



Australian Government

Department of Education,
Science and Training

National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools



*National Statement for Engaging Young
Australians with Asia in Australian Schools*

ISBN-13: 978 1 86366 618 3
ISBN-10: 1 86366 618 4
SCIS order number: 1248217

Published by Curriculum Corporation
PO Box 177
Carlton South Vic 3053
Australia

Tel (03) 9207 9600
Fax (03) 9639 1616

Email sales@curriculum.edu.au
Website www.curriculum.edu.au

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Acknowledgement

This publication was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training through the Asia Education Foundation under the Grants and Awards Programme.

Additional copies of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* are available on request from the Asia Education Foundation, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic 3010. Email: aef@asialink.unimelb.edu.au
Tel: (03) 8344 4800

The *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* is accessible on the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) website, www.mceetya.edu.au as well as on the Asia Education Foundation website, www.asiaeducation.edu.au.

Contents

Educating Australians for the twenty-first century	2
Purpose of this statement	3
Australia and Asia	4
Defining Asia	7
An Asia-engaged young Australian	8
Education: <i>Engaging Young Australians with Asia</i>	10
1 Teaching and learning	11
2 Curriculum resources	15
3 Professional learning	16
4 Engaging parents and the community	17
5 Teacher education	18
6 Quality assurance	19
7 Support for studies of Asia and Australia	20
References	21



Educating Australians for the twenty-first century

Ministers of Education are committed to the vision that the people of Australia have the knowledge, skills, values and understanding they need to fulfil themselves, to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a global economy.

Asia is now the region whose current emergence is one of history's greatest catalysts for worldwide change. Australians require new skills, knowledge and understanding related to the Asian region and Australia's engagement with Asia in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of living and working in the twenty-first century.

Globally the Asian region is of great significance. Asia includes:

- 60% of the world's population and 30% of world land mass
- the world's two most populous nations, China and India
- some of the most dynamic civilisations of all time
- a great diversity of belief systems including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, and Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country
- the world's second largest economy, Japan, and the two fastest growing major economies, China and India.

For Australia, the countries of the Asian region are of critical importance. They are our closest neighbours and major trading partners. They represent the cultural heritage of a growing number of Australians and their rich traditional and contemporary cultures provide opportunities for our social, creative and intellectual development.

Educating Australians for a world in which the Asian region plays a major role requires a substantial response by Australia's education jurisdictions and schools. As a nation develops so too does the body of knowledge valued by it. In Australia we 'have grown up in a society which has historically acted as if the only really important ideas, cultures, beliefs and norms are those with their origins in western Europe and latterly North America ...'¹

*The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*² affirms that young people can only make sense of their world and be active and informed citizens when they develop a sound understanding of the wider global context in which they are operating.

The Asian region and Australia's engagement with Asia are central to that context for all Australians.

1 Asia Education Foundation (2000) *Studies of Asia: A Statement for Australian Schools* (Second Edition), Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, p 5.

2 In April 1999, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education endorsed *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.

Purpose of this statement

Engaging Young Australians with Asia is a national policy statement which supports *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. These goals promote understanding of the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possessing the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.

The *Statement* identifies the broad knowledge, understandings, values and skills required to engage with Asia in the context of existing policies and practices in teaching and learning. It is based on the understanding that, across all learning areas, studies of Asia and Australia will achieve a status comparable with other studies traditionally included in the curriculum.

Engaging Young Australians with Asia has been prepared by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF)³ and builds on *Studies of Asia: A Statement for Australian Schools* (Second Edition, 2000). It reflects the significant work undertaken since 1993 by all education jurisdictions and schools across Australia in integrating the study of Asia across learning areas, including Asian languages.

It draws on this experience to outline six interlinked elements for education jurisdictions, schools and teachers which are optimal to assist all Australian students gain such essential capabilities from their schooling. These elements are: teaching and learning, curriculum resources, teacher professional learning, engaging parents and community, teacher education and quality assurance.

The statement integrates responses from a widely representative consultation of school education stakeholders including parents, business leaders, education sectors, classroom practitioners, school principals, curriculum leaders, teacher educators and Asian Studies academics.

3 The purpose of the Asia Education Foundation is to promote and support studies of Asia and Australia in schools. The AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and Curriculum Corporation, with core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training since 1992. The AEF works with schools, education systems, education agencies, teacher education institutions and professional associations to achieve four major goals:

- promotion and support of the study of Asia across the curriculum in Australian schools
- development of Asia-related materials for Australian school students
- promotion of the studies of Asia in teacher education institutions and in teacher professional learning programmes
- education of the broader community about the importance of school students undertaking studies of Asia programmes.



Australia and Asia

'It is our shared vision that by 2020 we will live in an Australia in which our children can speak with respect and knowledge about Islam; an Australia that can communicate with its largest and nearest neighbour – Indonesia; an Australia that can take up the opportunities offered by the intellectual and economic powerhouses of China and India ... An Australia in which a unique, vibrant, creative culture has blossomed, a culture that understands its Indigenous connectedness to land and is fed as much by the influences of the great civilisations of Asia as by those of Europe.'

Carrillo Gantner AO, National Summit on Studies of Asia⁴

Knowledge and understanding of Asia and Australia's relationship with Asia make an important contribution to building the social capital of our nation: enriching Australians' social, creative and intellectual development by extending their skills, vocational opportunities and aspirations; and developing an understanding of themselves, their own society and the richness of human experience. Enhancing our understanding of Asian nations strengthens our ability to contribute to harmony, partnership and cooperation in the Asian region and the wider world.

Knowledge and understanding of Asia and Australia's relationship with Asia make an important contribution to:

Being good neighbours and responsible global citizens

Now more than ever we live in one world. We face issues that can only be addressed internationally: sustainable futures, the changing world economy and security of people and environments.

Australia, like many countries, requires citizens who are globally engaged, comfortable with diversity and with the skills to operate effectively across cultures with different world views and belief systems. In particular we need to ensure that young Australians are prepared to engage with peoples from the Asian region. This is the part of the world to which we are most geographically connected. Our future is inextricably linked to the strength of the relationships and understandings that we forge with Asian countries. And this diverse region's rapid development demands increasingly sophisticated and informed responses from Australians.

According to General Peter Cosgrove,⁵ 'Good neighbours learn to speak each other's languages ... Good neighbours learn to respect each other's religious and cultural beliefs. Good neighbours learn to allow for differences and to be inclusive. Good neighbours spend time with each other. Good neighbours understand that contentious issues should be resolved through negotiation.'

4 Asia Education Foundation (2003) *Report of National Summit on Studies of Asia in Australian Schools at a Crossroad: Strategic Directions 2004–6*, Melbourne, p 24.

5 Cosgrove, P (2000) *Australia's Defence and the Lessons of East Timor*, public lecture.

In learning about our neighbours, human experience is the starting point. Despite differences in language, culture and environments, the basic spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical needs of human beings are the same. Awareness of similarities as well as differences with our Asian neighbours, and our interdependence, contribute to empathy and increased understanding.

The National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century recognise the importance of education in helping young people understand their roles and responsibilities as members of Australian, regional and global communities. A deeper understanding of the underpinning ideas and values of Asian societies will make it much easier for us to handle those occasions in the future when political, strategic or economic tensions arise between Australia and the countries of our region.

Australia has a long history of contact with Asia, beginning with contact between the Aboriginal peoples of northern Australia and the peoples of Asia. Although not always acknowledged, Asian peoples have played a significant role in the development of Australia. Over the past several decades in particular, increasing globalisation, world patterns of travel, communication, trade and cultural exchange have repositioned Australia towards the Asian region in areas as diverse as our bilateral and multilateral strategic security and economic alliances, education, migration, tourism, the arts, environment, scientific research, trade and commercial activity, health, aid, religion, law, media, sports and youth exchange.

Harmonious Australia

Australian society is strongly committed to ‘promoting diversity, understanding and tolerance in all areas of endeavour’.⁶ Today, 23% of Australians were born overseas, and about 5% of these in Asia. 800,000 Australians speak an Asian language at home. 20% of our university students come from the Asian region. Our schools include teachers, students and parents from Asian backgrounds. Australians see themselves as connected to the Asian region. *Australians Speak 2005*⁷ found that 82% of Australians see Australia as ‘important in Asia’.

A harmonious, multicultural society requires its citizens to have shared values based on mutual respect, empathy, knowledge and understanding of each other. The importance of achieving this understanding is highlighted by international events of recent years, which have drawn Australian citizens into reflection on issues as diverse as national identity, sovereignty and the values that underpin our society.

To nourish community harmony while maximising the benefits and opportunities to be derived from cultural diversity, our schools must assist young people to develop an awareness of the diverse histories, values and beliefs of Asian societies and of other countries that will continue to impact on Australia’s identity and our future.

6 Commonwealth of Australia (2003) *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity. Strategic Directions for 2003–2006*, AGPS, Canberra, p 1.

7 Cook, I (2005) *Australians Speak 2005*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, p 7.



Creative Australia

An understanding and appreciation of the traditional and contemporary cultures of Asia is playing an important role in the continual evolution of Australian cultural life. Philosophies, belief systems, aesthetics, medicines, technologies, arts, literature, languages, cuisine, sports and popular culture originating from the diverse cultures of the Asian region enrich our lives and expand our intellectual and creative horizons. Both within Australia and internationally, this cultural enrichment is making a vital contribution to what it means to be Australian today.

Prosperous Australia

Australia's future economic strength requires Australians to be knowledgeable and confident in relationships with the peoples of Asia. In 2005 over half of Australia's two-way trade is with Asia. By 2010 China will be our largest trading partner. Trade agreements will stimulate substantial increases in trade with key Asian markets as China, India and Japan join the United States as the world's four biggest economies by 2020. If China rises, as predicted, to be the world's largest economy in 2050, five-year-olds starting school today in Australia will be at the peak of their working lives.

Asia represents a market of more than three billion people. Economic development in China and India in particular will result in unprecedented markets for Australia – and strengthened competition. Increased education and affluence in those countries mean new competing business and workforce capacity globally. The diversity of the Asian region, combined with rapid change and the impact of globalisation, makes our engagement an increasingly challenging task – much more so than was recognised a decade ago. This demands timely, clever and flexible responses from Australia. An important educational and economic goal related to this is the shift of the Australian economy towards technology, services, innovation, intellectual capital and value-added production.

Australian business points to the importance of an understanding of different cultures and well-developed intercultural skills as new core competencies for twenty-first century Australians. Wherever Australians live and work, be it within Australia or internationally, they will increasingly experience a multinational, multicultural and multifaith setting. This applies to people from rural and urban Australia, to architects, teachers, farmers, scientists, electricians and hairdressers, who are already among those taking up career opportunities connected to the Asian region. And with the services sector predicted by many to become the biggest industry sector in the future, the necessity of cross-cultural communication skills and understandings, including languages, will be essential.

Defining Asia

While the word 'Asia' is in everyday use and is printed in atlases, it is nevertheless a widely contested concept. 'Asia' can be defined in geographical terms, but it can also be described in terms of cultural, religious, historical and linguistic boundaries or commonalities.

In Australian schools, studies of Asia are likely to cover the sub-regions of:

- North-east Asia including China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan
- South-east Asia including Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, East Timor, the Philippines and Cambodia
- South Asia including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics includes the countries known as the Middle East in its definition. Some schools extend the definition of Asia to the Asia-Pacific region.



An Asia-engaged young Australian

In order to prepare students to live, work and learn in their world, studies of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia⁸ are being included in course content across the curriculum with a balance between in-depth, sustained studies and broader studies that explore themes, topics or issues.

This section outlines what young people would optimally know, understand and be able to do by the end of their schooling as a result of studies of Asia and Australia in the curriculum. As such it can inform curriculum development in all learning areas.

Studies of Asia and Australia are integral to the achievement of goals common to many curriculum frameworks and guidelines in Australia including areas such as personal futures, interpersonal development, social responsibility, building communities, world futures, present and future conditions and the skills of communicating, creating, thinking and innovating.

Knowledge, understandings and skills related to Asia link closely to areas of national priority including values education, languages, civics and citizenship, information and communication technologies, sustainable schools and the national statements for English, Languages and Environment Education.

By the end of their schooling young people would optimally know, understand and be able to:

Understand 'Asia'

Students will be able to:

- explain what the term 'Asia' means, with some reference to geography, history, culture and the economy
- understand and appreciate something about the diversity of Asia's peoples, environments, cultures, belief systems and societies
- understand the importance of the countries of Asia and their economic, strategic and cultural links with other countries in the world, particularly Australia.

Develop informed attitudes and values

Students will:

- develop and communicate informed attitudes and behaviour towards Asian people, events, issues and lifestyles
- be aware of the plurality, interdependence and commonality of humanity
- be able to understand, critically analyse and respond to stereotyped views of Asian peoples, cultures, societies and organisations

- recognise, understand and support the agreed values for Australian schooling with a particular focus on cooperation and mutual respect between the peoples of Australia and our neighbours in the Asian region
- participate in values clarification, ethical justification and social negotiation to support their confident participation in dialogue about Australia's future and Australia–Asia engagement.

Know about contemporary and traditional Asia

Students will:

- understand contemporary Asian societies, cultures, environments and beliefs, and current connections between the cultures and peoples of Asia and other parts of the world, including Australia
- be able to explain the contributions cultures of Asia make to world heritage, traditions and human endeavour, including those in the arts, science, technology, philosophy, business, education, and religious and spiritual beliefs
- know about particular episodes, events and issues in the history of the Asian region that help explain why the region and its countries are as they are, and which have made significant contributions to world development and knowledge.

Connect Australia and Asia

Students will:

- understand current trends and developments common to Australia, the region and the world
- be able to identify and analyse contributions made to Australian society by Australians of Asian heritage and by Australians living and working in Asia
- understand how increasing cultural diversity through Asian immigration, tourism, investment and trade has influenced Australian society and culture
- be familiar with the history of Australia–Asia engagement and its relationship to current and diverse expressions of friendship, cooperation and intermittent tensions.

Communicate

Students will:

- develop intercultural skills and understandings to participate in, learn from, contribute to and engage confidently in diverse cultural environments at home and abroad
- be able to interact effectively with people of the Asian region both within and outside Australia confidently
- increasingly be able to communicate in one or more Asian languages.



Education:

Engaging Young Australians with Asia

The substantial work already undertaken by education sectors, curriculum authorities, schools, parents, support agencies and teacher training institutions over the past decade points to six interlinked elements that support *Engaging Young Australians with Asia*.

Teaching and learning

Studies of Asia and Australia are included in course content across the curriculum, with a balance between in-depth, sustained studies and broader, more general studies that explore themes, topics or issues.

Curriculum resources

All schools have access to high quality Asia-related curriculum resources.

Teacher professional learning

Teachers are engaged in continuing development of their knowledge, understanding and skills to support studies of Asia and Australia.

Engaging parents and the community

A continuing programme of promotion and information enables schools to engage parents and the wider school community about the focus on Asia and Australia.

Teacher education

Teacher training programmes prepare new teachers to support studies of Asia and Australia in schools by including course content about contemporary and traditional Asian societies, cultures and environments, and by developing approaches to teaching and learning related to studies of Asia and Australia.

Quality assurance

Education systems and schools monitor and review their progress in student achievement in Asia-related knowledge, understandings and attitudes.

1 Teaching and learning

‘Securing a commitment to teaching about Asia is a complex undertaking ... not just a unit or two across the curriculum based around information about Asia. It is multifaceted and involves school and classroom levels. At the very least it consists of:

- a policy statement and/or strategic plan
- the teaching about Asia in many areas of the curriculum
- whole school activities involving the school community.’

Curriculum Outcomes in Access Asia Schools, 2002⁹

Through inclusion of references to studies of Asia and Australia, curriculum frameworks, statements, policies and support materials provide guidance to teachers and the education community on engaging young Australians with Asia. These references reflect the goal that studies of Asia and Australia are included in course content across the curriculum with a balance between in-depth, sustained studies and broader studies that explore themes, topics or issues.

Whole school planning

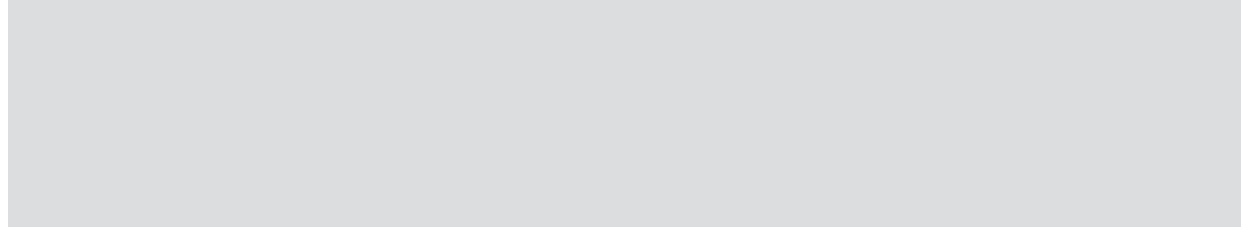
Experience has shown that it is most likely that the goal of Asia engagement can be achieved when the whole school is engaged. Studies of Asia and Australia in the school curriculum need to be part of long-term (five to ten years) planning in which students have the opportunity to add to their knowledge of Asia in a range of curriculum areas, including the opportunity to undertake sustained, specialised studies. This necessitates the whole school accepting the need to improve understanding of Asia and Australia through systematic inclusion of studies of Asia and Australia within the mainstream curriculum across learning areas and year levels.

A whole school approach may include mainstream studies, extracurricular activities, the visible presence of Asia and Australia in the school and a commitment to engaging young Australians with Asia in school policy and leadership with the support of parents and the school community. A whole school plan must address the amount of time students spend learning about Asia, the level of resources allocated, and staffing arrangements.

The scale and diversity of the cultures and nations of Asia present schools with many options. Factors to be considered by curriculum developers when determining priorities are:

- State, Territory and national priorities and initiatives including studies of Asia and Australia and Asian languages
- the curriculum policy framework within which decisions are to be made
- Asian languages and studies currently being taught at the school
- existing expertise within the school and the general population
- the extent of leadership and advocacy within the school for a new approach

9 Owen J & Andrew P (2003) *Curriculum Outcomes in Access Asia Schools*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, p 26.



- the needs, aspirations and backgrounds of students, teachers, parents and the school community, and the readiness of the school community to accept a focus on studies of Asia and Australia
- the resources (human, financial, institutional and professional) available to support these priorities.

Curriculum design

Providing an appropriate set of learning experiences about Asia to span curriculum from school entry to Year 12 is a major challenge. Judicious choices need to be made and priorities set by both education jurisdictions and schools if students are to be inspired to be lifelong learners about Asia. Curriculum designers need to answer the following questions:

- In what essential areas do students need to acquire knowledge and understanding about Asia and Australia?
- How can these essential areas be embedded in the curriculum at all year levels?
- Which themes, issues and events are relevant and appropriate and at what level should they be introduced?
- What resources are available for both teachers and students?
- What is teachable, given teacher motivations and training?
- What professional support is available to teachers and schools?
- How can links be made across the curriculum?

Sequence

At any year level there will be considerable disparity in the students' experience, perception and understanding of Asia.

In the early years of schooling, learning experiences about Asia should be designed to stimulate interest, awareness and psychological comfort with cultural contrasts and comparisons.

In the middle years, students should progressively be engaged with a range of studies of Asia and Australia across the curriculum, aimed at developing a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and a set of skills. During this period, students learn to undertake research to explain similarities and differences between economies and cultures, to use their knowledge base as evidence, and to interact respectfully with people from different cultures.

By the end of their secondary school years, students can synthesise, analyse, reflect on and apply their learning to personal experiences of Asia in an increasingly independent way. They can engage in cultural exchange, reflecting their enhanced understanding of their own culture, and their richer and broader framework of knowledge and understanding of Asian cultures. Students will increasingly be able to empathise with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Scope and sequence

The Asia Education Foundation supports education jurisdictions and schools to develop scope and sequence courses of study, K–10, across four learning areas: English, Studies of Society and Environment, The Arts and Languages. The scope and sequence materials are located on the AEF website at www.asiaeducation.edu.au.

Indicators of progress

Where schools have made significant progress in establishing a focus on studies of Asia and Australia, we can expect to see:

- active support and involvement of school leadership
- a team of people including the principal, school personnel, parents and the wider school community committed to a whole school, across the curriculum approach to studies of Asia and Australia
- school policy which incorporates studies of Asia and Australia across learning areas and acknowledges their place in the whole school
- a curriculum that explicitly includes studies of Asia and Australia in learning areas, that sets out a sequence of learning including knowledge, understanding, skills and values, and that recognises multiple entry points for students
- understanding and engagement of the broader school community of the importance of the programme, and a commitment to resource and support it
- opportunities for students to gain contact with an Asian language, and for some students to learn an Asian language
- opportunities for teachers to acquire further knowledge and understanding about studies of Asia and Australia
- exchanges and personal experiences of Asian peoples and countries
- regular monitoring and review procedures which focus on the effectiveness of the school's approach to studies of Asia and Australia.

Links to other national priorities

Engaging Young Australians with Asia supports a range of other priorities endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

Civics and citizenship education

Civics and citizenship education is a national priority. As citizens we now simultaneously belong to many kinds of community at the local, national, regional and global levels. The key to civic harmony will be respecting and valuing diversity. International events, particularly those in Asia, have become a powerful entry point into understanding this domain. This reflects the currency and relevance to Australia of occurrences in Asia, and also the enthusiasm of young people to see how our values and forms of governance relate to international conflict and peace-keeping, aid and crisis response, the management of migration and refugee programmes, and relationships across and between cultures.



National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools

The vision articulated in the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* states that 'all Australian schools provide values education in a planned and systemic way by developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts and building social skills'.¹⁰ Studies of Asia and Australia provide valuable contexts for young Australians to know and understand the cultural diversity within Australia, the region and the world. The vision of the *National Framework* states that there is a need to ensure values are incorporated into school policies and teaching programmes across the key learning areas. This offers opportunities for shared resource development which addresses values issues as well as the study of Asian cultures and experiences through the Access Asia series of curriculum materials and professional learning programmes provided through the AEF.

Statement of Learning for English

The nationally agreed *Statement of Learning for English* requires that students develop:

- a broad knowledge of a range of literature and other texts, including multimodal texts from Asia in English or translated into English
- knowledge of the ways in which texts may be interpreted and constructed according to cultural, social and personal backgrounds and contexts
- capacity to use texts to make sense of one's world, to broaden and promote shared cultural understandings.

The 2005 *Asia Scope and Sequence for English* document identifies curriculum resources to assist this implementation.

Information and communications technologies

The *National Goals for Schooling* state that when students leave school they should be 'confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society'.¹¹ Studies of Asia and Australia provide significant purpose, context and resources to integrate ICT into the classroom. They enable students to interact with their Asian peers, and to gain access to information, resources and opportunities for communication. Resources supporting studies of Asia and Australia, particularly the services provided through Asia EdNet,¹² instruct and support teachers on the use of ICT, help making their classrooms and learning programmes borderless.

National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools

The *Statement* includes a contemporary rationale for languages in Australian schools. The *Plan* indicates priority areas for collaboration to improve the quality and strength of languages education, including Asian languages. 'Twenty-first century education needs to ... develop in learners the knowledge, understanding and attributes necessary for successful participation and engagement within and across local, regional and global communities, and in all spheres of activity'.¹³ General Peter Cosgrove makes the point that, 'language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency of this world order'.

10 Department of Education, Science and Training (2005) *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*, Canberra. p 3.

11 Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1999) *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*, Canberra, Goal 1.6.

12 See Section 6.

13 MCEETYA (2005) *The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools*, Canberra.

Studies of Asia and Australia stimulate interest in Asian languages and vice versa. Both reinforce to the broader community the significant benefits of effective languages education for all learners. Intercultural approaches to languages education are being supported to enhance language learning capability and enthusiasm in our students.

Draft National Family-School Partnerships Framework¹⁴

The *National Goals for Schooling* explicitly recognise the role of parents as the first educators of their children. Family-school partnerships are collaborative relationships and activities involving school staff, parents and other family members of students. Effective partnerships are built upon mutual trust and respect and shared responsibility for the education of children and young people. Family-school partnerships can have a major impact on student engagement and learning in the studies of Asia and Australia by:

- families and schools creating positive attitudes to the studies of Asia and Australia
- ensuring families are informed about and understand their child's learning progress
- families and schools valuing and using the skills and knowledge children bring from the home to the school and from the school to the home
- families and schools recognising and using studies of Asia and Australia learning opportunities in the home and other non-school environments
- parents working with teachers in the educational decision-making process for their individual child.

2 Curriculum resources

'Students' knowledge and attitude outcomes could also be related to differences in teachers' use of resources ... those who indicated they made frequent use of a wide range of Access Asia teaching materials, professional development, excursions and advice from consultants were associated with high levels of achievements.'

Australian Students' Knowledge and Understanding of Asia, 2002¹⁵

The provision of high quality resources along with professional learning opportunities enables the strategies to reinforce each other and strengthen teacher commitment and capacity. Programmes of this kind benefit from the economies of scale accessed through a national approach.

A programme of resource development to support studies of Asia and Australia aims to meet these criteria:

- provide new content knowledge in national, State/Territory priority areas linked to studies of Asia and Australia
- link directly to a programme of professional learning, aimed at assisting teachers to implement the intentions of that programme

¹⁴ Department of Education, Science and Training (2004) *Draft National Family-School Partnerships Framework*.

¹⁵ Griffin, P et al (2002) *Australian Students' Knowledge and Understanding of Asia*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, p 4.



- illustrate the adoption of new teaching and learning approaches, designed to counteract ethnocentric attitudes and stereotyping
- assist teachers in acquiring authentic and culturally respectful sources of information about Asian peoples, events, issues and lifestyles
- assist teachers in receptivity to and empathy towards different cultures and an understanding of broader philosophical and pedagogical issues involved in the development of cultural understanding and empathy
- illustrate exemplary classroom practice in this area
- be available in a range of media, including text, CD-ROM, DVD and online.

3 Professional learning

'First, we would want teachers to have an increased knowledge of Asia; second, we would want them to have an increased understanding of what they already know about Asia; and third, teachers should have an increased intellectual confidence in dealing with Asia ... these teachers will be better equipped to prepare their students for life in the twenty-first century.'

Professor Colin Brown,
Studies of Asia: A Statement for Australian Schools (Second Edition), 2000¹⁶

To achieve high quality teaching and learning programmes, teachers will be engaging in continuing development of their knowledge, understanding and skills to support studies of Asia and Australia. This often requires a cultural change, a shift in attitudes and orientation, a readiness to learn new skills in cultural understanding and a willingness to address difficult issues of values as part of the curriculum.

Programmes of professional learning need to incorporate:

- new content knowledge in studies of Asia and Australia
- links with a programme of curriculum resource development to support teachers in the practical implementation of new approaches
- assistance with the adoption of new teaching and learning approaches, in part to counteract ethnocentric attitudes and stereotyping
- skills in acquiring authentic and culturally respectful sources of information about Asian peoples, events, issues and lifestyles
- receptivity to and empathy towards different cultures and an understanding of broader philosophical and pedagogical issues involved in the development of cultural understanding and empathy
- identification, documentation and sharing of exemplary classroom practice in this area
- the capacity of teachers to develop positive and mutually beneficial relationships with the families of their students
- supporting the role of teachers and principals as agents of change in culturally complex areas.

To be effective, programmes need to adopt a range of approaches. This includes initiatives such as formal university courses, in-country study programmes, short and extended professional learning workshops and school-based programmes. Professional networks, both online and face-to-face, need to be fostered. The Australian Government, education jurisdictions, schools, professional associations and external support agencies are all contributing to the provision of such opportunities for school educators.

4 Engaging parents and the community

Parents are important partners in engaging young Australians with Asia. They discuss with their children school, subject, course and career choices and support children to participate in a broad range of education experiences including excursions, exchanges, hosting, overseas tours and cultural events. They play a key role in school leadership and setting school priorities through parent bodies and many other kinds of support.

A continuing programme of information and promotion will support schools in engaging, informing and supporting parents and wider school communities to value and prioritise the engagement of young Australians with Asia through their schooling endeavours.

Such a programme would:

- provide schools with the kind of arguments and evidence outlined in this *National Statement* in a form suitable for distribution to parents and a general community audience
- make it clear that studies of Asia and Australia have the support of governments and educational authorities, and explain how schools and parents will be supported in the implementation of the programme
- provide examples of the format that studies of Asia and Australia might take
- outline the benefits to students, parents, communities and the nation
- provide resources which could be easily distributed in their current form by schools, or adapted to a form more suitable to parents and local communities
- use online and digital technologies to make information and materials widely available in a flexible and adaptable form.



5 Teacher education

‘... new learning will be about creating a kind of person, better adapted to the kind of world we live in now and the world of the near future.’

**Australian Council of Deans of Education,
New Learning: A Charter for Australian Education, 2001¹⁷**

Initial teacher education has a critical role in ensuring that new teachers in all learning areas and levels of schooling are equipped to take part in the delivery of studies of Asia and Australia. Teacher training programmes will adequately prepare new teachers to support studies of Asia and Australia in schools by including course content about contemporary and traditional Asian peoples, societies, cultures and environments and by developing approaches to teaching and learning related to studies of Asia and Australia.

In order to achieve this, teacher training institutions may need to give priority to:

- increase opportunities for trainee teachers to learn about and engage with Asian cultures and languages
- promote to trainee teachers the importance of and opportunities generated by studying Asian content and languages
- assisting trainee teachers to value and develop the skills to achieve positive and mutually beneficial relationships with the families of their students
- establish programmes to assist lecturers to gain the confidence, motivation and expertise to deliver quality learning about Asia to trainee teachers
- support a variety of mainstream, specialist and extracurricular programmes that help to transmit content and perspectives relating to studies of Asia and Australia and help trainee teachers to become more familiar and engaged with Asian countries and cultures, including study tours, exchanges, practicum and international collaboration
- familiarise trainee teachers with related curriculum resources and assist them to appreciate how they can be used within the classroom
- assist trainee teachers to incorporate studies of Asia and Australia into lesson plans they develop for supervised teaching within English, The Arts, Languages or Studies of Society and Environment
- provision of professional learning opportunities and postgraduate study for school educators.

6 Quality assurance

Education sectors and individual schools monitor and review progress in student achievement. The design of such programmes could include:

- the integration of studies of Asia and Australia in the curriculum, measured by system policies and numbers of schools, teachers and students participating
- the quality of school programmes, teacher skills and student learning achieved as a result of the programme.

As education jurisdictions review their curriculum policies and practices, the following indicators may be useful in measuring the extent of change in both participation and learning and teaching about Asia and Australia in schools. In such reviews, education jurisdictions will interpret these indicators in the context of their own priorities, resource considerations and timelines.

Indicators could include:

- curriculum policy statements of education jurisdictions that reflect the vision of this *National Statement*
- an increased number of schools offer comprehensive programmes including planned and identifiable studies of Asia and Australia components, number and proportion of teachers involved in delivering those programmes and number and proportion of students participating
- levels of provision for students engaged in learning an Asian language are monitored
- student achievement in knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes related to studies of Asia and Australia are monitored
- teachers have access to professional learning designed to improve studies of Asia and Australia in schools
- schools with exemplary learning and teaching programmes related to studies of Asia and Australia are identified, acknowledged and publicised
- high quality teaching and learning resources about Asia are being used in schools
- teacher education programmes offer increased attention to studies of Asia and Australia in course content and practice.



7 Support for studies of Asia and Australia

The following summarises support provided through the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) to promote the studies of Asia and Australia in primary and secondary schools.

Partnerships

Partnerships have been established with each State and Territory Department of Education in collaboration with Catholic and Independent sectors. Studies of Asia Advisers implement support programmes for schools. The delivery of professional learning programmes links to local priorities and resources.

Partnerships have also been established with key stakeholders including national principal and teacher professional associations and parent groups, universities, government departments, business and the philanthropic sector to support programme implementation.

Curriculum resources

The Access Asia series comprises 65 print and electronic materials for K–12 teachers and students, predominantly in English, The Arts, Mathematics, Studies of Society and the Environment learning areas. The Access Asia website features classroom resources, lesson plans, bibliographies and links to professional learning. The Access Asia website is located at www.asiaeducation.edu.au.

Professional learning programmes

Teacher knowledge has been identified as the greatest barrier for teachers to include studies of Asia and Australia. The AEF develops professional learning programmes for delivery nationally through each State and Territory or internationally. Programmes include postgraduate courses in distance and face-to-face modes, train-the-trainer programmes, short courses and workshops. These programmes facilitate the inclusion of State and Territory curriculum priorities and initiatives, take advantage of local resources and reflect current pedagogical practices. Programmes are available to be downloaded at www.asiaeducation.edu.au.

The AEF offers a range of international programmes for educators to gain first hand experience of the countries of Asia. Linking Latitudes Conference and Fieldtrip programmes have been conducted in Indonesia, China and Vietnam. Short-term study programmes are offered annually to India, China, Vietnam and South Korea and exchange programme are offered to South Korea, India and Indonesia.

Asia EdNet

Asia EdNet services include an active discussion group of over 1,000 educators with an interest in Asia, an online tutorial which supports teachers to integrate electronic resources into classroom programmes and a directory of evaluated online resources. Asia EdNet services are located at www.asiaeducation.edu.au.

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Postal address

Asia Education Foundation
The University of Melbourne
Parkville Victoria 3010

The AEF is located at

4th Floor, Sidney Myer Asia Centre
Cnr Swanston Street and Monash Road
Parkville Victoria 3010

Telephone +61 3 8344 4800

Facsimile +61 3 9347 1768

Email aef@asialink.unimelb.edu.au

Web www.asiaeducation.edu.au