

**Australia's Common and Agreed Goals
for Schooling in the
Twenty First Century**

**A Review of the 1989 Common and Agreed Goals for
Schooling in Australia (The 'Hobart Declaration')**

A Discussion Paper

May 1998

AN INVITATION TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED NEW GOALS FOR A NEW CENTURY

On 23 April 1998 the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) agreed to the release of a draft set of revised National Goals for Schooling. In releasing these draft goals, the Ministers said that they believed that these draft goals provided "*an opportunity to chart a real direction for our children's schooling as we move into the 21st century*".

The existing goals were originally agreed at a meeting in Hobart in 1989 and became known as the **Hobart Declaration on Schooling**.

Ministers agreed to release the draft goals for public discussion and comment over the next six months. An extensive process of consultation is planned to enable key stakeholders in schooling, including teachers, the non-government sector, parents and employers, to have input.

Ministers agreed it was timely to review the goals to take account of the significant social, economic and technological changes which have occurred over the last decade and because they believe there are new challenges which will face schools in the near future. The revised goals in their draft form represent a much sharper focus on students and their learning outcomes and the Ministers have determined that the final set of revised goals should be underpinned by a number of targets which will be developed and as part of the consultation process.

Key stakeholders are invited to use the draft statement to contribute directly to the development of National Goals which will take us into the next century. It is anticipated that Ministers will arrange consultation with key stakeholders in their own States or Territories and that the Commonwealth Minister will consult with national organisations. In addition, members of the general public who wish to make comment or contribute to the process can write, fax or Email their comments to the MCEETYA Secretariat (see below) or to a member of the Taskforce directly. On behalf of the MCEETYA Taskforce please take this opportunity to participate in this important work.

Yours sincerely

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At the Ninth Ministerial Council Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) [the Council] meeting in Hobart on 23 April 1998, the Council agreed to the following recommendations proposed by the National Goals Taskforce [the Taskforce]:

- a) the release of the proposed Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century (Appendix 1), for a period of six months of public debate and comment;
- b) note those existing agreed national targets (Appendix 2) and agree that the Taskforce will examine them further in relation to the above goals and report back to Ministers;
- c) the Taskforce identifying areas for new targets and developing draft targets for consideration by Ministers;
- d) the production of a consolidated goals and targets statement, also for consideration at the next Council meeting, having regard to the outcomes of the six month period of public debate and comment recommended in (a) above.

These significant decisions mark new directions for goals and related targets for schooling in Australia. This period of public debate and comment is intended to provide, for the next MCEETYA meeting, a final version of the goals and related targets for Ministers to approve.

This paper is intended to provide a full background to how the review has proceeded to this point, and to identify the key issues which remain to be faced.

BACKGROUND

In March 1997, at the sixth MCEETYA meeting in Melbourne, the Council took the decision to:

...examine the common and agreed goals of schooling in Australia to ensure that they reflect current and possible future educational developments ...

Following that decision, the Federal Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, Hon Dr David Kemp, wrote to all State and Territory Schools Ministers seeking "... nominees to a high-level committee comprising representatives of State, Territory and Commonwealth government school education authorities to oversee the review and inviting comments on a possible management structure and process for conducting the review ..." (MCEETYA Paper 1.1.3/1, Darwin, June 1997)

At the June 1997 Darwin MCEETYA meeting, the Council agreed that:

a small group representing the Commonwealth, all States and Territories and the non-government sector (with both NCEC and NCISA to be represented) should be established to prepare a draft revision of the goals for consideration at a future meeting of MCEETYA.

The MCEETYA National Goals Taskforce was subsequently formed, with the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Education, Mr Geoff Spring, appointed as Chair. The Taskforce met in the second half of 1997, presenting a Progress Report to the Eighth MCEETYA meeting in Melbourne on 11 December 1997, followed by its most recent report to the Ninth MCEETYA meeting in Hobart on 23 April 1998, referred to above.

An important part of the review process was to be extensive consultation, recognising that different forms of consultation would be needed at different stages of the process. In addition, it quickly became clear to the Taskforce that issues concerning the goals and issues concerning targets were strongly interrelated and needed thoughtful consideration.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE GOALS

The revision of the goals proceeded through a number of different stages, culminating in the version (Appendix 1) which was presented recently to the Council and agreed for release for public discussion and comment.

Initially, a draft revision was agreed by the Taskforce and a process of 'internal' consultations undertaken within each Taskforce members' own organisation or department. An amended draft of the revision of the goals, based on Taskforce members' responses, was presented to Ministers at the Eighth MCEETYA meeting in Melbourne on 11 December 1998, and noted.

In addition, the Council provided direction to the Taskforce in relation to targets, as discussed below.

Following the MCEETYA meeting and further responses from Taskforce members, a second revised draft of the goals was agreed and circulated more widely, to key interest groups within each Taskforce members' own jurisdiction. Whilst this consultation was not intended to be comprehensive, it provided significant positive and constructive feedback, which enabled further re-shaping of the goals statement into the version presented to Ministers in April (Appendix 1).

There are some striking differences between the 1998 version of the goals and the 1989 version (Appendix 3). These differences run much deeper than just the choice of words and the way things are expressed:

- the goals are not numbered, but grouped as dot-points under three broad themes of *students*, *curriculum* and *social justice*. Whilst these groupings are not meant to be mutually exclusive, they do reflect some clear links and logical connections between the goals.
- changes in schooling over the past ten years meant that a number of emerging priority areas of the curriculum now have an emphasis and importance which was not reflected in the 1989 goals, for example:
 - information technology
 - vocational education
 - literacy and numeracy
 - civics and citizenship
- the goals reflect a clear recognition of the particular learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the central importance of the reconciliation process.
- in particular, the goals have a sharper focus on students and their learning outcomes, thereby lending themselves to improved outcomes reporting and the development of standards and benchmarks, where appropriate.

The new goals statement attempts to capture the new curriculum initiatives and directions of school education in recent years, and express them in ways consistent with the outcomes focus of assessment, reporting and accountability which is now an integral part of Australia's educational landscape.

DEVELOPING TARGETS

Whilst the primary focus of the early work of the Taskforce was to revise the 1989 Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia, as the Taskforce undertook its work, it became increasingly obvious that the issue of *targets* related to the goals, was of central significance.

MCEETYA at its Eighth meeting in Melbourne in December 1997 directed the Taskforce to

undertake the development of additional statements of specific objectives and targets relevant to each goal, as appropriate, for Ministers' further consideration.

The starting point for the Taskforce's work on targets was to undertake, in collaboration with the MCEETYA Secretariat, a thorough search of all MCEETYA decisions and reports to identify all relevant outcome statements or targets which Ministers had agreed or endorsed, since 1994.

The search revealed a limited number of targets which correlate reasonably well with some of the new goals (Appendix 2), although even these, in most cases, require some further review.

Significantly, the search revealed little else that could be used as a target or as providing an outcome statement from which a target might be developed. It is clear from the analysis undertaken so far by the Taskforce that, with very few exceptions, the setting of appropriate targets, as against statements of intent, input or general direction, had not in the past been a normal part of most MCEETYA Taskforces' or Working Groups' work or reports.

The Council's interest in targets and their relevance to goals for schooling, may well be a reflection of much broader trends in government management reform worldwide, as governments shift from input-based planning and budgeting to planning based on outputs/outcomes.

WHAT MIGHT TARGETS LOOK LIKE ?

The Taskforce has only had very preliminary discussions concerning existing targets. It has also had preliminary discussions on identifying a range of issues and questions which the Taskforce will need to address as it carries out the decisions on the National Goals taken at the recent Hobart MCEETYA meeting. In particular, the Ministers' decisions on targets: ie.

- the Taskforce identifying areas for new targets and developing draft targets for consideration by Ministers; and
- the production of a consolidated goals and targets statement, also for consideration at the next Council meeting ;

mean that a new and comprehensive examination of targets and their relevance for each of the new goals will need to be undertaken.

So far, the Taskforce has identified the following issues and questions as fundamental to their further considerations:

- for which goals are the development of targets appropriate?
- what kinds of targets are appropriate—are they to measure **inputs**, **outputs** or **outcomes**, or a combination of them?
- what, if any, **level of consistency** of targets between different goals is required?
- is there a need to establish **priorities** between targets—do some need to be acted upon quicker than others?
- once it is decided that a target is needed, and what it might look like, how is it to be **measured**?
- for each goal, what **key interest groups** need to be consulted in the development of appropriate targets?
- in any measuring, how is the **data** to be collected and what is to be the **reporting process**?
- what **protocols** need to be agreed on relating to the use of the data or any outcomes from such measurement—who 'owns' the data?

These are challenging issues, the answers to which will affect significantly the final shape of the National Goals document.

CONCLUSION

The Council has set the broad directions for this review of schooling goals and targets. The Taskforce is at the stage of having many questions and not as many answers. The six month period for public debate and comment provides the opportunity for many more answers to be provided and agreed upon.

Already this review has made significant progress. The Taskforce expects to be able to satisfy the Ministers' requests and, by the end of 1998, produce proposals for targets in relation to the new National Goals which are coherent and appropriate.

The outcomes from the review process should be owned by all those who share in the provision of schooling to Australia's students. This paper invites all stakeholders and interest groups to contribute to the process, through the Taskforce membership.

AUSTRALIA'S COMMON AND AGREED NATIONAL GOALS FOR SCHOOLING IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

In the information age the greatest challenge will be to invest wisely in the intellectual and technological knowledge, skill and understanding of our young people. Successful nations will be those which accept the opportunities that globalisation presents to schooling.

Australians in the 21st century will be active and informed citizens of complex and rapidly changing local and global communities. They will be enterprising, adaptable and socially responsible contributors to our democratic, cohesive, culturally-rich and diverse Australian society.

Schools will be learning communities of students, families and teachers. They will be committed to pursuing excellence and equity, and to exploring and advancing individual, group and societal development.

Our world class school education, based on agreed national goals, will provide the foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, moral and aesthetic development. It will give them the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values relevant to present and emerging social, cultural and economic needs in local, national and international settings.

The achievement of Australia's common and agreed national goals for schooling establishes the pathway for lifelong learning, from the foundations established in the early years through to senior secondary education including vocational education and linking to employment and continuing education and training.

Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of every student. In particular, when students leave school they should:

- have skills in analysis and problem solving and the ability to become confident and technologically competent members of 21st century society.
- have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.
- be active and informed citizens with the ability to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice; and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to collaborate with others.
- have a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning.

In terms of curriculum, students should have:

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

and the interrelationships between them.

- attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; in particular, every child leaving primary school should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.
- been encouraged to be enterprising and to acquire those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

In addition, schooling should be socially just, and should ensure that:

- outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students improve and match more closely those of other students.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access, participation and outcomes.
- all students have understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures to achieve reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.
- all students have the knowledge, cultural understandings and skills which respect individuals' freedom to celebrate languages and cultures within a socially cohesive framework of shared values.

The National Goals for Schooling provide a basis for State and Territory school education systems, non-government school authorities and the Commonwealth to work together to:

- promote productive learning partnerships among students, parents, educators, business, industry and the wider community;
- provide safe, supportive learning and working environments;
- strengthen the status and quality of the teaching profession; and
- identify specific national targets, plans and strategies.

Goal	Agreed National Targets
<p>Students leaving school should have attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; in particular, every child leaving primary schools should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.</p>	<p>That every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standards within four years.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(MCEETYA, March 1997)</i></p>
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should have equitable access, participation and outcomes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>and</i></p> <p>All students should have understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proficiency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Standard Australian English and numeracy. <i>Target:</i> By the Year 2002, education and training systems/providers demonstrate significant increase in the proficiency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Standard Australian English to levels comparable to mainstream Australian children. <i>Target:</i> By the Year 2002, education and training systems/providers demonstrate significant increase in the proficiency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in numeracy to levels comparable to mainstream Australian children. • Improved achievement levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the key learning areas in schooling years and in priority subjects and disciplines in vocational education and training, and higher education. • Increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students successfully complete Year 12 or equivalent. • Increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students gain employment after participation in vocational education and training. <p>Following its consideration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Taskforce's report at the December 1995 MCEETYA meeting, Council agreed (amongst other things) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set as an objective that literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders will be similar to those of non-indigenous Australians and agreed to review progress towards this objective by the year 2000
<p>All students should have the knowledge, cultural understandings and skills which respect individuals' freedom to celebrate languages and cultures within a socially cohesive framework of shared values.</p>	<p>It is recommended that governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the Commonwealth's 1991 target of 25% of year 12 students studying a second language; • Agree that a target date for achieving the 25% target be extended from 2000 to 2006; • Agree that this national target be met by having 15% of year 12 students by that date studying a priority Asian language (up from the present figure of 4%); • Agree that the remaining 10% of the year 12 target be met by studying other languages (up from the present figure 8%); and • Agree that by the target date, 60% of year 10 students be studying a priority Asian language. <p>It is recommended that COAG endorse the following indicative proficiency targets for students studying priority Asian languages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1: achievable by 60% of Year 10 students after approximately 800 hours of instruction in Years 3-10 in a language-object program; • Level 2: achievable by 60% of year 12 students in a language-object program; • Level 3: achievable by the top 10% of Year 12 students; and • Level 4 achievable by 1% of students at Year 12 after participating in a specialist program (eg. immersion, in country programs). <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy: February, 1994)</i></p>
<p>Students leaving school should have a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning.</p>	<p>By 2001, 95 per cent of 19 year olds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have completed year 12, or • have completed an initial post-school qualification, or • are participating in formally recognised education and training. <p>(This target to include all those who are participating in year 12 or a course or program of study which leads to at least an AQF Level 1 qualification)</p>

Goal	Agreed National Targets
	<i>(Finn Targets, as amended at MCEETYA, April 1994)</i>
<p>Students should have been encouraged to be enterprising and to acquire those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.</p>	<p>MCEETYA agreed to achieve the following set of outcomes over the four year program, with a progress report in two years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 1999, the Enterprise Education in Schools Program will have achieved the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curriculum support materials which encourage the development of an enterprising culture will be available for use by teachers in all schools, including primary schools; • professional development materials in enterprise education will be available in all schools; and • all staff with responsibility for career education in all schools will have had specific professional development in enterprise education and will have been provided with materials to assist them to encourage advice to students about career options in small business. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Third MCEETYA Meeting, 26 May 1995)</i></p>

COMMON AND AGREED NATIONAL GOALS FOR SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA

Ten national goals for schooling provide a framework for cooperation between schools, States, Territories and the Commonwealth. The goals are intended to assist schools and school systems to develop specific objectives and strategies, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment.

1. To provide an excellent education for all young people, being one which develops their talents and capacities to full potential, and is relevant to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation.
2. To enable all students to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, respect for others and achievement of personal excellence.
3. To promote equality of education opportunities, and to provide for groups with special learning requirements.
4. To respond to the current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and to provide those skills which will allow students maximum flexibility and adaptability in their future employment and other aspects of life.
5. To provide a foundation for further education and training, in terms of knowledge and skills, respect for learning and positive attitudes for life-long education.
6. To develop in students:
 - a) the skills of English literacy, including skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
 - b) skills of numeracy, and other mathematical skills;
 - c) skills of analysis and problem solving;
 - d) skills of information processing and computing;
 - e) an understanding of the role of science and technology in society, together with scientific and technological skills;
 - f) a knowledge and appreciation of Australia's historical and geographic context;
 - g) a knowledge of languages other than English;
 - h) an appreciation and understanding of, and confidence to participate in, the creative arts;
 - i) an understanding of, and concern for, balanced development and the global environment; and
 - j) a capacity to exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics and social justice.
7. To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.
8. To provide students with an understanding and respect for our cultural heritage including the particular cultural background of Aboriginal and ethnic groups.
9. To provide for the physical development and personal health and fitness of students, and for the creative use of leisure time.
10. To provide appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work, including an understanding of the nature and place of work in our society.

Providing a sound basis for a collaborative effort to enhance Australian schooling, the agreed national goals will be reviewed from time to time, in response to the changing needs of Australian society.