



Media Release

11 October 2007

## The Teaching of Australian History in Schools

Last year, I called for a root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in our schools. In August 2006, the Government convened the Australian History Summit to begin this process. The Summit recommended that the teaching of Australian history be an essential, required and core part of all students' schooling in years 9 and 10.

Subsequently, the Government commissioned the Australian History External Reference Group to develop a Guide to Teaching Australian History in Years 9 and 10, building on earlier work of Associate Professor Tony Taylor. The Reference Group consisted of Professor Geoffrey Blainey, Dr Nicholas Brown, Dr Gerard Henderson and Mrs Elizabeth Ward.

I am pleased to publicly release the Guide today. It outlines the breadth and depth of historical knowledge and skills that every Australian school student should acquire by the end of Year 10. Without being restrictive, the Guide sets out in a sequential narrative the subject-matter which should be included in a course on Australian history at this level.

I announce today that the Government will, from 1 January 2009, require the teaching of at least 150 hours of Australian History to all junior secondary school students in Australia. This is with a view to seeing all jurisdictions implement this requirement through a compulsory stand-alone Australian History subject for Years 9 and 10.

This is consistent with the core recommendations of both the Australian History Summit and the Reference Group and will be a condition of the Commonwealth's next quadrennial schools funding agreement with the states and territories, which begins on 1 January 2009. It is also consistent with the Budget announcement that the next schools funding agreement will establish national standards for core curriculum in key areas.

I will write to Premiers and Chief Ministers asking that they accept the Australian Government's proposal to strengthen the teaching of Australian History based on the recommendations of the Reference Group and the subject-matter set out in the Guide. I will seek their cooperation on the next stage which includes consideration of assessment techniques, detailed curriculum and associated resources required to support this outcome. The Australian Government will share the costs of developing materials that are nationally consistent and reflect the content of the Guide.

I thank all those who have helped to shape this Guide and the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP for her stewardship of this process.

For further information and a copy of the Guide see <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/australianhistory>.

- [http://www.pm.gov.au:80/media/Release/2007/Media\\_Release24615.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au:80/media/Release/2007/Media_Release24615.cfm)