

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) comments on the Draft Years 3-10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship

The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) welcomes the development of the Australian Curriculum and is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the draft *Australian Curriculum, Civics and Citizenship: Years 3-10*. AWAVA have previously submitted on the *Draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (HPE)* and made a range of recommendations throughout the submission highlighting several areas of the health and physical education curriculum in which the inclusion of gender equality messages could be strengthened and enhanced.

Pedagogy is a crucial consideration for the effective implementation of the draft *Australian Curriculum, Civics and Citizenship: Years 3-10*. The Australian Education Union Policy on Gender Equity 2008 states: the *“implementation of gender policy is most effective when teachers are able to act on their own awareness of the problem. Effective curriculum development can only occur if teachers are involved in the properly resourced planning, implementation and evaluation of programs”* (p. 14). AWAVA requests a meeting between our member organisation, the Association of Women’s Educators (AWE), and ACARA to discuss requirements for the design and implementation of adequate teacher pre-service training and in-service professional development, using models of pedagogy for social justice.

We reiterate priority areas of improvement as stated in our previous submission and feedback on the HPE curriculum by highlighting three key focus areas:

- Stronger inclusion of a gender lens and gender equality messages throughout the curriculum
- Teacher education must be prioritised for the effective delivery of the curriculum addressing gender equality and Respectful Relationships education
- Drawing on gender examples throughout the curriculum in the delivery of the curriculum and within section elaborations

International agreement, negotiated at the 57th session of the Commission for the Status of Women in March 2013, emphasises the importance of focusing on gender equality and teacher education and training and states that governments must:

*“Develop and implement educational programmes and teaching materials, including comprehensive evidence-based education for human sexuality, based on full and accurate information, for all adolescents and youth, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, with the appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the involvement of children, adolescents, youth and communities, and in coordination with women’s, youth and specialized non-governmental organizations, in order **to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women of all ages, to eliminate prejudices**, and to promote and build informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills for the **development of respectful relationships and based on gender equality and human rights, as well as teacher education and training programmes for both formal and non-formal education”***

Agreed Conclusions - Section B (kk), page 10

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2013/L.5

I. General Curriculum Recommendations

AWAVA recommends:

- scrutiny of content in all learning areas to ensure a robust application of gender and gender equality lenses
- elaborations and examples to include reference to people and events from diverse gender/sexuality identities and groups
- emphasis on the importance of self-awareness in relation to diversity competence
- a greater emphasis on thinking-skills development and critical literacy approaches rather than knowledge
- the articulation and tracking of an aligned and integrated cross-curriculum approach within the documentation
- that on-going discussions be undertaken by ACARA to harness expertise in the area of social/gender justice education, both from academics and practitioners in the field

II. Specific recommendations based on the Curriculum Draft

AWAVA recommends the following amendments/additions to the draft *Australian Curriculum, Civics and Citizenship: Years 3-10*:

Description & Elaborations	Page Number	Recommendations
<p>General Capabilities</p> <p>In the Australian Curriculum, the general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. The curriculum mentions 7 general capabilities</p>	Page 9	<p>AWAVA recommends the inclusion of the following general capability:</p> <p><u>'understanding of gender and gender equality'</u></p>
<p>Year 4- Citizenship, diversity and identity</p> <p>Content description- How a person's identity, including their own, can be shaped by the different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they may belong</p>	Page 16	<p>AWAVA recommends the reworking of the content description:</p> <p>" How a person's identity, including their own, can be shaped by the different cultural, religious, social groups, <u>and gender and sexual orientation</u> to which they may belong "</p>
<p>Year 5- Government and democracy</p> <p>Content Description- The key values that underpin Australia's democratic system of government.</p>	Page 18	<p>AWAVA recommends reworking the elaborations:</p> <p>"Identifying the purpose of each of the key values of Australian democracy</p>

<p>Elaborations- identifying the purpose of each of the key values of Australian democracy such as freedom, equality and justice</p>		<p>such as freedom, equality and justice and applying a gender lens to each”.</p>
<p>Year 7- Citizenship, diversity and identity</p> <p>Content Description- How values, including respect for freedom, inclusion, respect, civility, responsibility, ‘fair go’, compassion and equality, can promote cohesion within Australian society</p>	<p>Page 24</p>	<p>AWAVA recommends adding gender equality and respectful relationships and reworking the content description:</p> <p>“How values, including respect for freedom, inclusion, <u>respectful relationships</u>, civility, responsibility, ‘fair go’, compassion and <u>gender equality</u>, can promote cohesion within Australian society”</p>
<p>Year 8- Analysis, synthesis and interpretation</p> <p>Content description- Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of relevant sources to identify the purpose, audience and context and to determine the reliability and relevance of information</p> <p>Elaboration- examining the language choices used by candidates in an election campaign or by a lobby group to identify the purpose and audience</p>	<p>Page 28</p>	<p>AWAVA recommends reworking the language of the elaborations section to reflect a gender lens:</p> <p>“examining the language choices, <u>including the use of sexist and/or misogynistic language</u>, used by candidates in an election campaign or by a lobby group to identify the purpose and audience”</p>
<p>Year 9- Laws and citizens</p> <p>Content description: The key features of Australia’s court system, including the hierarchy and jurisdictions of federal, state and territory courts</p> <p>Elaborations-allocating a selection of hypothetical cases from different types of law, such as criminal law, consumer law, family law, environmental law and workplace law, and/or jurisdiction to the courts in which they would be heard</p>	<p>Page 30</p>	<p>AWAVA recommends reworking the language of the elaborations section to reflect a gender lens</p> <p>“allocating a selection of hypothetical cases (<u>with an emphasis of using gendered examples</u>) from different types of law, such as criminal law, consumer law, family law, environmental law and workplace law, and/or jurisdiction to the courts in which they would be heard”</p>
<p>Year 9- Laws and citizens</p> <p>Content Description- The role of courts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’</p>	<p>Page 30</p>	<p>AWAVA recommends reworking the language of the elaborations section to reflect a gender lens:</p>

<p>means of legal governance, to apply and interpret the law, resolve disputes and make law through judgements</p> <p>Elaborations- investigating how citizens can be empowered by the legal system</p>		<p>“investigating how citizens, <u>especially women</u>, can be empowered by the legal system</p>
<p>Year 9- Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding</p> <p>Content Description-The key principles of Australia’s justice system, including equality</p> <p>Elaborations- examining factors that can undermine the application of the principles of justice, for example, bribery, coercion of witnesses, trial by media, or social media and court delays</p>	<p>Page 31</p>	<p>AWAVA recommends reworking the language of the elaborations section to account for victims/survivors of gender-based violence :</p> <p>“Examining factors that can undermine the application of the principles of justice, for example, bribery, coercion of witnesses, and trial by media, or social media and court delays. <u>Examining factors that impact on equitable access to justice systems including being a victim/survivor of gender-based violence</u>”</p>

III. Endorsements

This document has been endorsed in full/in part by the following AWAVA member organisations:

1. Association of Women Educators (AWE)
2. Women’s Services Network (WESNET)
3. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Alliance (NATSIWA)
4. Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women Australia (NIRWA)
5. Australasian Council of Women and Policing (ACWaP)
6. Australian Women’s Health Network (AWHN)
7. Women’s Legal Services Australia (WLSA)
8. Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
9. National Union of Students, (NUS) Women’s Officer
10. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, NASASV (Tasmanian Representative)
11. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, NASASV (Australian Capital Territory Representative)
12. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence NASASV (Northern Territory Representative)
13. Coalition of Women’s Domestic Violence Services of South Australia
14. Domestic Violence Victoria (DVVic)
15. Domestic Violence NSW

16. Queensland Domestic Violence Refuge Sector
17. Women's Council For Domestic & Family Violence Services WA
18. Women's Essential Service Providers Tasmania (WESP)