



History Teachers' Association of NSW

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Minister Verity Firth
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

23 November 2009

Dear Minister Firth,

The History Teachers' Association of NSW (HTANSW) greeted the proposal for a national history curriculum with excitement and we have been very actively involved in supporting the development of draft curriculum material. However, we have a number of serious concerns in relation to implementation. These concerns have been communicated to ACARA board members, ACARA officials and Julia Gillard's department and office. The response has always been that state and territory governments will be in charge of the implementation process. Consequently, I am writing to inform you of our concerns.

Firstly, writers have been directed to produce a syllabus that will be delivered in 80 hours per year, or 2 hours per week, in Years 7 to 10. This is stated in ACARA's Curriculum Design Paper and any consultation feedback on the feasibility of draft syllabus material has been based on the assumption that the full complement of 80 hours per year will be required to meet learning outcomes described in the curriculum documents for Years 7 to 10. For this reason, we are now seeking a commitment that final syllabus documents for Years 7 to 10 history will be released with an instruction that the courses require a minimum of 80 hours teaching time per year.

Our second concern relates to the funding of professional development to support the implementation of the national curriculum. We are aware that federal funding will be made available to state and territory governments, and that they will coordinate the provision of professional development in each jurisdiction. As you may be aware, HTANSW delivers the vast bulk of history specific professional development currently available to teachers in NSW. Since its inception as a voluntary professional association in 1954, HTANSW has established an enviable reputation for supporting teachers and addressing their classroom concerns in a timely and cost-effective way. We work across all sectors and have been particularly concerned with helping colleagues in rural and remote schools. All our professional development activities are accredited with the NSW Institute of Teachers and we are very proud of the consistently very positive feedback that comes through in evaluation from participants.

At the moment, most of this professional development work is heavily subsidised through voluntary effort and our own fund-raising activity. With the likelihood that there will be an increase in demand for national curriculum related professional development over the next few years, we are now anxious to ensure that HTANSW will gain support from federal funding that is consistent with its role and effectiveness in this area.

HTANSW, through the History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA), is playing a critical role in supporting the development of new national curriculum courses and we have a demonstrated commitment to seeing their successful implementation at the classroom level. Particularly in regard to implementation, we feel that there is now an urgent need for clarification and would welcome the opportunity for further discussion.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beatriz Cartlidge', written in a cursive style.

Beatriz Cartlidge

President, HTANSW