations are harmonious, and that all Australian citizens can enjoy the benefits of a human rights culture’. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century world, he observed, we will face ‘many problems ranging from climate change and dwindling water resources, to irregular migration and the exploitation of illegal workers, to terrorism, to the persistent problems of poverty and gender inequality. We need to equip young people with the skills and understanding to address these problems in ways which respect human rights’.

### ***Legal and social dimensions of our HR obligations***

To achieve this, von Doussa argued, we need to communicate both the legal and social dimensions of Australia’s human rights obligations. ‘You can think of the principles of the law as the skeleton of human rights education — the basic structure which underpins any discussion of how human rights

are relevant in everyday life; and this is something young people need to understand'. But to flesh the topic out and make rights real, 'you must talk about social dimensions of human rights. How are human rights relevant to your family, to your work, to your community, to other people?' And how can we, regardless of who we are, take responsibility for protecting human rights?

'For human rights education to succeed', he suggested, 'we must find ways to show people how respecting human rights can make a real difference to their lives and to the kind of society we live in'. And experience shows that this best can be achieved 'by analysing real life stories where patent unfairness has occurred. The stories need to be ones "close to home" to ensure empathy' with the situation they disclose or, as Anthony Ryan put it earlier, 'small conversations'.

Von Doussa then outlined the development of the modern conception of human rights laws starting with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. This declaration sets forth 30 Articles which articulate 'fundamental rights and freedoms which the nations of the world recognised as the entitlement of every human being without distinction of any kind'.

For the purpose of advancing an understanding in our schools of the essential values that underpin our way of life we have, in Australia, set out nine values in the National Values Framework for Australian Schools. The Articles of the Universal Declaration can, in his view, be seen as the international counterpart, as the 'International Framework of Values' which are the overarching guides to standards of behaviour.

But the world also has moved on since 1948 and the UN has, in response, developed and evolved the general principles into detailed and sometimes quite complex human rights instruments, often known as covenants, conventions or treaties, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* which form the 'backbone of international human rights law. These in turn are supplemented by a variety of other human rights instruments specifically to protect the rights of women, the rights of children and to prohibit all forms of racial discrimination and torture and more. The result, von Doussa explained, is that when the UN or the government speaks of human rights, 'they are likely not to be referring to broad guiding values, but to precise rights that can be clearly identified in international instruments'.

Australia, he observed, has ratified all the major human rights treaties and, by doing so, has voluntarily accepted it has to take all necessary steps to ensure the rights protected by these treaties are protected by Australian law. Despite our ratification of treaties, however, Australians have 'no legal guarantee that those rights will be protected in Australia unless and until parliament passes laws protecting those rights under Australian law'.

We have, in fact, passed laws protecting some of the rights set out in the international human rights conventions and established the HREOC as an independent statutory agency charged with promoting public understanding of human rights. The primary function of HREOC, von Doussa explained, is actually an educative one and includes:

- developing human rights education resources;
- investigating and conciliating complaints of discrimination;
- making submissions on the human rights impact of proposed laws;
- conducting national inquiries into human rights issues such as children in immigration detention, the stolen generations and discrimination against same-sex couples; and
- intervening in court cases that raise human rights issues, the most well known of which arguably was the Mabo case.

## ***Gaps in our laws***

While Australian law contains ‘many important human rights protections’ this protection is, in von Doussa’s view, ‘piecemeal and incomplete’. Many fundamental human rights principles set out in the ICCRP and the ICESCR to which he earlier referred, such as the right to health and to education, have not yet been guaranteed by Australian law. And the evidence of the gaps in legal protection of human rights in Australia ‘is mounting’ in, for example, such cases as ones related to the prolonged detention of asylum seekers in immigration detention centres and the denial to same-sex couples of the same access to financial entitlements as heterosexual couples.

Faced with criticism about what the UN calls the ‘implementation gap’ some people, he conceded, might note that ‘Australia has a comparatively strong human rights record, that our democracy is healthy, that our people are generally well-off’. His response, however, is simple — ‘successes do not excuse failures or permit complacency. We must keep trying to do better’. Moreover, he argued, ‘we need to recognise that protecting human rights is not just about responding to egregious breaches of human rights. It’s about preventing human rights violations before they happen by fostering a culture of human rights’.

Not surprisingly given the argument he had constructed, he believes this means ‘instilling in young people a respect for human rights, educating employers and employees about their rights and obligations under federal discrimination law, promoting legal and social reforms that enable families to balance their paid work and family responsibilities without suffering discrimination, and making sure that all laws and policies passed by parliament comply with basic human rights standards’.

## ***The Charter of Rights debate***

The gaps in Australian human rights protections, von Doussa noted, have led to calls for the introduction of a Charter of Rights which, at a state level, have led to action so there now is a Charter of Rights in the ACT and Victoria, and it is under investigation in Tasmania and Western Australia. That said, the desirability of such a move is still the subject of ‘heated debate’ and, to his mind at least, ‘much misinformation’. There is, he believes, ‘widespread confusion about what rights are already protected by Australian law’. The debate about whether Australia needs a charter of rights in this context ‘often gets hijacked by the tired old bogeyman of a United States style constitutional bill of rights which gives courts the power to declare legislation invalid’.

However no-one, according to von Doussa, is suggesting we introduce a constitutional bill of rights. Rather, ‘we need to explore the prospect of a statutory Charter of Rights which does not give the Courts this wide power’. And examples of such charters exist in the UK, New Zealand, Victoria and the ACT, which ‘all expressly preserve parliamentary sovereignty by denying the courts the power to strike down legislation which is inconsistent with human rights’. Instead the court can make a declaration of the inconsistency, but it then is up to parliament to decide whether to amend the law or not, and then up to voters to decide whether the decision that is made was right.

The way the statutory charters achieve this objective is by creating ‘a human rights dialogue’ between the courts, the legislature and the executive; and the ACT and Victorian charters are ‘the statutory articulation of a desire for a more rigorous debate about the protection of human rights’.

## ***The value of HR education***

A charter of human rights is one albeit contested way to protect human rights but not the only way. One thing von Doussa believes proponents and opponents of an Australian Charter alike agree on is 'the importance of human rights education in protecting human rights'. Laws alone will never, in his view, 'be sufficient to protect human rights'. Rather, they only can truly be protected when 'communities understand what it means to treat other people with respect for their rights and dignity, and use this understanding to guide the way we see and act in society'.

A vital part of HREOC's work in this context, he explained, is conducting projects and producing resources which 'break down stereotypes and encourage behaviour that respects human rights' — such resources as:

- *Face the Facts* aimed at dispelling myths about refugees and Indigenous people;
- *Voices of Australia* which encourages greater understanding between people of different racial backgrounds, cultures and religions through sharing their experiences; and
- *Youth Challenge: Teaching Human Rights and Responsibilities* designed to help combat racism and promote a culture of respect and equality among young Australians.

All these and other resources are downloadable free from the HREOC website (<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>) and also were discussed in the workshop that Rebecca Stuart conducted at the forum.

The bottom line for von Doussa is that 'education about rights and responsibilities improves young people's understanding of human rights. With understanding comes respect. And this respect helps build strong communities based on equality and tolerance in which everyone has an opportunity to contribute'. The challenge for educators he noted in concluding, is 'to inspire young people to think about the importance of human rights in their lives and the lives of others. It is only by equipping young people with the tools to protect human rights can we guarantee a future where respect for human rights extends beyond schools into our communities, our workplaces, our families, our courts and our parliaments; a future where human rights are a reality for all Australians'.

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Responding to a question from the floor about a possible mismatch between word and deed around the nine values for Australian schooling and the implications this has for educators, von Doussa noted the values are 'very general' and urged participants to dig deeper, with a focus on human rights, 'to get to what the values really mean'. The important thing in this context, he suggested, is the 'small discussions where you take a situation and unpack the issues around it ... the small stories that connect to people and engage them'. There were, he noted by way of example, lots of stories about immigration detention, but it wasn't until Cornelia Rau's picture appeared in the paper that people 'really started to react ... (and) that is why the *Bringing Them Home* stories ultimately are so powerful'. Asked by facilitator Mackay what is helpful to support educators to do this work, von Doussa acknowledged being 'disheartened' by community discourse whereby politicians and others 'exploit fear and uncertainty' especially around terrorism with all of the stigmatisation that then results. There is in this context, he argued, a need to 'get back to information and facts'. The only way to challenge stereotypes is with information and facts and that's 'a collective responsibility that involves, but is not limited to educators'. We need, he concluded, to 'foster a much broader public discussion, including efforts to engage the press'.

## Resource presentation

Kurt Ambrose (Project Manager, CCE, Curriculum Corporation) provided participants with an update of resources available from the Corporation to support and meet key performance measures in CCE, including the CCE website.

There are, Ambrose explained, two key interlinking curriculum and assessment documents for CCE that already had been discussed:

- Statements of Learning for Civics & Citizenship containing opportunities to learn at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9; and
- The Civics & Citizenship Assessment Domain outlining key performance measures, their descriptors and professional elaborations at Years 6 and 10.

As part of his own role, he has sought to bring these two together, to help ensure students have the opportunities to learn what is assessed, and linked them to resources available for CCE. More specifically, he has mapped the array of Discovering Democracy resources available to the four key themes of Australian History, Indigenous History, Law and Rights, and Sustainability, as well as the Key Performance Measures of the National Assessment with reference to primary and secondary schools. The result, which he provided to forum participants, is illustrated by the sample provided in the table below.

<b><i>Middle Primary Sample — Discovering Democracy Units (Organised by theme)</i></b>		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Key Performance Marker Descriptor — Yr 6</i>
Australian History	We Remember (symbols of state and nation; national celebrations; commemoration of significant lives and events)	KPM 1 6.1 Recognise key features of Australian Democracy KPM 2 6.9 Recognise the ways that understanding of and respect for commonalities and differences contribute to harmony within a democratic society
<b><i>Lower Secondary Sample — Discovering Democracy Units (Organised by theme)</i></b>		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Key Performance Marker Descriptor — Y 10</i>
Law and Rights	When Law Breaks Down	KPM 1 10.3 Understand the role of law making and governance in Australia's democratic tradition 10.4 Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a range of contexts KPM 2 10.9 Analyse the relationship between democratic values and social justice as an important aspect of Australia's democratic tradition

Ambrose reflected briefly on the results of the National Assessment Programme from 2004 as a prelude to exploring the two mapping documents in more detail. As indicated earlier in the forum, the results were 'disappointing' revealing as they did, for example, that 'the concepts and understandings with which students appeared to have the greatest difficulty were of two types:

- concepts such as “the common good” or strategies that refer to how individuals can influence systems for the benefit of society; and
- so-called “iconic knowledge” of key information about national events and nationally-representative symbols’.

He then illustrated how the primary and secondary matrices he developed might help teachers to tackle the difficult concept of the ‘common good’.

### ***Exploring the ‘common good’***

Teachers, Ambrose noted, will find no reference to the common good in the mapping documents, though it clearly is implied in many Discovering Democracy themes and resources. It depends, therefore, on ‘how teachers use these resources and make it more overt’. Four questions stand out in this context, which he then briefly discussed:

- What is the common good? — A lot of what Ryan described in his case study is, for Ambrose, ultimately about the common good. The Middle Primary unit ‘Rules and Laws’ is, he suggested, a good place to start because working through it surfaces notions essential to the common good and applies them in activities that students can undertake.
- How is it constituted? — Federation, explored through the Upper Primary unit ‘People Make a Nation’ provides ‘an obvious example where the students work out how to constitute the common good’. The concept of the common good always is, of course, contested, and this can be explored in Middle Secondary through ‘Parties Control Parliament’.
- How is it realised in governance? — Given the answer resides in Australia’s parliamentary democracy, this can be tackled through the three units ‘People Make a Nation’ (Upper Primary), ‘Law’ (Lower Secondary) and ‘Making a Nation’ (Middle Secondary).
- How does it evolve? — The concept of the common good continually evolves to meet new circumstances. Two particularly good examples he cited, which focus on events that occasioned ‘seismic shifts in Australian views and public policy,’ are ‘Democratic Struggles — 1967 Referendum’ (Lower Secondary) and ‘Getting Things Done — The Franklin Dam Dispute’ (Middle Secondary).

The use of these units can also be complemented by material in the Australian Readers which, according to Ambrose, could help ‘close the gap’ the 2004 assessment report identified in relation to students’ understanding of the common good.

He then finished his presentation with a short, online tour of the CCE website (<http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/>), with a particular focus on:

- Student research units mapped to the Statements of Learning;
- An Events Calendar noting significant days in Australian history that teachers may wish to ‘acknowledge, study or celebrate’; and
- ***A Biographies Gallery of contemporary figures of note.***

### ***Workshops***

Participants had a further opportunity to attend one of the five workshops offered on day one of the programme, which are summarised earlier in this report, with the exception that on this occasion the Australian Electoral Commission workshop (*Your vote counts*) was presented by Megan McCrone.

## ***Civics and citizenship education for the future***

Responding to requests from participants for some further input on CCE assessment, the final session of the forum began with a short contribution from Suzanne Mellor on the key points that participants should 'take home'.

In particular, she sought to confirm a few things about next steps, what can be learned from the assessment, and how it can be used.

Assessment, she noted at the outset, is part of the 'cycle of learning ... to find out if what you taught has been learned'. National sample assessment assumes a random selection of students will tell us how the nation is going. The assumption, then, is that most classrooms will be like the national average and 'you can run the sample assessment test yourselves to see where you stand'. In doing so, however, it is important to adhere to the following steps which Mellor outlined.

### *Step 1*

Before seeking to administer the test, read the National Assessment Report and print the national release materials. Particularly important are the questions, score guides and analysis contained in parts C, E and H.

### *Step 2*

Become 'really familiar' with the national statements and map it all in the way that Kurt Ambrose outlined, but taking account of 'your own school community and its curriculum'. In other words, 'recognise that your take might be different to someone else's'.

### *Step 3*

Think about professional development and working collaboratively, rather than trying to do it all alone.

### *Step 4*

Look at the professional development unit on assessment available through the CCE website to help you connect to the assessment domain.

### *Step 5*

Develop your whole school curriculum using the assessment domain and national assessment as 'drivers for that'.

It is important in this context to keep in mind the difference between KPM 1 and KPM 2 that she outlined earlier in the forum. KPM 1, she explained, is about civic processes — 'options, possibilities, ways in which you might get kids to think about civic processes. They are like resources and the question is how you use them to connect to concepts essential in the domain'. KPM 2, 'as much as anything else, is about school governance and the level of democracy in your class and school. That', Mellor explained, 'is how you connect KPM 1 and 2 and how the kids will learn'.

The real point is in her view that 'you can't leave KPM 2 out but you can't do KPM 2 without KPM 1 ... People are comfortable doing comfortable civics and citizenship work, but the kids in those circumstances were the ones down the bottom of the scale because they didn't get the concepts'. Effective CCE requires 'critical thinking and critical alliances being pursued in the school all of the time. It's an edgy, uncomfortable thing'.

Mellor then directed participants to an article she herself had written about the conundrums of introducing CCE and which can be found in the 'expert views' section of the CCE website. The article

deals with a lot of questions she gets asked all the time and for which teachers need answers in their schools. Her final piece of advice was for participants to avoid trying to reinvent the wheel; and here she directed them to 25 case studies from an evaluation in which she was involved in Victoria (available on the CCE section of <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>) from which they can learn.

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Warren Prior (Civics and Citizenship Project Officer, Social Education, Victoria) introduced the remainder of this final plenary session of the forum with a quote from Derry Hannam, an English School Inspector and Adviser/Trainer for the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship, which Prior thought could just as equally apply to CCE.

*Learning about democracy and citizenship when I was at school, was a bit like reading holiday brochures in prison.*

The point being, of course, that such 'travel brochures' only become useful when you escape or are let out.

There are, in Prior's view, a number of important questions that need to be addressed as we seek to consider CCE into the future, such as what is a 'good citizen'?; which he specifically asked participants to address in small groups as a conversation starter he often uses himself in CCE-related professional development he conducts. Other questions he feels need to be raised were:

- Should schools be responsible for CCE?
- What is 'Civics' and 'Citizenship'?
- Are both civics and citizenship problematic constructions?
- Who 'owns' it in the curriculum?
- How can schools plan CCE programmes?

We need, he noted in effectively beginning to respond to these questions in the remainder of his address, to acknowledge and take account of the 'public' (in inverted commas because it often tends to be top-down) 'debates' (often assertions rather than debates) and CCE that is swirling around us, which sees such tensions as:

- public schools as lacking a values framework versus an expectation of schools being responsible for increasing aspects of 'social education';
- teaching of 'Australian History' versus complex versions of Australian History;
- the ongoing debate about separate disciplines versus integrated SOSE;
- a proposal for a National Curriculum (cohesion) versus State autonomy (diversity);
- introduction of a new citizenship test (exclusion) versus 'multiculturalism' (inclusion);
- role of the state versus individual responsibility;
- national certainty about identity and core values versus confusions about location and identities; and
- globalisation and global megatrends (terrorism, social injustices) versus retreat to national boundaries.

### ***What is needed to move forward on CCE?***

What is needed in terms of 'planning and strategising' to move forward in CCE, according to Prior, primarily is an understanding about recent research and what it tells us about teaching and learning in CCE, so we can dispel a number of myths and avoid old mistakes. With this in place, we can then seek to build on current teachers/school practices, be well-informed about current policies in CCE, conceptualise meanings of CCE, audit current policies and practices, and engage students in the process.

What the research tells us in this context, he explained, is that 'formal' social education topics/curriculum on their own have little effect on citizenship attitudes, dispositions and behaviours. Students who report 'extensive practice of patriotic rituals', for instance, 'tend to be less knowledgeable about government and more authoritarian'.

By contrast, at the secondary school level, students' perceptions of 'a more "open" classroom climate is associated with higher levels of political interest, efficacy and confidence'. Students in classrooms that emphasise 'cooperation and collaboration show an increased ability to see the perspective of others'. Similarly, the expectation that students grapple with controversial issues has 'a positive effect on political awareness and development of values'. But perhaps the key finding from the research is that school governance that encourages students to actively engage in decision making has a positive effect on students' community engagement; much in the way that Ryan earlier had outlined for his school. In addition, as ACER research has shown, it correlates positively to students' academic performance as well.

When we look at the current situation in relation to CCE we find, he noted from his own work in Victoria in particular, that teachers and schools tend to feel positive about CCE as a goal, but not THE goal of schooling. Beyond this, the take-up of *Discovering Democracy* materials, as an indicator of the implementation of CCE, has been very patchy indeed. Put simply, many teachers and schools lack knowledge about current debates, national policies and practices in CCE and they mostly are 'unable to clearly articulate meanings to "civics" and "citizenship".'

Schools and particularly primary schools, he acknowledged, already are doing a 'very wide range of what can be called CCE programmes, but there is very little sense of articulating this activity into cohesive CCE programmes'. There is an anxiety in schools about the meanings of 'active' citizenship and 'community engagement' in terms of time allocation and legal issues, and uncertainty about the 'ownership' of CCE and the meaning of a 'whole school approach; with many SOSE/History/Humanities teachers not seeing CCE as a central goal of their area. There is, he feels, 'a generalised feeling that including CCE into the curriculum means removing other existing "topics" (ie, there's not enough time)'.

### ***International and national perspectives***

The *International Education Assessment Civic Education Study* of 2002 in 20 countries about Year 9/10 students' civic knowledge, which is managed by ACER and will be repeated in 2008, found that:

- students in most countries have minimal understanding of fundamental democratic values and institutions;
- students with the most civic knowledge are most likely to be open to participate as active citizens in civic activities;
- aside from voting, students are sceptical about traditional forms of political engagement, but open to other forms of involvement; and

- schools that model democratic practices are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement.

At a national level, Prior explained, there are a number of key dates which mark important developments on CCE, starting with the *Discovering Democracy* programme in 1997 which arose out of the Senate Select Committee that concluded that Australians, and particularly young Australians, were ‘profoundly ignorant about their political system’. Other dates he nominated aside from the emergence of this programme in 1997 were the adoption of the National Goals for Schooling in 1999, the adoption of CCE as an education priority area in 2002, the first National Assessment for Civics and Citizenship in 2004, the National Statements of Learning in 2006, and the second National Assessment for C&C in 2007.

The National Assessments he cited centre on the Key Performance Measures and Dimensions for C&C which Mellor had outlined, which are:

- Civics: Knowledge and Understanding of Civic Institutions and Processes — concepts related to civic institutions and processes, democracy, government, law, identity, diversity, cohesion, common good and social justice; and
- Citizenship: Dispositions and Skills for Participation — related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.

In essence, it is all about ‘providing students with the knowledge, skills, dispositions and opportunities to understand and practice what it means to be a good citizen in a democracy’. The point being, as Mellor had urged, that ‘you can’t do one without the other’.

***Dimensions of citizenship***

Prior then advanced his own dimensions of citizenship arising from this analysis, which comprised:

Dimension 1	Civic knowledge— understanding about human rights, cultures, organisations, decision making processes, institutions
Dimension 2	A sense of personal identity — a feeling of self-worth, belonging, efficacy, resilience, personhood
Dimension 3	A sense of community — locating oneself within a community(ies), global connectedness, sense of belonging and the common good
Dimension 4	Adoption of a code of civil behaviours — empathy, civil and ethical behaviour, concern for the welfare of others, responsibilities
Dimension 5	An informed and empathetic response to social issues — diversity, environmental, social justice, equality and equity
Dimension 6	Skills to take social actions — collaboration, leadership, decision making, practising
	Head ... Heart ... Hands

The question that then arises is, how to get started in developing CCE policies and practices in your school.

The first stage, Prior suggested, involves a whole school community decision — teachers, administration, students, SRC, parents, office staff, cleaners, School Council, local community — to discuss and clearly articulate what they believe to be ‘essential learnings in CCE — the concept of a “good citizen”’; which participants, from their earlier activity, fleshed out and which surfaced a mix

of civics and citizenship as discussed throughout the forum. Leadership of such an activity in his view could come from the SOSE area with assistance from 'student action teams'; and its articulation might take the form of 'a list of Graduate CCE Attributes and/or a School Mission Statement or other forms'.

Three key questions he suggested to develop the focus of CCE in the school in this context are:

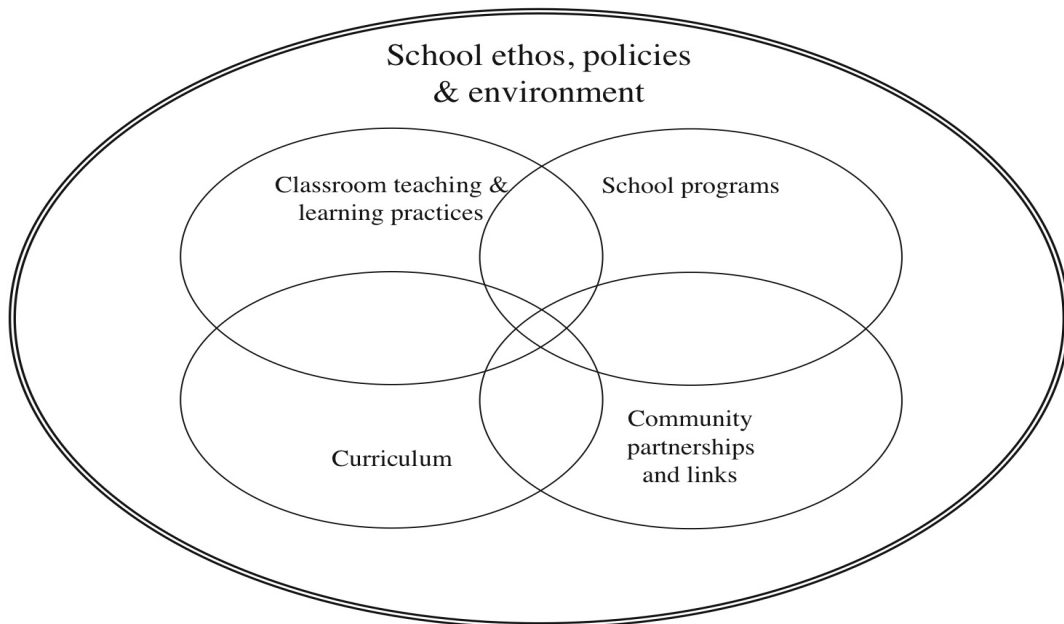
- What sort of world do we see children entering into in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- What will students need to be able to do, to know and to value?
- What will schools need to be like to cater for the responses to the first two questions?

The second stage of making it happen involves an audit of current practices to identify both strengths and weaknesses that exist. The audit should cover the school ethos, policies and environment, its programmes and curriculum, community partnerships and links, and classroom teaching and learning practices. Once again, Prior suggested, Student Action Teams and the SRC could be involved in the process.

A model for a whole school approach to CCE could then start to emerge along the lines of Figure 7, which participants spent a few minutes starting to fill out.

**Figure 7**

A Model for Whole School Approaches to Civics and Citizenship Education



In s  
 against state and national frameworks/ documents. There are school community discussions about  
 the report on the identification of strengths and gaps, which can give rise to celebrating the strengths  
 and developing an action plan for the gaps. The school should seek to establish a range of  
 instruments and CCE dimensions for benchmarking and measuring future CCE outcomes, and could  
 consider 'timely evaluation by an interested critical friend'.

**Student Action Teams**

The Student Action Teams Prior had recommended for inclusion in the process he outlined involve 'a group of students who identify and work on a real issue of community interest'. They carry out research on the issue and develop solutions/ action plans and reflect on what they have learned. They are a means of promoting student engagement in decision making and the implementation of projects aimed at making a difference; and existing teams have pursued such issues as truancy/ student welfare and discipline, safety week, health issues and a community mural. (Further information can be gained from Connect magazine, available through Roger Holdsworth, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote, Victoria, 3070.)

Student Action Teams, according to Prior, have a 'strong theoretical foundation in many writers about the development of young people and about appropriate educational programmes'. Nancy Phillips who he cited, saw it in terms of developing 'strong self-concept' involving the three interlaced elements of:

- a sense of control — capability, competence, impact on one's own environment, power over oneself, use of social/life skills, power to changes oneself and environment;
- a sense of bonding — with family/peers/community, to feel/be wanted, to feel/ be loved, to belong, to have basic needs met; and
- a sense of meaning — to feel important, to feel relevant, self-esteem, sense of dignity/honour, able to accomplish tasks.

### ***Approaches and resources***

Prior then ended his contribution to the final session by outlining a range of possible approaches to consider for CCE in schools, ranging from CCE as a separate subject to within school focused mentoring programmes, to themes in the local area and more, along with a range of resources on which participants can draw, including:

- the CCE website — <http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/>;
- the National Goals for Schooling in the 21st century — <http://www.mceetya/default.asp?id=11576>;
- the National Assessment Domain for CC — <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=12182>;
- the National Statements of Learning — <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11893>;
- the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) assessment maps and progression points — <http://www.vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/index/html>; and
- the IEA C&C international study — [http://www2.hu-berlin.de/empir\\_bf/iea\\_e1.html](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/empir_bf/iea_e1.html).

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Forum facilitator Tony Mackay then sought to draw the forum to a close by summing up the two days in terms of the following key points.

- It is clear that CCE is on the map. It has been going as a programme for a decade and the nature of the debate along with how embedded it is in schools is what we grapple with each year. In addition it is, as Warren Prior suggested, an evolving and dynamic programme.
- We now have Statements of Learning and National Assessment which not only are significant achievements in their own right, but place us well to advance.
- This national forum more than its predecessors picked up on Suzanne Mellor's call for the knowledge base to be addressed, but with the caution to put it in the context of whole school activity and how the school is governed to ensure civic engagement as well.
- We have quality resources we should acknowledge and celebrate.
- If 2007-08 is about implementation at a deeper level, it has to be whole school including a focus on professional learning for staff.

The question is, then, what is next, given the sense in which CCE clearly has lots of energy behind it in the national curriculum debate. What, he asked, should be the focus of the national forum in 2008?

Responding to this challenge, Joy Duffield (DEST) acknowledged that the focus of the last two years has been to look at some of the 'external drivers' for CCE in schools. In her view, the forum next year should have more of an opportunity to look at key issues for effective classroom practice and, in this context, she invited participants to contribute their views, with a focus on balancing the 'citizenship doing with which we tend to feel more comfortable and the civics knowledge that sits behind it'.

## Appendix: Forum programme



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

# 2007 National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum

School education: Civics and citizenship education for the future

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA — 28 AND 29 MAY 2007

<b>Monday 28 May 2007</b>	Facilitator — Tony Mackay, Director, Centre for Strategic Education
8.30–9.00 am VISIONS THEATRE FOYER	<b>Registration</b> Arrival tea and coffee
<b>SESSION 1</b> 9.00–9.30 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Introduction and welcome</b> <u>Tony Mackay</u> <b>Welcome to Country</b> <u>Matilda House, Ngunnawal Elder</u> <b>Official opening</b> <u>The Hon. Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training (TBC)</u> <b>Welcome to the National Museum of Australia</b> Gabrielle Hyslop, Acting General Manager, Audience and Programs, National Museum of Australia
<b>SESSION 2</b> 9.30–10.15 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Keynote address</b> <i>Existential questions and the study of history</i> Bishop Tom Frame, Director, St Mark's National Theological Centre
<b>SESSION 3</b> 10.15–11.00 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Keynote address</b> <i>The 1967 referendum, citizenship rights and the constitution of Australia</i> Associate Professor Bain Attwood, Monash University
11.00–11.30 am Morning tea PENINSULA ROOM	
<b>SESSION 4</b> 11.30 am–12.15 pm VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Panel</b> <i>Statements of learning</i> <u>Di Kerr, Curriculum Corporation</u> <i>National Assessment Report — Civics and Citizenship 2004: Findings</i> Suzanne Mellor, ACER
<b>SESSION 5</b> 12.15–1.30 pm BUNYIP	<b>Workshops</b> <i>Connecting 'Memory of a Nation', an archival collection with classroom enquiry</i> Margaret Fleming, Education Manager, National Archives of Australia, and <i>Have your say in... The Gallery of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House</i> <u>Glenda Smith, Old Parliament House</u>
BIAMI	<i>Your vote counts</i> <u>Beatrice Barnett, Australian Electoral Commission</u>
YOWIE	<i>Discovering the building blocks in our national identity at the Australian War Memorial</i> <u>Roslyn Hull, Australian War Memorial</u>
VISIONS THEATRE	<i>Integrating an understanding of human rights into the classroom and the curriculum</i> <u>Rebecca Stuart, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission</u>
STUDIO	<i>Teaching about Australia and Asia</i> Kurt Mullane, Manager Professional Learning, Asia Education Foundation
1.30–2.15 pm Lunch PENINSULA ROOM	
<b>SESSION 6</b> 2.15–3.15 pm VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Keynote address</b> <i>Finding the flag's history: mediating the maze of misinformation and mythmaking</i> Dr Elizabeth Kwan, Historian, Darwin
<b>SESSION 7</b> 3.15–4.00 pm	<b>Interactive tour</b> <i>Museums as signposts to civics and citizenship: an interactive tour of the NMA</i> David Arnold, Manager, Education Section, National Museum of Australia
4.00 pm	<b>Conclude day one</b>

# 2007 National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum

6.10 pm	Bus leaves University House for delegates who have registered for the evening event at the National Archives of Australia, Barton
6.30–8.30 pm NATIONAL ARCHIVES	<b>Evening event</b> Viewing of the new exhibition <i>Memory of a Nation</i> , wine, a light evening meal and jazz in the beautifully restored 1927 East Block building

## TUESDAY 29 MAY 2007

8.45–9.15 am VISIONS THEATRE FOYER	Arrival tea and coffee
<b>SESSION 8</b> 9.15–10.00 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>National case study</b> <i>Sustainability in practice</i> Anthony Ryan, Principal, Townsville Central State School, Queensland
<b>SESSION 9</b> 10.00–11.00 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Keynote address</b> <i>The significance to Australia of international human rights</i> The Hon. John von Doussa, President, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
11.00–11.30 am PENINSULA ROOM	Morning tea
<b>SESSION 10</b> 11.30–11.50 am VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Resource presentation</b> <i>Meeting key performance markers in civics and citizenship education: A guide to resources</i> Kurt Ambrose, Project Manager Civics and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Corporation
<b>SESSION 11</b> 12.00–1.15 pm BUNYIP	<b>Workshops</b> <i>Connecting 'Memory of a Nation', an archival collection with classroom enquiry</i> Margaret Fleming, Education Manager, National Archives of Australia, and <i>Have your say in... The Gallery of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House</i> <u>Glenda Smith, Old Parliament House</u>
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STUDIO	<i>Teaching about Australia and Asia</i> Kurt Mullane, Manager Professional Learning, Asia Education Foundation
1.15–2.00 pm Lunch PENINSULA ROOM	
<b>SESSION 12</b> 2.00–2.50 pm PENINSULA ROOM	<b>Plenary session</b> <i>Civics and citizenship education for the future</i> Warren Prior, Civics and Citizenship Project Officer, Social Education Victoria
<b>SESSION 13</b> 3.00–3.30 pm VISIONS THEATRE	<b>Finale</b> Performance by Shortis and Simpson
3.30 pm	<b>Close</b>

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Science, Education and Training and managed by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

The views expressed at the 2007 National Civics and Citizenship Education Forum do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Science, Education and Training or the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.