

**Deakin University**

**Moments in Time:  
Investigating the Australian  
History Curriculum in  
Primary Classrooms**

**Final Report – 2015**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 8<sup>th</sup> 2010, after two years of curriculum drafting and national consultation, first under the auspices of the National Curriculum Board (NCB) and then under its successor the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Peter Garrett, Federal Minister for School Education, in a Kevin Rudd Labor government, announced that the draft national curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History had been unanimously endorsed by the states and territories and would be subject to final agreement in October 2011. In the new curriculum formulation, school history was to be a core subject, with English Mathematics and Science in Years Foundation-10. In late 2013, the incoming Coalition federal government announced that there would an inquiry into the national curriculum, with a special focus on history. In January 2014, Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne announced Coalition advisor Kevin Donnelly and academic Ken Wiltshire would lead the review (Ireland, 2014).

The Australian Curriculum initiative has far reaching implications for state and national schooling relationships. The focus on History Curriculum addresses issues of nationhood, national identity and social cohesion: *“Awareness of History is an essential characteristic of any society; historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others”* (ACARA, 2009, p.4). Alongside English, Maths and Science, the teaching and learning of History is *becoming* mandatory for all Australian children from early years to Year 10. For the past three decades History has largely been absorbed within the broader social science subjects in these year levels. There are curricular and pedagogical issues for all core national curriculum subjects; however History is now carving out a new and distinct curriculum path from early years into secondary school. Successive cohorts of Primary school teachers have been educated in SOSE, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) or the ‘Humanities’: unlike History teachers in the secondary sector, they may not have content knowledge from under-graduate degrees in the discipline of History.

The focus of this ARC Linkage project has been the ‘implementation’ of the Australian Primary History Curriculum in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Findings from the project provide evidence-based curricular and pedagogical theorising of effective and productive teaching and learning of History in those contexts. Using a research design approach including document analysis, interviews of stakeholders and longitudinal case- studies the research has examined the following research questions:

- Q1 How do education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations support or facilitate professional learning, teacher identity and practice in this new curriculum area? How does this reconfigure curriculum theorising on a national level? *For discussion of findings refer to chapters 1, 2 and 3*
- Q2 How do Primary School teachers effectively teach the knowledge, skills and values of History? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings? *For discussion of findings refer to chapters 3 and 4*
- Q3 How do Primary School students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History? *For discussion of findings refer to chapter 5.*

Q4 How is the discipline of History reconstructed by the Australian curriculum initiative?  
*For discussion of findings refer to chapter 6*

The project involved a tri-state multi-disciplinary collaboration. This team included History and Curriculum researchers as Chief Investigators and industry partners: Queensland Studies Association (QSA); Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA); New South Wales Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES); Queensland History Teachers Association (QHTA); History Teachers Association New South Wales (HTANSW); and History Teachers Association of Victoria (HTAV).

This Australian Research Council Linkage project was initially funded and begun in August 2011. As there have been uneven responses by State authorities in rolling out the History curriculum, the project data collection period was extended until the end of 2013 with analysis continuing in 2014 and culminating in this final report in June 2015. A research approach to systematically collect, record and analyse data from across national and local policy levels was employed including:

- analysis of curriculum policy documentation (QSA, BOSTES VCAA and ACARA),
- interviews of Curriculum specialists and developers; professional associations, pre-service providers; school community representatives; families and other important community members,
- 12 longitudinal case studies of Primary School classrooms in Queensland and Victoria (by the end of data collection period NSW had not begun classroom implementation so case studies were not appropriate in that State) and
- focus group colloquium interviews.

By the end of 2013, the History curriculum was at the *enacted* stage of the curriculum development continuum in Queensland and Victoria and was moving into that stage in New South Wales. In curriculum adaptation, such as that evidenced in this analysis, the process is not one of simple passivity rather there is activity, proactivity and reactivity. Viewing this as adaptation rather than implementation offers access to the emergence of new knowledge through networking, co-evolution, connectivity and feedback within non-linear environments.

Unlike its previous position in the studies of society syllabuses, History is now offered as a separate discipline with its own specifically stated epistemology of key concepts, skills, and inquiry (ACARA, 2014b). These key concepts are: evidence; continuity and change; cause and effect; significance; perspectives; empathy; contestability. The following skills are used in the process of historical inquiry: chronology; terms and concepts; historical questions and research; analysis and use of sources; perspectives and interpretations; explanations; and communication. The local context plays a dominant role in identifying main aspects of perspectives and of content in the discipline of History. Local history, often determined by community traditions and formal local historical associations, has a major influence on the 'history' engaged by teachers. Depending on the school context, this history may have some resonance for the student community. In some cases the demographic of the local community has changed and is significantly different to the 'local history' presented to students.



The most effective history teaching and learning saw both teachers and students highly engaged in multi-dimensional inquiry journeys with students positioned as inquirers. The vast majority of participants in this study did not identify as history teachers per se. The history label was uncomfortable for some, whereas others successfully absorbed the label – incorporating *history teacher* into their wider teacher identity whilst integrating their school's history curriculum. As a progressive leading teacher remarked, "*We've still got a long way to go*": the discipline of history is understood by teachers and professional associations as rich and complex. The main attributes of successful pedagogical content knowledge are identified as:

- an integrated inquiry approach,
- a discipline inquiry approach,
- the use of practical and authentic experiences,
- the use of local context and
- the use of narrative/stories.

**Chapter 1** of this report introduces the project. **Chapters 2-6** offer substantial discussions of the findings in relation to the research questions and the key issues raised in them: **Chapter 2** Australian History Curriculum: Implementation and Adaptation; **Chapter 3** Primary Teachers as History Teachers; **Chapter 4** Effective Teaching of history; **Chapter 5** Primary Students – The New Historians and **Chapter 6** History revisited.

The following chapters provide separate discussions of National and State analyses. **Chapter 7** provides a national policy analysis. **Chapter 8** provides an analysis of Victorian data including an overview of the analysis of this State data, a specific section on Victorian policy analysis and then separates analyses of the six Victorian case studies. **Chapter 9** provides an analysis of Queensland data including an overview of the analysis of this State data, a specific section on Queensland policy analysis and then separates analyses of the six Queensland case studies. Chapter 10 offers an analysis of New South Wales policy and implementation until end of data collection period.

## POSITIONING THE FINAL REPORT

This report is concerned with the implementation of the Australian History Curriculum from a particular point in time and place. The report has focussed on three Australian states: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The report has addressed the implementation time from 2011-2013 inclusive. A very brief comment is offered here to readers on the curriculum implementation at the time of publishing this report in June 2015. Firstly a comment is made on the current status of implementation in each state and territory. This is followed by a brief account of current issues for History Teachers' Associations, nation-wide.

### History curriculum currency in the three states central to the report

**Queensland:** In 2014 Queensland schools continued to teach the *AC: History*.

<http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/13653.html>

**New South Wales:** "The Board of Studies has developed new K–10 syllabuses for English, Mathematics, Science (including Science and Technology K–6) and History incorporating Australian curriculum." <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/>

**Victoria:** Since the data collection period for this study (2011-2013), the AusVELS History curriculum has introduced a series of levels for students with disabilities – Levels A, B, C, D – that are found prior to the Foundation Level. The new user-interface navigates horizontally across all levels (up to Level 10). Icons representing the cross-curriculum priorities are still only applied sparingly to various topics. For example, investigating pre-contact ways at Level 4 could link well to *Sustainability* as well as *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures* when looking at sustainable hunting practises. <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/The-Humanities-History/Curriculum/F-10>

### History curriculum currency in the other states and territories

The following states and territories were not part of the study this report is based upon; however, they are included here to complete a national overview:

**Tasmania:** Department of Education schools in Tasmania are teaching the AC: History F-10. This has been in-effect as of 2013 according to the Tasmanian Government Curriculum webpage. <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/Students/schools-colleges/curriculum/Pages/Curriculum.aspx>

**The Australian Capital Territory (ACT):** The *AC: History* was implemented in ACT K-10 schools from 2011-2013. No more recent information is available from their Department of Education and Training website.

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching\\_and\\_learning/curriculum\\_programs](http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/curriculum_programs)

**The Northern Territory:** "Northern Territory schools commenced teaching...History from the beginning of Semester 2 2013".

<http://www.education.nt.gov.au/teachers-educators/curriculum-ntbos>

**South Australia:** The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) developed a multimedia resource entitled, "Leading Learning: Making the Australian Curriculum Work for Us" dated 2013 and 2014. Further information is Intranet-based for DECD employees.

<http://www.acleadersresource.sa.edu.au/>

**Western Australia (WA):** The *AC: History* is included in the WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority curriculum browser for pre-primary (aka Foundation) to Year 10.

<http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/p-10-curriculum/curriculum-browser>

## ACARA

Recent inclusions to *The Australian Curriculum: History* web-page are downloadable PDFs of sample portfolios of student work. These are categorised as satisfactory, above satisfactory or below satisfactory. A summary of the task is provided before each annotated work sample. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>

## History Teachers Association of Australia

The centenary of commemorations of WWI continues to be a central focus for the teaching of history Australia-wide. In 2014, the Simpson Prize saw an increase in both the number of schools participating and the volume of entries (HTAA, March 2015). According to the HTAA Bulletin (March 2015), the various state and territory association bodies are celebrating learning activities related to *The Great War*; working towards increasing membership and supporting current members by offering more regional PD opportunities; and/or facilitating online networking web-pages. The HTAA itself has developed the website resource *AC History Units* with the aim of assisting teachers to design their own programs (<http://www.achistoryunits.edu.au/>). Effective history pedagogy is eloquently summarised as follows:

*There is no single 'best' way to teach history. Research suggests that good history teachers know the content, use a variety of approaches, explicitly teach the skills of historical inquiry and analysis, tailor learning opportunities to suit their students' stage of development, and encourage deep understanding.*

<http://www.achistoryunits.edu.au/teaching-history/how-to-teach-history/teachhist-history-pedagogy.html>

## CHAPTER ONE: ABOUT THE PROJECT

Mary Dixon

### PROJECT BACKGROUND & RESEARCH TEAM

Moments in Time: Investigating a National History Curriculum in Primary Classrooms was funded by the Australian Research Council in partnership with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority; History Teachers Association of Victoria; New South Wales Board of Studies; New South Wales History Teachers Association; Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCCA) and QHTA, for the period 2011-2014 under the Australian Research Council Linkage Project Scheme. This project arose out of collaboration between researchers from Deakin University, University of Technology Sydney, Griffith University and University of Southern Queensland investigating primary history curriculum change, content knowledge, pedagogy and disciplinarity. The project took a multi-disciplinary approach to investigate the pedagogical and curriculum implications of a national History curriculum for primary classrooms to provide evidence based curricular and pedagogical theorising of effective and productive teaching and learning of History in those contexts.

The Chief Investigators on the project were: Associate Professor Mary Dixon and Dr Kim Senior of the Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University; Dr Nicole Green of the School of Teacher Education and Early Childhood, University of Southern Queensland; Dr Paul Reitano of the School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University; and Adjunct Professor Anthony Taylor of University of Technology Sydney. Project management was provided by Lea McEvoy (2011-2014), and research assistance by Gisela Boetker-Smith (2011), Adam Mitchell (2011), Rebecca Sahr (2014) and Satine Winter (2014).

### ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority is an independent statutory body responsible to the Victorian Minister for Education, serving both government and non-government schools. They provide high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting for all Victorian students 0 to 18. (<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/aboutus/index.aspx>)

The History Teachers' Association of Victoria is committed to fostering an outstanding professional community which meets the challenges of the teaching and learning of history in a dynamic environment. It pursues this goal within the state of Victoria, throughout Australia and internationally. (<http://www.htav.asn.au/about-us/about>)

The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards was created by the NSW Government, commencing operation on 1 January 2014, to sustain and improve the already high standards of achievement in NSW schools. BOSTES brings together the Board of Studies NSW (BOSNSW) and the NSW Institute of Teachers. The Quality Teaching Council will continue to function under the auspices of BOSTES. BOSTES will work across all NSW school systems. (<http://www.bostes.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/home>)

The History Teachers' Association of New South Wales (HTANSW) seeks to promote the study and teaching of History and to provide professional support for those working in the area of History education. (<http://www.htansw.asn.au/>)

The QCAA is a statutory body of the Queensland Government. They provide Kindergarten to Year 12 syllabi, guidelines, assessment, reporting and testing and certification services for Queensland schools. The QCAA was established on 1 July 2014, replacing the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA). (<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about.html>)

The QHTA is a voluntary organisation with an executive membership of Primary and Secondary History Teachers, Academics and Educationalists. Their aim is to foster an interest in History and the teaching of History, but especially to support and assist History teachers in Queensland. (<http://www.qhta.com.au/aboutus.htm>)

## **AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS & DESIGN**

Distinguishing History as a discrete curriculum is a cultural and pedagogical shift for the primary teaching population. More significantly, it is a cultural and pedagogical *change* for primary school teachers for whom History is an entirely new curriculum area.

As the first major study of History in these settings the major aims of the study were:

- a theorisation of primary learning of History;
- identification of models of successful pedagogical content knowledge in primary History teaching
- identification of extensions to the discipline of History from the primary school context

The research examined the following research questions:

1. How do education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations support or facilitate professional learning, teacher identity and practice in this new curriculum area? How does this reconfigure curriculum theorising on a national level?
2. How do primary teachers effectively teach the knowledge, skills and values of History? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings?
3. How do primary students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History?
4. How is the discipline of History reconstructed by the Australian curriculum initiative?

## **PROJECT DESIGN**

### **APPROACH**

The aim of the project has been to investigate the pedagogical, curriculum and disciplinary implications of a national History curriculum for the primary classroom. A research design has been employed to systematically collect, record and analyse data from across national and local policy levels.

Curriculum Policy works at macro and micro levels and is an ongoing process. Curriculum policy implementation research, working at a multi-state level, demands use of a broad and point-in-time process of document analysis. The study values, from epistemological and practices perspectives, the essential role of qualitative evidence and methods to give account of the processes involved in students learning History and teachers teaching History. Longitudinal case studies of primary classrooms and interviews of curriculum stakeholders have formed this data set. As an interpretive study, each collection of data during the research has been propelled by an ongoing analysis, which has informed subsequent data collection methods. Using a hermeneutic circle, the collected data has increasingly reflected a greater depth. Analysis has involved the research team working holistically rather than reductively.

## DATA COLLECTION

Period of data collection: 2011-2013 inclusive.

**Sources of Policy documents** for the relevant period:

National level – Australian Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting Association (ACARA)

Queensland – Queensland Studies Association (QSA)

New South Wales – Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)

Victoria – Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA)

*For a full list please see Appendix D*

### **Interviews with Policy makers:**

Curriculum specialists and developers, professional associations, and teachers from Queensland, NSW and Victoria were interviewed in 2011 and 2013 (n=31).

*For a full list please see Appendix C*

### **Professional Associations:**

Researchers attended/viewed the following professional association events and collected field notes:

- HTAV State Conference 2011
- HTAV Primary Conferences – 2011; 2012 and 2013
- VCAA online event Session 8: AC History: Teaching the Historical skills strand in the primary years 2011
- *Australian Academy of the Humanities* Annual Symposium – Educating the Nation: The Humanities in the New Australian Curriculum 2011
- QSA state conference 2012
- QHTA conference 2013
- HTANSW state conference 2013

### **Focus group interview:**

Focus group interviews were held in Queensland and Victoria in November 2013. Participants included Industry partners; pre-service teacher educators; principals and teachers from the case study schools; curriculum specialists and developers and professional associations.

### **Case Studies:**

The case studies have provided a significant data base of the dialectical interrelationships of History content, students, teachers and environments (Ball & Bowe, 1992). Case studies are frequently used in educational research when a deep understanding of the context is essential. Intensive case studies (Blatchford et al., 2008; Datnow & Stringfield, 2000; Khamis & Sammons, 2004; Saito & Tsukui, 2008; Sargent, 2006; Thomas et al., 2004) are designed for large-scale and long-term investigations into the “complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 181).

All 12 case study schools in the project are co-educational, government schools. In Victoria the schools are *Primary Schools* where students begin at age 5/6 and continue until leaving for secondary college after seven years. In Queensland, with one exception, the schools are *State Schools* where students begin at age 5/6 and continue until leaving for secondary

college after 8 years. The exception enrolls students from age 5/6 until the end of compulsory schooling.

Case study schools were selected to represent urban/regional/rural distinctions of school context – six in each state: two urban, two regional and two rural. Schools were not chosen because of a reputation for teaching history. Rather the research team randomly contacted schools in relevant areas. The project has not worked with any schools in NSW, despite original proposal, because implementation was pushed back beyond the scope of this project.

**TABLE 1: VICTORIAN AND QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY SCHOOLS**

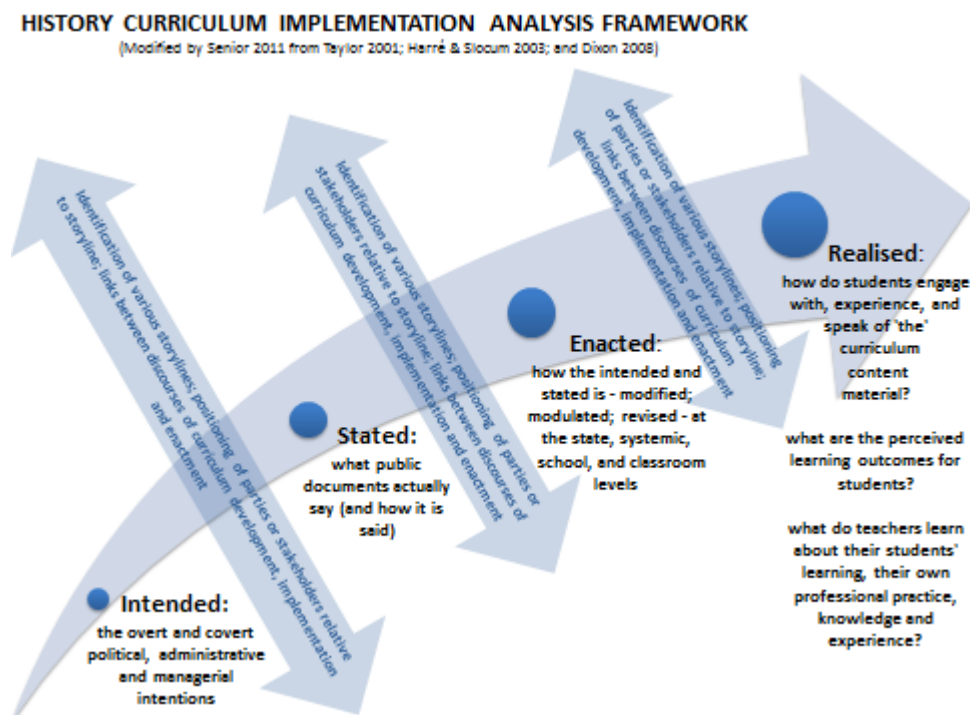
<b>VICTORIAN SCHOOLS</b> <i>(school population as at end of data collection period)</i>
<b>Rural 1</b> Central region of Victoria (55)
<b>Rural 2</b> Western Plains region of Victoria (570)
<b>Regional 1</b> South Gippsland region of Victoria (347 )
<b>Outer Urban 1</b> Outer West metropolitan area of Melbourne (760)
<b>Urban 1</b> Northern Metropolitan area of Melbourne (451)
<b>Urban 2</b> Western Metropolitan area of Melbourne (447)
<b>QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS</b> <i>(school population as at end of data collection period)</i>
<b>Rural 1</b> Darling Downs region of Queensland (367 )
<b>Rural 2</b> Lockyer Valley region of Queensland (436)
<b>Regional 1</b> Gold Coast region of Queensland (1156)
<b>Regional 2</b> Central West region of Queensland (298)
<b>Urban 1</b> North Eastern Metropolitan area of Brisbane (840)
<b>Urban 2</b> Southern Metropolitan area of Brisbane(846)

The researchers visited each case study school at regular intervals over the period of the project with no data collected after the end of 2013. The following data was collected at each school:

- Structured, formal interviews with Principals, teachers and students
- Informal interviews with Leadership, teachers and students
- Field notes of observations of teaching and learning
- Photographs taken by researchers, teachers and students of teaching and learning
- Community documents (historical society minutes and community publications)
- School newsletters
- Policy and professional learning documents
- Census data 2006 and 2011
- My School data
- School webpage and relevant links

Relevant consent under ethics processes was obtained in all case studies and interviews.

## DATA ANALYSIS



**FIGURE 1: HISTORY CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK**

The analysis of the data employed the framework in Figure 1 in organising the sets of analysis and in generating understandings of the relationships between stages of curriculum implementation and data sources – working from macro to micro sites of curriculum. The final analysis has responded to each research question:

- Q1 How do education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations support or facilitate professional learning, teacher identity and practice in this new curriculum area? How does this reconfigure curriculum theorising on a national level?



- Q2 How do Primary School teachers effectively teach the knowledge, skills and values of History? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings?
- Q3 How do Primary School students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History?
- Q4 How is the discipline of History reconstructed by the National curriculum initiative?

## Two stage analysis

### Stage 1: Curriculum Implementation

In this approach curriculum implementation is seen as processual working through:

<i>Intended</i>	concerning the overt and covert political, administrative and managerial intentions.
<i>Stated</i>	concerning what public documents actually say and how it is said.
<i>Enacted</i>	concerning how the intended and stated are modified and qualified at state, systemic and classroom levels.
<i>Realised</i>	concerning how students engage with, speak of or encounter the curriculum or content; the learning outcomes for students and the impact on teachers' professional knowledge.

Although this process suggests linear intentions, the implementation is never linear in this way. The analysis has been open to the multi-directional nature of curriculum development and implementation. The analysis of documents, interviews and case studies has included attention to these aspects of implementation and has also been open to what was not expected and beyond this process.

### Stage 2: Positioning Analysis

The data was also analysed through Positioning Theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Dixon, 2008; Dixon & Senior, 2008) to reveal storylines of pedagogy, curriculum and disciplinarity. Positioning theory is an explanatory scheme to understand and study discourse and in this case the discourses surrounding the National Curriculum, the primary history curriculum, primary history teachers and primary students as history learners. The origins of the term 'positioning' and 'position' are metaphorical; from the field of marketing where a position refers to communication strategies that allow one to place a certain product amongst its competitors and from a military meaning of a "position" in the sense that a position is always taken against the position of the enemy (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p. 395). Positioning involves a tri-polar relationship, evident within the conversation, of position, story lines and speech-acts (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Within the conversation we position others and ourselves sometimes intentionally and often unintentionally. In relation to selves and conversations, positioning is defined as:

*...the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p. 395).*

Positioning is to be understood as the process of making determinate a position in relation to others. Positions can and do change; these positionings and repositionings are constructed and brought about within the conversation of the participants. The positioning of participants within a context speaks to the power available to them. Positions are clusters

of rights, duties, and obligations to perform (or to require the performance of) specifiable kinds of acts—and thus positions exist as expectations, beliefs, and presuppositions.

The Positioning analysis identifies ‘Storylines’ which are realised in the conversation. These are not stories or narratives themselves. Social episodes display storylines, as if the speakers were living out of narrative conventions. The speakers, positioned by others or by themselves, may draw on both the storylines made available within their context of the conversation and those that are embedded in a broader set of discursive actions. Story lines are multilayered, with the possibility of several unfolding simultaneously from the same pattern of speech-act.

Storylines of implementing a history curriculum, of teaching history, of learning history and of the discipline of history have been revealed in each case study school, in each state and across the national perspective. Teachers, students and history are positioned and repositioned in multiple ways and in an ongoing change process.

### **Representation of analyses**

The findings from the analysis have been represented in multiple ways in order to meet various reader-needs and includes the following chapters:

#### ***Australian History Curriculum: Implementation and Adaptation- see Chapter 2***

This chapter specifically addresses the process of a History curriculum implementation

#### ***Primary Teachers as History teachers – see Chapter 3***

This chapter specifically addresses:

Q1 How do education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations support or facilitate professional learning, teacher identity and practice in this new curriculum area? How does this reconfigure curriculum theorising on a national level?

#### ***Effective teaching of history - see Chapter 4***

This chapter specifically addresses:

Q2 How do Primary School teachers effectively teach the knowledge, skills and values of History? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings?

#### ***Primary students – The New Historians – see Chapter 5***

This chapter specifically addresses:

Q3 How do Primary School students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History?

#### ***History revisited – see Chapter 6***

This chapter specifically addresses:

Q4 How is the discipline of History reconstructed by the National curriculum initiative?

#### ***National Analysis- see Chapter 7***

This chapter specifically addresses the national policy document analysis

**Victoria- see Chapter 8**

This chapter provides an overview of implementation in Victoria and specifically addresses Victorian policy analysis and case studies of six Victorian schools analysed through a combination of curriculum implementation and Positioning theory.

**Queensland - see Chapter 9**

This chapter provides an overview of implementation in Queensland and specifically addresses Queensland policy analysis and case studies of six Queensland schools analysed through a combination of curriculum implementation and Positioning theory.

**New South Wales Analysis see Chapter 10**

*This chapter specifically addresses the New South Wales policy document analysis.*

## CHAPTER 2: AUSTRALIAN HISTORY CURRICULUM: IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTATION

Mary Dixon

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a commentary on the implementation process of the Australian History curriculum as it occurred for the project period of 2011-2013 (inclusive) in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The details of the curriculum implementation are to be found in the chapters which follow – National Analysis and then each state section. This chapter provides an overview of the curriculum implementation analysis. This overview draws on the details provided elsewhere in the report.

It also provides a critique of ‘curriculum implementation’ as a way of theorising what has occurred and offers in its place ‘curriculum adaptation’ as more representative of the process and more useful as a framing of curriculum theorisation

In this first section there is a brief explanation of how ‘curriculum’ is understood in this project and the data collection and analysis processes used by the project team.

The findings are then presented in five sections:

- Currere – tracking the curriculum process of each state
- Cosmology – the overall understandings which underpin this processing
- Community – the players and their positionings
- Conversation – the political and local contexts
- Complexity – the logic of movement and the adaptations that have been made

It is well held by curriculum theorists that curriculum’ is the sum of the stories and narratives of the nation that the current generation chooses to tell becoming “the site on which the generations struggle to define themselves and the world” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995 pp. 847-8). Successful implementation and renewal is critical – but problematic (Fullan, 2007). Professor Stuart Macintyre, the lead National History writer, has stressed the “major logistical implications” (2010) peculiar to the implementation of this new curriculum area. Internationally, the complexity of History curriculum implementation processes in regard to the primary settings has already been acknowledged in both the UK and Russia (Nichol, 2007, 2008). This complexity has been present in Australia. The difficulties faced by participants at all levels of curriculum implementation have highlighted the complex nature of such processes (Hargreaves 2009; Marsh, 2007). Failures to successfully implement and sustain curriculum innovations in education have been well documented (Cohen & Ball, 2000; Fullan, 2007). In the past curriculum change research in Australia has been bounded by state curricula. This project has addressed the opportunity provided by a national curriculum to extend the scope of Australian curriculum research.

### PROJECT ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

#### Data

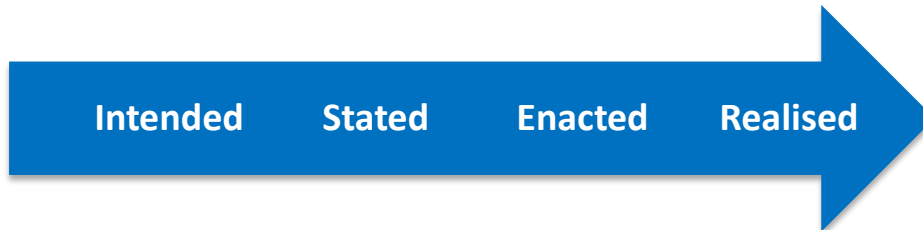
This project drew on data collected across disparate sites: offices of government curriculum authorities and professional associations, school staff rooms, primary classrooms. Fullan (2007) argues for an interactive analysis in curriculum implementation research involving external factors (such as policy documents, government directives and national context) and internal factors (such as regional context, school leadership and teacher knowledge).

Data collection included: History curriculum documents, teacher plans, support materials

for teaching strategies and student activities, assessment tasks (planning and products), school policy statements, actions/speech acts from writers, curriculum policy makers, teachers, students, State curriculum authorities and Professional Subject Associations.

### Analysis

Analysis involved a double process working across macro to micro implementation. The implementation process was mapped using a 'process' approach



The process is identified stages:

- **Intended:** the overt and covert political, administrative and managerial intentions
- **Stated:** what is included in public documents and how it is stated
- **Enacted:** how the intended and stated is modulated, modified, revised at the state, systemic, school and classroom
- **Realised:** how do students engage with engage with, speak of and experience 'the curriculum', and what do teachers learn of their own knowledge, experience and their students

The various curriculum points were plotted – from the Australian Curriculum at ACARA level, State level (Victoria, NSW and Queensland) including case study schools. (Details on these can be read in the chapters on National and state analysis). The data was also analysed through Positioning Theory (Harré & van Lagenhove, 1999; Dixon, 2008; Dixon & Senior, 2008) to reveal storylines of implementation and relative positioning of stakeholders.

### Communication of findings

The analysis process has revealed the difficult and complex process of implementation. The linear plotting is somewhat useful but is problematic as contextual issues impact on the process. The process at times falters, is never stable nor constant across sites and is often unstable within each site. In order to address these issues, the findings are represented through Doll's map of 5Cs for interpreting curriculum (Doll and Gough, 2002, pp. 42-52). In this view curriculum is not seen as a document or a bounded stable set of content and activities and assessment. Doll identifies:

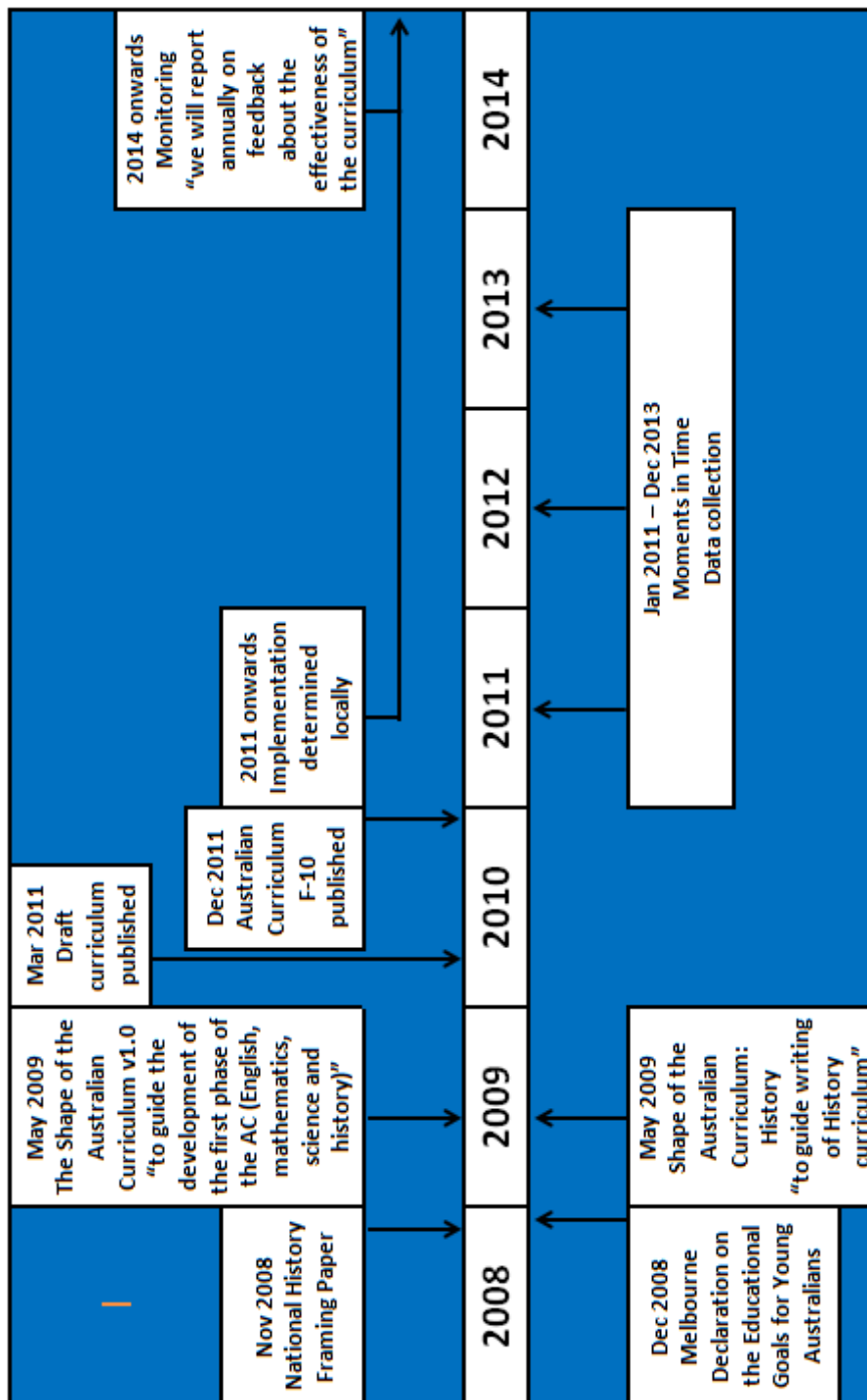
- Curriculum as *currere* – rather than the course of curriculum *currere* is seen as a verb rather than the linear work of a course as a noun. In this case the coursing of curriculum- movement in multiple directions;
- Curriculum as cosmology – identifying the larger ideas that underpin the resultant curriculum;
- Curriculum as community – the curriculum is lived / constructed / reconstructed through and between a range of actors;
- Curriculum as conversation – the conversation includes all that is said and what is allowed to be said;
- Curriculum as complexity – curriculum is understood as networked.

The reading below is presented in these five distinct parts but it is recognised that each part is entangled with the other. Each part constructs and reconstructs each of the other parts. This is a report on an assemblage of curriculum doing.

**The Australian Curriculum creation and implementation in context**

The timelines on the following pages are offered as a simple visual guide to demonstrate how the *AC: History* came to be, official implementation plans and how the implementation has occurred in the three states that were the focus of this project.

**FIGURE 2: TIMELINE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING AS RELATES TO MOMENTS IN TIME**



**FIGURE 3: TIMELINE OF CURRICULUM CONTEXTUAL IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES IN VICTORIA**

2011 onwards Implementation determined locally	2014 onwards Monitoring by ACARA “we will report annually on feedback about the effectiveness of the curriculum”
Jan 2011 – Dec 2013 Moments in Time Data collection	
1 <sup>st</sup> HTAV Primary Conference	4 <sup>th</sup> HTAV Primary Conference
2 <sup>nd</sup> HTAV Primary Conference	3 <sup>rd</sup> HTAV Primary Conference
AEU (Vic) Bans: work on curriculum implementation	
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FIGURE 4: TIMELINE OF CURRICULUM CONTEXTUAL IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES IN QUEENSLAND

2011 onwards Implementation determined locally	2014 onwards Monitoring by ACARA "we will report annually on feedback about the effectiveness of the	
Jan 2011 – Dec 2013 Moments in Time Data collection		
QHTA encourages membership from primary teachers; offers Australian Curriculum targeted workshops at its annual conferences; uses its website to provide links to teaching and learning resources including Scootle and HTAA; provides articles on teaching and learning history through its quarterly newsletter		
2011	2012	2013
Teachers became familiar with the new curriculum by auditing and reviewing current programs and engaging with QSA (QCAA) undertook curriculum mapping and developed curriculum Education Queensland developed "Curriculum to	Teachers continue to become familiar with and plan for the new history curriculum while the new English, mathematics and science curricula are taught  Further PD in History offered as well as PD on "operationalizing the AC"	History to be taught in all F-10 classrooms using the Australian Curriculum  In 2012 QSA's (QCAA) online hub became operational and continues to be available combining content and achievement standards with advice and sample
	2014	2015
	History continues to be taught in all F-10 classrooms using the Australian Curriculum  Implementation of Geography curriculum begins	Implementation of remaining learning areas/subjects by 2016
	2016	



FIGURE 5: TIMELINE OF CURRICULUM CONTEXTUAL IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

2011 onwards Implementation determined locally	Jan 2011 – Dec 2013 Moments in Time Data collection	2014 onwards Monitoring by ACARA “we will report annually on feedback about the effectiveness of the curriculum”	HTANSW encourages membership from primary teachers; offers Australian Curriculum targeted workshops at its bi-annual conferences; uses its website to provide links to teaching and learning resources including Scoop.it and HTAA; provides articles on teaching and learning history through its Teaching History Journal	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
The NSW Minister announced that implementation will be delayed until 2014  The BOS began development of a history syllabus “that gave expression in the NSW style to the Australian Curriculum content descriptions” in consultation with teachers	Existing NSW K-12 syllabuses were used  A joint memorandum on the implementation schedule of the new syllabuses was  It was announced that the new syllabuses would be available by the end of September	PD commenced  A year of “familiarisation and planning”  Schools will need to have prepared a plan for implementation		The NSW K-10 English, Mathematics, Science and History syllabuses incorporating Australian curriculum start being taught according to the implementation schedule i.e. History not yet being taught	Optional to begin teaching the NSW K-10 History syllabus incorporating Australian curriculum	Start teaching the NSW K-10 History syllabus incorporating Australian curriculum			

Currere

State and case study point in time plotting

The plotting of the curriculum process has revealed the multi- directional movement of ‘implementation’

**TABLE 2: STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN VICTORIA**

	Intended	Stated	Enacted	Realised
<b>Victorian Policy – AusVELS</b>				
<b>Rural 1</b>				
<b>Urban 1</b>				
<b>Regional 1</b>				
<b>Outer Urban 1</b>				
<b>Urban 2</b>				
<b>Rural 2</b>				

**TABLE 3: STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN QUEENSLAND**

	Intended	Stated	Enacted	Realised
<b>QCAA</b>				
<b>Rural 1</b>				
<b>Urban 1</b>				
<b>Regional 1</b>				
<b>Rural 2</b>				
<b>Urban 2</b>				
<b>Regional 2</b>				

**TABLE 4: STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN NSW**

	Intended	Stated	Enacted	Realised
<b>BOSTES</b>				

## The major issues which confronted each state's implementation

Victorian issues included:

- the ban on whole school professional development under union-sanctioned industrial action that occurred from the end of June 2012 to the beginning of April 2013
- the time frame for distribution of reporting frames

Queensland issues included:

- remote schools – the isolation from Brisbane which means very little opportunity for face to face professional development

NSW issues include:

- review by the NSW Board of Studies of the draft national curriculum for English, maths, science and history, for kindergarten to year 10, warned the draft was vastly inferior to the existing curriculum
- postponement of implementation on the premise of a lack of professional development support – financial

In late 2013, the incoming Coalition federal government announced that there would an inquiry into the national curriculum, with a special look at history. This review has now (October 2014) been tabled.

## Cosmology

The far-reaching intention of this national curriculum as articulated by ACARA (2010) was to prepare all young Australians “to compete in the globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century”. Underwriting this process are issues of nationhood, national identity and social cohesion: “Awareness of History is an essential characteristic of any society; historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others” (ACARA, 2009, p. 4). What constitutes historical knowledge in primary curriculum was articulated in the Shape Paper (2009). Years F-6 were to be based on four ‘focus questions’:

- What do we know about the past?
- How did Australians live in the past?
- How did people live in other places?
- How has the past influenced the present?

Ideas and themes that would underlie the F-6 course were to be:

- A capacity to move from local to regional, national and global contexts.
- A focus on Australian social history.
- An opportunity to study North American, European and Asia-Pacific topics.

Local contexts, teachers and students have divergent understandings of ‘the past’ – whose past? When is past? Who is involved in Australia’s social history? These issues appear in the case studies and in the implementation processes in each State. The federal review of the curriculum calls these issues to account. This reading of curriculum does not seek the correct account but rather recognition of the depth of understandings present in this debate.

## Community

This view of curriculum destabilizes the pre-determined view of stakeholders in curriculum implementation. In that view curriculum is a top down model moving from curriculum/policy maker to local authority to schools as sites of enactment of the bounded curriculum, to teachers as deliverers of the curriculum and to students as receptors. The state studies and the case studies have evidenced the lively and dynamic interaction of all those involved.

The federal authority, ACARA, asserted their responsibility for the construction of the National curriculum document but not its implementation (Firth, 2010). The Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority (QCAA) – previously known as QSA – worked closely with ACARA to implement the Australian Curriculum History in all states schools in 2013. The VCAA also collaborated with ACARA to implement the Australian Curriculum History into Victorian state schools in 2013. With regard to the Australian Curriculum, the Board of Studies NSW commenced its syllabus development process once the Australian curriculum had been endorsed by the State and Territory Education Ministers. It was responsible for advising the NSW Minister for Education on the appropriateness of the Australian Curriculum for NSW schools and the structure and process of its implementation. The BoS NSW developed new K-10 syllabuses for English, Mathematics, Science (including Science and Technology K-6) and History incorporating the Australian curriculum

National and State Professional Subject Associations have professional knowledge relevant to this national curriculum implementation. They have extensive experience in the complexities and the problematics of successful curriculum implementation within their own state contexts and in close proximity to the site of teachers and students. The QCAA offers professional development via online engagements, through newsletters, and workshops. The QHTA has also been proactive in supporting primary teachers As was argued in the Queensland analysis ‘Committed and passionate teachers were the driving force to implement the history curriculum into classrooms’. Primary teachers bring their own knowledge, interest and experience in the local context to shape historical engagements by students with local history. Students are part of this curriculum implementation. They however do not see their work in class as a new curriculum rather it is the curriculum. They engage with it as they do with other ‘already implemented’ areas. They engage with the curriculum and remake it within the limits made available within the classroom approach. As inquiry is central to this in most classrooms students are generating their own history questions.

This community is a network with push and pull from and between all members. These pushes are not all equally weighted or equally effective but what they do is generate in each history curriculum moment a particular history curriculum reading.

## Conversation

The Australian History Curriculum generates conversations around the nature of history, the nature of history teaching and learning and the nature of curriculum. These conversations extend beyond those directly involved in the development of the curriculum document and implementation plans and enactments.

Over the past two decades, nationally and internationally, debates on History, History teaching and national identity have generated considerable political and professional controversy (Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 1999; Barton & Levstik 2004; Grever & Stuurman 2007; Osler, 2009). Internationally for example, researchers are addressing to what extent migrant communities' attitudes to their antecedent histories play in the creation and maintenance of school-level historical consciousness (Grever, 2010) and their links to social cohesion (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

The consultation process for the developments of the Australian History Curriculum is documented in chapter 8. In 2015 the review of that document will generate more discussion. These conversations are shaped by engagement with diverse understanding of the discipline of History and understanding of primary students and primary education. Strategic plans of each of the statutory authorities (QCAA, VCAA and BOSTES) share common responsibilities for advising their respective Ministers of Education on curriculum matters and also for providing curriculum leadership and support to schools in their states. They have each been involved in varying ways with the development of the national curriculum; for example, secondment to ACARA of senior staff of VCAA. The authorities have each indicated in their strategic planning a consultative process with ACARA as the roll out occurs: for example, Chair QSA stated "As we move towards this new curriculum, we affirm QSA's commitment to consult widely and to collaborate closely with education authorities, schools and school communities to make the transition as seamless as possible." (QSA, 2010a, p. 3)

Conversations are growing between professional associations and teachers in a variety of forms. These conversations concern those same issues which are central at the national and state level: diverse understanding of the discipline of History and understanding of primary students and primary education. Students are involved in classroom conversations about what is history and how does this knowledge relate to them and to their community. These conversations are never definitive nor are they final. They are generative of knowledge critique and knowledge construction.

### **Complexity**

Complexity is an explanatory system which opens up understanding of a networked system such as occurs in this curriculum design and implementation. Morrison (2006) has established that "complexity theory is a theory of change, evolution and adaptation" (p. 1) He explains that "in complexity theory an organism, however defined, senses and responds to its environment, thereby changing its environment, which changes the organism again, so that the organism reacts to, and thereby – proactively – changes, its environment; the process, in iterating itself, produces dynamic and continuous change recursively: (p. 2). In this project each stakeholder and each iteration of the curriculum is responsive to and is constitutive of the other. Curriculum Complexity "invites us to understand our physical and social worlds as open, recursive, organic, nonlinear and emergent, and to be cautious of complying with models and trends in education that assume linear thinking, control and predictability." (Gough, 2012, p. 46) Drawing on the theoretical work of physical chemist Prigogine, Doll (as cited in Gough, 2012, p. 43) argued that "concepts such as emergence should encourage us to acknowledge the non-linear, unpredictable and generative characteristics of educational processes and practices."

The analysis of the implementation of the Australian History Curriculum has evidenced the complexity of curriculum. The process is uneven and always politically and socially charged. The movement of the curriculum from ACARA to a year 1 classroom to a State government office is not linear. The 'curriculum' has morphed in this movement. It lives in multiple forms. Between the input of a curriculum model and the output of a student learning outcome under complexity there is recognition of 'emergences'. What has emerged in this process is new history, new historians, new history teachers and new curriculum.

### **Curriculum adaptation**

Implementation suggests a process which is not possible...in which a given curriculum is put as it is into practice. At the same time, a complaint about complexity as an explanatory system is that it does not have a predictive quality. What is made available is a new discourse. Complexity analysis highlights the process as it occurs.

In curriculum adaptation, such as evidenced in this analysis, the process is not one of passivity rather there is activity, proactivity and reactivity. The system is learning about its parts and it's whole. Viewing this as adaptation rather than implementation offers access to the emergence of new knowledge through networking, co-evolution, connectivity and feedback within non-linear environments. Although complexity may be an anathema to lock step linear curriculum development and design, it has its place in understanding curriculum implementation and allows for a renaming of this process as curriculum adaptation

## CHAPTER 3: PRIMARY TEACHERS AS HISTORY TEACHERS

Rebecca Sahr

*We've got an outstanding Teacher in 4/5/6, who is just so interested in everything...*  
(Rural Victorian teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

*You really need to be passionate about everything you teach so that you can engage the children [in history].* (Urban Queensland teacher, interview, 2012)

This chapter draws on the *Moments in Time* longitudinal study to illustrate notions of teaching and teacher identity working with the Foundation to Level 6 Australian Curriculum: History hereafter referred to as *AC: History*. This chapter also surveys the contribution of education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations to support and/or facilitate Professional Development (PD) and Professional Learning (PL) of the *AC: History*.

This chapter specifically addresses:

Q1 How do education departments, government bodies, pre-service teacher education providers and subject associations support or facilitate professional learning, teacher identity and practice in this new curriculum area? How does this reconfigure curriculum theorising on a national level?

### HISTORY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Location and Access

*...where we are, it's not easy to access things...It's the same with PD. PD's hard when you're not right here [in Melbourne].* (Regional Victorian school principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

*There would be value of teachers in going to observe people...to see best practice in different situations...in composites in small schools where you've got five year levels in the same room. How are they covering that work?* (Rural Victorian school principal, interview, October 2013)

Physical access to the many well-managed and well-resourced museums and sites of significance in urban centres was perceived as advantageous. Opportunities to shadow effective practitioners were also desired. Unlike their rural and regional counterparts, the urban schools within each state enjoyed greater access to professional development and PD opportunities. Much larger staff numbers and a higher concentration of schools saw some urban school teachers compose the critical mass required to sustain PD networks – especially in Queensland. The reciprocal sharing of ideas and resources with colleagues across various schools within the networks was deemed constructive.

*...there already is, of course, great history teaching going on around the country.*  
(Museum educator, interview, 2011)

Whilst the geographically isolated schools in this study welcomed the notion of greater support and PL opportunities, the remote Queensland schools demonstrated effective pedagogical approaches towards *historical inquiry*. In fact, teaching and learning strategies

in remote Queensland schools were deemed to be more effective than those being utilised in the state's urban schools. In Victoria, new staff dynamics proved problematic. High numbers of teachers new to four out of five of the rural, regional and outer urban Victorian schools created a challenge for the well-intentioned and highly-engaging curriculum visions of curriculum leaders/principals. It is envisaged that, as these teachers settle into their new roles and get to know their school's local communities, each school's history curriculum will be fully realised.

### Education Departments and Government Bodies

The QSA (as was, now QCAA) provided online professional development in history pedagogy and curriculum. However, initial professional development could have been greater:

*As far as history goes, we have not been offered, at this point...there's been the odd thing that might have come through that you could do out of school hours.*

(Queensland teacher, interview, 2012)

It is acknowledged that with the full implementation of the *AC: History* in Queensland in 2013, there was an increase in professional development opportunities. In Victoria, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) provided some professional development for F-6 history teaching. The VCAA's online resources were gaining momentum. The BOSNSW valued professional development but was yet to plan professional development strategies.

### Taxonomy of Whole-School Methodologies towards PL

Across the national case studies, three distinct approaches to Professional Learning (PL) and curriculum development of the *AC: History* were evident in schools:

1. A collective participatory approach – as exemplified by an urban Queensland school's active History Committee that participated in QCAA and QHTA PL to better support their colleagues. This approach was also demonstrated by most of the Victorian schools where principals (or assistant principals in urban schools) enjoyed an additional curriculum leadership role. In particular, one urban Victorian school modelled a highly effective and inclusive collective participatory approach, stemming from a shared perspective of the child:

*It comes back to valuing the child and valuing studentship and being a child as a legitimate social force in itself...children need to be seen as co-constructors...of their own historical narrative and what it means for them as a nine-year-old, for example, in [NAMED SUBURB], a valued position. (Leading teacher, interview, 2011)*

2. A specialist compartmentalising approach – as exemplified by a rural Queensland school that appointed a specialist history teacher to teach the *AC: History* to all students in the school
3. A laissez-faire approach – as exemplified by a rural Queensland school where whole-school *AC: History* PD and planning was insufficient (individual teachers eventually took the initiative to understand the *AC: History* and plan towards their class's history curriculum).

The specialist approach (example 2, above) compartmentalised the study of history as it was not integrated with other studies. Also, the classroom teacher was excluded from gaining



the skills and knowledge to continue conversations with students – especially when there was no greater PL vision for core specialists to coach each other. In Victoria, most schools enjoyed a multi-dimensional approach to primary education:

*...the main concerns actually haven't been about the content or the disciplinary nature of the curriculum...The questions that primary teachers have asked me [are], 'Can we implement the Australian Curriculum for history in an integrated or interdisciplinary curriculum scope or sequence?' (VCAA representative, interview, 2011)*

Best practice was observed in schools that activated a fully integrated inquiry-based approach with a collective participatory methodology. Whilst the structure and support of the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) was beneficial to one urban school, another urban Victorian school handled most of their history PL internally, and enjoyed ongoing intellectual engagement and stimulation alongside a local university scholar.

### Teacher Education

University history educators argued in unison that the *AC: History* document was too dense and that the consultation process was not an authentic two-way dialogue. A higher-education practitioner who was involved in a number of consultations perceived the consultation process as disingenuous:

*I think that the consultation, in inverted commas, at the very least has been limited to the top echelons...ACARA have tried to sell it to the departments, the departments have then sold it to consultants; the consultants have tried to sell it to the principals. Then there's tokenistic kind of approaches to get leaders of schools on-board, but I really don't think that they've addressed the grassroots teachers. If you look at theory of change in education, none of the scaffolds or structures are in place to actually embed it. (Victorian University History educator, interview, 2011)*

One urban Victorian school representative attributed a lack of history content knowledge amongst teachers to an absence of history in teacher education courses. However, a pre-service teacher countered this claim with a critique of her peers for not showing an interest in the history teaching and learning that was on offer within the course she completed:

*We did do a history unit as part of my [M Teach] course and there was, I think, only a handful of us who were actually interested. The others were not really interested because it's not [viewed to be] as important as literacy, numeracy...If they had a history background it might make it that little bit easier, but because they don't they'd rather just avoid it. (Victorian pre-service teacher, interview, 2013)*

At a different Victorian university, educators facilitated a dynamic inter-disciplinary inquiry-based approach to the humanities in their education course:

*...[As a consequence, our pre-service teachers] knew how to build an inquiry unit and think about the humanities and history of the core of an integrated curriculum...We saw it [the introduction of The AC] as a change for the teacher training and we hoped that that change would change the way the teachers thought...(University History educator, interview, 2011)*

These pre-service teachers who studied education via an integrated and critical inquiry-based methodology, benefitted from experiential learning. Further, the space to be reflexive was valued by many teacher participants within the broader study.

### **History Teacher's Associations**

*...professional learning is...about engaging in professional reading, having informal and formal conversations at school level, being part of a wider community of history teachers...to help improve your practice. (HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

The respective state's History Teacher's Associations (HTAs) maintained websites to make communications and resources available to teachers. Each state's HTA (HTAV, QHTA and HTANSW) also ran an annual history teaching conference. HTAV has facilitated separate annual conferences for primary school educators since the trial introduction of the AC: *History* in Victoria in 2011. The HTANSW's 2013 annual conference offered both F-6 and 7-12 level related streams on day 1 of its 2-day conference. The QHTA's 2014 Brisbane-based annual conference integrated F-6 history teaching into its program. Further, the QHTA offered to coordinate an additional regional conference in Townsville in 2013, following on from a regional conference in Cairns in 2012.

*...it will be important for us to make sure that we acknowledge short term wins and share positive feedback and maintain leadership by clearly communicating evidence of improved student outcomes in history. (DEECD representative, interview, 2011)*

A focus on outcome-based education can be problematic as it does not specify or require particular pedagogic approaches. It simply focuses on students demonstrating an understanding of the set skills and content. In some schools, teachers' low confidence in the subject area and perceptions of pressure saw them tightly control history learning with a teacher-directed approach. From 2013, the HTAV has offered a mentoring program to better support members who are "early-career teachers, new heads of department and/or first-time teachers of History" (HTAV, 2014b).

### **Mentoring as Effective Professional Learning (PL)**

Effective mentoring of history teaching and learning was noted as invaluable by interviewees across the states. Facilitating participatory inquiry-based learning – alongside mentoring teachers – was highly prized by a Masters of Teaching student during her Victoria-based practicum:

*Some students wanted to look at the Stolen Generation. They all had a choice, they weren't told, 'You need to look at this' – they were given a bit of a choice, which I like. That way they were interested in that topic. We had workshops on how to research...Once we had a workshop on creating questions...on what they wanted to know more about...We [also] ran a little workshop based around their main assessment, so if they want to do, for example, something about letter writing, [we would] run a workshop about letter writing using historical terms. (Pre-service teacher, interview, 2013)*

Here, effective PL strategies were applied in the classroom context *with* students. An appreciation for student-centred learning, saw mentoring teachers and student teachers

facilitate workshops on a needs-basis. Participation in the workshopping of the *historical skills* that primary school students deemed necessary to their further investigations of historical content was deemed highly successful.

The benefits of mentoring and collegial discussions were experienced in 2011 at a regional Victorian school when a history specialist teacher fortuitously worked in a temporary role for one term. She modified a unit of work she had originally planned and taught within a secondary school history classroom and informally mentored staff:

*She taught us so much about what was coming and what to do...She set up, for another term a whole project on Gallipoli and what happened in WWI and how to lay a wreath electronically and she showed us how to research a soldier, and look she was just amazing!* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

### **HISTORY TEACHING PRACTICE AND IDENTITY**

*[Effective history teaching] is very dependent on the passion that the teacher has to history...Some people don't think it's that important. [Consequently the discipline] is at the bottom of their list of how they integrate that into their curriculum.* (Rural Victorian principal/curriculum leader, interview, 2013)

The depth and breadth of historical inquiry within the 12 case study schools of this project were varied and evolving. Teacher practice and teacher identity were inter-dependant. A teacher's philosophy towards students was also integral to this intersecting ontology. Certain identities and positioning philosophies were found to be more conducive to effective history teaching than others. The three ontologies below have overlapping boundaries, the areas where a teacher's practice begins to evolve towards a more inclusive and student-centred ontology. Some schools and teachers may even traverse elements of all three ontologies.

#### **1. Teacher as co-participant of the research journey**

The teacher invites student negotiation of their research focus – learning alongside students and facilitating meta-narratives:

*I'm a [national identity named]. So I have my own indigenous history. So it's been learning for me too [alongside students] about Australian indigenous cultures as well.* (Regional Queensland teacher B, interview, 2012)

*History is about asking questions and having the skills to find out.* (Regional Queensland teacher B, interview, 2012)

*We are influenced by socio-cultural practice.* (Urban Victorian assistant principal, interview, 2011)

*[Students] could choose whatever they wanted...and they'd come together and they'd talk about it...and that narrative, that discussion, was the most powerful thing that came out of it. I think they built that knowledge themselves.* (Urban Victorian teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

An egalitarian teacher ethos sees students treated as whole human beings who are capable of understanding the complexities and contradictory stories that arise in the studies of history. Students apply *historical skills* in the act of investigating rich histories and exploring their questions of interest. A great sense of responsibility to pedagogy guides teachers.

## 2. Teacher as director of research

The teacher dictates what students should be investigating and how. Classroom students and teachers were usually the audience members for finished work. An evolving yet paradoxical approach towards pedagogy was evident at a regional Victorian school:

*I think kids learn by doing rather than just absorbing...I've already given them the information, the timeline, so they haven't had to look for a great deal of information.*  
(Teacher B, interview, 2012)

*The teacher gives us stuff to learn about and we hop on the computer and start.*  
(Year 5/6 student B, focus group interview, 2012)

Teachers selected stories and foci, and disseminated resources to their students. They directed students to make posters and present them to their peers. These pedagogic choices suggest a teacher-directed approach to student-learning. Another teacher's intention to relinquish a sense of teacher-control or dominance was succinctly verbalised as follows: *I have to get over the fact that I don't know everything.* (Outer urban Victorian teacher B, interview, 2012)

## 3. Teacher as transmitter of knowledge

*The teachers tell us [history] and we listen.* (Regional Victorian Year 6 student, formal group discussion, 2012)

*...everything the kids are doing is book work.* (Rural Victorian principal/curriculum leader, interview, 2013)

*You get marked on it [understanding history handouts and making posters] and then that will go on your report and you get a really good score if you pay a lot of attention and listen.* (Regional Victorian Year 5/6 student, formal group discussion, 2012)

Students were rewarded for their comprehension skills and their ability to follow the teacher's instructions in history classes. Textual comprehension took precedence over exploring historical questions, analysing sources and perspectives, and a practical understanding of historical concepts. Transmission approaches to teaching and learning history saw students learn/remember compliancy skills rather than the historical skills outlined in the *AC: History*. This positioned the student as the receiver of teacher instructions.

*It is important for us to have the knowledge to answer the kids' questions.* (Urban Victorian teacher B, interview, 2013)

*My staff feel ill-equipped because they're not actually from the area to know the area's history and what happened there...They'd rather teach Federation, First Fleet explorers than try and get local context. They're more comfortable with that, and there's more information readily available. (Regional Victorian principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This is the quandary of an authoritarian practice-identity; the belief that the teacher must have the knowledge to impart to students. This positions the student as an empty vessel rather than a co-explorer.

### **PRIMARY TEACHERS AS ACTIVE COURAGEOUS TEACHERS**

In conclusion, the most effective history teaching and learning saw both teachers and students highly engaged in multi-dimensional research journeys. Further, a collective participatory approach towards PL, curriculum development – and even classroom teaching in some schools – supported the kind of reflexivity that is necessary for professional growth and enjoyment. It also facilitated courageous teaching and learning. The vast majority of participants in this study did not identify as history teachers per se. The history label was uncomfortable for some. Others successfully absorbed the label – incorporating *history teacher* into their wider teacher identity whilst integrating their school's history curriculum. Rigid notions of history reflected rigid identities and teaching practices. Active and courageous approaches towards history honoured a space for not knowing – the space to truly learn. As a progressive leading teacher remarked, “*We've still got a long way to go*”.

## CHAPTER 4: EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF HISTORY

Mary Dixon

This chapter provides a response to the project question: How do primary teachers effectively teach the knowledge, skills and values of History? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings? The chapter draws on the projects work across Queensland and Victoria – details relevant to particular case study sites can be seen in relevant chapters. The consensus – amongst primary teachers, organisation and professional association representatives, higher education lecturers and academics – is clear. The discipline of history should be understood as rich and complex. Explorations of history cannot be rushed or merely squeezed into a *core business* class. Deeper investigations are necessary to allow the time and space to appreciate the complexities and ambiguities of histories.

Professional learning and the professional associations support best practice; in particular their conferences are identified as rich sites of learning valuable pedagogical approaches. Whole school curriculum planning and whole school pedagogical approaches have also been identified as major supportive environments for successful classroom practices. Some schools have a pedagogical framework that is embraced by all staff and students so there is a consistent approach to promoting higher order thinking skills. Furthermore, those teachers who work collaboratively on the development of new curriculum not only promote collegiality but also are more likely to identify and cultivate best practices in the classroom.

In this chapter the main attributes of successful pedagogical content knowledge are identified. The chapter addresses them in order of significance as identified from an analysis across the documents, interviews and case studies:

- integrated inquiry approach,
- inquiry approach,
- practical and authentic experiences,
- the use of local and
- narrative/stories

Finally, the last word is on the pivotal role of the teacher.

### **Integrated, inquiry based curriculum**

A fully integrated inquiry curriculum which is planned across the entire school provides a very deep basis for student learning. One school in Victoria, which has chosen to have a full time staff member allocated to curriculum planning, plans integrated units across the school and in line with AusVELS provides a sound platform from which teachers can address the needs of their particular students. Investigations into histories can also effectively facilitate skills in literacy, ICT, numeracy, geography, contemporary society, and science. As one teacher explains:

*Developing a sense of time is easier because it has links with maths, for example. I think chronology was the most accessible for teachers and students. Read them stories of how things are sequenced. As well in maths, sequencing is always a part of it and patterns. The way we understand the relationship between different sections of mathematics, you can almost always go back to a pattern or a sequence*

*somewhere and I think it's just a more obvious area to start learning about when you're talking of history as a subject on its own. (Focus group discussion, 2013)*

The dynamic nature of a fully integrated and inquiry approach was highlighted by a leading teacher in a focus group discussion:

*...the inquiry runs and dominates everything...it's about designing something or sparking something that's rich enough so that everything can be fed into it, literacy, numeracy, SOSE, history, science...can all go in there. (Leading teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

Those schools that have employed inquiry as a curriculum approach across all areas are the most successful in implementing History. In an urban primary school that has inquiry as the basis of all curriculum across the school, best practice is nurtured through the teachers' continuous professional learning and collegiality. A reflexive approach to teaching sees teachers mindfully engaging with students and facilitating a lived experience of an integrated and embodied curriculum. Inquiry-based learning begins with the existing knowledge of students – making connections to their lives and what is meaningful to them. Similarly in the case study school that is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school the most significant and distinctive feature of the teaching of history in this school is its position in the IB PYP inquiry approach. The interdisciplinary approach through central ideas ensures that history is engaged in a meaningful and holistic manner. The inquiry focus in the discipline of history and in the Australian History curriculum is well positioned in this inquiry IB PYP model. The continuity of this approach across the school supports its engagement in a systematic and developmental process.

## **Inquiry**

Inquiry-based learning has been the pivotal focus of the Australian History Curriculum. Within that document each year level has Key Inquiry Questions identified with recommendations for relevant Historical questions and research. Inquiry is posited as fundamental to the discipline of history.

Statements of best practice can be seen in the Rationale in the Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority (QCAA) (<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/yr2-history-overview.html>). The statements are generic to all year levels:

*History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that develops students' curiosity and imagination. Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society, and historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others. It promotes the understanding of societies, events, movements and developments that have shaped humanity from earliest times. It helps students appreciate how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant continuities that exist to the present day. History, as a discipline, has its own methods and procedures which make it different from other ways of understanding human experience. The study of history is based on evidence derived from remains of the past. It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges. The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain*

*different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively. (QCAA, 2014c)*

This inquiry emphasis resonates strongly with pedagogical approaches in many primary schools. This is also considered best practice in many of the case study schools. Students are positioned as key stakeholders in their education through student-centred inquiry-based learning. By engaging students in conversation that activates higher order thinking, including asking open questions, the students are assisted in making their own connections and articulating their own ideas. For one school, history came by 'stealth' into an already developed inquiry curriculum tradition. It grew and has become a central generative focus. A hands-on inquiry-based approach to exploring history is championed by the principal of one case study school who strongly believes that history needs to be lived to be understood:

*Best practice to me is making the curriculum content resonate with students through inquiry-based learning. So allowing students to draw familiar links to artefacts, social views, experiences of their own, it's so practical to ensuring that students engage in the contents and making some things really relevant and resonate. Through that process it also helps develop reflectivity. Like a self-consciousness within the humanities and social sciences. So it builds them and their sense of identity. So it really has to resonate so students can take ownership of their learning through inquiry. (DEECD representative, interview, 2011)*

The value of historical inquiry was key part of the pedagogical approaches in the classroom. Broadly speaking, inquiry in the classroom develops a sense of initiative and independence for learners.

*I think building the inquiry skills, particularly with the geography coming on board and using inquiry models for children, because it revolves around them. They get to lead it and have it going and be able to work and build that knowledge up and to me that's a skill that they need outside school because in essence we can't give them all the knowledge, they need to know how to go looking for it themselves. (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

These sentiments were echoed by another teacher who said:

*The skills of inquiry is a developmental process whereby inquiry learning should begin in the early years so students then have the capacity to engage in inquiry learning in their later years of schooling. (Focus group discussion, 2013)*

An example of inquiry is using primary and secondary sources to write a report because it promotes skills of analysis and literacy. For example, students had to rate the sources on a scale of one to five:

*Then leading up to the assessment piece where then they had to analyse the sources and write a paragraph - it was a long paragraph - and respond to a question about the Qin Dynasty, and I was really pleasantly surprised with their results. Even the kids with the low literacy, they could still pick out - they had to refer to the sources and cite it properly. (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*



As teachers explained *“it is important for students to develop the historical skills of analysing sources in earlier years so when they reach upper primary they have those skills to engage in research”* (Focus group discussion, 2013).

Inquiry-based education allows students to be responsible for their learning – to have authorship. Active learners are self-directed and highly engaged. Teachers, parents and community members are important in facilitating student knowledge of self and others, as well as *key historical concepts* (ACARA, 2011, p. 2). Students apply *historical skills* in the act of investigating rich histories and exploring their questions of interest. Students are encouraged to determine relevant questions and then research the ‘answers’ to their questions. Asking or posing questions is a key historical skill students must have in order to conduct productive research. A teacher recounted one way of developing this skill through the teacher:

*Modelling ideas by talking aloud about, for example, conditions of refugees, before posing a series of questions. Then together as a class they brainstorm ideas that would lead to questions to help the students in their research. This was an ‘I do, we do, you do’ process. Teachers modelled the process again for those students needed it.* (Focus group discussion, 2013)

Teachers spoke about the importance of students asking inquiry questions as an effective way of promoting engagement in the classroom. With student engagement:

*You can also tell when they start posing those questions, asking those questions and those why questions which we all go ‘ooh, good’. But that’s when you kind of go oh, this kid is really engaged, he’s really taking with it and that’s really good to see, from our point of view and I’m sure for every teacher. When they start asking those questions, start expanding their learning or their knowledge, then you know that they are engaged.* (Focus group discussion, 2013)

But teachers also spoke of the challenges of having students develop the skills of posing questions *“How does one assess this? Especially when there are 30 boys and they are required to pose 3 key inquiry questions. This can be messy...”* (Focus group discussion, 2013)

Nevertheless, ACARA history provides guidance to develop inquiry questions through source analysis. As one teacher noted:

*Instead of being content-driven it’s more source-driven, so maybe in the sequence of events of a teaching event you might start with - you might have started in the past with content and the map and this is what happens, this is where this happened, but now it’s more - well, here’s a source, here’s a source, here’s a source, what questions do you want to know about these sources and how can these sources inform our knowledge?* (Focus group discussion, 2013)

### **Practical and authentic experiences**

Best practice in history teaching in primary schools brings together 1) the importance of primary sources in history and 2) the pedagogical importance of bodily engagement. Many successful history teachers are making use of this powerful combination. Usually it is articulated as employing practical or authentic experiences. One Principal spoke effectively of this entanglement when they argued that for students to have deeper understanding of

things, for example the weight and texture of fabrics worn by soldiers in WWI and WWII, they needed to be able to hold and feel the uniforms; that History is engaging when the senses are awakened with artefacts to see and touch, role-plays to produce, and theme days to celebrate – even past year 2.

The use of artefacts draws on a long tradition in museums and many successful teachers are incorporating artefacts in their historical work.

*...one of the things that I've been most impressed with is the use of artefacts...looking at items/articles from the past and really making inferences from them. Getting the children to get their hands on well-selected items linked with the unit where possible, but not always, and getting them to make some inferences...really getting that conversation going in the classroom using items from the past and what they might tell us about people. (Teacher, interview, 2013)*

In one Queensland school they engaged in activities such as matching old and new artefacts and images. The historical skill of *analysis* was used to identify themes in artefacts - such as size, colour, use, style. Students used an interactive whiteboard to rearrange artefacts into old and new. The concept of *change & continuity* was introduced as well – by having students construct timelines and participate in historical narratives. Students looked at the changing technology of artefacts to reinforce their understanding.

There is some debate around the use of images and also of the internet as a way of 'experiencing' sites, artefacts and events. A greater use of video-conferencing is perceived as an effective means of involvement in the broader community, especially connecting to urban hubs where resources are centrally located. In a Queensland school students used photos to think about the past from different viewpoints, usually by examining family members by first looking at the main family and then examining other family members to see the similarities and differences.

Where possible, teachers are making extensive use of cultural institutions such as The Immigration Museum. These sites have well developed programs for schools and engage the students in experiential learning with a strong emphasis on artefacts. One of the limiting factors for primary students is travel distance to such institutions

### **Through the local**

In addressing an intention to teach through practical and authentic learner experiences successful approaches made extensive use of local environment, local people and local knowledge. One regional teacher advocates for more localised professional development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures:

*...for example, where I am in Victoria, it's one thing for the Victorian Government to do a PD - which I think would be good for overall understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Victoria - but then I also think it's quite important for the local regions, like the Grampians region and the Western Victoria region, to develop their own personal or their own professional development seminars to assist the teachers in that. You know - these are the resources that we have locally - and actually work with the schools and the teachers to develop*

*something easily accessible for teachers [that meets] the guidelines of the curriculum.* (Teacher, interview, 2011)

In another Victorian regional school the curriculum co-ordinator referred to the long tradition of local historical work. This local work involves the historical society, local community members, use of the local environment and a public performance.

*Our Story of \*\*\*\*\* Project, which is teaching children about local history but taking them into the environment, meeting the indigenous people that are part of the area - going to another area like Mount \*\*\*\*\* and learning about the environment with land care.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012)

This project has resulted in a Community Partnerships Award and a grant from the Department of Education to create a film about it. Similarly, in a Queensland regional school local knowledge was embraced as the cornerstone of their history curriculum. The justification for this was clearly explained by a member of the QHTA: *"It is important for students to know their own history so they feel a connection to place and appreciate the changes that have taken place."* (interview, 2013)

Teachers also recognise the importance of students knowing their local area because of the rapid change that is occurring before their eyes. For example, to celebrate a school's 25th anniversary, a teacher and her students researched the history of the school that used to be a horse-breaking yard. The teacher noted:

*[Students] just loved the fact that where they play there used to be horses everywhere and noise and all that sort of stuff and kids on horses and kids doing that sort of stuff. Part of what we've been doing with the grade five Australian colonies, it's about connection to place.* (Attendee, QHTA conference, 2013)

In a rural school in Queensland the emphasis in the history curriculum was on the local community and the role of generations of families and how they have shaped history in the region. People, buildings, and the local environment are seen as sources of information and used as strengths in the teaching and learning of history. Specific attempts are made to provide links between theory and practice and to help students make those links explicitly and implicitly.

The local often starts with the family:

*...our kids got more out of grandparent's day and asking the...the really basic stuff: What did you do at school? What did you do before school? What were your favourite games? What did you do on the weekends? Where did you go for holidays? They got more out of that...hearing their grandparents say, but we didn't have a telephone and we had to walk to school. That was much more real and had a bigger impact than studying these things [Federation, the First Fleet, Ancient Olympics] and what they consider so far back for them that it's just a fairy story.* (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

## Narrative/stories

Strongly linked to authentic experiences and use of the local is the employment of narratives. As explained by a university teacher educator:

*You know I think they're the sort of things that are best practice about teaching history, which has shifted from just knowing a whole lot of dates and events, to knowing the stories behind it and the reasons for those stories and the way in which we choose to tell our history, and what is seen as important and why. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

And

*You always have stories...Unusual stories of human coincidence and luck and adversity and connections...those are the most powerful moments in history. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

Students not only seek out narratives but are challenged to rewrite history writing their own stories about the past. The construction of timelines from an array of historical narratives is a regular approach.

## The role of the Teacher

The classroom teacher is pivotal in best practice. Case studies reveal the important role of the school and of state contextual issues. However, regardless of these, best practice is found in a huge array of local contexts. A representative of QCAA makes a strong and clear argument regarding the high level of skill evidenced by these teachers:

*[These teachers] know the resources, know the curriculum, and know the discipline methodology that underpins ACARA History. Good history teaching is hands-on. Good teaching is also about the teacher being well informed. The teacher does not have to be an expert on every topic, but be able to acknowledge to students that he/she does not know much about this topic, but as a historian would find out about this and model what good historians do. That is important for the teacher of history to show what good history looks like in a classroom. A good teacher can show students that relevance. So, one can be doing the exotic things, like building the pyramids and pulling the pharaohs' brains out through their nose or whatever, but to make that learning relevant to a student in 2011 or 2012, that is where good history teaching has power, that is, it is connected to the students' own experiences and own lives. Good history teaching has a futures perspective as well.(interview QCAA representative, 2013)*

## CHAPTER 5: PRIMARY STUDENTS – THE NEW HISTORIANS

Mary Dixon

*When asked to brainstorm what makes 'home' a home, a Grade 3 student answers how home for him means "where your history is."*

This chapter provides a report on analyses of data responding to the research question: *How do Primary School students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History?*

We have considered here the following data sets:

- interviews with professional association members
- interviews with teachers
- interviews with students
- observations from classrooms
- photographs from classrooms

### How are students 'seen' in history curriculum documents?

Curriculum documents at all levels – national and state – have an emphasis on inquiry as the primary framing of engagement of students. As such, students are positioned as inquirers. In an inquiry approach students raise questions and research responses to the questions. This approach is based on a view that students construct their own learning, that learning is driven by powerful questions and the students learn best when they have a strong investment and determination in the activities. Inquiry is regarded as essential in the discipline of history itself. For students to develop as historians then they must engage with inquiry as an essential process of learning.

There are several attributes of the primary students which have an impact on teaching and on curriculum implementation. Teachers note that students in early primary years require more structure and content. One Specialist History teacher in Queensland noted that special effort is needed to 'engage' students in this work: *"you really need to be passionate about everything you teach so that you can engage the children."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

### Student Historians in primary classrooms

A cautionary note: there are local, state and National constraints on the enacted curriculum in each classroom. These constraints limit what approaches the teachers can use and therefore the learning profile the students can adopt.

### History

Students are now beginning to have an awareness of the nature of 'history'. They recognise history as a subject they learn at school.

*We learn a variety of different things, dating back and - like how to interpret things like primary sources and secondary sources. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2011)*

One Victorian Year 6 boy argued: *"I would like to learn about Australian History...because a few years ago I became a citizen here."* (Focus group discussion, 2011)

For some young students history introduces new skills and sources of learning, these Year 1 students were very vocal in explaining what they learn in history:

*We have to know where worlds are all over the world...*

*We like the maps so we can know where we are...*

*We have to learn it [history] so we can write it down...*

*We want to learn about people's stories...Maybe they will have a secret or something...*

*We want to learn how everyone is going over the years...* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

For other (Year 6) students:

*We haven't done a lot of history. Our literacy and numeracy is really important...*

*We do history for a term with a summative assessment at the end...* (Focus group discussion, 2011)

### Historical concepts

In History sessions students think about the 'past'. In early years it is often referred to as 'the olden days'. The students engage with the past in many ways:

- In one instance observed the teacher would display an image and the students would say what the object is and talk about whether it was from the past or the present and why they believed that to be so. For example they may talk about how mobile phones are from the present and compare them to old telephones
- Students used photos to think about the past from different viewpoints, usually by examining family members by first looking at the main family and then examining other family members to see the similarities and differences
- Students looked at the changing technology of artefacts to reinforce their understanding.

Students are able to articulate an interest in the past: *"we want to learn so we know how people are going over the years"* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013). A Year 6 student offers a more sophisticated reading: *"comparing the olden times to now."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

Some Year 1 students identified story as a central concern of history:

*I like history because I like hearing other people's stories...*

*History is about people's stories and I want to know a secret...* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

The most common historical concepts explored were change and continuity, cause and effect, while 'significance' was a focus in one classroom. Students explored the skill of chronology by constructing timelines on the whiteboard, by forming human timelines, and constructing pictorial timelines on the classroom walls. History learning was also about learning content in order to have the base knowledge to begin their research

### Moving out from family to the community to the world

Early primary students are seen learning about the past and present in relation to themselves, their families and other people in their community. They were able to make interesting connections:

*The Queen is old...and she's in a paper that's old. The queen is on the back of all our money.*

*My grandma. She's the best of my history because she helps me to learn knitting. The hand print is the favourite thing we do with our families.* (Focus group discussion, 2011)

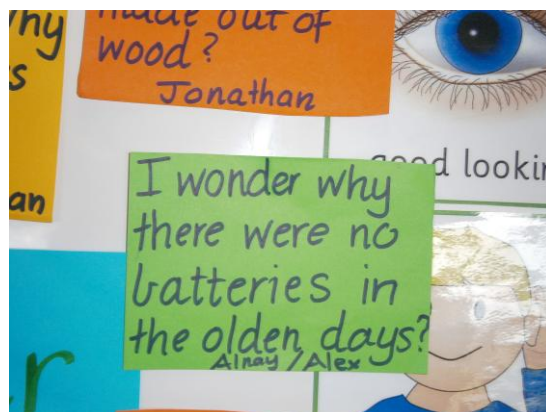
Students bring family stories and families into the classroom:

*I have some great stories shared in my room. I've got a boy whose parents both came over as Vietnamese boat people. I know the conversations are taking place at home and that children are sharing them at school. There's good questions being asked and, again, there's a lot of empathy taking place, trying to understand what it was like for other people.* (Teacher, interview, 2013)

As students move through primary school they engage with more distant fields of knowledge: units focussed on Australian history, Indigenous culture, and democracy in the United Kingdom, ancient civilisations such as Egypt and China. A Year 6 student explained: *"we do a different subject each term. So we might do ancient Rome or ancient India one term"*. (Focus group discussion, 2012) Another student in Year 6: *"well they tell you what happened in ancient times, Ancient Rome, ancient India, like, homo-sapiens and Aboriginal culture."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

### Users of Inquiry

The inquiry process, evidenced in school curriculum documents and interviews with teachers, was unevenly implemented. In some classes students were positioned as the authorities on their interpretations. The word inquiry has entered the language of the students *"in history we watch videos we **inquire** [emphasis authors own] we research on the internet. We can look at books but we don't do that much"* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013). Students are encouraged to determine relevant questions and then research the 'answers' to their questions: *"we think about things and we make problems and we ask people what they do"* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2011). To this Year 1 student the process is: *"we make problems then we ask people."* (Focus group discussion, 2012).



**IMAGE 1: STUDENTS POSE PROBLEMS TO RESEARCH**

In some classrooms, student inquiry questions were shaped by teachers. Teachers modelled posing inquiry questions before having students develop their own. As one student noted: *"but mostly we have to create our own question"* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2012).

In Queensland and Victoria, early years students base their research on local history and actively engage family members as sources of their research. Other important sources are local sites, museum and other cultural institutions. Some students collected their data by listening to songs and studying poetry.

*I reckon the best thing for me was like doing the poems and songs because you don't only research them you get to listen to them and read them and explore what they mean and things. We wrote down evidence in our book and then we had to choose from there. We felt involved in it, like because we got to research it ourselves and read it ourselves. (Year 3 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*My favourite thing would probably be when we read the book and looked all it up on the Internet and then wrote it out. (Year 5 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

Students were seen using a wide variety of resources to find answers to their questions or information to put together to answer their questions. These included:

- Individual research on the Internet. This was very common with most classrooms having access to a bank of computers with particular emphasis on specific online resources such as The Learning Place. *"The quickest resource is just to go straight to the website so it's not hard"* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013). *"We usually go to the internet and if we can't find it then we go to the library"* (Year 6 student, 2013)
- Researching money and the people who appear on our currency notes
- Dreamtime stories and traditional stories
- Task sheets created by the teacher
- Watching videos: *"I like to watch the videos about Federation – which we've been doing – and doing group work on it"* (Year 5/6 student C, focus group discussion, 2012)
- Interviewing community members
- Visiting historical sites

Some students are not given the opportunity to research the topic. Research was often limited to resources provided by teachers in worksheets. Often the teacher provides information for them:

*She [the teacher] seems to read up on it herself before she gives it to us. She will ... she has a large history book and she reads the whole section about what we're going to do, and she'll read on the computer or something. Then she'll be able to explain it to us without looking at it. She'll have a better understanding before she tells us. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*

*The teachers tell us [history] and we listen. (Year 5/6 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*The teachers tell us and we listen. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This Year 7 student states that learning about history is limited: *"the teacher explains what we have to do [worksheet] and we just do it. Like look in books to try and find answers and things."* (2012)

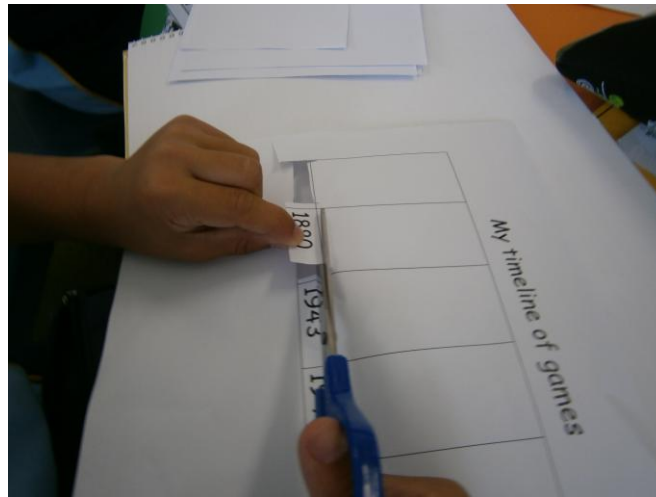
However some students are learning valuable skills of critique and avoidance of plagiarism. As described by these Year 6 students:



[We are] *trying not to plagiarize. I just cut it and paste it and then I have a look at it and I type in my own words and then I delete...We have to research it and write down in a PowerPoint all that work. Like, say, get information about it...Looking at valuable websites and working out whether sources are – how useful they are, and having the continuum to say well we put it on a scale of five and then having to actually explain why they don't think it's as useful as some.* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

Students present their responses to their inquiry questions in a variety of ways. From all years in the primary school students:

- create timelines based on pedagogical content
- creating a museum in the classroom
- participate in class debates
- create narratives
- build photo pictorial timelines
- create power point presentations
- construct fact files
- make maps
- role-play
- create picture books
- write reports
- complete comprehension activities



**IMAGE 2: CREATING A TIMELINE**

One student explained the whole process as it occurred for her.

*First we get given pieces of paper and we read through them, and then there will be questions on another piece of paper and you write down the answers from what you've learnt in that paragraph. And sometimes we make posters that we have to put certain information on and we can add other information if we've finished that...You put dates, where it's happening and why it's happening.* (Year 5/6 student A, focus group discussion, 2012)

For some students inquiry is not the central process. In some classrooms, the history questions were directed by the teacher and information was provided by the teacher. The students were observed reading worksheets which emphasised comprehension and the teachers concern was spelling. There was a considerable amount of cut and paste and colouring in some classrooms. For some young children learning history provides its own particular challenges as a Year 1 student explains: *"it's hard to know what to do because colouring in has to be certain colours."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

## CHAPTER 6: HISTORY REVISITED

Paul Reitano

Previous to the ACARA initiative, History was relegated to a strand within Queensland's Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) (SOSE, Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2000). The strand, *Time, continuity and change*, consisted of five concepts – evidence over time; changes and continuities; people and contributions; cause and effects; heritages. The other strands were: place and space; culture and identity; systems, resources and power. In New South Wales HSIE (BOSNSW, 1998) also offered History as a strand – change and continuity – along with the other strands of cultures, environments, social systems and structures. 'Significant events and people' and 'time and change' were concepts embedded in the change and continuity strand. Philosophically, these strands were expected to be investigated together. In Victoria, History was part of the "core discipline concepts, generic cross-curriculum skills, personal and social skills" (VCAA, 2004.)

The *AC: History* was implemented in Queensland and Victoria in 2013. Unlike its previous position in studies of society syllabuses, History is now offered as a separate discipline with its own specifically stated epistemology of key concepts, skills, and inquiry (ACARA, 2014b). These key concepts are: evidence; continuity and change; cause and effect; significance; perspectives; empathy; contestability. The following skills are used in the process of historical inquiry: chronology; terms and concepts; historical questions and research; analysis and use of sources; perspectives and interpretations; explanations; and communication.

Since implementation of the *AC: History* has not yet occurred (at time of writing) in NSW the focus of this chapter shall be on Queensland and Victoria. The case study schools in Queensland and Victoria indicate the transition they are making in adapting and constructing the History discipline in their classrooms according the *AC: History*.

For example in Queensland case study school *Rural 1* students construct timelines and participate in historical narratives as a way of developing an understanding of the concept of change and continuity. Students look at the changing technology of artefacts to reinforce their understanding of this concept. Teachers at this school prefer *AC: History* because of its explicit content descriptions whereas Study of Society and Environment required teachers to first look at the *essential learnings* and then choosing specific content. The value of history is acknowledged for the way it encourages students to think about the past, to understand the events of the past. Two examples are the students using the key history skill of chronology to examine family histories, all types of families; and the differences in artefacts over time.

At Queensland case study school *Regional 1* the discipline of History is viewed as a way of teaching and integrating other subjects such as literacy and history is viewed enthusiastically as a way of teaching students about different people and cultures, the different ways this is interpreted and the impact this has on society.

The discipline of History, the study of History is regarded as essential to understanding Australian society by the teachers at Queensland case study school *Urban 1* and is valued as

a discrete subject area. In comparison to Study of Society and Environment, teachers prefer *AC: History* because it can be taught explicitly. There is a focus on literacy and numeracy and while seen as important subject, historical literacies may be at risk of not receiving as much attention as needed.

Teachers at Queensland case study school *Rural 2* view the discipline of History as an important part of the school and community. While History is acknowledged at this school as being content-based and requiring considerable content knowledge for teachers to implement the curriculum History is also acknowledged as being skills-based. Teachers see History as providing students with skills that can be transferred and generalised across a range of subjects and into all aspects of life, now and in the future. Students are seen to be keen to further develop their research skills and to explore in further detail whichever topic is being taught and also alternate outcomes and consequences in the discipline of History. Students acknowledge the difficulties in learning history – when the emphasis was on content – as they develop their historical skills.

Primarily, teachers at Queensland case study school *Urban 2* regard History as being about the past, and how the learning is supported through the modelling of inquiry-based skills. History is considered as a curriculum priority and as a key factor in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in general and not specifically historical literacies. People's lives, families and culture are explored in terms of past and present. History is viewed as being essential to living in Australia and an important part of Australian culture. The role of teachers is to teach history content and also change over time. This is considered particularly relevant for students new to Australia so that there is mutual understanding of different cultures.

Teachers' use of historical language at Queensland case study school *Regional 2* is clearly apparent. Teachers speak of students using their historical skills of chronology and '*cause & effect*' – they could base a report around a timeline of events – as well as developing their skills of communication and explanation by doing comparative studies, using a variety of media. Teachers model by developing a master timeline which students then use to create a whole class time line to demonstrate '*cause & effect*' in migration patterns. Teachers consider SOSE as too vague because it was attempting to cover too many disciplines, whereas *AC: History* is definitive on the content to be covered and the concepts and skills to be developed are clearly stated. Unlike inquiry in other disciplines historical inquiry does not necessarily provide a definitive answer. Students find this process to learning history a challenge. For example, framing their responses around a key historical concept of '*cause & effect*' has proved challenging. Students are given grounding in the differences between primary and secondary sources, between written and non-written sources.

The teachers at Victorian case study school *Rural 1* have differing approaches to pedagogy and hence the discipline of History. To varying degrees there is an understanding that history is rich and complex. History is also perceived as content knowledge and skills as identified in AusVELS. A hands-on inquiry-based approach to exploring History is championed by the principal who strongly believes that history needs to be lived to be understood.

Similarly, teachers at Victorian case study school *Urban 1* focus on facilitating the development of *historical skills* through an active inquiry-based approach. Rich *historical knowledge and understanding* flowed-on through student-active investigations. Interviewed staff agreed that the discipline of History is embodied and subjective. This philosophy parallels an understanding of “*who the children are and how they feel about different types of histories and where that comes from for them and why they hold those points of view*” (Assistant principal, interview, 2011). The teachers at this school understand that history is part of the social fabric. History has therefore become naturally integrated into all that they do. Students understand history is complex, and how investigating history is both an engaging and cooperative activity. Little things may hold grand narratives, secrets or personal meaning. Innumerable stories are layered and interwoven; they are found in texts, the physical environment and people’s memories. When asked to brainstorm what makes ‘home’ a home, a Year 3 student answers how home for him means: “*Where your history is*” (Culture Question video journal, 2012). The student is positioned as capable and powerful – only he can know and articulate his unique and evolving perceptions of the world around him. The discipline of History can effectively integrate with other disciplines in an inquiry-based classroom, resulting in active immersions into understanding historical events. When investigating the Eureka Stockade, a mathematics activity helped to facilitate empathy for the diggers in these Year 3/4 students.

In contrast, some teachers at Victorian case study school *Regional 1* see the discipline of History as heavily content-dependent; there is a strong emphasis on history being located through dates and facts. Despite this, a hands-on inquiry-based approach to exploring history is championed by the principal who strongly believes that history needs to be lived to be understood. The teachers at this regional school have differing approaches to pedagogy and hence the discipline of History. To varying degrees there is an understanding that history is rich and complex.

By 2013 the language of the discipline and the word ‘history’ itself was only edging into the Victorian case study school *Outer Urban 1* classroom. New staff are being supported to engage the IB PYP curriculum – and therefore a history curriculum – through professional support. This is a challenge with new cohorts of students and new cohorts of teachers. This transition stage is most readily apparent in the conflicting approaches to teaching inquiry based facilitation alongside teacher directed transmission. In this sense the ‘History curriculum’ is seen as in the initial stages of enactment as the staff become more fully immersed and experienced in the IB PYP curriculum. The discipline of History is clearly engaged through inquiry at this IB PYP school. As has been noted earlier it is seen as both content heavy and understood through questioning. Teachers make strong comments on history as constituted by knowledge, skills, values, people, places and events.

History has been a strong aspect of the Victorian case study school *Rural 2* curriculum. The focus of that curriculum has been local history as it has become institutionalized through the historical profile of the area. This is a rich area of engagement and a strong community and school identifier. It also may provide a limitation to other historical readings. For staff History is seen as content knowledge and skills as identified in AusVELS. The teachers see the discipline of History as heavily content dependent – a similar sentiment expressed by teachers at Victorian case study school *Urban 2*. This content is filtered through the strong

local historical framing. For the students there is a strong emphasis on History being located through dates and relevant to the past.

In summary, teachers in Queensland schools reflected both similar and different understandings of the discipline of History. The two remote schools incorporated History within the local community, that is, drawing heavily on human resources and local history to promote students' understandings of key historical concepts of change and continuity and cause and effect. This was especially the case in the Foundation year at one school where students manipulated artefacts, constructed timelines and drew on the stories of the town folk to construct narratives. At the other remote school, teachers and students embraced the discipline of History to a greater extent than those in the early years. Some teachers took the view of History as an opportunity to transfer skills across other discipline areas, and a long term outcome of History as a way of providing skills for life. Whilst most teachers acknowledged the importance of the cross curriculum priority – Australia's relations with Asia – one urban school used this as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of being an Australian. Even though all teachers were aware of the word inquiry, not all were able to articulate this skill into the classroom in a sequential way that develops students' thinking skills and conceptual understandings of history.

The discipline of History in Victorian schools was largely seen as content rather than skills or understandings or common historical concepts. The local context plays a dominant role in identifying main aspects of perspectives and of content of the discipline of History. Local history, often determined by community traditions and formal local historical associations, has a major influence on the 'history' engaged by teachers. Depending on the school context, this history may have some resonance for the student community. In some cases the demographic of the local community has changed and is significantly different to the 'local history' presented. Areas with high rates of families new to Australia are challenged by the local history. One case study school in urban Melbourne draws heavily on local history which concentrates on Melbourne in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. The demographic of the community at that time is significantly different to the student community which is now largely Asian and African. There is yet to be a bridging between local history and current local community. In a contrasting situation, a rural school located in a well-known Victorian historical area has a current school community demographic which has been very stable over the last century but this can be a limiting factor as the enduring local history stories remain unchallenged. A further disjunction occurs between the cohort of teachers who may be very familiar with colonial Australian History but unfamiliar with the local history of the school context.

## CHAPTER 7: NATIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS

Tony Taylor

### NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN HISTORY 2008-2014

This report is a revised and updated version of a paper 'Scarcely an Immaculate Conception: New Professionalism Encounters Old Politics in the Formation of the Australian National History Curriculum' by Tony Taylor published in *The International Journal of Historical Learning Teaching and Research* vol 11.2 May 2013 pp. 11-20.

#### Introduction

On December 8<sup>th</sup> 2010, after two years of curriculum drafting and national consultation, first under the auspices of the NCB and then under its successor the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Peter Garrett, Commonwealth Minister for School Education, in a Kevin Rudd Labor government, announced that the draft national curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History had been unanimously endorsed by the states and territories and would be subject to final agreement in October 2011. Additional drafts would emerge from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and agreement on the other curriculum subjects was expected to follow in due course.

#### ACARA and the New Professionalism

What characterised national curriculum development during the Rudd government years (2007-2010) was first, a coordinated and professionally-based approach to comprehensive national curriculum that involved all states and territories as partners, second, a publicly announced schedule of national development, consultation and implementation and third, the 2008 creation of an apolitical arm's length curriculum agency, the NCB, to be retitled the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Agency in 2009. The NCB/ACARA board had full representation of states and territories as well as of non-government education systems. In the space of one year, the federal approach to national curriculum had changed from the ad hoc non-consultative improvisation and personal intervention Coalition approach to the systematic and consultative policy-framing and professional Australian Labor Party (ALP) approach.

In the new curriculum formulation, school history was to be a core subject, with English Mathematics and Science in Years Foundation-10. Furthermore ACARA would develop national senior (Years 11 and 12) curriculum frameworks in Ancient and Modern History. The F-10 history curriculum was to be implemented in 2011 and two senior history frameworks (Years 11 and 12 Modern and Ancient) were set for implementation in 2014 as complementary offerings to previously established local courses at that level.

#### Framing the Australian Curriculum in History

Briefly, the construction of the Australian Curriculum in history began its public life in late 2008 when it was announced that eminent historian and president of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia Professor Stuart Macintyre was, appointed as 'Lead Writer' to draft a 'Framing Paper' which would outline the proposed aims, principles and structure of ACARA's history curriculum F-10. Working with this chapter's author (Tony Taylor) and other

colleagues, Macintyre drew up a concise but comprehensive document that was published for consultation in November 2008. In the NCB's Framing Paper, Macintyre made it quite plain that the F-10 program would be based on a world history perspective, that students would develop discipline-based historical *Knowledge, Skills and Understandings* through inquiry-based learning and that *Overviews* linked to and *Studies in Depth* were to form an essential part of the secondary (Years 7-10) curriculum. *Knowledge* and *Understandings* were to be linked together in a single category and key *Understandings* were to be discipline-specific. What follows is an edited version of the proposed *Understandings*:

- Historical significance: the principles behind the selection of what should be remembered, investigated, taught and learned.
- Evidence: how to find, select and interpret historical evidence. This involves understanding the nature of a primary source, locating its provenance and context.
- Continuity and change: dealing with the complexity of the past. This involves the capacity to understand the sequence of events, to make connections by means of organising concepts including periodisation.
- Cause and consequence: the interplay of human agency and conditions. This involves an appreciation of motivation and contestation.
- Historical perspectives: the cognitive act of understanding the different social, cultural and intellectual contexts that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.
- Historical empathy and moral judgement: the capacity to enter into the world of the past with an informed imagination and ethical responsibility.
- Contestation and contestability: dealing with alternative accounts of the past. History is a form of knowledge that shapes popular sentiment and frequently enters into public debate.

The origins of these *Understandings* lay in the 2003 Australian historical literacy framework (twelve elements) devised by Tony Taylor (with Carmel Young) in 2003 and the 2006 (and onwards) Peter Seixas – led Canadian project on historical thinking (six elements). For example, *contestability* is an Australian inclusion and *perspectives* is a Canadian inclusion. Interestingly, *empathy*, which had been dying a slow death in the United Kingdom's various versions of a national history curriculum, was still regarded as a key component in the NCB paper. This was arguably because in Australia, empathy, as a concept had none of the Thatcher-era political baggage it had acquired in the United Kingdom. As for *Contestability*, evidence gleaned by the author in his work as director of the Australian National History Centre 2001-2007 clearly showed that school students from Year 5 onwards could engage with and benefit from an examination and discussion of varying views and representations of the past. It was to be omitted from the primary curriculum by ACARA without explanation.

It was at that time, in late 2008 and early 2009 that the then NCB set up a history advisory group (AG) that consisted of Stuart Macintyre, Paul Kiem (then president of the History Teachers' Association Australia) and the author. A highly capable NCB project officer, a former history/geography teacher, was assigned to the AG to assist with drafting and liaison. The AG was told that the curriculum design would be based on 40 hours per annum at the primary school level (Years F-6 within an integrated curriculum) and 80 hours at the

secondary level (Years 7-10). On that basis, the AG began its work in consultation with two teams, two successive primary years (F-6) teams and a secondary years (7-10) team.

### The Shape Paper

As the Framing Paper went out for national consultation – over the 2008/9 Christmas (summer) holiday period – the AG worked with the two writing teams and with NCB officials in devising the next key NCB document, the draft Shape Paper, a ‘scope and sequence’ document in the parlance of Australian education systems. The draft Shape Paper, published in May 2009 under the aegis of the NCB’s replacement, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA – headquarters by now moved from Melbourne to Sydney) was to form a consultation guide for teachers and other interested parties who were to respond throughout the rest of that year prior to the publication of the close-to-final draft curriculum document in 2010.

The Shape Paper added the more generic skill of problem solving to its *Understandings*, an idea that was later dropped. What then followed was, in effect, an F-10 syllabus. Years F-6 were to be based on four ‘focus questions’:

- What do we know about the past?
- How did Australians live in the past?
- How did people live in other places?
- How has the past influenced the present?

Ideas and themes that would underlie the F-6 course were to be:

- A capacity to move from local to regional, national and global contexts.
- A focus on Australian social history.
- An opportunity to study North American, European and Asia-Pacific topics.

In essence, Years F-6 were laid out as a predominantly Australian set of themes, with the opportunity to develop global contexts. As a curriculum framework, the F-6 model was not a radical departure from what already existed in most jurisdictions and was really a variation of the expanding horizons approach to curriculum, a model that had its origins in Arnold Gesell’s early 20<sup>th</sup> century thinking about developmental psychology.

As for Years 7-10, four major year-by-year topics were scheduled for development. These were to be:

- History from the time of the earliest human communities to the end of the Ancient period (c. 60,000 BC–c. 500 AD).
- History from the end of the Ancient period to the beginning of the Modern period (c. 500–1750).
- The Modern World and Australia (1750–1901).
- Australia in the Modern World (1901–present).

Within that framework, key themes to be explored were:

- Movement of peoples.
- Human transformation of the environment.
- Characteristics of civilisations — early forms of government, religion, society and culture.



- Rise and fall of large empires.
- Heritage.
- Nature of history, role and methodologies of the historian.

Important problems that needed to be dealt with here were content overload, repetition of primary level Australian topics, Australian exceptionalism and challenging levels of abstract thinking implied in the Years 9 and 10 themes and topics.

Once published, the Shape Paper received, as anticipated, mixed reviews and the consultation process led to refinements in the proposed course of study. Throughout 2009 and 2010 the AG worked with ACARA project officials in attempting to refine the document and provide the basis for a fully-fledged F-10 curriculum framework in time for the pre-Christmas, end-of-school-year 2010 deadline. It was at this stage that the AG realised that these refinements were seemingly arrived at in an often arbitrary way within ACARA itself. Meanwhile, there was informed and constructive feedback from the professional education community together with some hostile commentary from the conservative press, politicians and from fringe think tanks.

### **‘Capricious’ Interference**

During that process of refinement in 2009, it became clear to members of the AG (Macintyre, Kiem and the author) that there were other, anonymous drafting and redrafting hands at work beyond the confines of the small and highly capable writing teams.

A brief example of the kind of problem the AG faced was the deletion of topics and themes and replacement of these deletions with new, out-of-the-blue alternatives. A good case in point was the initial inclusion of the Vikings in the primary curriculum as a topic that had exploration/expansion elements, beliefs and values aspects and gender perspectives as well as being an area of study that had a long track record in fostering student engagement. Submitted to the NCB in an early 2009 draft, the document returned with the usual quota of lesser modifications but with Vikings now deleted and replaced by the Celts. There was no explanation for such a significant change. Not only that but a Year 7 ‘What is History?’ introductory Depth Study had also vanished without trace. This latter unit of work was intended to provide a common disciplinary starting point for students beginning high school with a wide variety of primary school historical experiences, allowing for the states that began secondary education at Year 8 – in which case the unit was to be a common end-of-primary experience. Another change was the unexplained dropping of *contestability* from the primary curriculum.

The AG’s response was first that there were serious historical issues with the Celts as a topic at this Year 8 stage, not least the debate about whether or not the Celts actually existed as a self-identified group. A second reaction was general consternation about what had happened to the ‘What is History?’ unit. The contestability issue was not taken up, mainly because the AG were much more exercised by the other two issues.

At this time, another problem arose. The original figures of 80 hours of history per annum for secondary schools and 40 hours for primary, were modified down to a notional 70 hours for secondary and then revamped to a lower figure of 60 hours - with no indicative hours for primary. The AG’s conclusion regarding this lowering of timetabled expectations for history

as a core subject was that the state and territory representatives on the ACARA Board were reluctant to give any kind of commitment to history time slots because this would put pressure in existing and established subject areas that were considered to be more important. These were the other core subjects English, Mathematics and Science, as well as the timetable-heavy subject area such as The Arts and Physical Education. By the time this whole process finished in late 2010, the figure for primary schools had disappeared altogether and the secondary school figure had dropped to an unofficial 50 hours, but with nothing stated in the curriculum documentation. This slow abandonment of NCB/ACARA's commitment to establishing a clear space in timetable of history was regarded by members of the AG as a betrayal of the NCB's original intentions and as an invitation to schools to bury the subject in a corner of their timetables. As it happens, in its trial of the new curriculum, a government high school situated close to the author has allocated a total of 20 hours per annum to history, geography and economics and civics education.

By this time (early 2010), the AG was becoming increasingly exasperated with this kind of arbitrary intervention, so much so that the author spent a weekend drafting his own version of what an F-10 curriculum might look like which he then distributed to the AG, the writers and to the relevant ACARA officials. This illustrative (not pre-emptive) initiative provoked an immediate response. ACARA officials flew down to Melbourne from their new headquarters Sydney and convened what could only be called a crisis meeting. During that meeting, the AG forcefully made the point that the curriculum design process was being inappropriately and adversely affected by absence of process, non-consultative decision-making and lack of transparency. Assurances were given but the interventions and lack of transparency continued on into 2010, so much so that in May 2010, Stuart Macintyre spoke out publicly in *The Australian*, a Murdoch News Corp paper not normally eager to provide a platform for Macintyre's thoughts:

Professor Macintyre told *The Australian* the consultation process set up by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority had become derailed by '*capricious*' decisions made to change the course without reference to the expert advisory groups or the writers. '*Some of the changes appeared out of nowhere and were difficult to deal with*' he said. '*There would be no consultation or explanation, and we didn't have a chance to explain why we did things a certain way.*' (*The Australian*, 2010)

It was at this stage a new senior manager responsible for history and science was appointed and more transparent processes were immediately set up, a frankness regarding decision-making processes came into play and status/ownership of drafts became more negotiable.

In retrospect, the NCB/ACARA bedding-down period 2008-2010 was bound to produce problems. NCB/ACARA, newly-formed national body that was recruiting from eight different jurisdictions each with its own organisational culture, was also trying to hire experienced staff in mid-career, staff who might be reluctant to abandon their own career routes and homes for what could turn out to be a short-term and domestically expensive diversion from their established work and life trajectories. Having said that the AG was very fortunate in the NCB's initial selection of its project officer and in ACARA's 2010 appointment of its senior curriculum manager. It did however take a year and a half to settle the accumulating issues that Stuart Macintyre finally felt compelled to raise publicly in May 2010.

## New Federalism, Old Rivalries

If we look more closely at the political interference issue, when novice Prime Minister Rudd came to power, he promised a new approach to federal politics that would eschew the customary blame game in which jurisdictions condemned federal policies for their own difficulties, and vice versa and used their local claims as blockers to force concessions out of Canberra. In this game, much local political capital can be made out of being parochially stubborn. Yet, at the same time, the jurisdictions have a history of being only too happy to receive annual federal grants from Canberra, a phenomenon that provoked the frequently acerbic ALP federal treasurer (later Prime Minister) Paul Keating into famously remarking that it was unwise to stand between a state premier and a bucket of money (Keating, 2011).

Of the state premiers, it is New South Wales (NSW) that normally carries most political clout. NSW is the most populous state in Australia, was the nation's oldest colony and is a jurisdiction with a reputation for brashness, sharp practice and for playing hardball politics. So wary is Canberra when dealing with NSW that, whenever some major, national policy issue is under consideration, almost the first question asked in the Canberra planning sessions is 'How will NSW take it?' And so dominant in national education decision-making is NSW that the obstructionist comment, 'We don't do that in NSW' has become a standing joke with educators in the other states and territories.<sup>7</sup>

In education matters, NSW has a reputation for being traditionalist, For example, NSW is the only jurisdiction to retain the title 'inspector' for its curriculum officials, was the last state to retain public examinations at Year 10 (until 2011) and retains a high stakes examination regime at Year 12, the High School Certificate (HSC). Not only that but NSW has, on several occasions refused to join in federal initiatives, almost invariably using the rationale that federal policy, even that of a politically-aligned national government, would adversely affect NSW's 'world class' education system.<sup>8</sup> As far as the national curriculum is concerned, this approach was adopted by the then ALP State Premier Maurice Iemma as early as 2008. Three years later, a characteristic example of the continuing nature of the 'world class' discourse was offered by conservative coalition Education Minister Adrian Piccoli from this debate in the NSW Legislative Assembly (lower house) on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011<sup>9</sup>:

*This [by now conservative coalition] Government remains committed to a national curriculum but wants it to be done properly. New South Wales has a world-class education system and a world-class curriculum. What replaces the existing New South Wales curriculum has to be at least as good as what is presently in place and the Government is not confident that what is currently on the table meets that very high standard.*

At that stage, early 2010, while all the other jurisdictions agreed on an implementation schedule, NSW eventually committed itself to a full implementation of the national curriculum by the end of 2016, three years later than most other jurisdictions.

Having said that, the two largest agencies, the then NSW Board of Studies (BoS) and the VCAA each played an important part in revamping the history curriculum to suit their own established approach to syllabus design. Knowing that the ACARA deadline for a national sign-off across all four core subjects was October 2010, in September of that year, the NSW BoS began a public campaign on 13<sup>th</sup> September to adjust the Australian Curriculum to meet its own purportedly exacting standards. This last-minute attack came with weeks to go to

final agreement and notwithstanding continuing and consistent NSW official representation on the NCB and in ACARA since 2008.

As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the NSW BoS's objections were as cited as follows:

[The history draft was] *“far too ambitious to be taught effectively. It is not possible for all students to reach high standards in deeper understandings and skills development with the current content overload...There is no scope for differentiation of curriculum to cater for the full range of student ability.....excessive history content will impinge on the time needed to develop and practice foundational skills... there is an overlap of content in years 5 to 6 and years 9 to 10.....The curriculum is not feasible as there is too much content for the time available, particularly in years 4 to 10.”*

The timing was perfect. With only a few weeks to go until the proposed October sign-off deadline, the NSW BOS had fired a broadside claiming that it had been prevented from making any criticisms about the national curriculum before the August 2010 federal election. In any event, as far as history was concerned, this intervention lay in a serious objection by the NSW BoS to the amount of time allowed for Overviews in the Year 7-10 program.

Meanwhile, Victoria started making similar noises about Years 9 and 10. Their complaint was that there was not enough sequencing of Australian history from Years 7-10 and that World War One (a hugely popular history topic in schools and in the public domain) should be moved from Year 10 where it sat (at that stage) in an overall 20<sup>th</sup> century examination of 'Australia and the World'. Victorian politicians, as with their NSW counterparts began to make threatening public comments about not signing off on the draft. With what seemed like indecent haste, ACARA cut the World War One topic out of Year 10's 'Australia and the World' and parachuted into Year 9s 'The Making of the Modern World' as a final Depth Study, bringing it more into line with the already existing Victorian curriculum framework. Not that the decision was a bad one, (unlike the NSW/ACARA judgment about Overviews) since it made the revamped Year 10 far less weighed down out by major wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The process however was a characteristic state versus Canberra arm-twisting struggle, briefly fought and quickly conceded.

The current (October 2014) state of affairs is as follows. The Australian Capital Territory began its introduction of the Australian History Curriculum (Year 7) in 2010; Tasmania introduced history in 2012; Queensland and Victoria trialled and implemented the curriculum in 2012-2013 with full Victorian implementation planned for 2015. The Northern Territory staged its introduction of History F-10 in 2013 as did South Australia. Western Australia introduced History F-10 in 2014 and NSW brought in history at the secondary level in 2014 and plans to bring in primary history in 2015.<sup>10</sup>

### **Endnote**

Having said all that, in late 2013, the incoming Coalition federal government announced that there would an inquiry into the national curriculum, with a special look at history. The process was taken one step further when a two-person panel was appointed as reviewers in January 2014. The track records of these nominees as Coalition supporters and as critics of

the Australian Curriculum, led many in the education community to view their appointment as a hostile act by Education Minister Christopher Pyne. Promised in May 2014 with authoritative reports that the reviewers are at loggerheads over proposed changes<sup>11</sup> and only published in October 2014 means, in effect, there can be no substantive changes to the curriculum until 2016 at the very earliest. Not only that but, as things stand at the moment, Education Minister Pyne would anyway have to get any changes through ACARA and the Education Council since the government has no remit for direct intervention in the Australian Curriculum.

## CHAPTER 8: VICTORIA

Mary Dixon, Kim Senior and Rebecca Sahr

### VICTORIAN OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the policy and case study findings for Victoria. This is built on a detailed analysis of Victorian Policy documents and six longitudinal case studies.

### CONTEXT

The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that there were approximately 870,000 students enrolled in Victorian schools in 2013 – this figure is for Foundation to Year 12 students. Victoria had at the time the second highest number of enrolments nation-wide, after NSW. Across both primary and secondary school levels in Victoria, there are 1594 state schools, 484 Catholic schools, and 218 independent schools (private non-denominational or religious association). Home schooling is also an option in Victoria.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

#### Policy documents

The following data was collected between 2011 and 2013: policy drafts; official email updates; website announcements; webpage content from the VCAA, HTAV, and ACARA; formal interviews with policy actors representing or consulting with these organisations; observations of professional development events.

#### Case Studies

Six case study schools were chosen. As this project design warranted a longitudinal engagement with particular schools to study curriculum development, the number of schools was limited. The 6 schools were all government primary schools – 2 urban, 2 regional and 2 rural.

Data was collected progressively in each school from 2011 – 2013 and included:

- School curriculum documents
- Classroom observations
- Interviews with teachers, students school curriculum leaders
- Photographs of learning by teachers, students and researchers

Data was analysed using Positioning Theory (Harré and Slocum, 2003). Each school was identified as a stand-alone case. A full analysis of the data from each school resulted in six case studies follows the analysis of Victorian policy documents in this chapter.

Positioning analysis has been carried out across these six case studies. This is not to generate a flattened reading but rather to identify any trends which are discernible as Victorian in nature. This analysis is presented in this section where it is merged with the reading of Victorian Policy Analysis.

## STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HISTORY CURRICULUM FROM VICTORIAN POLICY AND IN CASE STUDY SCHOOLS END 2013

**TABLE 5: STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN VICTORIA**

	Intended	Stated	Enacted	Realised
<b>Victorian Policy – AusVELS</b>				
<b>Rural 1 school</b>				
<b>Urban 1 school</b>				
<b>Regional 1 school</b>				
<b>Outer Urban 1 school</b>				
<b>Urban 2 school</b>				
<b>Rural 2 school</b>				

At the end of 2013, the history curriculum was at the enacted stage of the curriculum development continuum at a state/systemic level. Each of the schools was enacting a history curriculum with deep professional engagements by the teachers as they continue to develop the curriculum within their own context.

### IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM

Each school has its own particular journey in implementation even though they are under the same jurisdiction. State issues do play a large part and the particular Victorian issues include:

- the ban on whole school Professional Development (PD) under union-sanctioned industrial action that occurred from the end of June 2012 to the beginning of April 2013
- the time frame for distribution of reporting frames

Although there were invitations to consult and there were many responses – see Victorian policy analysis – many teachers felt there had been no consultation and their voice had not been heard or called upon. History educators from universities echoed this concern.

Individual schools had individual issues in implementing the curriculum:

- adapting to composite classes
- adapting AusVELS to a school curriculum
- working with a large number of new staff
- a new school in a new community
- constraints from assessment

Individual schools also were able to value add to the AusVELS:

- using the curriculum in a holistic way
- aligning the curriculum with a fully integrated inquiry curriculum- IB in particular
- development through dedicated curriculum co-ordinators
- strong links to local historical associations

## **HISTORY TEACHING**

Trial programs and an increase of support to primary teachers by professional associations have supported the development of history teaching. These supports include conferences, consultancy support and on line resources. Teachers are recognised as responsible for helping to shape their school's unique and lived curriculum.

The discipline of history is perceived as complex and challenging. Although teachers generally are concerned that they may not have the depth and breadth of history content, they, and school leaders, feel that previous iterations of history are a strong platform to build upon. History has a limited time on the timetable. It receives greater emphasis in those schools which have an inquiry basis across all curriculum areas.

The inquiry approach advocated in the history curriculum is taken up across the schools. However the inquiry processes vary across the schools with some having a strong reliance on teacher-directed activities. This emphasis on inquiry is juxtaposed with a view that the history curriculum is about teaching a particular and a large amount of content. To achieve a balance between inquiry and content, the inquiry must be limited by the content. Teacher led teaching was largely constituted by use of PowerPoint presentations and use of digital resources.

There is also strong evidence of history being a vehicle for the teaching of literacy. A common thread throughout the schools was a concern to link the curriculum content to the students in the school. The emphases on history curriculum content often came from particular teachers in the school who had specific content interest or expertise and the historical background or location of the school

## **HISTORY LEARNING**

Across the six case study schools students were seen to learn history through inquiry. Students were encouraged to determine relevant questions and then research the 'answers' to their questions. Research involved going to community members, visiting historical sites, using the internet and drawing upon teacher generated resources. This process evidenced in school curriculum documents and interviews with teachers was unevenly implemented. Student inquiry questions were often shaped by teachers. Research was often limited to resources provided by teachers in worksheets. The time for this work was a large factor in the determining this implementation of 'inquiry'. Students were aware of the part of literacy skills in this work – correct spelling etc. Students were also aware of the role of maps and timelines in history learning.



## THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The discipline of history is largely seen as content rather than skills or understandings or common historical concepts. The local context plays a dominant role in identifying main aspects of perspectives and of content of the discipline of history. Local history, often determined by community traditions and formal local historical associations, has a major influence on the 'history' engaged by teachers. Depending on the school context, this history may have some resonance for the student community. In some cases the demographic of the local community has changed and is significantly different to the 'local history' presented. Areas with high rates of families new to Australia are challenged by the local history. One school in urban Melbourne draws heavily on local history which concentrates on Melbourne in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The demographic of the community at that time is significantly different to the student community which is now largely Asian and African. The bridge between local history and current local community is yet to be breached. In a contrasting situation, a rural school located in a well-known Victorian historical area has a current school community demographic which has been very stable over the last century. This can be a limiting factor as the enduring local history stories remain unchallenged. A further disjunction occurs between the cohort of teachers who may be very familiar with colonial Australian History but unfamiliar with the local history of the school context.

## BEST PRACTICE

Both ACARA and AusVELS emphasize the role of inquiry in any history curriculum. This is also considered best practice across the case study schools. Those schools which have integrated inquiry as a curriculum approach across all areas are the most successful in implementing History. For one school, history came by 'stealth' into an already developed inquiry curriculum tradition. It grew and has become a central generative focus.

For the primary curriculum other best practices have been identified as:

- placing the self in history
- multi perspectival approaches to history content
- narrative
- a Worldly perspective – not focussed only on Australia
- integrated,
- interactive and practical experience
- using the interests and backgrounds of the students in the school
- artefacts collected by students

Best practice is supported by professional learning and curriculum planning which involves a whole school approach.

## VICTORIAN POLICY ANALYSIS

### CONTEXT

#### Research focus

Policy work occurs at all levels from the government level and association bodies to the policy actors at a school level. The term *policy actors*, includes teachers but excludes students here. The policy analysis below uses positioning theory to analyse how the governing level, as well as other authorities outside the school, support and/or facilitate the

professional learning, teacher identity and teacher practice in the curriculum area of primary school history (Foundation to Year 6). It investigates how certain perspectives place teachers and the work that they do in teaching history.

### **School enrolments**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics states there approximately 870,000 students enrolled in Victorian schools in 2013 – this figure is for Foundation to Year 12 students. Victoria had the second highest number of enrolments nation-wide, after NSW. Across both primary and secondary school levels in Victoria, there are 1594 state schools, 484 Catholic schools, and 218 independent schools (private non-denominational or religious association). Home schooling is also an option in Victoria.

### **DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED**

The following data was collected between 2011 and 2013. Data published prior to 2011 is also included and further cross-referencing occurred into 2014. Policy drafts; official email updates; website announcements; webpage content from the VCAA, HTAV, and ACARA; formal interviews with policy actors representing or consulting with these organisations; observations of professional development events. All of this data informs the analysis below.

### **STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

At the end of 2013, the history curriculum was at the *enacted* stage of the curriculum development continuum at a state/systemic level (Taylor, 2001; Harré & Slocum, 2003; Dixon, 2008). Since 2011 updated versions of the *AC: History* have been released with minor modifications. To move to the *realised* stage of the continuum would require further engagement with both teachers and students. Facilitating the space for teachers and students to be reflexive on this matter could be beneficial to the curriculum's evolution – especially as a lived curriculum within schools.

### **DEVELOPING THE AUSTRALIAN HISTORY CURRICULUM**

This section investigates which stakeholders and organisations interacted in the development of the history curriculum, and the processes that were involved. The positioning of history is also examined.

#### **The consultation process**

Part of the process in developing the Australian history curriculum, was a public consultation period that occurred over the months from November 2008 to February 2009 “the Board’s primary consultation instrument was a survey seeking stakeholder responses to questions posed by the Board in relation to...[the history] framing paper. (NCB, 2009, p. 4) The history framing paper received 302 responses nation-wide from stakeholders which included adults from across a range of education-related areas to interested individuals and community groups (NCB, 2009, p. 4). Formal submissions (purely qualitative) accounted for over one third of the total responses (NCB, 2009, p. 17).

*With consultation, I think you have to have it managed. I think there have been a lot of opportunities for there to be conversation. (Museum educator, interview, 2011)*

A hierarchical perception is implied here through the notion of management. Opportunities for dialogue infer that both listening and expression are two-way; however, these

conversations are initiated and constructed from the top down. A higher-education practitioner (involved in a number of consultations) critiqued this hierarchical approach, perceiving the consultation process as disingenuous:

*I think that the consultation, in inverted commas, at the very least has been limited to the top echelons...ACARA have tried to sell it to the departments, the departments have then sold it to consultants; the consultants have tried to sell it to the principals. Then there's tokenistic kind of approaches to get leaders of schools on-board, but I really don't think that they've addressed the grassroots teachers. If you look at theory of change in education, none of the scaffolds or structures are in place to actually embed it. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

This critique positions ACARA as transmission-oriented. When applied to multiple layers within the education hierarchy, the empty vessel metaphor becomes a gravity-fed, multi-tiered cascading fountain. It is inferred that students are at the bottom-layer of such a hierarchy – the largest number and yet with the least amount of power.

### History is political

The Framing Paper Consultation Report: History (NCB, 2009) highlighted critical concerns from some primary school teachers regarding the paper's selection of content and its possible repercussions:

*Although there was minimal feedback from primary practitioners, some respondents were concerned that the content of Stage 2 would limit the ability of teachers to explore the contested nature of the history. There was a concern that this would lead to the creation of an 'official history' and a 'sanitised' version of Australia's past. (NCB, 2009, p. 8)*

The concern of the history curriculum as conservative is contrasted with the current Abbott federal (Liberal/National coalition) government's perceptions of the curriculum as too leftist. An interviewee from a Victorian organisation summarises the conservative political context in regards to history in schools:

*The history curriculum is meant to pick up the history aspects of civics and citizenship education...the Federal Opposition [led by Tony Abbott] has been particularly critical of the history curriculum because they believe it doesn't contain enough or - I guess a more triumphal view of history, the inexorable development of a democratic nation. There have been debates over whether it is too critical of World War I and the ANZACS and these kinds of things, so there is that politics behind history as well. I guess I wouldn't be surprised if there was a change of government that there may be some review of history. (VCAA representative, interview, 2011)*

A change of government occurred in September 2013 and a review of the Australian Curriculum (AC) was quickly instigated by Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne. In January 2014, Pyne announced Coalition advisor Kevin Donnelly and academic Ken Wiltshire would lead the review (Ireland, 2014).

A higher education practitioner surveys the history wars in regards to history education in Australia:

*The history document [AC: History] is very clearly a response to John Howard's, Anna Clarkson and Tony Taylor's history wars, which actually were based on a very silo and*

*insular view of what history education is, particularly for young children. So from a primary education perspective I would suggest that we [as a teacher-education provider] are probably ahead of our time in terms of the ways that we deliver our curriculum. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories in the AC: History**

*It's very British. It's a very warped sense of history...It's a very white-washed, what we want you to know...very cleansed version, because it is hard to find the other versions. But what about the Aboriginal massacres, the takeovers. None of that was taught to us as kids and there's more and more of that coming out in the takeovers. Then what about the Portuguese who landed in southern New South Wales and all of those different stories? That doesn't come into - ours is still a very British take on our history and that to me is very warped. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This principal understands history as a collection of rich, complex and subjective stories. Her critique positions the *AC: History* as tokenistic when it comes to frontier warfare history and the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures that is embedded within the AusVELS History curriculum makes overtures towards a deeper and richer understanding of frontier warfare from an Indigenous perspective *"they [students] will learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples prior to colonisation by the British, the ensuing contact and its impacts"* (ACARA, 2014b, p. 22).

However, the terms *frontier warfare* and *Aboriginal massacres* are not mentioned in the cross-curriculum preamble. It is not until Year 4 that the use of the term *frontier conflict* is encouraged. Within the study of *"the nature of contact between Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders and others"* (ACARA, 2014, p. 46), *Pemulwuy* or *the Black War* are mentioned only in parenthesis in the *AC: History* (ACARA, 2014, p. 46). In Year 5 the *AC: History* includes an elaboration which outlines *"the consequences of frontier conflict events such as the Myall Creek Massacre, the Pinjarra Massacre..."* (ACARA, 2014, p. 50). While the stories of local Indigenous people are invited in earlier years, perhaps only certain types of stories are welcomed. An earlier understanding of frontier warfare could help students to come to understand any possible silences or under-representations of First Nations Peoples in their communities.

The principal of a primary school located within a community where there are reportedly *"...hardly any [CLAN NAMED] people left..."* (focus group discussion, 2013) made particular comment on the issue of story in history. The stories of the Indigenous inhabitants are either lost or difficult to find. This means that even where the AusVELS History curriculum embeds a local Indigenous perspective, there are challenges in making contemporary community links. As the Curriculum Director, the principal directed teachers to search further afield to locate different Indigenous Australian cultural practises and key words in-language *"indigenous studies wasn't necessarily [CLAN NAMED], it was – they [the teachers] had to pick stories, but they had to know where they came from. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*. This positions the school and teacher as respectful of cultural differences amongst clans and First People's Nations across the vast land and smaller islands now known as Australia. Students are positioned as capable of appreciating the many corresponding cultural and language differences.

### The history curriculum as crowded/prescriptive

*...we have an incredibly crowded curriculum and the more that we privilege NAPLAN results, literacy and numeracy as the basic fundamentals of learning, the less time we will actually have to offer rich history learning. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

A representative of a Victorian curriculum organisation spoke about a challenge with the development of the AC: *History*:

*...there's been an incredibly strong...level of expectation about it. There's been a huge number of lobby groups who've wanted their story of the past to be told. So the curriculum initially I think was very big and at the same time that you've got lobby groups saying we've got to have this, we've got to have that, this has got to be in the curriculum, the consultation has - from teachers it's indicated that it needs to be far more constrained. So that's been, I think, one of the tensions in the processes. To have it manageable for schools and teachers and also to accommodate what are seen as priorities in teaching history. (VCAA representative, interview, 2011)*

This notion of many voices and perspectives of history reflects the richness and complexities of the many histories that exist. An apparent desire to *constrain* these voices suggests that the rich interwoven layers of a more inclusive history are overwhelming to some. Such teachers can be positioned as controlling; they need to hold knowledge and this is easier if the amount of knowledge is minimised. A transmission approach to teaching and learning is implied.

Alternatively, the desire for a less crowded curriculum may simply be a call for a less prescriptive curriculum. Such an understanding of pedagogy sees teachers as protective of inquiry-based learning and the space for students to wonder and research what they find of interest in a particular area of study. This positions the teacher as a facilitator of student-centred learning.

*...we're deeply concerned that because of the density of the document that's been developed that it's going to place schools, and particularly primary schools who have limited specialists in history, some difficulty in implementation. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

*Really what they'll need is to look at the content areas that are in the document, in the history curriculum and to have the opportunity to engage with their colleagues in how do you implement this, how do you teach it, what resources are available, what sort of skills and understandings can be achieved in young people, what sort of exemplars can be used. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

### A state-based approach

*AusVELS will be the authorised location of the curriculum for Victorian government and Catholic schools and will provide a model for independent schools of how the new Australian Curriculum subjects can be incorporated into existing school-based curriculum programs. (VCAA, 2010a)*

Victoria's AusVELS is a rebranding of the AC: *History*. The VCAA rationalised that it was necessary to have an AusVELS specific site so that personal and social learning as well as interdisciplinary learning would remain foci for Victorian teachers. The VCAA's General

Manager of the Curriculum Division, David Howes, also argued the necessity for AusVELS on a pragmatic level:

*It will be some years before the Australian Curriculum is completed for all learning areas. In the intervening 'hybrid' period, it is clearly preferable that Victorian teachers and educators have access to a single curriculum framework that brings together the new Australian Curriculum with the areas of the curriculum not yet developed as part of the national curriculum. A situation in which teachers, especially primary teachers, need to go to two different sources to locate the curriculum is far from satisfactory. The development of a Victorian framework for the whole curriculum is designed to avoid this. (Howes, 2011, p. 2)*

This statement positions primary school teachers as either too busy or too inept to navigate two curriculum sources. Further, the VCAA's intention to consolidate information on one website has several challenges. For example, the few resources relating to history planning are scattered across both their website and the separate AusVELS website that the VCAA manage (as viewed September 2014).

### **AusVELS History collaborations**

*The VCAA, DEECD, CECV and Independent Schools Victoria have committed to continue this collaborative approach to work towards a common implementation timeline to ensure all Victorian schools have access to and are able to benefit from shared professional development activities and implementation resources. (VCAA, 2010a)*

It is implied here that teachers need support, they need resources; they need to feel they are not alone. The united front of authority bodies position themselves as dependable facilitators.

*I can tell you anecdotally that there's been a lot of enthusiasm for primary Australian Curriculum History. So it will be important for us to make sure that we acknowledge short term wins and share positive feedback and maintain leadership by clearly communicating evidence of improved student outcomes in history. (DEECD representative, interview, 2011)*

### **HISTORY TEACHING**

This section investigates how history teachers are perceived in primary schools. It also takes a critical look at how education departments and organisations have supported or facilitated professional learning for history teachers in the phasing-in period of AusVELS History.

#### **Good teachers do things well**

According to one university history educator "good history teachers" facilitate student learning around identity:

*Who am I? Where do I belong? Where do I come from? What has been my journey? How is my journey different from others? I think they're big questions around history, but they're also questions around where am I now and where am I going. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

This perception of history teachers recognises the complexities, contradictions and evolving nature of identities. The history discipline aside, it could be argued that primary practitioners also facilitate personal and social learning around identity.

*I think it's important that the teachers feel comfortable with the Curriculum that's been given and that they take the advantage to develop those in-depth studies that are relevant to their schools, to their students. (Teacher, interview, 2011)*

This graduate teacher positions teachers as both receivers and developers. She infers that the AC: *History* is a framework that moves in a hierarchical fashion from outside the school to inside the school. The teacher is also responsible for helping to shape their school's unique and lived curriculum.

*VELS [Victorian Essential Learning Standards] or the Australian Curriculum...are the guidelines. What we'll do is interpret it, and I have confidence that we'll interpret it really well. (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)*

*Anybody who loves teaching and is professionally engaged in their teaching and has a capacity to teach using terrific pedagogy and - is already well on the way to teach anything confidently. (Museum educator, interview, 2011)*

### **Primary practitioners teach history already**

*...there already is, of course, great history teaching going on around the country. (Museum Educator, interview, 2011)*

*The...[VELS] Victoria curriculum already has history as a distinct discipline at the primary level, so at Years 5 and 6 there's been a separate history discipline to the last seven years. Even in the humanities curriculum, which is the lower primary level, even though it's written as humanities and contains history and geography and a little bit of economics, there's still been a strong emphasis on what's historical within that. (VCAA representative, interview, 2011)*

*...we feel that we've got a pretty...modern and up-to-date curriculum in the sense of having the units of inquiry, and we feel that it promotes...the skills, the concepts and the knowledge as well. So I'm anticipating that it won't actually be too traumatic for us, it'll fit in really nicely with what we're doing anyway. (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)*

*...the main concerns actually haven't been about the content or the disciplinary nature of the curriculum...The questions that primary teachers have asked me [are], 'Can we implement the Australian Curriculum for history in an integrated or interdisciplinary curriculum scope or sequence?' (VCAA representative, interview, 2011)*

In the early development stage of The AC, a professional association committee member called for a more inter-connected approach to curriculum development:

*...we were very disappointed and have publicly, and in many ways, stated our view that it was not the right way to go about developing an Australian Curriculum with a remit around four subjects... we felt a more holistic approach to curriculum development would have been appropriate, [one] that included multi-dimensional aspects curriculum. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

## The VCAA Trial Program of the Australian Curriculum

The VCAA supported an initial 150 schools in Terms 1 and 2 of 2012 to trial the AC. The trial program was run in partnership with DEECD, CECV and Independent Schools Victoria (ISV). At the end of the trial period, 121 schools were thanked for their participation and only 54 schools filed a final report with related materials to the VCAA at the end of Term 3 2012 (VCAA, 2014b). Support was facilitated mostly online with collaborative spaces and networking being encouraged. A 30-minute online session dedicated to the F-6 history curriculum was facilitated by the VCAA on 18 August 2011. This was followed-up with a 60-minute online session titled, “History: Teaching the Historical skills strand in the primary years” run by VCAA history curriculum manager, Pat Hincks. This ICT-rich approach is theoretically inclusive of primary practitioners in rural and remote areas who have access to a reliable broadband network but also sees teachers as tech-savvy. However, it was reported by one participant that only one of the 13 participants was a primary school teacher. The significant rate of teacher non-participation coincided with state wide industrial action which prohibited teacher involvement in professional development (PD) and curriculum development

The VCAA’s 386-word report on the AC Trial Implementation 2012 – covering English, history, mathematics and science – does not provide any links to resources developed for teaching history as promised in earlier newsletters (VCAA, 2014b). However, it is mentioned that “The VCAA, in conjunction with ACARA is working with the resources generated from the trial to produce materials that will be published progressively in 2013” (VCAA, 2014b). Within the VCAA’s dedicated *History Resources* webpage, there is only one sample unit and it is within the secondary school area. Another webpage of the VCAA site is labelled *History Planning Templates*. It offers one template per year from Foundation to Year 6. And multiple templates at each year level from Year 7 to 10 cover specific foci of the history curriculum.

On the VCAA’s AusVELS website, a solitary resource for primary school planning inclusive of history reveals a Year 3 curriculum which allots an annual 30 hours to history teaching and learning as part of an integrated approach (as below):

<b>English</b> 320 hours	Speaking and Listening	25	Scientific technical language	Varying powers of language	Social conventions, tal
	Spelling	25	Linguistic awareness, rules, phonic awareness, derivation, word	Linguistic awareness, rules, phonic awareness, derivation, word	Linguistic awareness, usage
	Grammar	25	Tense and person, punctuation Nouns and pronouns	Tense and person, punctuation Adverbs and adjectives	Tense and person, pu Verbs and action verb
<b>Mathematics</b> 200 hours	Number and Algebra	120	Place value, patterns, odd/even/addition	Place value, patterns, subtraction	Place value, multiplica
	Measurement and Geometry	40	3D shape	Time, length, mass, capacity	Angles
	Statistics and Probability	40	Graphs	Graphs	Chance
<b>Science</b> 60 hours	Understanding, inquiry skills, human endeavour	60	Living and non-living things	Earth and space- <del>earth</del> s rotation	
<b>Physical Education/Sport</b> 80 hours	Movement and activity	80	Skill development and practice	Skill development and practice	Skill development and
	Interpersonal development		Team building and fitness, swimming	Ball handling and games, athletics	Soccer, netball, baske
<b>Art</b> 60 hours	Visual	60	Collage, cards, threads, textiles	Mask making, printing, sketching	Construction, modelin
	Performing		Rhythm, melody, score	Garage band	Song, drama, orchestr
<b>Languages</b> 100 hours	Communicating	100	Italian greetings, songs, colours, counting	Italian family, seasons, weather, days, performance	Italian numbers, the al
	Intercultural knowledge				
<b>Health</b> 20 hours	Health knowledge and promotion	20	Healthy eating and food choice Wellbeing Bounce Back program	Wellbeing Bounce Back program	Wellbeing Bounce Back
	Building social relationships		Drug education, families		
<b>Integrated study</b> (Thinking Processes/ Personal Learning) 80 hours			<b>Theme: Healthy minds, healthy bodies</b>	<b>Theme: Celebrations, significant events, rules, laws</b>	<b>Theme: Design: Dres</b>
	History	30		Community and remembrance significant events, celebration	
	Civics	10		Australian symbols, groups, leadership rules	
	Design and Technology	10	Safety skills and strategies		Inventor research: Infi invention, developin
	Sustainability	15	Growing and eating healthy foods		Designing and creatin

**FIGURE 6: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM PLANNING DOCUMENT**

<http://curriculumplanning.vcaa.vic.edu.au/by-year-level> (Accessed 3-9-14)



The history curriculum is positioned as a minor consideration at 10.6% of the 320 annual hours allocated to English. The blank boxes on this published template further position the *AC: History* as marginal. The information overall is minimalistic. Rather than being a dynamic example of curriculum planning, the template merely reproduces vague concepts from the *AC: History*.

### Professional association support

The history curriculum was introduced to some Victorian schools in 2011 for trialling and validation purposes. The HTAV facilitated its first annual conference for primary school teachers in 2011. However, the one-day event was only half the length of the annual conference which had traditionally supported secondary school teachers. This limits participation by primary school teachers and suggests the greater valuing of secondary history teaching,

*...what we've got is a Primary Conference - primary teachers conference, which is where we really try and get primary teachers to showcase what they're doing to other teachers, because they're presenting it in their own style, their own language and their own - getting their own methodologies, and that's really the most effective way. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

Here, primary practitioners are appreciated as being different to consultants, in terms of experiences, understandings and communication styles.

*I think there...[are] two avenues for primary teachers for professional learning. One would be the content knowledge – the what has happened, getting the story - and making sure that they're well equipped enough and feel confident enough with the actual content. The other avenue is sort of dealing with the discreet set of historical skills and understandings that need to be understood by the teacher to ensure that the good history teaching occurs. (HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

By 'good' history teaching it is inferred that this professional association representative means 'effective' history teaching. History-content is conveyed here as a singular story, rather than an individual's interpretation. The history teacher's interpretation of 'the story' is considered equally important to their knowledge of the key concepts and skills. The student is not mentioned, nor is the teacher's ability to facilitate the student's development of skills and understanding.

*I'm really in favour of the students providing role models for other students, in terms of producing good quality work, and that's what the Kids Conference is about as well. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

A select group of students – who are deemed to be doing history well – are positioned as exemplars of scholarship to their peers. The 'Kids Conference' appears to be largely constructed and qualified by adults. Values attributed to summative work take precedence over the learning journey of effective inquiry.

### Funding + demand = assistance

*I guess everyone's waiting for the possibility of funding and firmer advice on resourcing and professional learning before they can make wise decisions on how to, you know, support teachers and support the new curriculum. (University History educator and HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

*...a lot of the teaching associations have a very vociferous, senior years' membership. If you look around at all of the professional teaching associations, the way that they concentrate upon post-compulsory resources, post-compulsory education - you know, resources for teachers and students - is quite prolific. So when we go out to consultation, you might get - I think you get the senior teachers being a bit more vociferous than say the primary years' teachers, for example. (HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

In 2012, implementation of the AC: History was optional. By 2013, all Victorian schools were expected to be teaching history as informed by AusVELS in accordance with state implementation guidelines. This apparently created some tensions:

*When the Australian history curriculum was being rolled out I went to a lot of schools, because teachers were very panicky, first of all, about resourcing the curriculum, and also about how to implement it. I found a lot of work at that time was going out and doing presentations about the different [set] studies, how they could be approached and the best way to structure the curriculum for each school, because each school has different time allowances, different types of teaching models, that sort of thing. So it was about customising it, or adapting it, to their needs. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

These 'panicky' teachers are represented here as under-skilled in terms of teaching history. The professional association's representative positions herself as an authority on the teaching of history within schools.

### **The professional development deficit**

An academic makes the distinction between professional support (which is offered to teachers online) and professional development:

*...You see on the website, they've got things like [the portal] Illuminate...and that's sort of professional support, that's not professional development. That's really putting it right into the hands of teachers to organise this for themselves. There doesn't seem to be anything definite yet, but I assume this is going to happen, with regard to professional development and that means not just a day here or there. It means they have to learn history, academically. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

*I do worry that there are not sufficient primary teachers with sufficient academic background or time to easily up-skill with regard to the nuances that current F-6 curriculum expect of them. (University History educator and HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

In some instances primary teachers are positioned as inexperienced and incompetent history teachers as in the quotes above. Learning academic history implies being a content expert. A wider perspective on professional learning is outlined by a representative of a professional association:

*From the professional development curriculum point of view - from the teacher's point of view - professional learning is not just - I don't think it's just about going to professional learning seminars. It's about engaging in professional reading, having informal and formal conversations at school level, being part of a wider community of history teachers, not just even - going beyond - I think that's really sort of crucial as well - to help improve your practice. (HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

[Professional learning could involve] *mentoring and shadowing teachers who are already confident in taking on historical methodology in the classroom.* (Museums educator, interview, 2011)

### Effective teacher training is important

*Teacher training was identified as a key concern, at the pre-service level and through the ongoing professional development of teachers. Respondents noted that the new history curriculum will present challenges to all teachers, but particularly for teachers of primary and the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) learning area.* (NCB, 2009, p. 11)

A pre-service teacher questions the low interest in understanding how to teach history:

*We did do a history unit as part of my [M Teach] course and there was, I think, only a handful of us who were actually interested. The others were not really interested because it's not [viewed to be] as important as literacy, numeracy...If they had a history background it might make it that little bit easier, but because they don't they'd rather just avoid it.* (Pre-service teacher, interview, 2013)

This pre-service teacher positions her peers as single-mindedly pragmatic – only engaged in what they perceive to be the key elements of primary school teaching. She also infers that a discomfort and fear of history as an unknown discipline is the cause of the reactive avoidance she has observed amongst her peers. A more mindful approach to teacher training is outlined below.

The phased introduction of the AC – with only four discipline areas released initially – encouraged some of its university educators to facilitate a dynamic inter-disciplinary approach to the humanities in their education course:

*[We developed]...an integrated critical inquiry-based course...[rather] than your traditional chalk and talk lecture series. So that was an opportunity for us and we were hoping that would also open opportunities for the teacher candidates, the teacher students, when they got out into the classrooms. So they knew how to build an inquiry unit and think about the humanities and history of the core of an integrated curriculum...We saw it [the introduction of the AC] as a change for the teacher training and we hoped that that change would change the way the teachers thought...[As] Civics and Citizenship and Geography...come out, I see that as just another tool to keep using within this kind of integrated approach.* (University History educator, interview, 2011)

This academic understands that learning is experiential. The teacher cannot effectively facilitate integrated critical inquiry-based learning if they have not had the opportunity to be a learner within such a dynamic approach to studying education.

*...to teach history well you need to have a connection with it, so you can engage and connect your students with it as well. History is such an interesting subject that - I know I could only engage with it if I connected with it in a certain way.* (Teacher, interview, 2011)

The teacher is positioned as both connector – making own connections to stories of history – and the facilitator of connections for students.

## HISTORY LEARNING

This section investigates how policies and the people who help inform policies, position history learning, and the student.

[As a learner] *hopefully you start to get awareness and an understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the life that you're part of.* (Museum educator, interview, 2011)

Here learning is positioned as constructive and complex.

### Learning is measurable

*The reporting of student achievement of Foundation to Year 10 is a matter for the sectoral authorities for Victorian government and Catholic schools and for individual schools in the independent sector, consistent with the reporting requirements included in the Victorian registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA) school registration requirements and school funding agreements.* (VCAA, 2010b)

*Obviously there's going to be issues with the change in the reporting system because people are used to the current reporting system with the VELS progression points and so on. So I think there will be issues and hiccups.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)

It is recognised that new systems of assessment and reporting add to a teacher's workload and also strongly influence the curriculum.

### The student as inquirer

*I have some great stories shared in my room. I've got a boy whose parents both came over as Vietnamese boat people. I know the conversations are taking place at home and that children are sharing them at school. There's good questions being asked and, again, there's a lot of empathy taking place, trying to understand what it was like for other people.* (Teacher, interview, 2013)

Student voices and stories are an important and valued part of the classroom and social collective.

*Kids at primary school are really creative and I think in terms of expressing their knowledge of history, I think that will be a really, really great thing in primary schools...[that] tends to go when they hit high school, it's more essays and stuff. Which is important as well but primary schools, I just think there's so much scope for them to do great things.* (Teacher, interview, 2011)

### Learning as process-oriented

*I'm the first to go, "Do you know what? I don't know. Let's look that up or whatever".* (Teacher, interview, 2013)

The teacher above positions herself as a learner alongside her students. She describes modelling learning strategies and skills. The notion of process-orientated learning is expanded upon by a graduate teacher with an interest in history. She spoke of the virtue of learning how to learn:

*Teach them how to learn so when they do to history they can just chow down on all that content, all that rich content. Because they know the historical skills of research and questioning and those sort of lessons.* (Teacher, interview, 2013)

The student is positioned as capable and eager. Armed with skills, content easily flows.

*Some students wanted to look at the Stolen Generation. They all had a choice, they weren't told, "You need to look at this" – they were given a bit of a choice, which I like. That way they were interested in that topic. We had workshops on how to research... (Pre-service teacher, interview, 2013)*

Effective student-learning is understood to come of greater engagement and independence. Teachers supported the individual's goals by facilitating workshops which helped to develop historical skills:

*Once we had a workshop on creating questions...on what they wanted to know more about...We [also] ran a little workshop based around their main assessment, so if they want to do, for example, something about letter writing, [we would] run a workshop about letter writing using historical terms. (Pre-service teacher, interview, 2013)*

Students are positioned here as egalitarian and capable individuals. Teachers facilitated an accelerated learning journey by creating a space for students to be largely autonomous. Students practised higher order thinking skills by negotiating elements of the curriculum from topic of interest to summative assessment.

*[Students] like to be creative with content and not just a repository of content, where the teacher is just sort of telling the story. They do like to be creative with content, so I think that's really important. Giving the primary school students the opportunities to research as well - develop the skills of research - that just go into so many other areas of their education beyond history. It's crucial, all that critical thinking, sourcing of information, finding and locating information and packaging it in a way - for particular audiences. (HTAV representative, interview, 2011)*

### **The teacher as lifelong-learner**

*...primary teachers are often very good at pedagogy [such as inquiry-based practise]. But perhaps their specialist knowledge is not necessarily strong. In the case of a subject like history, nobody has expertise in all areas of history. Everybody is going to be learning from reading and hopefully engaging with new histories, even if you are an experienced history teacher at primary or secondary level, you're still going to be exposed to new content through this curriculum [the AC: History] (Museums educator, interview, 2011)*

Teachers are positioned as co-explorers and co-learners alongside their students.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

*Placing the self in history:*

*[Best practice is]...positioning oneself in the historical and pedagogical landscape and going from there. And I think you do that at primary school. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

*Multi perspectival:*

*Best practice for me would have to be engaging the students...[via a curriculum which is] multi-faceted. It can't - in my opinion - it's not appropriate or it's not encouraging to write it from one person's point of view or one culture. So it needs to be - I think it needs to be very neutral...in the curriculum statement. (PhD candidate and primary school teacher, interview, 2011)*

**Narrative:**

*You always have stories...Unusual stories of human coincidence and luck and adversity and connections...those are the most powerful moments in history. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

**Worldly:**

*One thing I think we need to start looking at with history is that we don't have such an anthropocentric point of view...There's all these other ways of integrating that aren't quite so based on human and human perceptions. So if we can enquire and we can ask about everything about our world then I think we open up the curriculum again with that. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

**Inquiry Based:**

*Best practice to me is making the curriculum content resonate with students through inquiry-based learning. So allowing students to draw familiar links to artefacts, social views, experiences of their own, it's so practical to ensuring that students engage in the contents and making some things really relevant and resonate. Through that process it also helps develop reflectivity. Like a self-consciousness within the humanities and social sciences. So it builds them and their sense of identity. So it really has to resonate so students can take ownership of their learning through enquiry. (DEECD representative, interview, 2011)*

*The way in which history should be taught, is from multiple perspectives: a gender perspective, a social justice perspective. You know I think they're the sort of things that are best practice about teaching history, which has shifted from just knowing a whole lot of dates and events, to knowing the stories behind it and the reasons for those stories and the way in which we choose to tell our history, and what is seen as important and why. (University History educator, interview, 2011)*

The consensus – amongst primary teachers, organisation and professional association representatives, higher education lecturers and academics – is clear. The discipline of history should be understood as rich and complex. The teaching of history should connect to students in the first instance and be integrated with other curriculum areas. Students are positioned as key stakeholders in their education through student-centred inquiry-based learning

**The micro: Practical suggestions**

A regional Higher Degree by Research student advocates for more localised professional development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures:

*...for example, where I am in Victoria, it's one thing for the Victorian Government to do a PD - which I think would be good for overall understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Victoria - but then I also think it's quite important for the local regions, like the Grampians region and the Western Victoria region, to develop their own personal or their own professional development seminars to assist the teachers in that. You know - these are the resources that we have locally - and actually work with the schools and the teachers to develop something easily accessible for teachers...[that meets] the guidelines of the curriculum. (PhD candidate and primary school teacher, interview, 2011)*

*...one of the things that I've been most impressed with is the use of artefacts...looking at items/articles from the past and really making inferences from them. Getting the children to get their hands on well-selected items linked with the unit where possible, but not always, and getting them to make some inferences...really getting that conversation going in the classroom using items from the past and what they might tell us about people. I've seen that done really well. (Teacher, interview, 2013)*

*With no technology, you always have stories...Unusual stories of human coincidence and luck and adversity and connections...those are the most powerful moments in history. (HTAV representative, interview, 2013)*

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDIES

### VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 1: RURAL 1

#### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-6 primary school had an enrolment of 49 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 55. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff decreased from 4.7 to 4 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English fell from 7% to 6%. The number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 2% to 7%.

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 28%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 33% and 24%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 15%.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results – while this school had drops in many of the areas tested, they remained steady in other areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual challenges** relevant to the school’s implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** challenge was that the all of the teachers were new or relatively new to the school in 2011. They needed to spend time establishing collegial relationships, getting to know each other’s strengths, as well as getting to know the students, school culture and the greater community.

The **second contextual** challenge was the ban on whole school Professional Development (PD) under union-sanctioned industrial action that occurred from the end of June 2012 to the beginning of April 2013. The Australian Education Union (Victoria) national curriculum implementation bans were part of the enterprise bargaining campaign. The Principal encouraged teachers to do professional development in their own time.

The **third contextual** challenge was the physical location of the school. The school is in regional Victoria. The high cost of chartering a bus for the hour and a half trip to Melbourne’s museums and sites of significance is deemed unachievable. This distance also inhibits teacher exposure to professional development. The concern around student access to Melbourne has little implication for the Foundation – Year 1 levels of the curriculum due to the focus on family and local heritage. However, exposure to effective and engaging exhibits and an understanding of why museums preserve artefacts is beneficial when engaging with the History Curriculum at Year 2: “students explore, recognise and appreciate the history of their local area by examining remains of the past and considering why they should be preserved” (ACARA, 2014b, p. 34). By Year 3 the need for greater exposure to others, along with a range of formative experiences beyond the known, is outlined in AC: History:

*Moving from the heritage of their local area, students explore the historical features and diversity of their community as represented in symbols and emblems of significance, and celebrations and commemorations, both locally and in other places around the world. (ACARA, 2014b, p. 39)*



## DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

Formal interviews were conducted with the Principal, whom also fulfils the role of curriculum leader, and a parent who has an interest in local history. An audio recording was made of a whole school audience with the parent talking about local history. Photographs were taken of this event as well as of student work, the school yard, and the wider community. A classroom teacher, who shares a combined Foundation/Year 1/2/3 class, participated in a collective focus group discussion in November 2013. This case study was also informed by informal conversations with teachers and students, as well as the researcher's observations during school lessons.

## STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

This small regional primary school was working across a number of stages of implementation. The *intended* and *stated* stages blend with elements of the enacted stage of curriculum development. This reflects a school which was establishing its culture with a mix of relatively new teachers – both graduate and experienced staff. The school's curriculum is a lived and evolving experience:

*At this point, I don't know that our school is there yet. We've got a strong sense of community history in that we've got buildings named after local soldiers. The Remembrance Day ceremony today is a big deal at our school. The kids walk up to the local cemetery, et cetera...I think we're still very early on our journey. But the interest is there. We're definitely wanting to do better than we're doing.* (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

In October 2013, the principal/curriculum leader envisioned that the school's history curriculum (already enacted) would be greatly integrated into the whole curriculum for 2014 and that the many opportunities to teach history within a local and relevant context would be grasped. She believed that *historical knowledge* and *skills* needed to be made more transparent to students. She hoped in future: *"that the teachers [would] make the links more explicit"* (Interview, October 2013).

The principal/curriculum leader's other intention was to see comparative local history being taught – observing change over time and exploring why these changes have occurred. She also hoped that the teachers, half of whom were still relatively new to the school and wider community, would facilitate greater connections between the curriculum and the community.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### Implementing the AusVELS curriculum

The *AusVELS History* curriculum is accepted by the staff as a largely workable and relevant document, however crowded. The main challenges encountered at this small school included accommodating multi-level composite classes and creating meaningful connections with the wider community:

*It's not clear enough as to how it can be personalised to the context at a local level. I also think that the statements are grand. It's great, and there's a lot of work in it. But for composite grades I think the teachers are overwhelmed with how much there is to get through in their one year when they look at the statements that are there.* (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)

*We couldn't do any PD [because of the union ban]...In hindsight that is something we're going to have to do better because the teachers are grappling on their own, working out how to implement it [AusVELS History] in their own classrooms.*

(Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)

*We did an audit recently on what history we're actually doing, whether it's deliberate or not...it made us realise how much we really need to get into the curriculum, have a look what it really entails; who needs to know what, who needs to have which skills, and how we can cover it. Because we had the ready-made inquiry curriculum...and we're all new to the school...we didn't process it as well as we should have. So I think that's on the agenda now for us to go forward.* (Teacher, focus group discussion 2013)

It takes time to understand a new curriculum document, and to activate a lived school-based curriculum which caters to the school's unique context and its students' needs. Additional challenges for staff at this school included taking the time to get to know their students and the school's evolving culture. Half of them were also learning about the broader community. This huge amount of change positioned teachers at a disadvantage and, in turn, also placed students at a disadvantage.

The principal/curriculum leader ponders effective professional development options for her colleagues:

*There would be value of teachers in going to observe people...to see best practice in different situations...in composites in small schools where you've got five year levels in the same room. How are they covering that work?* (Interview, October 2013)

Teachers' intentions to further develop the curriculum at this school, and their effectiveness as facilitators, positions the student as a valued member of the school community.

## **HISTORY TEACHING**

### **The discipline of history is perceived as complex and challenging**

*We do lots of history here. I just don't know that it's explicit to the kids. And I don't know that the links are clear enough to the staff.* (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)

History is understood as an important part of our rich social fabric. It is the stories of people past and present. However, access to stories can be difficult:

*Aboriginal Studies has not been done very well in the past at our school...you look at our community and there are no local Aboriginal people to even access to ask to come in and share their stuff with us. So everything the kids are doing is book work.* (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)

Opportunities to turn the literature into practical experiences were lost. Consequently, the teachers are positioned as unimaginative whilst the students are positioned as passive and potentially disengaged. Further, the missed opportunities to engage with neighbouring Indigenous clans portrayed a limited view of community.

In contrast, the school was observed capitalising on its local context as a resource for teaching and learning history by connecting to community members, past and present. Knowledge of the sacrifices of community members during war was evident through memorial plaques. The historical skills of cause and effect, significance, and empathy were fostered amongst students. In the past there was higher-order thinking around this via an after-school history unit.

### A teacher-directed focus

Teachers were seen teaching history through: reading stories to the whole class; providing a range of resources – digital and paper – for students to research; inviting visitors to the school to talk about local history; using timelines and world maps; displaying images from the local area. A range of communication mediums – graphic, oral, written, digital – were utilised by teachers. An annual field trip takes place at an old gold-mining town. The literacy program carries some of the history content. This is viewed as complementary by the principal/curriculum leader:

*In our upper levels, the way history has been taught here, is...heavily linked in with literacy. Some of the concepts that have to be looked at are complex and they need to have some comprehension around them. In the upper levels part of the rotations for reading, there's a history rotation always. And they're looking at building general knowledge. (Interview, October 2013)*

However, difficulties are noted in this approach:

*The kids who are in those particular literacy groups - you might have a Grade 5 child, who's in a Grade 3 literacy [group], well not technically, but at that level with other kids because of their reading level – they can't cover that sort of stuff in their literacy. So we were trying to work out ways [to resolve the issue] and I asked a few people at the conference [for suggestions because a colleague] wants to do it well, but he's just struggling to know how to do it. (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

The collegial support evident in the teacher's statement above, positions the teacher as caring and solutions-oriented. This places the student as a valued member of the teaching-learning community.

### Integrating history

*[Effective history teaching] is very dependent on the passion that the teacher has to history...Some people don't think it's that important. [Consequently the discipline] is at the bottom of their list of how they integrate that into their curriculum. (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)*

History, like all disciplines, is more effective when integrated into a dynamic interdisciplinary curriculum. Such an approach positions the student as a holistic learner, and the teacher as a passionate pedagogue:

*We've got an outstanding Teacher in 4/5/6, who is just so interested in everything, and you mentioned suitcases. I know that had he heard that, he would have been doing that tomorrow [using suitcases as a pedagogic prop to ignite student's imaginations of the past]. (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

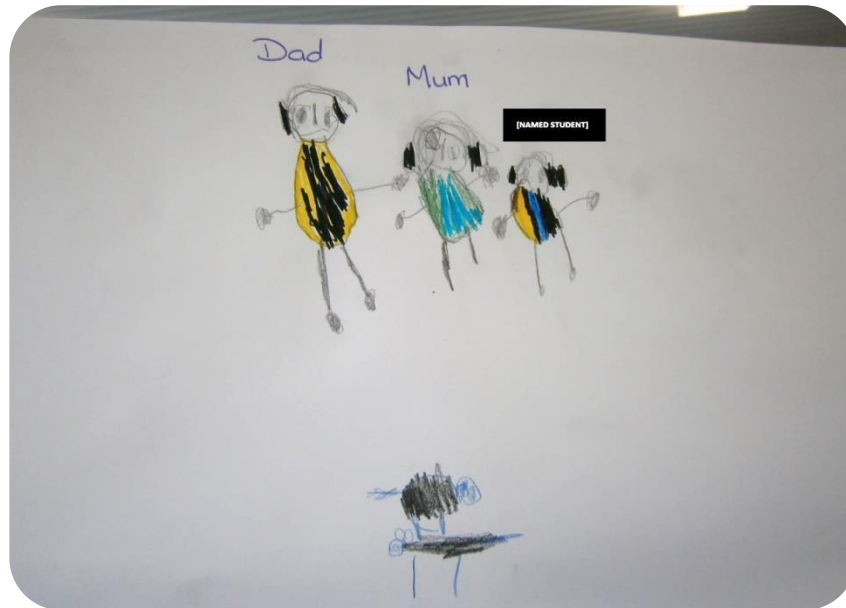
An integrated approach to curriculum development benefits from wide expertise – a team of teachers who each bring strengths and passions to the table. Fostering collegial relations, and role-modelling effective interpersonal skills, positions the teacher as cooperative and responsible, as well as an effective learner. This situates the student as an important stakeholder.

## HISTORY LEARNING

### History is learnt via inquiry, transmission and activities

Students were seen to be learning history through: reading Dreamtime stories; creating an Aboriginal-style painting; drawing family portraits; making maps and timelines; developing questions for research; writing responses to their questions; speaking to visitors from the

wider community; listening; looking at photographs, and conducting research on the Internet.



**IMAGE 3: FAMILY AS IMMEDIATE HISTORY**

*We follow the inquiry unit – Hero, I think they're called now, [formally known as] Interact. It was supposed to have all the history through it. A lot of it though, what we're finding is tokenism in the program, particularly with the littlies. I can't speak so much for the older kids. But we're finding that, yeah it's mentioned, but it's not really worthwhile, valuable activity. It's just so that you can tick it off. (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*



**IMAGE 4: EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES**



**IMAGE 5: TEACHER DIRECTIONS**

The teacher as *follower* of an externally produced program, positions the student as merely a recipient of the curriculum. However, this teacher was reflexive about how she and her colleagues aim to improve their approach to facilitating inquiry-based learning with a greater understanding of AusVELS History: “we didn’t process it as well as we should have. So I think that’s on the agenda now for us to go forward” (Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013).

### **History is learnt via inquiry at home**

Time and space for wondering and researching are part of home life for two young brothers who attend the primary school (one brother was in Foundation, the other in Year 1 at the time of interview). Their mother, a local history enthusiast, talked about nurturing the boys’ innate curiosity, and harnessing their energy:

*We had a house...in our property that burnt down years and years and years ago, and the chimney fell down. All that’s left in our paddock is a piece of the chimney that goes into the ground. And the kids get out there and dig holes and pull bits and pieces out. And they pulled a man’s ring out. And so they were thrilled with that, they found this old ring...Along our creek there’s the telegraph line...and there’s a saw pit where the men got down with the double saws and cut the logs. And so they [the boys] play in the saw pit. (Parent, interview, 2013)*

Learning *historical skills* and *knowledge* can be active and fun. Informal archaeological digs and play in places of historical significance also strengthens children’s connections to people and places of yesteryear. This positions the child as an active inquirer, and the parent as a facilitator of engaging immersions into history.

### **THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY**

The teachers at this small regional school have differing approaches to pedagogy and hence the discipline of history. To varying degrees there is an understanding that history is rich and complex. History is also perceived as content knowledge and skills as identified in AusVELS. A hands-on inquiry-based approach to exploring history is championed by the principal who strongly believes that history needs to be lived to be understood.

## BEST PRACTICE

*I think best practice for history is where the kids are learning about history without thinking of it as a separate thing. It needs to be part of their everyday...there are lots of opportunities where we can do that. We just have to be creative and think outside the box. (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)*

Divergent thinking is magnified when teachers work collectively. The process is maximised when others, including parents, community members, and especially the students themselves, are an important part of the collective. Consolidating *historical skills* sees students distinguishing between past and present – comparing and contrasting objects from various times, and understanding chronology. An inquiry based approach facilitates the students' development of questions and drives student research.

History, as interactive and practical, engages students. A greater use of video-conferencing is perceived as an effective means of involvement in the broader community, especially connecting to urban hubs where resources are centrally located. The principal/curriculum leader wondered about the potential of accessing The Immigration Museum that way. She also thought it would be beneficial to students if boxes of artefacts from the museum could be borrowed – similar to the boxes that the Shrine of Remembrance lends to schools in rural and regional areas: *“the kids need to see a variety of artefacts – not just images. (Teacher, interview, October 2013)*

The principal/curriculum leader also expressed that for students to have deeper understanding of things, for example the weight and texture of fabrics worn by soldiers in WWI and WWII, they needed to be able to hold and feel the uniforms; that History is engaging when the senses are awakened with artefacts to see and touch, role-plays to produce, and theme days to celebrate – even past Year 2.

*[Best practice is facilitating history which is] relevant to the kids, and that the kids will know or be able to verbalise the cause and effect...they need to know what the key concepts are so that they can verbalize it themselves. (Principal/curriculum leader, interview, October 2013)*

Opportunities for student-active learning inquiries are central to an effective history curriculum. History must be connected to the students and this is articulately expressed by the principal/curriculum leader: *“If we're only talking about the past and it has no connection to their lives and doesn't impact on them, why would they get excited about it?” (Interview, 2013)*

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 2: URBAN 1

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-6 primary school had an enrolment of 433 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 451. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 26 to 26.3 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 33% to 36%. There were no students identifying as Indigenous.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 2%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 6% and 20%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 71%.

NAPLAN results – while this school had small drops in half of the areas tested, they remained steady in several of the areas tested, and had improvements in the remaining areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual Challenges** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** challenge was the ban on whole school Professional Development under union-sanctioned industrial action that occurred from the end of June 2012 to the beginning of April 2013. The Australian Education Union (Victoria) national curriculum implementation bans were part of the enterprise bargaining campaign.

The **second contextual** challenge faced by the school was that it was in a review year for 2013 but in November of that year a reviewer had yet to be appointed to the school.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

Formal interviews were conducted with the assistant principal (who also performs the role of Teaching and Learning Leader) and a Year 3/4 Leading Teacher. The Leading Teacher also participated in the focus group discussion convened in Melbourne in November 2013. This teacher documented student learning via creation of a video journal and made this available to the researcher. Additionally, in conjunction with two teaching colleagues who work with the Leading Teacher in a *neighbourhood* of 60 plus students, the Leading Teacher again documented students further developing their skills via another video journal and shared this with the researcher. This case study was also informed by informal conversations with teachers and students, student work samples and the researcher's observations during school lessons.

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

*I think we've reached a stage where we're confident that what we do more than covers our requirements under AusVELS, and then some. (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This urban primary school reached the *realised* stage of curriculum implementation by the end of the data collection period of this project. School teachers had evidently worked hard for a number of years to create an integrated inquiry based approach to teaching and learning. In December 2011, both the school's assistant principal and the Leading Teacher involved in this research did not envisage any potential issues with their capacity to effectively teach history. They were confident that they could facilitate all professional development in-house through sharing the wealth of staff expertise – with a focus on

integrating the *AusVELS History* curriculum into the school's evolving approach towards teaching and learning rather than professional development around historical concepts. A reflexive approach to teaching and learning was evident at this school. Staff work closely with a university academic in education and at the time of this case study they were exploring the intersection of affect and intellect. During the Victorian Focus Group Discussion, November 2013, the Leading Teacher mentioned how their approach to curriculum was evolving: *"we've still got a long way to go."* It was raised that there is no end-point to learning. It could also be argued that there is no end-point to curriculum implementation.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### Transcending the AusVELS curriculum

*Through a contemporary inquiry-based pedagogy, you can exploit this curriculum to create a really vigorous investigation of history.* (Leading Teacher, interview, 2011)

*We're so worried about our responsibility to the curriculum, why aren't we just as worried about our responsibility to our pedagogy.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

*I'm not scared of checklists or bureaucrats anymore.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

The *AusVELS History* curriculum is understood by the staff as a crowded document with an imposing checklist that moves in a hierarchical fashion from central policymakers outside the school to teachers who are under pressure to implement it in schools. In contrast, the school's own curriculum is an embodied and evolving process, with pedagogy taking precedence. The teachers at this school chose to approach the *AusVELS* document in a flexible manner, absorbing it into an already effective school programme:

*For us, it becomes more an exercise of how do we ensure that we are appropriately documenting and auditing, as each new document is released that is appropriate for how we run the school - **where** [emphasis authors own] does it fit I suppose is more the conversation rather than **how** [emphasis authors own] are we going to fit this in?* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

The school's assistant principal also expressed this emphasis on pedagogy when sharing, in an interview, how her team draws links between the original VELS and *AC: History* but does not use this to drive how they teach and learn. The Leading Teacher reflects on the school's ease of integrating the *AC: History* strands of Historical Knowledge and Understanding, and Historical Skills, into their inquiry-based curriculum:

*[History has] actually snuck its way into everything we do. We looked at, broadly, the inquiry for the last three terms as being science, looking at the idea of energy as something that can't be destroyed or created, just changing form. We moved from that into how - trying to follow the science curriculum that was being bought in - how that impacts our lives. So, children in groups looked at inventions and types of energy, power stations, light bulbs, and how that's influenced our lives, and what's happened is it's become a giant research project for them, from a historical point of view.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)



### Assessment as a reflective tool on teacher-practice

Assessing student-learning allows teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning cycle. After a weekend of report-writing, the Leading Teacher shared his insights: *“I can see the richness of the learning. I can write about it. It's [the report writing] documented probably one per cent of it, and that's an enormous amount”* (Focus group discussion, 2013).

### Curriculum adaptation to students' needs

The school's teachers engage with students holistically. Perceiving students as capable individuals with their own knowledge informs an egalitarian student-active approach to curriculum development:

*We are influenced by socio-cultural practice.* (Assistant principal, interview, 2011)

*It comes back to valuing the child and valuing studentship and being a child as a legitimate social force in itself....children need to be seen as co-constructors...of their own historical narrative and what it means for them as a nine-year-old, for example, in [NAMED SUBURB], a valued position.* (Leading Teacher, interview, 2011)

Here it is also evident that the greater community's socio-cultural context is an integral part of the school's dynamic; informing curriculum choices within a student-active pedagogical framework. The school's positioning embraces ACARA's aim to facilitate student *“interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be informed and active citizens”* (2014, b, p. 13).

## HISTORY TEACHING

### The discipline of history is perceived as rich and complex

The teachers understand that researching history is also about researching and interpreting stories – learning and appreciating the multiple narratives and inherent subjectivity of history subjectivity:

*We ask children what they thought research was, and ask them to research the neighbourhood, the school, stories that were interesting to them, looking at the idea of research being a narrative, being a story, told by a certain person, not an objective truth or set of facts* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

Deep investigations into histories allowed both teachers and students to appreciate the complexities and ambiguities of the contested stories that lie beneath any dominant notion of history:

*That's where the magic of history is. The more you learn about something, the less clear it becomes. The more the arguments become - and that's why people enjoy it I feel, because you do hear these voices speaking to you from the past. You think, I wonder who's right and who's - not that somebody has to be right, but the different perspectives start to come through the more you dig.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

Facilitating an inquiry based approach honoured the quiet and often marginalised histories, and positioned students as curious beings, capable of conducting research.

### Facilitating student-active inquiry-based learning

*We work with an inquiry model...it's different to how I've seen other schools work.*  
(Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

From classroom observations and the video journals of student-learning, it is evident that a student-active approach to inquiry-based learning is being engaged within the school. The student is positioned as researcher; posing questions, discussing theories, sharing new understandings. The teacher is positioned as nurturer of student curiosity and as an impartial facilitator; observing student learning and offering guiding questions when need be. Teachers are not the holders of knowledge, rather, they are co-explorers. When some Year 4 students posit an unusual theory, the Teacher can only be heard asking, *"How do you know this?"* (Student Research video journal, 2012). As a result the students begin using higher-order thinking skills to better synthesise the evidence at hand.

*...engage children and get them emotionally involved in what you're doing [as a teacher].* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

Emotional investment in intellectual activities is perceived as crucial to student success in terms of engagement, the development of skills and knowledge. Staff professional development with a local university academic has helped teachers to better appreciate the connection between affect and intellect.

### Reflexive co-operative practitioners

*Our approach can be delivered by expertise within the school.* (assistant principal, interview, 2011)

In this school, leadership values the strengths of its staff and their collective development. The school demonstrated a dynamic collegial workplace in which the centrality of reflexive practise was evident in the professional development resources, constructive dialogue and reciprocated praise between teachers and leadership, and the intellectual engagement demonstrated by staff. The staff development template engages the teacher as researcher. In this school, research is perceived as a way of thinking about teaching and learning.

Teachers at this school modelled effective cooperative skills through ongoing collegial practise and shared-planning. They also facilitated fruitful cooperative learning skills amongst students

*...we had kids across two neighbourhoods , about 125 children, doing the same topic for example, within their group. They could choose whatever they wanted...and they'd come together and they'd talk about it and go, 'No, that's not right. We're right. This is why'. So, you had those primary and secondary sources... and that narrative, that discussion, was the most powerful thing that came out of it. I think they built that knowledge themselves. I think that's really key. With the research, they did that. With the science, they've done that all the way through.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

In addition, a cooperative approach to learning was evident in each of the video journals that were shared with the researcher, as well as through in-school observations. Students worked together, discussing theories and their respective, evolving, interpretations of historical stories or cultural concepts.

## Facilitating community connections

*The answers that you gave really helped me. Can you please tell everybody who answered, thank you. My Teachers were really excited when I started, same with my parents. They were even more excited when I got the answers...Thankyou that you took some of your time.* (Year 4 student, letter, 2012)

The Foundation to Year 6 AusVELS History curriculum focuses on family, community, local and national heritage and history. Teachers at this urban school facilitate connections to the wider community. Such an approach helps build student confidence as well as skills in communication and higher-order thinking, whilst furthering the student's knowledge-base of history, and understanding of processes. Student endeavours to connect with others is evident in the above excerpt of a student's letter to a foreign consular officer who had responded to the students research questions.

This school demonstrated a variety of ways in which students engage with the wider community. An excursion to a nearby cemetery resulted in students feeling motivated to learn more about the deceased buried at the gravestones they had identified: *"they came back and they, on their own, found this website called findagrave.com"* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013).

Members of the wider community are reportedly generous in their interactions with the school: *"being in [NAMED SUBURB], you've got endless people who want to come in and tell their story about [NAMED SUBURB]...we're spoilt in that respect"* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013). These opportunities benefit the students' learning and position them as important members of the wider community.

## HISTORY LEARNING

### History is learnt through inquiry

In every classroom there was strong evidence of an enacted inquiry approach. Students developed their own questions around topics and used these for their research. Rumour or 'school myth' was a valid starting point for a cooperative student investigation into the stories of their immediate community. Stimulated by the commemorative plaques in the school yard, some Grade 4 students begin to question the plausibility of the rumour that two past students were killed by head injuries caused by a thrown discus. The following conversation excerpt indicates the higher-order processing being enacted:

*Student A: How do you know that the kid got died by a discus?*

*Student B: [NAMED TEACHER] told us.*

*Student A: Yeah, but according to other kids.*

(Year 4 students, Student Research video journal, 2012)

Student A shares his conceptual skills of contestability. The student's growing understanding of the importance of the authentication of sources is also evident in the exchange. According to teachers, time and resources for student thinking and researching resulted in rich student-learning:

*...over time, because we did give them a lot of time, three terms in the end, scandal started to emerge, debate secrets, all these little things came out. That it wasn't one person that invented the light bulb, it was probably hundreds really, it's the idea they come up with.* (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)

## Affect and intellect

Teachers were mindful of allowing space for students to make emotional connections to new research topics. Open questions were deemed conducive to student-thinking and learning. Students were positioned as the authorities on their interpretations. Students appeared comfortable in sharing their thoughts on any topics, particularly when brainstorming. In one instance, when a Year 3/4 student expressed that he was not a good thinker, the teacher facilitated a one-on-one conversation which drew out the child's perceptions of home and culture:

*Student: She's poor [Mum]. But now she's middle class because of Dad.*

*Teacher: What makes you middle class do you think?*

*Student: I don't know...you have a lot of things...a house, a bed...a kitchen.*

*Teacher: ...I think you're a really good thinker.*

*Student: I have to think for a long time.*

*Teacher: That's okay. I have to think for a long time too.*

(Teacher A and Year 3/4 student A, Culture Question video journal, 2012)

The conversation organically developed into a discussion about meta-cognition. This also positioned the student as capable, reflective and articulate whilst positioning the teacher as encouraging and egalitarian. The teacher praised the skill rather than the person – effectively countering the child's negative self-talk. In my observations, teachers did not label people, and only made minimal value judgments on behaviours. Conversations focussed on the task and implicitly reinforced each student's capacity to research history:

*Student: We were researching about the mystery behind the toilets.*

*Teacher: That has a lot of possibilities, doesn't it?*

(Teacher B and Year 3/4 student, Culture Question video journal, 2012)

## THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The teachers at this school understand that history is part of the social fabric. History has therefore become naturally integrated into all that they do. Teachers focus on facilitating the development of *historical skills* through an active inquiry-based approach. Rich *historical knowledge and understanding* flowed-on through student-active investigations. Interviewed staff agreed that the discipline of history is embodied and subjective. This philosophy parallels an understanding of “*who the children are and how they feel about different types of histories and where that comes from for them and why they hold those points of view*” (Assistant principal, interview, 2011).

Students understand that history is complex, and how investigating history is both an engaging and cooperative activity. Little things may hold grand narratives, secrets or personal meaning. Innumerable stories are layered and interwoven; they are found in texts, the physical environment and people's memories: “*I found something out there on the bench, it says memorial for...*” (Year 3/4 student, Student Research video journal, 2012). When asked to brainstorm what makes ‘home’ a home, a Year 3 student answers how home for him means: “*Where your history is*” (Culture Question video journal, 2012). The student is positioned as capable and powerful – only he can know and articulate his unique and evolving perceptions of the world around him. The discipline of history can effectively integrate with other disciplines in an inquiry-based classroom, resulting in active immersions into understanding historical events. When investigating the Eureka Stockade, a maths activity helped to facilitate empathy for the diggers in these Year 3/4 students:

*We had this mini-maths inquiry looking at land. Squatters were able to have 32 square kilometres of land to run sheep on, do whatever they wanted. If you were a poor digger on the diggings, you got four square metres for the same money. So to go and measure that out, we had to use computers to measure 32 square kilometres obviously, but to build that and see the unfairness of it. To try and get an understanding of why people were politically so upset and so enraged. I think that really speaks to kids, that sense of unfairness. (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

## **BEST PRACTICE**

*...the inquiry runs and dominates everything...it's about designing something or sparking something that's rich enough so that everything can be fed into it, literacy, numeracy, SOSE, history, science...can all go in there. (Leading Teacher, focus group discussion, 2013)*

In this urban primary school, best practice is nurtured through the teachers' continuous professional learning and collegiality. A reflexive approach to teaching sees teachers mindfully engaging with students and facilitating a lived experience of an integrated and embodied curriculum. Inquiry-based learning begins with the existing knowledge of students – making connections to their lives and what is meaningful to them. This is facilitated from a socio-cultural perspective whilst modelling collegiality and cooperative learning. Like students, teachers are also lifelong learners.

The school's egalitarian ethos sees each student being treated holistically. Children are seen as capable of understanding the complexities and contradictory stories that arise in the studies of history. Students apply *historical skills* in the act of investigating rich histories and exploring their questions of interest. The notions of fairness and equality appear to drive students towards consolidating higher-order thinking skills and a sensitivity to the marginalised or quiet stories of history. Deep and meaningful student-active learning is not restricted by time or perceptions of pressure from the *AusVELS History* curriculum framework. A great sense of responsibility to pedagogy guides teachers. This is the foundation for teaching and learning history within this urban primary school

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 3: REGIONAL 1

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this established F-6 primary school had an enrolment of 295 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 347. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 19.1 to 22 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 3% to 7% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous fell from 1% to 0%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 17%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 29% and 30%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 24%.

NAPLAN results – while this school had small drops in a few of the areas tested they remained steady in several of the areas tested, and improved in the remaining areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual challenges** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** challenge was that the Principal and some of the teachers were new to the school when this study commenced. They needed to spend time establishing collegial relationships, getting to know each other's strengths, as well as getting to know the students, the school culture and the greater community as the locality was also new to staff.

The **second contextual** challenge was the ban on whole school Professional Development (PD) under union-sanctioned industrial action that occurred from the end of June 2012 to the beginning of April 2013. The Australian Education Union (Victoria) national curriculum implementation bans were part of the enterprise bargaining campaign.

The **third contextual** challenge was the physical location of the school. The school is well-established in a regional setting. The two hour bus ride to central Melbourne's museums and sites of significance costs considerable time and money. This distance also inhibits teacher exposure to professional development).

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

Formal interviews were conducted with the principal (who is also the curriculum leader), Year 5/6 teachers, a casual teacher with a history specialisation, and four individual students. A group discussion with several Year 5/6 students was also facilitated. In addition, the principal participated in the Victorian focus group discussion, November 2013, with representatives from other Victorian schools involved in this research project. Photographs were taken during class time and of the wider community. This case study is also informed by informal conversations with teachers and students, as well as the researcher's observations during school lessons.

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

*We've been in a phase of rapid growth, so our history curriculum – as it stands at the moment – is the units that were established years before I came. This is my third year there. The people who remember them try and incorporate them. Those who are new, take the lead of someone who's old in their department, and go, oh yeah, we'll have a go at that. Next year we're revamping our whole scope and sequence for [SCHOOL*

NAMED]; *all the general studies areas, as well as looking in more depth at English and maths.* (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

This regional primary school was working across a number of stages of implementation of the AusVELS History curriculum during the data collection period of this research project. The *intended* and *stated* stages blended with elements of the *enacted* stage of curriculum development. This reflected a school which was growing together with its mix of established and new staff members (both graduates and experienced staff).

In November 2011, the principal/curriculum leader envisioned that the school's history curriculum would quickly evolve, and was optimistic about "*the journey ahead*" but lamented how some staff members "*make it hard for themselves*" by not looking at the ACARA website and resources (Interview, 2011). Insecurities around teaching history caused some teachers to react to suggestions for innovation and inquiry-based learning by clinging to the safe knowns of transmission-style teaching of Federation, for example.

As curriculum leader, the principal had put considerable time and effort into inspiring staff by making AusVELS History more accessible and planting seeds for inquiry-based learning practises. She facilitated a progressive understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and generally championed the evolution of an innovative, inclusive and engaging school curriculum. Opportunities for students to actively explore history within a local and meaningful context were on the agenda for 2014.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### Implementing the AusVELS curriculum

*When we looked at what we had and looked at the scope and sequence chart, our topics generally fitted what the history topics were. It's just a matter now of the teachers sitting down and really teasing out the content...we did a bit of that the other night and we couldn't see too many problems.* (Principal, interview, 2011)

The AusVELS history curriculum is accepted, by this school, as a largely workable and relevant document. And while accommodating two-year rotations within its parameters *can* be perceived as a challenge, at this school where composite classes are run for all grades except Foundation, it is seen as advantageous *and* challenging.

*So for them [the teachers] to run a two year rotation works and it also gives you more time to run a decent chunk. If you're trying to run every year - I know the skills say it's over two years, but because there's particular tick offs, and teachers need to be answerable, so they want to have it ticked off, it's really hard to fit everything that's required into the year.* (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

Some teachers admitted to a lack of confidence in teaching history. The curriculum guidelines and ACARA's online resources were seen as "*really helpful*" (Teacher B, interview, 2012), however, teachers felt that more support was needed to boost teacher-confidence and foster effectiveness in teaching history:

*I would love to go to a PD on how to set out a history curriculum for...a rotating two-year system. I would love somebody to show me that and what to do; the assessment tasks for each term, how much each term, just the basic things that make you feel confident.* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

*...where we are, it's not easy to access things...It's the same with PD. PD's hard when you're not right here [in Melbourne]. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

The school's decision to run composite year levels combined with its distance from Melbourne, places teachers at a disadvantage compared to metropolitan schools in the roll-out of a centralised curriculum directive. Teachers expressed a desire to feel more confident and supported. The teachers' lack of specialist skills and limited understanding of how to effectively plan and facilitate a history curriculum, positions the student as a victim of circumstances. However, the current focus on history also positions the school with a responsibility to facilitate constructive collegial conversations and in-house professional development to lift the collective capacity of its teachers and to effectively facilitate student skills and understanding.

### Assessment challenges

*... [A] dilemma is the reporting aspect of the whole process because the whole reporting packages stuff has been thrown into limbo. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

Within this context of uncertainty around the new curriculum and the not-quite-there-yet reporting system, the school's principal expressed the challenges felt by staff. She warned of the inherent biases of an assessment-driven curriculum:

*The minute we tick the boxes we teach to what we're ticking off. It's not the other way. It's not curriculum and pedagogy that leads to the reporting...Certainly my staff go the other way and go, 'Well if we're ticking these boxes, we have to make sure we've got the evidence to have ticked the boxes, so we better do what it's telling us to do'. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

The AusVELS History curriculum is understood as a prescriptive framework with an imposing checklist that moves in a hierarchical fashion from central policy makers outside the school to teachers who must implement it in schools. However, the school's principal concedes that ACARA welcomed teachers to be involved in the consultation process of drafting the AC: History:

*I feel that all teachers had the opportunity to be involved if they wanted to. So I'm gathering if nobody here wanted to, it wasn't for lack of ACARA trying. (Principal, interview, 2011)*

*Generally classroom teachers are focussed on the bare bones...Unless somebody advocates for that subject area, you don't get a lot of change. (Principal, interview, 2011)*

The school's own curriculum is a lived and evolving experience with a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills. As curriculum leader, the principal is keen for "pedagogy to be a real focus...across the board" (Interview, 2011). She reflects on a period of rapid growth with staff adapting to the AusVELS History curriculum, and the different approaches pushed forward by new staff members, particularly graduate teachers: "Those who are new, take the lead of someone who's old [experienced] in their department" (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013). It is inferred that the more experienced teachers lack the innovation and energy of their graduate colleagues, and that these new staff members bring with them the energy and mindset to take risks and try something new. The school is positioned as adaptive and proactive in facilitating lifelong learners. The student is positioned as valuable and capable.



## HISTORY TEACHING

The discipline of history is perceived as challenging and exhilarating: “[To be a history teacher is]... *very scary because you have to be so careful not to put your opinion into what you believe has happened in the past...I have to be careful that I’m not biased*” (Teacher A, interview, 2012). The discipline of history, within the formal context of national and state-directed education guidelines, was new to many of the school’s teachers. For some, a tentative approach towards the unknown resulted in the AusVELS document being clung to as a kind of life raft. Amongst the teachers at this school there are very different understandings of teaching AusVELS History:

*I come to a staff that are very much, ‘It says this, I have to tick the box where I come from’, and staff very much the other way that went, ‘No, as long as we have the big question there and assist our children to get into it, they will cover it’. So it’s two different extremes.* (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

Fortuitously, a history specialist worked within the school as a Casual Relief Teacher for one term during the first year of AusVELS history implementation at this site. She modified a unit of work she had originally planned and taught within a secondary school classroom, and informally mentored staff. A colleague reflects on the experience fondly:

*She taught us so much about what was coming and what to do...She set up, for another term a whole project on Gallipoli and what happened in WWI and how to lay a wreath electronically and she showed us how to research a soldier, and look she was just amazing!* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

### The pedagogy paradox

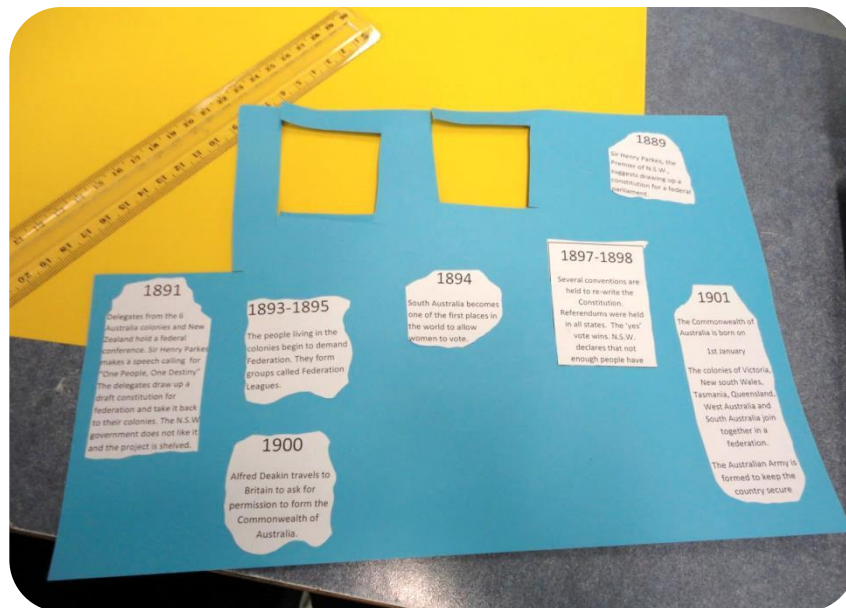
An evolving philosophical approach towards the art of effective teaching and learning is evident amongst teachers and students:

*I love history. I love the stories and the kids just soak up anything that you give them in class.* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

*I think kids learn by doing rather than just absorbing...I’ve already given them the information, the timeline, so they haven’t had to look for a great deal of information.* (Teacher B, interview, 2012)

*The teacher gives us stuff to learn about and we hop on the computer and start.* (Year 5/6 student, student B, 2012)

Teachers selected stories and foci, and disseminated resources to their students. They directed students to make posters and present them to their peers. These pedagogic choices suggest a teacher-directed approach to student-learning. This may be a reactive way of working within a subject specialisation that is new to a teacher and not greatly supported by professional development in or near the school. This positions students as dependant and disadvantaged.



**IMAGE 6: POSTER AS A MODE OF PRESENTATION**

Students were rewarded for their comprehension skills and their ability to follow the teacher's instructions in history classes: *“you get marked on it [understanding history handouts and making posters] and then that will go on your report and you get a really good score if you pay a lot of attention and listen”* (Year 5/6 student A, focus group discussion, 2012). Textual comprehension takes precedence over exploring historical questions, analysing sources and perspectives, and a practical understanding of historical concepts. The teacher gives students the content or tight parameters on what students should be researching.

### Purpose and audience

*Interviewer: And what are you going to do with the book when you finish?*

*Student: I am going to try and give it to my aunt. See what she thinks about it. (Year 5/6 student, 2012)*

*[On a poster] you put dates, where it's happening and why it's happening. (Year 5/6 student, 2012)*

Often there was no intended audience for student-projects, beyond the teacher, classroom peers and whomever a student might try to show their work to. This resulted in lost opportunities for students to share their new knowledge with other students at the school or within the community. The school does facilitate an annual event which focuses on purpose and audience:

*We incorporate history a lot into literacy. So we run a picture story writing competition every year in third term. The focus for the 3/4s was their picture story book had to incorporate an explorer or inventor. So the children had to research an explorer or inventor and put them and themselves in a story. So there were a lot of historical facts within that picture story book. The theme for the 5/6s was discrimination and equality and that was amazing because while it wasn't necessarily history, a lot of them looked at refugees and countries in times gone past, and looked at the social injustices between and then developed them into their stories. So they were amazing stories. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

As competition offers an extrinsic motivator of a prize to win even if it is simply a label of success bestowed by others this again positions the student as a receiver.

In contrast to the school's largely teacher-directed culture, a community partnership has initiated an authentic student-centred local history project. A meaningful purpose for a real audience ignited excitement:

*We've been invited...to be part of a local project with the town library and a film maker who want to develop pictorial histories to put on an iPad about local places of significance in the area. So they want our children to interview local residents, create the story, even dress up, do whatever, and then put it onto film, to put onto the iPads so people can borrow that and find out our history. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This insight into the Principal's eagerness to harness a real learning opportunity, and her intention to further develop the school's history curriculum demonstrates how she positions the students as valuable, capable and active learners. The school is positioned as co-facilitator of community collaborations. Getting to know the local history has not previously been a priority for teachers at this school:

*My staff feel ill-equipped because they're not actually from the area to know the area's history and what happened there...They'd rather teach Federation, First Fleet explorers than try and get local context. They're more comfortable with that, and there's more information readily available. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

This is the quandary of a teacher-directed approach; the belief that the teacher must have the knowledge to impart to students. This positions the student as an empty vessel rather than a co-explorer. As local residents, perhaps with generations of ties to the area, students may be able to assist the teacher to learn the history of the area.

## **HISTORY LEARNING**

### **History is learnt via transmission**

*First we get given pieces of paper and we read through them, and then there will be questions on another piece of paper and you write down the answers from what you've learnt in that paragraph. And sometimes we make posters that we have to put certain information on and we can add other information if we've finished that...You put dates, where it's happening and why it's happening. (Year 5/6 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I like to watch the videos about Federation – which we've been doing – and doing group work on it. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I've got the little pages and then me and [STUDENT NAMED] – 'cause it's a group poster – we're going to get other information after we've stuck all that on and stick it all over the page as a border...[STUDENT NAMED] likes borders but she didn't know what, and I liked the information so we thought we'd put them together. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*The teachers tell us [history] and we listen. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

The largely teacher-directed approach at the school sees students learn/remember compliancy skills more than the historical skills outlined in *AusVELS*. This positions the student as disempowered receiver.

### Connections are the key

Students are interested in their family histories, *Horrible Histories* and other kinds of histories or historical figures to which they can relate:

*I love reading...I read some of the My Story books [Scholastic UK] from old times and stuff, like the factory girls...and how they lived and when they went on strike...[I'm interested in reading] the diaries that they made and what they do – what they did in those times. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I like Japanese history, me and [STUDENT NAMED] both want to go to Japan. (Year 5/6 Student D, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I know I've got about five convicts in my family...My Dad went through ancestry.com (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I'm related to a [deceased] Prime Minister...Mum told me. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

Older family members tell us about our ancestral history. The process of learning history requires, and fosters, connections to others; a parent, a grandparent, a friend with a shared interest, or a character in a story. Students had trouble expressing historical concepts such as cause and effect, and empathy. Discussing connections between the self and history may be challenging when there is no precedent to do so.

### Intrinsic motivation

*History just really interests me...I like old times and that kind of stuff. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

One Grade 6 student demonstrated a proactive approach to learning history. She wrote a four-page booklet at home which her mother proof-read and then shared with the grandfather:

*It wasn't an assignment. We were just doing posters and planning information [at school] like we are now but I wanted to go a bit further so I went home and looked up some information and memorised information and put it in my own words. (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

This student's love of history was triggered by her grandfather two years earlier. She infers that her quest to take her learning further is only nurtured at home. This positions the school and teachers as only a small component of history education. However, with parental support a key aim from AC: *History* is embraced: "students develop interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be informed and active citizens" (ACARA, 2014b, p. 13)

### Challenges

An intrinsic interest in history was evident amongst students. However, they struggled to articulate their learning of history beyond the largely teacher-directed culture present at the school. The transmission approach to teaching and learning merely generated lower-order thinking skills of remembering. A disconnection between the student and the present is evident: "[I like] to learn how difficult it was for the kids and the adults to be in that type of age [sometime in history]...People used to try and steal vegetables because they were very rare and worth a lot of money" (Year 5/6 Student, focus group discussion, 2012).

Teachers are positioned as lacking the expertise to facilitate higher-order thinking skills. These skills may be challenging to facilitate when there is little time allocated to depth studies: “...we seem to focus on a subject for a block and we study it for a block of time and then we move to something else...Usually 1-3 hours a week” (Teacher B, interview, 2012).

### Core Business Talk

Another challenge to student learning of history is a perceived pressure by staff for students to perform well with their literacy and numeracy skills. Interpersonal skills are another consideration:

*Our core business is really reading – which of course involves integrated studies but reading [literacy] and maths, and social skills, personal skills. Getting along, being confident...It is across the board. We often talk about what our core business is.*

(Teacher B, interview, 2012)

*The 5/6s have literacy circles and a lot of these [historical] novels they're starting in the literacy circles, but it's not necessarily related to anything else they're doing. It's [the teacher's]...way of trying to cover history this year, because they can't [otherwise] fit it in.* (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)

The talk of *core business* and tight scheduling evades a discourse of catering for the whole-person. This positions the student as a fragmented client at best. History is understood as another means of teaching the *core business* of literacy. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is an additional specialisation which is also integrated into history classes:

*Children these days are far more savvy with technology and Google, there's nothing they can't find out. I find I'm using ICT far more than I have in the past.* (Teacher B, interview, 2012)

*I like looking-up history...[the information comes] off paper that we've been given or off the Internet or sometimes I ask my grandad.* (Year 5/6 student, focus group discussion, 2012)

The analysis and use of sources (via an ICT medium or otherwise) is an *historical skill* which is challenging to grasp when it is not explicitly taught or reflected upon with a teacher:

*Finding information for the projects [was hard]...cause when you go on Wikipedia...they're hard words and you didn't really get them so you had to try and type them out into what you thought they were.* (Year 5/6 student, focus group discussion, 2012)

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The teachers at this regional school have differing approaches to pedagogy and hence the discipline of history. To varying degrees there is an understanding that history is rich and complex. However, some teachers see the discipline of history as heavily content-dependent; there is a strong emphasis on history being located through dates and facts. A hands-on inquiry-based approach to exploring history is championed by the principal who strongly believes that history needs to be lived to be understood.

### BEST PRACTICE

A Year 5/6 student reflects on his most engaging moment in relation to learning history. He does not hesitate to go beyond the classroom and into a dated family holiday experience: “when I went to Scotland [aged 4 years]...I got to stand on a catapult...It was a bit scary” (Year 5/6 student, focus group discussion, 2012).

Students learn best from real experiences and immersions. Opportunities for student inquiry – facilitating a space for wondering, posing questions which lead to more questions, and researching people’s stories – are an effective means of connecting to history:

*...our kids got more out of grandparent's day and asking the...the really basic stuff: What did you do at school? What did you do before school? What were your favourite games? What did you do on the weekends? Where did you go for holidays? They got more out of that...hearing their grandparents say, but we didn't have a telephone and we had to walk to school. That was much more real and had a bigger impact than studying these things [Federation, the First Fleet, Ancient Olympics] and what they consider so far back for them that it's just a fairy story. (Principal, focus group discussion, 2013)*

Inquiry-based education allows students to be responsible for their learning – to have authorship. Active learners are self-directed and highly engaged. Teachers, parents and community members are important in facilitating student knowledge of self and others, as well as *key historical concepts* (ACARA, 2014b). By engaging students in conversation that activates higher order thinking, including asking open questions, they are assisted in making their own connections and articulating their sub-conscious ideas. Effective pedagogy involves taking risks and being a co-explorer alongside students. Facilitating opportunities for meaningful purpose or application further engages both teachers and students. Investigations into histories can also effectively facilitate skills in literacy, ICT, numeracy, geography, contemporary society, and science. Explorations of history cannot be rushed or merely squeezed into a *core business* class. Deeper investigations are necessary to allow the time and space to wonder and appreciate the complexities and ambiguities of histories.

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 4: OUTER URBAN 1

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period of this project this Public-Private Partnership Foundation-6 primary school in an outer Melbourne growth corridor was opened with an enrolment of 260 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 760. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 16.4 to 43.8 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 60% to 65% and there were no students identifying as Indigenous.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 13%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 30% and 31%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 26%.

NAPLAN results – while this school had small drops in some areas tested and stayed steady in some areas tested it also had small improvements in the remaining areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual Issues** relevant to the implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual issue** is that the school is new and has grown rapidly over the three years of our engagement with them – tripling in size in this time. This has meant large and rapid increases in staff which has implications for the depth of curriculum conversation amongst the staff. It is also a very young staff with increasingly high numbers of graduate teachers. The position of the school in the outer west makes finding new staff a challenge. These are significant challenges for any curriculum implementation. This difficult situation is exacerbated by the school commitment to the IB PYP. The curriculum is integrated and follows the design template below:



**FIGURE 7: IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME**

A major theme represented here is “where we are in place and time?” Students inquire into, and learn about, these globally significant issues in the context of units of inquiry, each of which addresses a central idea relevant to a particular trans-disciplinary theme. Lines of inquiry are identified in order to explore the scope of the central idea for each unit. These inquiries are substantial, in-depth and usually last for several weeks. The curriculum does address six subject areas including social studies. The school incorporates AusVELS with the IB PYP and reports to parents and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) accordingly. The merging of these imperatives is a challenge for the more senior staff leaders. As reported by the curriculum coordinator: *“the School has a trans-disciplinary program of inquiry and we are becoming [emphasis authors own] an inquiry based learning school”* (Interview, 2011).

The immediate benefit from the IB PYP curriculum is the alignment in regard to an inquiry approach. The IB PYP stipulates six units of enquiry per grade per year. Each of those units has a broad subject focus, although it is called trans-disciplinary.

*For example, there is the unit - every year you do a unit under the theme of where we are in place and time, so that's looking at history and geography in terms of human migrations and events and explorations and things like that. So under that unit, every year, each in each grade level would do what we'd call, I guess, a history based unit of enquiry.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)

The **second contextual** challenge is the physical location of the school. The school is a new building in a newly constructed residential suburb. All residents in the area, all the school families and the school staff are new to the area. Previously the area was not residential. This has implications for the Years 2 and 3 History Curriculum – as outlined by ACARA in the *AC: History*:

Year 2 Level Description

The Past in the Present: The Year 2 curriculum provides a study of local history. Students explore, recognise and appreciate the history of their local area by examining remains of the past and considering why they should be preserved. (p. 34)

Year 3 Level Description

Community and Remembrance: The Year 3 curriculum provides a study of identity and diversity in both a local and broader context. Moving from the heritage of their local area, students explore the historical features and diversity of their community as represented in symbols and emblems of significance, and celebrations and commemorations, both locally and in other places around the world. (2014b, p. 39)

This is not to suggest that there is no local knowledge, but that its configuration is distinctive and difficult to readily engage.

## **DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED**

- Formal interviews with Curriculum coordinator, classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers and researcher
- Observations of history classes
- School's curriculum documents



## STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The IB PYP program is fully enacted in the school with each year level engaging units on place and time. The curriculum is audited against AusVELS. In 2011 the school was *“becoming an inquiry based learning school”* (Curriculum coordinator, interview).

By 2013 the language of the discipline and the word ‘history’ itself was only edging into the classroom. New staff are being supported to engage the IB PYP curriculum – and therefore a history curriculum – through professional support. This is a challenge with new cohorts of students and new cohorts of teachers. This transition stage is most readily apparent in the conflicting approaches to teaching inquiry based facilitation alongside teacher directed transmission. In this sense the ‘History curriculum’ is seen as in the initial stages of enactment as the staff become more fully immersed and experienced in the IB PYP curriculum.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL’S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### The formal curriculum process

The history curriculum, as with other curriculum areas in the school, is understood as a document that moves in a hierarchical process from central policy makers outside the school – in this case the IB, VCAA and ACARA – through school leadership and then to classroom teachers. In this process the leadership and the teachers have modifying roles and the students are recipients of the curriculum: *“Curriculum process moves from policy makers to principals and leadership who will be provided with the curriculum ...then it will be a case of taking it back to the schools”* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011).

Modification by school leadership addresses the needs of their school context and their students.

*Our plans are to obviously consider the curriculum, and obviously in this case, the Australian curriculum, in developing that framework and developing the six programs of enquiry including the content and the skills that are included within the Australian curriculum. So we'd need to consider that and look at what works based on the curriculum, but also what works in terms of the context of our school and our kids and the units.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)

The national and state curriculum authorities claim involvement from schools but in this case there has been no direct participation: *“we haven't played any part in terms of the development of the history curriculum as a school”* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)

### Assessment is a curriculum determinant

Interviews with teachers and conversations with students, combined with observations by the researcher, provided substantial evidence that assessment practices work as a significant curriculum determinant. As the curriculum coordinator remarked:

*As long as there's a clear understanding of how the assessment and reporting works in relation to the curriculum. I think the schools can handle the implementation, but I think the biggest professional learning needs to happen in terms of connecting it back to the assessment and reporting because that's where we're accountable as well.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2011)

Within this perspective teachers are primarily positioned as assessors rather than facilitators or curriculum designers and students as subject of assessment and recipients of judgements. The assessment process was significant enough for one Year 6 student to say in response to the place of History in his school learning: *“we do history for a term with a summative assessment at the end”* (2012). The relationship between curriculum and assessment was not seen however as unproblematic by the co-ordinator: *“I think sometimes written curriculum can do us a disservice because they focus too much on that and they focus too much on the progression points and what needs to be ticked off on the reports”* (Interview, 2011).

### **Curriculum adaptation to students needs**

Teachers had strong positions on the implementation of the curriculum. The student profile, usually developmentally configured, was an important factor in shaping implementation. Teachers in the early years emphasised the importance of relating history to the lives of their students. They argued that: *“history must be connected to the students in the early years...For prep children they are so ‘me’ focussed it must be connected to them”* (Teacher A, interview, 2012).

This reflects the structured development of skills and interests in the AusVELS and Australian Curriculum documents. In this assertion the teachers position themselves as modifiers of curriculum – asserting agency in their curriculum implementation work.

*For prep children they are so ‘me’ focussed it must be connected to them...  
It’s hard for them to understand ‘before I was born’. (Teacher A, interview, 2012)  
And to understand another country is engaging for those who have travelled but for those who haven’t travelled they couldn’t get it. (Teacher A, interview, 2012)*

## **HISTORY TEACHING**

### **Teachers were seen teaching history through:**

- reading stories to whole class
- providing a range of resources, digital and paper, for students to research
- bringing visitors to class to tell stories
- using timelines and world maps

### **The teachers see the discipline of History as heavily content dependent**

The teachers often spoke of the history content as a challenge in terms of new knowledge for them. They argued that this requires that they increase their content knowledge and have access to a large bank of resources. These demands were seen to be very significant in a situation in which they are themselves new to the teaching profession and new to the IB PYP curriculum and to ‘history’. The inquiry model of the IB PYP and of the History curriculum does not position the teachers as holders of knowledge and providers of knowledge. The teachers however bring to this curriculum a background in teacher directed pedagogy and knowledge transmission. This is reinforced by assessment protocols. External influences exacerbate this perspective.



**IMAGE 7: TEACHER-DIRECTED CONTENT**

### Literacy learning impacting History teaching

The tasks set in the history sessions are, and the assessment of those tasks is, strongly linked to the literacy curriculum. This permeates at all levels: *“history becomes your reading and writing... History becomes subsumed in literacy and thematic work”* (Teacher B, interview, 2012).

The history curriculum is often a vehicle for literacy even recognizable by the students: *“we want to learn so we can write it down”* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013). Literacy is also viewed as a pre-requisite for learning history: *“yes but they need to know the basics of spelling first”* (Teacher A, interview, 2012). The history curriculum is positioned as secondary to the literacy curriculum. This reflects the national curriculum perspective evidenced in the staging of the development of the various curricula, the time devoted to the respective curricula in schools and NAPLAN imperatives. . This is significant in a school which has the IB PYP as a curriculum framing device. These Year 6 students share their understandings:

*History is not an important area in school ...we haven't done a lot of it...*

*The most important subjects are literacy and numeracy.* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

### Engaging an inquiry process

The teachers in the school are fully aware of the role of inquiry in their teaching- as a PYP school and in regards to the History curriculum. This is viewed in a very positive way by the teachers: *“I am in the inquiry with them”* (Teacher B, interview, 2012). However it does challenge previously held views of the role of the teacher: *“I have to get over the fact that I don't know everything”* (Teacher B, interview, 2012). It was asserted this was particularly challenging for graduate teachers: *“it's hard for them to let go control”* (Teacher A, interview, 2012).

# Central Idea

## The way we live has changed over time

IMAGE 8: INQUIRY CENTRAL IDEA

### HISTORY LEARNING

Students were seen learning history through:

- developing questions to guide their own research
- making maps and timelines
- writing responses/ books to their questions
- interviewing visitors and outside community members
- researching on the internet

#### History is learnt through inquiry

In every classroom there was strong evidence of an enacted inquiry approach. Students developed their own questions around topics and used these for their research: “history is about asking questions and having the skills to find out” (Teacher B, interview, 2012). For a Year 1 student the process is: *“we make problems then we ask people.”* The word inquiry has entered the language of the students: *“in history we watch videos we **inquire** [emphasis authors own] we research on the internet. We can look at books but we don’t do that much”* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013).

The students use a range of resources for accessing information to answer their questions: *“we usually go to the internet and if we can’t find it then we go to the library. The quickest resource is just to go straight to the website so it’s not hard”* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013).

Teachers also organise visitors to the classroom. Community members are often invited in to address student questions. Teachers also present videos and read books to the class: *“the teachers tell us and we listen”* (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013).

#### Timelines and maps

Students are often seen creating timelines relevant to the topic or central concept. This activity was seen on many occasions over the visits to the school. Maps were used more often in upper primary classrooms. Both maps and timelines appeared to engage the interests of the students: *“I like looking at the map so we can learn where worlds are”* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013).



**IMAGE 9: STUDENT'S TIMELINE**

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The teachers at this school are firmly committed to the teaching of history. They see it as making strong links to the community and to the lives of the students through the lives of the school community. As argued by a Year 6 teacher: *"history changes the student's worldviews"* (Interview, 2012).

The discipline of history is clearly engaged through inquiry at this IB PYP school. As has been noted earlier it is seen as both content heavy and understood through questioning: *"history is about questions and skills not content"* (Teacher B, interview, 2012).

Students understand that history is about the past or 'the olden days': *"we want to learn so we know how people are going over the years"* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013). A grade 6 student offers a more sophisticated reading: *"comparing the olden times to now"*.

The students in the early years have a strong sense of the role of story in history.

*I like history because I like hearing other people's stories.* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013)

*History is about people's stories and I want to know a secret.* (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2013)



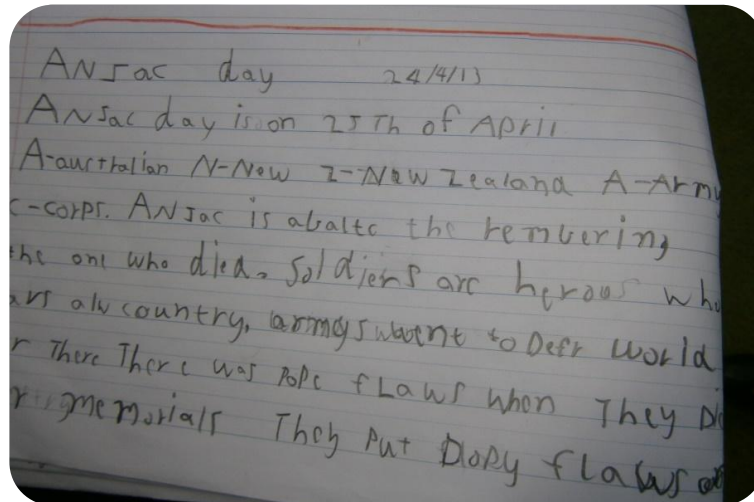
**IMAGE 10: HISTORY AND THE PAST**

Teachers make strong comments on history as constituted by knowledge, skills, values, people, places and events. The students represent history as concerned with particular content.

*Well about history... like federation. And, and how the natives lived, before the white people came. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*

*We learnt about the gold rush so not really history it was Australia but now we do other places. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*

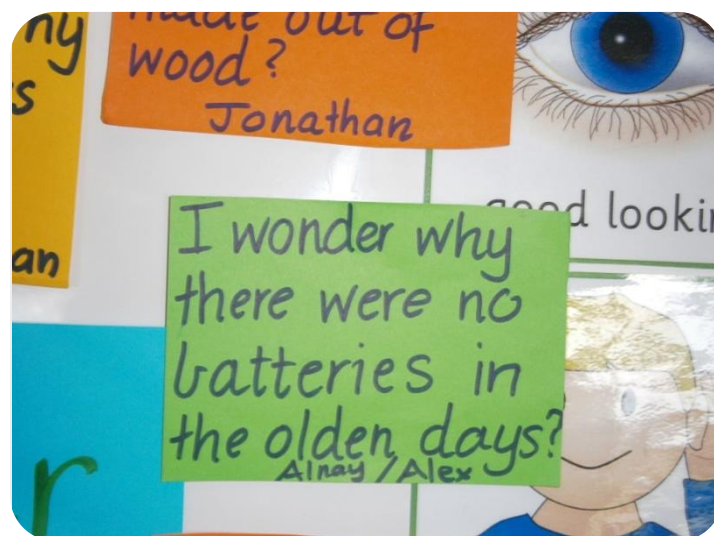
*We have been learning about the Silk Road because we could see how countries were connected. (Year 6 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*



**IMAGE 11: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN HISTORY**

#### **BEST PRACTICE**

The most significant and distinctive feature of the teaching of history in this school is its position in the IB PYP inquiry approach. The interdisciplinary approach through central ideas ensures that history is engaged in a meaningful and holistic manner. The inquiry focus in the discipline of history and in the Australian History curriculum is well positioned in this inquiry IB PYP model. The continuity of this approach across the school supports its engagement in a systematic and developmental process.



**IMAGE 12: QUESTIONS OF INQUIRY**

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 5: URBAN 2

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period of this project this school, a Prep-6 primary school, recently formed by the merging of two small local primary schools, had an enrolment of 428 students increasing to 447 by the end of the data collection period. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 30 to 31 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 73% to nearly 80% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous remained steady at 1%. ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 50%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 29% and 15%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 7%.

NAPLAN results - this school remained steady or improved in all areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual Issues** relevant to the implementation of the *AC: History*.

The **first contextual** issue is that the school has undergone recent changes in staff. One of the significant staffing factors is the school's decision to have a full time Curriculum Coordinator. This has been extremely valuable in a time of curriculum change concurrent with staff change.

The **second contextual** issue is that the previous principal had a strong association with the local historical society. The school is named after a historically significant local industry. This historical consciousness is evidenced around the school in artefacts from that industry, photographs and maps. The previous principal still has a presence in the school. The school community is one relatively new to the area with almost 80% of students with a language background other than English. There are no likely or apparent ties between the school community and that local history represented by the school name.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED:

- Formal interviews with Curriculum coordinator and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers and researcher
- Observations of history classes
- School history curriculum documents

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

At the end of this research project the school was moving from an enacted curriculum implementation to a realised one. The History curriculum has been worked inside integrated units. History has gained greater prominence over time as AusVELS grew – including reporting protocols. The staff identified minimal support from the regional office or the Department in this implementation: *“the department seems very quiet on it...I went to one briefing last year...our region has only briefly touched on history”* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012).

The impact of the union embargo has been felt by the curriculum coordinator who identified the limitations on curriculum development from lack of staff meetings: *“my role is to pass new curriculum on to staff but can't yet because of [the] union”* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012).

The school does have support for curriculum development through a cluster of schools to which it belongs. Also the curriculum coordinator ensures contact with subject associations and has taken the time to attend subject conferences – such as the one run for primary teachers by the HTAV.

### **DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM**

The current school is a result of a merger of several schools in 2009. After the merger the school appointed a full time curriculum coordinator. It has been her responsibility to see to the overall curriculum development across the entire school. This has included a curriculum developed around literacy and maths blocks in the morning with afternoons devoted to integrated units: *"this work is called "integrated" by everyone – the students have integrated books"* (Teacher A, interview, 2013). These units are coordinated across the school. The school staff spent time in 2012 examining the AusVELS document and found: *"there's not a huge change required"* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012). Integrated units include Asian countries, disasters, gold. As one teacher explained: *"our integrated topic was gold and we decided to integrate history into it – so we did the gold rush"* (Teacher C, interview, 2013).

### **HISTORY TEACHING**

#### **Teachers were seen teaching history through:**

- reading stories to whole class
- providing a range of resources digital and paper for students to research
- bringing visitors to class to tell stories
- using timelines and world maps

The school is divided into large open plan areas each accommodating multiple classes. Teachers' team teach and students work across the areas. History teaching was identified as being taught during the integrated time. The time spent on these units averaged approximately four hours per week and integrated literacy and mathematics activities.

#### **Teacher content knowledge**

The teachers identified the particular demands of content knowledge. The curriculum coordinator suggested that teachers often look for something they are interested in personally. They will then take the running with that in their team – sharing the load of demand for content knowledge. At other times teachers needed to learn the content before implementing the curriculum: *"at the end of last term we did an overview of this term and we researched it ourselves – we weren't sure ourselves. We had to learn it ourselves then teach the kids"* (Teacher A, interview, 2013). This lack of content knowledge was attributed to the absence of history in teacher education courses.

With almost 80% of the students coming from families with language backgrounds other than English, a large proportion of the school community are new to Australia and to the local area. The 'historical' profile of the school is largely located around 1900 Victoria. There is therefore a large cultural divide between the current school community and the local historical profile. The staff at the school are drawing on local history and on 'Australian History' as the content and referents of the curriculum. History teaching is used to *"embed our students into their community"* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012).



## HISTORY LEARNING

Students were seen learning history through:

- local walks
- making maps and timelines
- writing responses to set tasks, for example: *“write a letter from the goldfields”*
- interviewing visitors and community members from outside the school
- researching on the internet

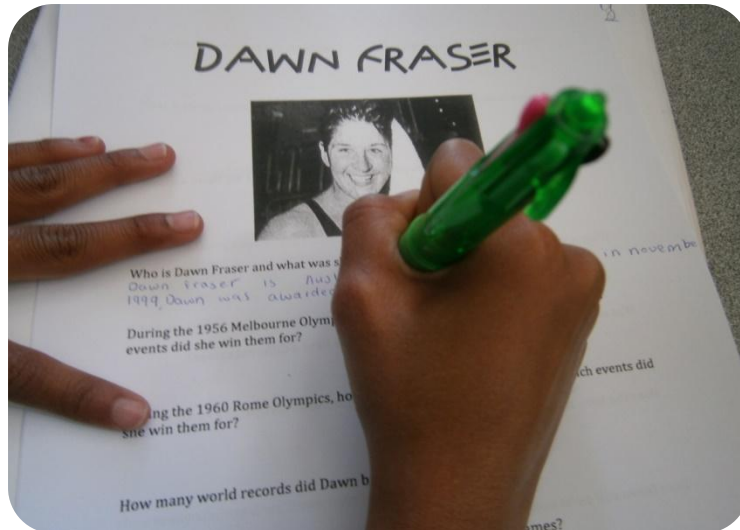
The teachers identified the home backgrounds of their students as significant in terms of expectations for learning: *“it is the cultural background – they lack a lot of life experiences”* (Teacher A, interview, 2013).

The students are given a great deal of visual and written information from which to answer questions.



**IMAGE 13: RESEARCHING FROM PROVIDED INFORMATION**

The students are often involved in whole class teacher directed activities in which the teachers present information through stories, artefacts and PowerPoint presentations using internet sites and a variety of texts. The history of sport in Australia was used to engage historical concepts and skills and to introduce students to what was considered important Australian cultural knowledge – for example: the significance of Donald Bradman, Dawn Fraser and Evonne Goolagong Cawley.



**IMAGE 14: STUDENT WORK SHEET ON DAWN FRASER**

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

Staff at this school acknowledge the importance of history for primary students. They identify it as a body of content knowledge. As one teacher explained: *"it is important for us to have the knowledge to answer the kids' questions"* (Teacher B, interview, 2013). The staff also see history as having an important role in the communication of culture.

### BEST PRACTICE

The school is committed to integrated curriculum units as best practice. The careful planning of these units across the school and in line with AusVELS provides a sound platform from which teachers can address the needs of their particular students.

## VICTORIAN CASE STUDY 6: RURAL 2

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this established Prep-6 primary school had an enrolment of 543 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 570. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 34.1 to 35.6 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English fell from 2% to 1% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 1% to 2%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 11%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 29% and 32%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 29%.

NAPLAN results – while this school had small drops in half the areas tested they remained steady in the rest of the areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual Issues** relevant to the implementation of the *AC: History*

The **first contextual** issue is that the school is located in an area that has strong national historical significance. Local historical sites attract local and international visitors. The school has well developed links to local historical societies and to community groups.



**IMAGE 15: LOCAL HISTORY**

The school has a long tradition of engaging with local historical associations. One of the members of this association presents to teachers and to the HTAV. Over time the Grade 4 curriculum has included a major study focussed on the history of the local area. This predates the introduction of an official history curriculum.

*We have a long standing program linked to VELs and the area we did get a Community Partnerships Award for it a few years ago. (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012)*

And:

*We have got quite a reputation of our Story of \*\*\*\*\* Project, which is teaching children about local history but taking them into the environment, meeting the*

*indigenous people that are part of the area - going to another area like Mount \*\*\*\*\* and learning about the environment with land care.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012)

School policy emphasises “a strong sense of community through an ‘open door’ policy, good communication, whole school community events and a Parent Liaison Representative Program which builds connection between parents, teachers and classrooms” (De Identified School website, accessed June 2012)

The **second contextual** issue was the implementation of the curriculum being seriously affected by the union bans on curriculum meetings and the delay in reporting advice from government authorities.

#### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with the Curriculum coordinator and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers and researcher
- Observations of history classes
- School history curriculum documents

#### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

As indicated above History has been a strong aspect of this school’s curriculum. It has previously come under other curriculum areas. The focus of that curriculum has been local history as it has become institutionalized through the historical profile of the area. This is a rich area of engagement and a strong community and school identifier. It also may provide a limitation to other historical readings. At the end of this research project the school was moving from an enacted curriculum implementation to a realised one.

#### DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL’S HISTORY CURRICULUM

The school was building on its already well-established history focus at the end of 2012. The curriculum coordinator advised that the school has a “long standing program linked to VELS” and that “*Grade 4 is our focus group*”(Interview, 2012).It was noted by staff that they had no input to the development of the document. The school staff spent time in 2012 examining the AusVELS document and found: “*there’s not a huge change required*” (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012). The framework was found to be easy to follow and allowed the teachers to develop units and slot them into the year where they needed to. It was considered flexible rather than dictatorial. The benefit for the teachers was that the *AC: History* made the teachers more conscious of the teaching of history and refocused what may have been: “*wishy-washy integrated units*” (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012).

There have been external factors that have inhibited the smooth movement from *enacted* to *realised*. Union bans on curriculum meetings have made it more difficult to share unit development and teaching resources. The delay in disseminating report protocols also constrained this transition. Teachers continued in their classroom teaching but they were conscious of the limitations to the full implementation available from ready access to a whole school curriculum development conversation.

## HISTORY TEACHING

Teachers were seen teaching history through:

- reading stories to whole class
- providing a range of resources digital and paper for students to research
- bringing visitors to class to tell stories
- using timelines and world maps

### Teacher content knowledge

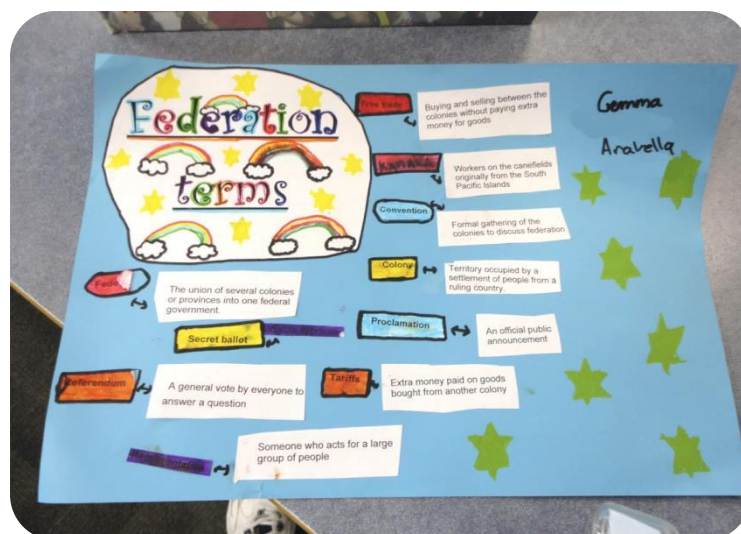
The teachers in this school are already very familiar with Australian history and historical discourses. They are seen by leadership as having the skills and knowledge to engage successfully with new and even unfamiliar curriculum content:

*Our early years teachers will adapt to anything and they will present history in a creative way. So it doesn't mean a huge shift for them....they [the teachers] need to know certain knowledge themselves of the history of Australia and I would be very surprised if anyone didn't have that knowledge in primary school I think because it's very logical, the different facts and things that they need to be able to impart to the children. (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012)*

The school supports teaching history through active engagement. History is taught as part of large integrated units at each year level. This integrated approach is one that has been used before but it has made a qualitative difference through the AusVELS curriculum:

*It's going to add quality to the integrated units that we were doing, a few years ago we moved away from focusing on content and focusing on skills and that will continue but now it's a blend. They've got that content that they need to cover but develop the skills that are necessary as well. So I think that it will be a richer curriculum really in the next few years by including this. (Teacher A, interview, 2012)*

History teaching was integrated with literacy with a strong emphasis on sequencing and comprehension activities.



**IMAGE 16: LITERACY AND HISTORY IN UPPER PRIMARY**



**IMAGE 17: SEQUENCING IN EARLY PRIMARY HISTORY LESSON**

**HISTORY LEARNING** Students were seen learning history through:

- developing questions to guide their independent research
- making maps and timelines
- writing responses and books to their questions
- interviewing visitors and outside community members
- researching on the internet

#### **History is learnt through inquiry**

History is engaged through an inquiry process. The units of inquiry are largely centred on the student families and local context except for some units in Grades 5 and 6. The students are often involved in whole class teacher directed activities in which teachers present information through stories, artefacts and PowerPoint presentations using internet sites and a variety of texts. Local community members are invited guests to speak to the students.



**IMAGE 18: ARTEFACTS FOR INVESTIGATION IN INQUIRY UNITS**

Students present the results of their inquiry in a variety of ways. Active learning is evidenced below in the models made for an upper primary presentation of local history:



**IMAGE 19: MODEL MADE FOR AN UPPER PRIMARY PRESENTATION ON LOCAL HISTORY**

For some young children learning history provides its own particular challenges as a Year 1 student explains: *“it’s hard to know what to do because colouring in has to be certain colours.”* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

#### **THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY**

For staff History is seen as content knowledge and skills as identified in AusVELS. The teachers see the discipline of History as heavily content dependent. This content is filtered through the strong local historical framing. For the students there is a strong emphasis on history being located through dates and relevant to the past.

#### **BEST PRACTICE**

The staff refer to the long tradition of local historical work – previously done at Grade 4 level. This local work involves the historical society, local community members, use of the local environment and a public performance.

*Our Story of \*\*\*\*\* Project, which is teaching children about local history but taking them into the environment, meeting the indigenous people that are part of the area - going to another area like Mount \*\*\*\*\* and learning about the environment with land care.* (Curriculum coordinator, interview, 2012)

This project has resulted in a Community Partnerships Award and a grant from the Department of Education to create a film about it.

## CHAPTER 9: QUEENSLAND

Paul Reitano and Satine Winter

### QUEENSLAND OVERVIEW

#### CONTEXT

The context of schools in Queensland is not explicitly stated in the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority (QCAA) documents. And although not specifically stated, the expectation is that each school, whether it be in an urban, regional or remote setting, takes into account the context of their local community when developing their individual curriculum – without deviating from the content descriptors and assessment outlines in the ACARA and QCAA curriculum documents. Other ways of establishing the context of a school are to study: the location of the school; its student and staff populations; the background of students; the ICSEA and NAPLAN data. Whilst the QCAA has made an effort to provide professional development opportunities through online activities, teachers in remote areas experience limited access to face-to-face professional development. Schools in remote locations are often located much farther away from other schools than those in urban settings so students in remote settings can also be disadvantaged by not being able to easily network with students from other schools. Students in urban settings are more easily able to network with other students as was shown in one case study school where students worked with Queensland Academies, SPARQed and High Achievers.

#### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

Data was collected from ACARA and the QCAA. The researcher made field notes on classroom activities and conducted semi structured interviews with the school principal, teachers and students. Students, teachers and the researcher took photographs of classroom activities. The researcher also collected school based curriculum documents. What is stated by ACARA and QCAA has not directly translated into schools in terms of the curriculum language, and timelines set down for implementation. Data was also collected from the Queensland History Teaches Association (QHTA), in formal interviews with stakeholders and via a focus group discussion with teachers from the Queensland case study schools in late 2013.

#### STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACARA HISTORY IN QUEENSLAND

Whilst the QCAA indicated a step by step process of implementation – through subject framing papers, transition steering committees, ‘frequently asked questions’ documents and timelines for full implementation – evidence from the six case study schools indicated each at a different stage of implementation. At one school teachers in the Foundation Years were using Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) documents to teach according to *AC: History*. At another school *AC: History* was seen in 2012 as ‘useful’ in providing guiding preparation for teaching. A history committee was established at one school to raise awareness amongst the teaching staff. It was committed and passionate teachers who were the driving force behind implementing the history curriculum into classrooms. In broad terms, teachers were heavily focussed on embedding the other three core disciplines – English, mathematics and science – into the school curriculum. Some teachers spoke about the availability of the QCAA online activities as an opportunity for professional development.



## DEVELOPING THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

Whilst the timeline outlined by the QCAA for implementation of *AC: History* in Queensland schools had 2012 as the date of initiation of implementation, actual development of a distinct history curriculum in the six case study schools varied from that. One remote school was proactive and was developing the school history curriculum in 2012 and by 2013 *AC: History* was being taught throughout the school. Other schools saw the Foundation Years adopt the history curriculum while upper primary classes were still in the *enacting* stage. Because some schools had not put in place an official program of professional development, individual teacher initiative to embrace *AC: History* was the driving force. Other schools are members of professional development networks and so had been able to access relevant resources from other teachers. Some teachers reduced content delivery by half the allotted time because either the content was perceived to be too boring for students or because it overlapped with science. Time management was an issue for some teachers because their school was still in the process of adapting to the other core disciplines of English, mathematics and science. One school appointed a teacher – with a history background – to be the specialist teacher of the *AC: History*, teaching all students across the school, to take the pressure off classroom teachers so they could work on with the task of implementing the other core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

## HISTORY TEACHING

The QCAA offers professional development online, through newsletters, and workshops. The QHTA has also been proactive in supporting primary teachers to varying degrees of success. Those who teach in remote schools are reliant on the services of the QCAA website for professional development. Despite this perceived disadvantage, the research from these six case study schools shows that teachers in remote areas are embracing *AC: History*. This is demonstrated in the accounts in '*History Learning*' and '*Best Practice*' below. During case study visits teachers spoke to this researcher about teaching students how to conduct research and of how to engage students using multiple sources to promote substantive knowledge. For example teachers: used, inter alia, small and whole group discussions as a means to clarify questions; scaffolded source analysis; made history fun by having the class engage in role play; promoted perspective by having students consider the viewpoints of other students; used a multimodal approach; engaged in history at any time of the school day – whenever students talked history.

## HISTORY LEARNING

A common theme to emerge from the six case studies is that some form of historical inquiry is occurring in all the classrooms. Inquiry, according to ACARA and the QCAA, is the central tenet in history learning. The Foundation years for example, base their research on local history and actively engage family members as sources for their research. At another school the Foundation year group collected data from a museum. And at yet another school, students collected data by listening to songs and studying poetry. The most commonly explored historical concepts were 'change & continuity', 'cause & effect' and 'significance'. Students explored the skill of 'chronology' by constructing timelines on the whiteboard, by forming human timelines and by constructing pictorial timelines on the classroom walls. Students researched dreamtime stories and engaged with commemorations. History learning was also about learning content in order to increase specific knowledge to assist students with their research. Students presented their findings through written narrative,

PowerPoint's, timelines, plays and through pictures. The level of historical inquiry in the six case study schools varied but each school was making a concentrated effort to embrace AC: *History* – in a time when some teachers were still grappling with the implementation of English, mathematics and science.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Inquiry, and the epistemology that surrounds it, is considered by ACARA and the QCAA as best practice in history. Interestingly, it was the teachers and students in schools in remote locations who demonstrated a better grasp of pedagogical approaches to historical inquiry. There was a strong focus on embedding the key historical skills. One example focussing on 'chronology' had a Foundation class engaged in activities such as matching old and new with artefacts and images. In another, students formed a human timeline and used the electronic whiteboard to construct other timelines. The concept of 'significance' was promoted through looking at the events that occurred in students' families. Students used the historical skill of 'analysis' to deconstruct artefacts. Students posed their own questions in preparation for their research. The teachers used scaffolding to help students pose inquiry questions – modelling for those students who had any difficulty in posing appropriate historical questions – before discussing the veracity of the questions as a class. One class used a timeline to show the evolution of democratic government and used the topic of migration to further develop their understanding of 'cause and effect'. Students engaged in role playing to develop empathy. At one urban school class time in history learning was primarily focussed towards literacy and numeracy. Student-centred learning was the pedagogical framework of one regional school with the focus on active and informed citizenship. Another regional school embraced the history of the local as the cornerstone of their history curriculum. Students used people and buildings as sources of data thereby giving a real world focus in their historical inquiry.

## **QUEENSLAND POLICY ANALYSIS**

### **CONTEXT**

The State of Queensland and its education sectors are guided by national policies on education and mandated to follow national legislation. Two pieces of legislation provide the framework for the national and state policies. They are the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth) and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DDA). The Disability Standards for Education are sourced from the DDA and aim to provide guidance on expectations and obligations of schools and educators in complying with the DDA in order to meet legal requirements.

The two national policies that affect Queensland are the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians and the Australian Curriculum. At a state level the main policies affecting the education sector are comprised within the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) framework. The QCAR framework provides guidance on the education system in Queensland and consists of five components: Essential Learnings, Standards, Assessment Bank, Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) and the Guidelines for Reporting. The Essential Learnings clarifies what to teach. The similarities between the Australian Curriculum and the Essential Learning's relate to expectations of what to teach, curriculum organisers and achievement standards or standards-based assessment. The differences between the Australian Curriculum and the

Essential Learning's relate to assessment, stages and phases of schooling, and requirements of senior schooling subjects (QSA, 2014).

The QSA provided the system of assessment for the Queensland education sector. In 2014, the Newman Liberal National government in Queensland introduced legislation that established the QCAA as a statutory body of the Queensland government, replacing the QSA. The QCAA is responsible for providing guidelines, assessment, reporting, testing and certifications services for Queensland schools from F-12 (QCAA, 2014a). The main policy actors in Queensland, prior to 1 July 2014, were the QSA and the Queensland schooling sectors. There are three schooling sectors in Queensland. They include Education Queensland schools (1400), Catholic schools (288) and Independent schools (188) (QCAA, 2014b). All of these main policy actors are in agreement with the alignment of the Australian Curriculum and the current Queensland curriculum and identified the inclusion of historical skills as a key strength of the four Phase 1 learning areas.

The QSA and the Queensland schooling sector identified the achievement standards as a key issue of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum with that of the Queensland curriculum, in particular, aligning with the Queensland standards of the syllabus in the Essential Learnings. Other key issues included managing the curriculum in smaller schools and catering to diversity such as Indigenous perspectives

The development of history in the Australian Curriculum is included in Phase 1 along with English, mathematics and science and the QSA confirmed that Queensland was involved in every level of development and writing of the curriculum as well as advisory panels (QSA, 2014). The State government is primarily responsible for the funding of schools in Queensland. The State of Queensland budget expenditure for school education in 2012/13 was \$5 265 312 and increased to \$5 603 266 in 2013/2014 (QTU, 2013).

The structure of primary schooling still varies from other states and territories with Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia under the system of a pre-year 1 known as Preparatory in Queensland – which is optional – with the primary years comprised of Year 1 to 7. Queensland is expected to align with the remaining states and territories when it transitions Year 7 into the secondary years of schooling commencing in 2015.

The Australian Productivity Commission stated that in 2011/12, there are a total of 1890 schools in Queensland with 1563 of those being primary schools, 231 being part primary and part secondary and the remaining 96 being special schools (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2014).

#### **DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED**

The type of documents that constitute policy can be wide varying and come in a multitude of formats ranging from government documents, official email correspondence and website announcements from relevant organisations. Policy documents are often referred to as grey literature because they are an alternate form of literature that often include government reports, white papers, green papers, and policy in online format. The data collected for this analysis is acknowledged as grey literature and includes a range of documents that relate to

policy and the implementation of the *AC: History* in Queensland. For full list of policy documents analysed see Appendix D.

Also included is analysis of interviews with policy actors and teacher educators representing or consulting with the QSA, QHTA and Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA). Analysis of a focus group discussion with teachers from the Queensland case study schools forms another aspect of this analysis. For full list of interviewees see Appendix C.

### **STAGE[S] OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACARA HISTORY IN QUEENSLAND**

The important thing to note in these Queensland documents is QSA's willingness to work with the ACARA. The QSA "is working with our education partners to ensure Queensland schools make a smooth transition to the new Australian Curriculum" (QSA, 2014). Further support for the ACARA agenda is evidenced as the statement, quoted above, goes on to say that Queensland is represented on the expert panels of curriculum writers and that the QSA will provide feedback from the Queensland education community to ACARA. The statement then explains how the Queensland's Minister of Education nominee to ACARA as an Australian Curriculum Ambassador – a former Assistant Director General – will fulfil the role by providing regular updates to the Transition to the Australian Curriculum Steering Committee and to schools. The clear managerial intentions have been laid down here. There is no room for equivocation about the impending history curriculum. "In 2013, Queensland schools will plan, teach, assess and report History across the year levels using the Australian Curriculum" (QSA, 2014).

The following statements are again unequivocal public statements of intention. The *Transition to the Australian Curriculum* confidently states that the QSA has developed a comprehensive framework to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. In short, Queensland is "well positioned" for this transition to the history curriculum because of the similarities between *AC: History* and Queensland's SOSE Essential Learnings. For example, the four stages of development as proposed by the framing papers resonate strongly with Queensland three phases of learning. Indeed the framing papers are described as "world class" and "are clear about what is to be taught and learnt" and has the content and achievement standards which "set high expectations for all students" (QSA, 2014).

To this end, the QSA has developed a series of information "flyers" to inform and perhaps placate those in the educational community. One common way to allay fears of impending change is to produce "frequently asked questions" documents. The questions are carefully worded to avoid any possible ambiguity. For example in the document titled *Development of the Australian Curriculum* ([www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)) there are a series of questions and answers relating to the makeup of the Australian Curriculum and timeframes for implementation of the two phases. A recurring theme is the nature of Queensland's representation during these developmental phases and the similarities and difference between the Australian Curriculum and Queensland curriculum documents. The *Transition to the Australian Curriculum* reiterates QSA's role in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, as well possibly pre-empting concerns with questions (and answers) about the Queensland position in the transition phase and the position of Essential Learnings in this transition. The final "frequently asked questions" document, *Assessment, moderation,*

*certification and the Australian Curriculum*, seeks to answer queries that typically come from the education community.

To enhance the transition to the Australian Curriculum, and to again indicate QSA's support for the Australian Curriculum, the QSA and ACARA jointly published a 13 page curriculum mapping templates in July 2011 to assist regional centres and schools map curriculum and assessment. At this stage only English, mathematics and science have been considered in the mapping process. The first template seeks to elicit basic demographic data, systemic and school based priorities, and sources for gathering information and data at the school and regional level, while the following template concerns current practices at the school level in terms teaching and learning, staff capacity to improve, resource management, and community engagement. The remainder of the curriculum templates indicate proposed mapping for teaching and learning for the other three core curriculum areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, and the range and timing of assessment across all year levels.

## **DEVELOPING THE HISTORY CURRICULUM**

The following timeline indicates the developmental process of the *AC: History* as relates to Queensland:

### **Timeline**

1. 2008 National Curriculum update
2. 2008 National History Curriculum Framing Paper
3. 2009 HTAA Statement – National Curriculum & Teacher Pre-Service Training
4. 2009 HTAA Response to NCB's History Framing Paper
5. 2009 The Shape of the *AC: History*
6. 2009 Framing Paper Consultation Report: History
7. 2009 Statement from Paul Kiem, President, HTAA on National Curriculum & Teacher Pre-Service Training
8. 2010 P-10 Draft National History Curriculum (Draft Consultation version 1.0)
9. 2010 QSA response to draft K(P)-10 Australian Curriculum
10. 2010 QSA Australian Curriculum K(P)-10 Trial - Feedback from Queensland Schools
11. 2010 Australian History Curriculum approved
12. 2010 Federal Minister Peter Garrett Press Release
13. 2010 State and Territory Minister's Resolution (7<sup>th</sup> MCEECDYA Meeting 8 December 2010, Canberra)
14. 2012 The Shape of the Australian Curriculum
15. 2014 Online History Curriculum Document\_v7.1

A number of policy documents are selected from the above timeline for further discussion.

### ***National History Curriculum: Framing Paper 2008***

The NCB began its consultation with the publication of the *National Curriculum Development Paper* on its website. This paper described the context of its work and set down questions that needed to be answered to determine the kind of curriculum that would be developed. The *National History Curriculum: Framing paper* was built on the response to the *National Curriculum Development Paper*; initial advice; AG feedback; submissions through the Board's website; individual responses by academics and teachers;

responses from national, state and territory forums. The purpose of this paper was to generate broad-ranging discussions about curriculum development. The paper was posted on the NCB's website with an invitation to all those interested to provide feedback and advice from November 2008 until February 28, 2009.

#### ***HTAA statement – National Curriculum & Teacher Pre-Service Training February 2010***

While the History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA) has been an enthusiastic supporter of the initiative to develop a national curriculum in history, the association expressed concern about the ability of pre-service training programs to prepare history teachers capable of successfully implementing new national courses. The association felt that there was an urgent need for everyone with an interest or involvement in teacher preparation to begin to address this issue. The HTAA wanted to see is a commitment from all education ministers, universities, state curriculum authorities and teacher employment bodies to a minimum standard, it being that:

*A primary teacher will have a firm foundation in the content to be dealt with in the primary section of any national syllabus AND an understanding of the discipline of history and history pedagogy appropriate to the primary setting. (Kiem & Secker, 2010)*

#### ***Queensland response to draft K(P)-10 Australian Curriculum May 2010***

The Queensland schooling sectors, in partnership with the QSA provided feedback on the draft K(P)-10 Australian Curriculum. It was agreed that there is general alignment between the Australian Curriculum and the existing Queensland curriculum.

Feedback was gathered from:

- National forums
- State focus sessions
- Learning Area Reference Committees (LARCs)
- QSA mapping activities with staff teams
- Interviews with some Queensland trial schools using the draft K(P)-10 Australian Curriculum
- The three educational sectors representing 1400 Education Queensland schools, 288 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Feedback was categorized accordingly: strengths; content descriptions; content elaborations; achievement standards; structure of curriculum; general capabilities; cross-curriculum dimensions; digital layout.

#### ***Australian Curriculum K(P)-10 trial – Feedback from Queensland schools July 2010***

Content was examined in terms of strengths:

- solid scope and sequence
- succinct and useful descriptors and elaborations
- enables the use of inquiry processes
- ability to integrate with English

Content was examined in terms of weaknesses:

- too much content to cover within the timeframe given
- limited time to explore deep understandings or big concepts
- content overlap and placement, especially in Years 7–8
- need for teacher training in the content area

- lack of quality resources to implement the curriculum topics
- time requirements to teach content

The 'need for greater refinement for clarity' was the key concern in regard the achievement standards. In terms of professional learning and resources, it was recommended that schools should get comprehensive advice about planning and teaching.

## HISTORY TEACHING

From 2010 until May 2013 QSA issued newsletters titled *QSA Connect*. The content of these newsletters can be categorised into: (1) promoting professional development workshops; (2) encouraging teachers to join the history assessment project; (3) advertising new history resources. A number of these newsletters were published each month, indicating QSA's commitment to a successful roll out of the Australian Curriculum History. A good thing about these newsletters is that apart from disseminating Australian Curriculum, they also acted as recruiting hubs for teachers to participate in the development of assessment exemplars. For example:

*Join our History assessment project. QSA is seeking expressions of interest from teachers (through their principal) to be involved in a workshop developing Assessment Bank packages that support our Australian Curriculum: History exemplar project. The workshop will be held 23–25 May with three days of Teacher Release Scheme (TRS) available. In particular, we are seeking teachers who have a special interest in the History learning area in P–2 and Years 3–7. For further details... (QSA, 2012a)*

Whilst professional associations like the QHTA provide professional learning for history teachers, the QSA has also been active in offering professional support for teachers:

*Add our professional development workshops to your favourites. Here the QSA offers regular opportunities for professional development to primary and secondary educators. So why not add our workshops page to your favourites list? Upcoming training includes: ~ Standards and assessment: Implementing the Australian Curriculum P–10 (QSA, 2012b).*

The QSA has developed its own *P-10 Curriculum and assessment* advice for teachers, which closely mirrors that of ACARA. Teachers can access, for example, exemplars for whole school planning; advice for catering for diversity; Year 2 Diagnostic Net; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives support materials.

In 2012 the QHTA held a Conference which was very well attended by primary school teachers. A range of presenters, including Brian Hoeppe, Sue Burvill-Shaw and representatives from QSA, explored the implications of an inquiry approach to teaching and considered how primary sources might be best utilised in the primary classroom. Time was also given to the asking and answering of attendees questions. The QHTA encouraged membership of the association amongst primary teachers. Sue Burvill-Shaw ran a number of full day workshops through QHTA aimed to provide practical advice in implementing the AC: *History* in primary classrooms. Both Helen Hennessey and Karen Madden provided invaluable advice to the Executive as to how to assist Primary Teachers.

In 2013 QHTA made a concerted effort to ensure that a large range of Primary focussed sessions were offered at both the Annual Conference (held mid-year) and end of year Professional Development Day. Again, a pleasing number of primary teachers attended

these sessions. Additionally, QHTA provided communication through its online Discussion Group and Facebook Page.

The 2014 Annual Conference was replaced by the HTAA Conference hosted by QHTA in Brisbane and again, a concerted effort was made to ensure a distinct primary stream was available on each day *“despite our attempts, it has been difficult to ensure that all primary teachers are aware of the opportunities offered by QHTA”* (President QHTA).

The history discipline will be a challenge to tertiary educators as well as pre-service teachers. Even though history has a values system which caters for diverse classrooms, this early childhood educator’s experience in learning history in high school was that it was middle class, with a ‘white’ set of values that were politically incompatible to the accepted norms of the day.

Leadership in schools will play a key role in moving teachers from the SOSE mindset to a history focus. The first phase of the implementation of history will be the arrival new documents to school, and someone will be expected to in-service all staff, and this will lie with the heads of curriculum. Most will not have a history background. As this early childhood educator explains:

*I think that there’s a real concern that when we implement a new curriculum that teachers in classrooms are not getting first hand professional development in teaching that particular curriculum. I think particularly with history, where we’ve got no history of teaching history in primary years, particularly in the early years. It’s a real concern.* (Interview, 2011)

The result is that early years teachers may see the content as the same and not realize that the concepts and skills for history are different to that of SOSE. The challenge is the move away from the play based SOSE to a more investigative focus in history. The demands of AC: History makes it harder for play based learning because of the increased testing requirements for Year 3, 5 and 7. These demands clearly troubled the early childhood educator:

*So how are we going to shift a mindset? My fear is that teachers are going to be teaching - they’re going to see that in the early years the content of history is around family and self and community. That fits very nicely in what was taught in SOSE, so it will be business as usual. ...as we transition children from Prep through to Year 3, how we might apply pedagogy to stay true to the Australian curriculum in history through an investigative inquiry way? How it moves from a play based approach through to a more investigative, and then inquiry approach is, I think, going to be the challenge.* (Interview, 2011)

This early childhood educator spoke of the importance of incorporating a trans-disciplinary approach into teaching history as it will avoid the subject oriented approach seen in secondary schools. Children, according to this early childhood educator, make meaning of the world in a trans-disciplinary way:

*I think that an inquiry approach or an investigative approach aligns with the capabilities that we’re trying to develop within history. Well I’d like to see a focus on the discipline of history, the same way as there should be a focus in the discipline of science, for example. But I’m not sure that the pedagogical way of doing that is to have subject oriented half hour slots of time, where pencils down, we’re now going to talk history. That’s not the approach that aligns with the philosophy or the belief system or even the research that shows how children in younger years learn best.* (Interview, 2011)



Another concern this early childhood educator raised is with the timetabling approach because it does not give students the opportunity to develop understandings:

*It goes against everything that we aware of in the research about how young children learn and we're seeing a very timetabled approach to fit in with the rest of the school. We know that children need lengthy periods of time to build their understandings. (Interview, 2011)*

Furthermore this early childhood educator felt concern about pedagogical approaches:

*As we move up into Year 1, 2 and 3, we'll see - and probably rightly so - fewer opportunities for child initiated play. But a play - perhaps it's the word, play, that changes to be more of child initiated investigation and inquiry. (Interview, 2011)*

The focus on teaching should on developing independent learners where students can develop their knowledge, concepts and skills. As this early childhood educator explained “it is important that teachers develop the mindset of historians so they can then promote that kind of thinking into students' minds - so children can see their disciplined approach, not the SOSE integrated approach.” (Interview, 2011)

This early childhood educator spoke about the critical importance of teachable moments – to pick up on the interests of children, knowing that there's a particular learning opportunity for children and run with it “to say right, this is - initiate that discussion - a history discussion or a history moment and be able to say to the children, we're being historians now.” (Interview, 2011) So ultimately, it is about the skill of the teacher to use child initiated opportunities for play to be teaching opportunities – to challenge the children, to extend their thinking, and to get them to inquire about their own play.

A teacher educator explained one of the challenges of teaching history at the tertiary level is instilling confidence in primary graduates, that is, they must develop a liking for history “it is an on-going challenge, and knowledge of content is a real challenge because most will not have a depth of knowledge. They require the substantive and procedural knowledge, that is, pedagogical content knowledge.” (Interview, 2011)

One of the biggest challenges for primary teachers, according to this teacher educator, is that in Queensland, they have never had a professional association with a focus on teaching history in primary schools. The QHTA has over the last five years in particular engaged more widely with primary teachers “so I think the professional association, the QHTA and then bigger – the (national) History Teachers Association will be actively involved in supporting primary teachers.” (Interview, 2011)

Apart from the professional associations, the C2C materials will provide an extra avenue of support in terms of which content area to address, because unlike SOSE which provided more flexibility in topics, AC: History has mandated the content to be covered in each year level. Furthermore, the content to be taught at each year level will vary from that offered in SOSE, so AC: History will even be a challenge for those who love teaching history.

*So professional learning should also be about dealing with the disappointment of those who are dedicated to history teaching to one area of teaching - to make them feel comfortable about teaching another topic in history. They are starting to be a little disengaged from this process because they don't totally agree with moving these topics out of the year levels for very personal but educative reasons. Then*

*they're thinking, well I don't really know whether I could have the content to teach the topics that are now in my year level. (Teacher educator, interview, 2011)*

While new teachers will probably be less entrenched in a particular model of teaching the content, they will, as this teacher educator pointed out, have a superficial knowledge and maybe some *will* have a commitment to certain models because of their background. This teacher educator's other concern was that teachers can differentiate in the levels of complexity between Year 6, Year 5 or 4.

*I don't think we should underestimate the kids and their capacity to investigate something they don't know about, rather than be told what it is and then go and investigate it. It's a bit like sort of telling the kids how the movie's going to end before they actually go and see the movie. They hate that. So if we're going to teach them all the content and then say, now go find out about it, it's not going to work. So I think there will be some people who will need to get a bit of head space around that. But I'm hoping it'll be a positive impact on the schools. (Interview, 2011)*

This teacher educator spoke about teachers being mindful of the demands of *AC: History* – the requirement that there is sequential development of the concepts and skills history. This teacher educator acknowledged that teachers have an incredible amount of content but it is specific to those who love it. Teachers are now being asked to:

*plan in a continuous way with their colleagues so that there's not repetition. So that there's not simplicity, that there's developmental. That's the big professional learning, is how does a team, to actually develop a really good sequence of history learning over the primary years, so that the kids don't get to Year 7 and say but we did this in Year 3. (Interview, 2011)*

As this teacher educator noted, continuity with planning will be critical:

*We need to be looking at history from P to 10, but of course these primary schools that don't have a secondary campus - and there are still a lot of those - they're not even going to talk to the secondary school. So I think there are probably three common areas that some professional learning could be done in. But then you've got all these disparate needs because of backgrounds and experiences and love of history. (Interview, 2011)*

## **HISTORY LEARNING**

The policy documents analysed in this analysis position the learning of history as a pivotal and integral aspect of the curriculum regardless of some of the difficulties involved in implementing the curriculum. The policy documents indicate an authoritarian voice on the implementation of the learning of history from policy actors such as teachers and school leaders as well as discipline specific and curriculum organisations. Teachers are identified as having a key role in the delivery of the history curriculum, specifically their content knowledge and pedagogical approaches.

The responses from the trial schools and QSA to the new curriculum detail a range of strengths and challenges to implementing the history curriculum. The trial schools identify four main strengths of the history curriculum that cover scope and sequence, useful descriptors and elaborations, use of inquiry processes and the ability to integrate with the subject of English. In comparison, the QSA identify six main challenges of the history

curriculum that cover the importance of the subject of history overall in the curriculum, the sequencing of topics and the specifics of content. Those six challenges were:

- too much content to cover within the timeframe given
- limited time to explore deep understandings or big concepts
- content overlap and placement, especially in Years 7–8
- need for teacher training in the content area
- lack of quality resources to implement the curriculum topics
- time requirements to teach content

The trial schools identify the practical delivery issues of the curriculum in addition to the need for professional development, lack of resources and difficulties with the timeframe of teaching the curriculum. The QSA identify significant and detailed issues with the history curriculum starting with the subject being too content heavy with the need for consistency and clarity in content, achievement standards, content descriptors, digital layout and cross-curriculum dimensions. Interestingly, the QSA identified avoidance of repetition as a strength of the history curriculum whereas the trial schools identified content overlap as a challenge.

Guidelines are offered on time allocations for the teaching of the curriculum and work off the principal of 25 teaching hours per week over an anticipated 37-40 teaching weeks per school year. A 'typical' school year in Queensland is variable due to allowances made for public holidays (5-6), student free days (5), NAPLAN testing (3), different start and finish dates for public, private and remotely located schools, occasion days (e.g. sports carnivals) and schooling sector priorities (QSA, 2014). History is allocated as 18-20 hours in P-2 and 37-40 hours in 3-6. This equates as half an hour per week in the early years, while the middle years is allocated one hour per week.

The *AC: History* positions the subject as being organised in terms of content, curriculum focus and structure and achievement standards while catering to diversity. These organisational categories are linked with bigger picture goals relating to students' ability to succeed in life and work for the future. The curriculum aims to enhance the general capabilities of students in literacy, numeracy, competence in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding. Each of these capabilities is expected to be enhanced through the teaching of subjects such as history.

The main policy actors in Queensland discuss the Australian curriculum in terms of students; however students appear to be an object of discussion instead of active participants who negotiate the curriculum. For example, the feedback from the trial schools in Queensland spoke of students in relation to their abilities. Teachers and school leaders identified a need for "*students who will transition to the Australian Curriculum without all the required prior knowledge at their year level*" (QSA, 2010c p. 3)

There is limited evidence to suggest that students were consulted on the process of implementation, other than to be recipients of curriculum. The policy documents analysed do not indicate that students had a direct or active voice in the process of developing the

history curriculum. This research provides a voice for students to express their opinion on the implementation and the content of the Australian history curriculum.

The QCAA rationale states clearly the expectations for students:

*The curriculum generally takes a world history approach within which the history of Australia is taught. It does this in order to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live. An understanding of world history enhances students' appreciation of Australian history. It enables them to develop an understanding of the past and present experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their identity and the continuing value of their culture. It also helps students to appreciate Australia's distinctive path of social, economic and political development, its position in the Asia-Pacific region, and its global interrelationships. This knowledge and understanding is essential for informed and active participation in Australia's diverse society. (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au)*

The AC: *History* aims to ensure that students develop:

- interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be informed and active citizens
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that shape societies, including Australian society
- understanding and use of historical concepts, such as evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability
- capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in the analysis and use of sources, and in explanation and communication

The curriculum in Queensland is aligned to the goals for Australian schooling, as expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. These goals are:

- Goal 1 — Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
- Goal 2 — All young Australians become:
  - successful learners
  - confident and creative individuals
  - active and informed citizens

The QCAA also provides sample assessments under *P-10 History sample assessments*. There is a strong emphasis on inquiry. Students will:

- pose questions about the past using sources provided
- compare objects from the past to the present
- answer questions using sources provided
- present a historical narrative as a speech that describes how technology has changed over time and impacted on people's lives

Assessment is used for a variety of purposes, but its' most important use is in supporting learning. Sufficient and suitable evidence is collected to enable fair judgments to be made about learning. Once the evidence is collected and analysed, it is summarised and presented in ways that are meaningful and useful to:

- help children achieve the highest standards they can
- promote, assist and improve teaching and learning

- build a shared understanding of the qualities of children's work and communicate meaningful information about children's progress and achievements to children, teachers, parents/carers and the system

Feedback is a critical aspect of the learning and teaching process. It is defined as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by children and their teachers to decide where the children are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. Feedback gathered throughout the teaching and learning cycle informs future teaching, learning and assessment. Its purpose is to recognise, encourage and improve learning.

### BEST PRACTICE

*History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that develops students' curiosity and imagination. Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society, and historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others. It promotes the understanding of societies, events, movements and developments that have shaped humanity from earliest times. It helps students appreciate how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant continuities that exist to the present day. History, as a discipline, has its own methods and procedures which make it different from other ways of understanding human experience. The study of history is based on evidence derived from remains of the past. It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges. The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively. (www.qcaa.qld.edu.au)*

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It is the purposeful collection of evidence about children's achievements. An assessment program is planned at the same time as the teaching and learning program and is developed using the achievement standard and the content descriptions.

A planned assessment program will:

- guide and support targeted teaching and learning
- ensure children have opportunities to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their learning in all aspects of the achievement standard
- provide regular feedback to children about how they can improve their learning
- clarify future teaching and learning needs
- ensure teachers have sufficient evidence of learning to make defensible on-balance judgments about the quality of children's work against the standard

To assist teachers in their teaching, sample work portfolios have been provided at the conclusion of each level in the *AC: History*.

Professional learning is a process all teachers should participate in in order to be able to understand and be current with regard curriculum and pedagogical requirements. In short, it is about getting to know the resources, know the curriculum, and know the discipline methodology that underpins *AC: History*. It is important too for ensuring *AC: History* is taught as intended as there can be a gap between the intended and the enacted curriculum.

There is concentration on pedagogy in *AC: History*. That is, the focus is on the *how* rather than the *what*. History content however should not be discounted just because there are a number of teachers who are unfamiliar with the *what* of history. If there is momentum from the top, then the classroom teacher feels more supported. So there must be support at a systemic level. It is also important to establish some experts, or key people in schools, or at the districts level.

Queensland was well positioned by having a year of familiarisation and before the expectation of implementation in 2013. It was about how QSA could best use that time and whether the impost of English, mathematics and science did not overshadow the familiarising with history. There was some anxiety associated curriculum change for some teachers, but there was also a chance to renew too.

Good history teaching is hands-on. Good history teaching is also about the teacher being well informed. A teacher does have to be an expert on every topic, but being able to acknowledge to students that they do not know much about a particular topic, but that as a historian can find out about the topic thus modelling what good historians do. That is important for the teacher of history to show what good history looks like in a classroom. A good teacher can show students that relevance. So a teacher can be doing the exotic things: building the pyramids; pulling the pharaohs' brains out through their nose; but to make that learning relevant to a student by connecting it to the students' own experiences and lives, that is where good history teaching has power.

Good history teaching has a futures perspective as well. By the time students reach Year 6 they should be able to view their future – anything in the future – through a varying set of lenses. One lens might be: “can I make that decision based on the evidence that I have in front of me?” A critical feature of futures learning is the concept of perspective. Does their perspective influence their opinion? Is there agreement on that perspective? Is there a biased point of view on that? These are important futures learning questions.

The skills developed in class provide lifelong learning skills in terms of writing, analysing, creative thinking; they're really important skills and history this well.

*It is important for students to know their own history so they feel a connection to place and appreciate the changes that have taken place. They interviewed all these people and no one knew it was Edmund Barton, and I thought that's really sad. They could say George Washington. Now, what's that saying about application? We live in this country, we need to understand ourselves and then go broader, but they're so global these days (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)*

Many teachers at the QHTA Conference July 2013 commented on the importance of students knowing their local area because of the rapid change that is occurring before their eyes. For example, to celebrate a school's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a teacher and her students researched the history of the school which used to be a horse-breaking yard. Students, the teacher said:

*just loved the fact that where they play there used to be horses everywhere and noise and all that sort of stuff and kids on horses and kids doing that sort of stuff. Part of what we've been doing with the grade five Australian colonies, it's about connection to place...(Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)*

But as in all curriculum change, attendees at the QHTA Conference July 2013 said that the new history curriculum will take time to get used to, but the C2C will provide a useful guide.

*The proof of the pudding is in the eating and we've got to try it first. Like you said, this is the unit you were given. We were given - I know the English, maths, and science C2C and this is your Bible right at the beginning, last year, and we just went oh, okay.* (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)

But a word of caution from the group:

*So we tried it [other subject area] and then we just went - after a couple of weeks it was just, oh my gosh, we can't get through this, I'm so far behind. So I think we're going to have a similar sort of thing with history.* (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)

Attendees at the QHTA Conference, July 2013 spoke about the importance of students asking inquiry questions as an effective way of promoting engagement in the classroom.

*You can also tell when they start posing those questions, asking those questions and those why questions which we all go ooh, good. But that's when you kind of go oh, this kid is really engaged, he's really taking with it and that's really good to see, from our point of view and I'm sure for every teacher. When they start asking those questions, start expanding their learning or their knowledge, then you know that they are engaged.* (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)

They also spoke of the challenges of having students develop the skills of posing questions "How does one assess this? Especially when there are 30 boys and they are required to pose 3 key inquiry questions. This can be messy..." (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013).

Nevertheless, AC: History provides guidance to develop inquiry questions through source analysis. As one attendee noted:

*Instead of being content-driven it's more source-driven, so maybe in the sequence of events of a teaching event you might start with - you might have started in the past with content and the map and this is what happens, this is where this happened, but now it's more - well, here's a source, here's a source, here's a source, what questions do you want to know about these sources and how can these sources inform our knowledge?* (Attendee, QHTA Conference, July 2013)

Some schools have a pedagogical framework which is embraced by all staff and students so there is a consistent approach to promoting higher order thinking skills. Furthermore, those teachers who work collaboratively on the development of new curriculum not only promote collegiality but are more likely to identify and cultivate best practices in the classroom. Teachers, from the Queensland case study schools attending a focus group discussion held in Brisbane in November 2013 also spoke about the enjoyment of teaching history "there isn't the five week cycle. We had to cover three units over the year. So it was a little bit different in that way, we weren't cramming and we could enjoy ourselves and relax a little bit more." (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)

They spoke about the joy and challenge of teaching history especially when teaching topics like Federation where students had the opportunity to engage in role play.

*I've really enjoyed SOSE too but I'm more history than Studies of Society and Environment. Even though that's really important, I just love teaching about past events, whether it's modern or ancient I just find it's just so fascinating. Federation is*

*history too, which is what we were doing, Federation. Then last year I knew that we would be doing government so I did the Discovering Democracy unit where parliament versus monarch (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

Having history as a separate subject, offers the opportunity to teach students key events of the past. But critically it is important to develop a sense of time with students before expecting them to write about history. So the onus is on teachers to have the required grounding in historical pedagogy that embraces learner-centred teaching.

Teachers attending the focus group discussion said that it was important to embed Aboriginal history whenever the opportunity arose: *“because it's the Aboriginal based and family based and I taught in an Aboriginal school years ago, I love it”* (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013).

Teachers attending the focus group discussion used a number of pedagogical approaches in their classrooms to promote a deeper understanding of history. For example, role playing or writing narratives is ‘doing history’ and is more likely to help students develop a greater sense of empathy.

*I've found that the children studying the ancient civilisations of Egypt and China, the ancient Egypt unit was taught a little bit differently, different delivery to the ancient China, and the ancient China was more role playing and hands on and I found that the children really immersed themselves in the China activity. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

However, promoting this sense of empathy or perspective amongst younger children is not without it challenges because as one teacher explained, they can be egotistical.

*Developing a sense of time is easier because it has links with maths, for example. I think chronology was the most accessible for teachers and students. Read them stories of how things are sequenced. As well in maths, sequencing is always a part of it and patterns. The way we understand the relationship between different sections of mathematics, you can almost always go back to a pattern or a sequence somewhere and I think it's just a more obvious area to start learning about when you're talking of history as a subject on its own. Any year level student, I think that would be their first port of call in becoming fluent in this sort of area for learning. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

Fieldtrips to museums help promote the key historical concept of change and continuity, especially in the area of technologies. Using other resources such as family members and photographs, help promote past and present.

Students enjoy assessment that has variety such as responding to timelines, pictorial sources, and then having to write a narrative. There is a strong emphasis on levels of higher order thinking.

*We had mixed media type assessment. There was timelines, pictorial and written, part timelines. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*



*I think one class did just a presentation, oral presentations with slides in the background. But also the written narratives are what I actually found the kids were most excited about. The finished product was something that they could really own and say well, this is pretty cool actually, I've come up with this myself, and that was a bit of pride for them. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

The value of historical inquiry was key part of the pedagogical approaches in the classroom. Broadly speaking, inquiry in the classroom develops a sense of initiative and independence for learners.

*I think building the inquiry skills, particularly with the geography coming on board and using inquiry models for children, because it revolves around them. They get to lead it and have it going and be able to work and build that knowledge up and to me that's a skill that they need outside school because in essence we can't give them all the knowledge, they need to know how to go looking for it themselves. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

These sentiments were echoed by an early childhood teacher who said “*the skills of inquiry is a developmental process whereby inquiry learning should begin in the early years so students then have the capacity to engage in inquiry learning in their later years of schooling*” (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013).

An example of inquiry is using primary and secondary sources to write a report because it promotes skills of analysis and literacy. In one example students had to rate the sources on a scale of one to five:

*Then leading up to the assessment piece where then they had to analyse the sources and write a paragraph - it was a long paragraph - and respond to a question about the Qin Dynasty, and I was really pleasantly surprised with their results. Even the kids with the low literacy, they could still pick out - they had to refer to the sources and cite it properly. (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013)*

As teachers explained “*it is important for students to develop the historical skills of analysing sources in earlier years so when they reach upper primary they have those skills to engage in research*” (Attendee, focus group discussion, 2013).

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDIES

### QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 1: RURAL 1

#### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-12 state college had an enrolment of 400 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had decreased to 367. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff decreased from 38.9 to 33 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English remained steady at 1% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 17% to 22%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students in the bottom quarter was 68%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 20% and 10%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 3%.

NAPLAN results – while this school had small drops in half the areas tested they remained steady in the rest of the areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*.

This school offers an education from Foundation to Year 12 in a co-educational setting located in the Darling Downs region of Queensland. The school's curriculum framework offers a diverse and rich education to students in the early, middle and senior years of learning. Despite this, there are significant challenges in terms of curriculum implementation because of the school's distance from Brisbane. While the QSA (as was, now QCAA) has provided professional development opportunities through its website, the QHTA is Brisbane based which makes it difficult for teachers at this school to attend professional development workshops.

#### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with Head of curriculum and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- School's curriculum documents

#### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The observations made by the researcher during this case study show that the *AC: History* had been *enacted* throughout the school but that it was only in the Foundation classes that the curriculum was fully *realized*. In 2012, the timetable provided for one hour of teaching history per fortnight. Teachers were able to integrate English materials into history – drawing on historical content. There was a concern or awareness, however, that there is a vocabulary of history to be learned.

By 2013 the curriculum focus was multi modal – videos, PowerPoint presentations and guest speakers from the community. One example was showing how family roles have changed – from what was seen as a family in the past and what is regarded as a family unit

now. This demonstrates that there is a focus on the past and the present. The concept of *change & continuity* was introduced as well – by having students construct timelines and participate in historical narratives. Students looked at the changing technology of artefacts to reinforce their understanding.

### **DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM**

The Head of Curriculum has been largely responsible for disseminating the *AC: History* materials and providing in-house professional development opportunities for staff. It was acknowledged that the QSA (as was, now QCAA) provides online professional development in history pedagogy and curriculum but the willingness of staff to engage in these activities has been slow.

In 2012 the focus of implementation of the national curriculum was clearly on the core disciplines of English, Mathematics and Science – along with literacy and numeracy. This process of curriculum implementation was still evident in 2013 especially in the middle years. The situation was different in the early years settings where teachers were actively engaged in implementing the *AC: History*. As the Head of Curriculum explained:

*We often use the C2C . I like to look at the assessment pieces and then choose what suits best for the children – because we've got years one to three. So we have to look at individual units as well as the multi-aged unit and just see what would work best for the group of kids we have. Then once we've chosen the assessment pieces we like to work from a week to week basis what lessons we can use from the units and then create our own to suit - to make towards that assessment.* (Interview, 2012)

### **Curriculum adaptation to students needs**

Early years students in 2012 used photos in their family studies to think about the past of their own families, as well as other families, so they could see what the differences were between past and present. The value of history was acknowledged for how it encourages students to think about the past and to understand the events of the past. To help reinforce this, students hold a minutes silence on Remembrance Day.

Although family members were again the focus in the early years in 2013, teachers spoke of using the key history skill of chronology to examine family histories, including all types of families. Students also examined the differences in artefacts over time. The latter involved the promotion of the key historical concept of *change & continuity*.

### **HISTORY TEACHING**

#### **Teachers were seen teaching history through:**

- Timelines via the electronic whiteboard
- Artefacts, to emphasise the past and the present
- Story telling of family histories
- Daily classroom activities

Classes used *Information and Communication Technologies* to construct timelines; they created a human timeline which emphasised the past and the future. Students were assessed on their ability to construct a timeline using paper and glue. The concept of *significance* was promoted by discussing important events that occurred in students' families. The historical skill of *analysis* was used to identify themes in artefacts - such as size,

colour, use, style. Students used an interactive whiteboard to rearrange artefacts into old and new.

It is difficult to restrict history to one hour a week especially as students like to talk about history at any time of the day. So history is in a sense integrated throughout the school day. A teacher may see themselves as a teacher of history for only that one hour a week, but is actually teaching history most days. The teachers observed and interviewed preferred the *AC: History* because of its explicit content descriptions whereas the Study of Society and Environment, as was under state based curriculum, required first looking at the *Essential Learnings* and then choosing specific content.

The teachers considered the viewpoints of the students and their prior knowledge in their teaching. Teachers used a multi-modal approach – videos, PowerPoint presentations, and guest speakers from the community – to show how family roles have changed over time. The teachers used the C2C assessment pieces as a framework to plan their teaching.

### Engaging in an inquiry process

The teachers used inquiry as a way to embed student input in to their learning. In order to consolidate previously learned skills and develop their understanding of the concept of past and the present, the classes would engage in warm up activities using pictures in a memory game. In one instance observed the teacher would display an image and the students would say what the object is and talk about whether it was from the past or the present and why they believed that to be so. For example they may talk about how mobile phones are from the present and compare them to old telephones. Then moving on from the warm up activity they moved to an activity where they had to match pictures using the categories *old* and *new*. This was an example of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Misconceptions were usually corrected through reteaching, by either using the whiteboard or through class discussions. The pedagogical approach was to work through the warm up and then move to explicit teaching – which involved (a) an opening; (b) the main lesson; (c) wrapping up.

## HISTORY LEARNING

### Students were seen learning history through:

- Posing inquiry questions
- Assembling artefacts in sequential order
- Looking at family images

Students used the process of inquiry to investigate the differences in their family history. This was done by interviewing their family members. The skill of posing inquiry questions was not always grasped by all students at the same time, so there was a lot of scaffolding by the teachers. Students would share their findings with the class via oral presentations, written accounts, and drawings. Foundation students shared:

*I can use an iPad....*

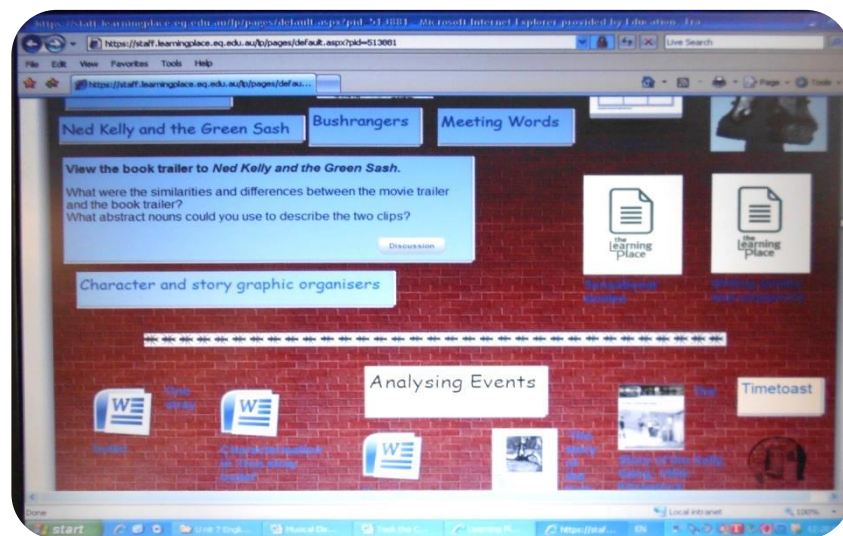
*You read a sentence and they draw a picture... draw it up there, the last one, that's mine...*

*The hand print is the favourite thing we do with our families. ..(Focus group discussion, 2012)*

Year 6 students used Google as a tool to access data: “*yeah, we go on Google and research the stuff that we don’t have in books.*” (Focus group discussion, 2012)

Once the Year 6 students have collected their data they: “*put it on a PowerPoint presentation or in the Word document and we get to... we write it out in our book.*” (Focus group discussion, 2012)

Because of the large number of Aboriginal students within the college, classroom activities embrace this area of cross curriculum priority as illustrated by this Year 6 student: “*we were doing like a dot painting and a boomerang and we had to make up a story.*” (Focus group discussion, 2012)



**IMAGE 20: AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL SKILL PROMOTED IN THE CLASSROOM**

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

As stated above, teachers preferred the *AC: History* because of its explicit content descriptions whereas SOSE, as was under the state based curriculum, required first looking at the essential learnings and then choosing specific content. The value of history was acknowledged for the way it encourages students to think about the past, to understand the events of the past. Two examples are the students using the key history skill of chronology to examine family histories, all types of families; and the differences in artefacts over time.

### BEST PRACTICE

Classes would engage in warm up activities using pictures in a memory game. In one instance observed the teacher would display an image and the students would say what the object is and talk about whether it was from the past or the present and why they believed that to be so. For example they may talk about how mobile phones are from the present and compare them to old telephones. Then moving on from the warm up activity they moved to an activity where they had to match pictures using the categories *old* and *new*. Misconceptions were usually corrected through reteaching, by either using the whiteboard or through class discussions. The pedagogical approach was to work through the warm up and then move to explicit teaching – which involved (a) an opening; (b) the main lesson; (c) wrapping up.



**IMAGE 21: DISASSEMBLING ARTEFACTS TO MAKE DETERMINATIONS**

Classes used *Information and Communication Technologies* to construct timelines; they created a human timeline which emphasised the past and the future. Students were assessed on their ability to construct a timeline using paper and glue.

The concept of *significance* was promoted by discussing important events that occurred in students' families. The historical skill of *analysis* was used to identify themes in artefacts - such as size, colour, use, style. Students used an interactive whiteboard to rearrange artefacts into old and new. The skill of posing inquiry questions was not always grasped by all students at the same time, so there was a lot of scaffolding by the teachers. Students shared their findings with the class via oral presentations, written accounts, and drawings.

Students used photos to think about the past from different viewpoints, usually by examining family members by first looking at the main family and then examining other family members to see the similarities and differences. The concept of *change & continuity* was introduced as well – by having students construct timelines and participate in historical narratives. Students looked at the changing technology of artefacts to reinforce their understanding.

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 2: URBAN 1

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-7 state school had an enrolment of 738 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 840. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 41.3 to 46.7 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 10% to 13% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 0% to 1%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 1%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 19% and 22%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 71%.

NAPLAN results –this school had improvements in slightly more than half the areas tested and a drop in only one area, the rest remaining steady against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** issue was the preparedness of staff in implementing the *AC: History*. Teachers in this school had accessed and attended a range of professional development to assist with a smooth transition from teaching SOSE, as was under the state based curriculum, to the implementation of the national curriculum. Collaboration had occurred between teaching teams to assist with the transition. All year levels included History in their curriculum overviews.

The **second contextual** issue was the student population. There are a significant number of students who have a language background other than English at this school while only a very small number of students who are of Indigenous background. The school utilises *Dimensions of Learning* as a framework for planning, teaching and assessing with a significant focus on differentiation. There are a range of academic programs and specialised teachers to help these students in addition to other students with learning differences and also students categorised as gifted. The school prides itself on its academic record and is linked in with the Queensland Academies, SPARQed and High Achievers. The school is focussed on the overall success and wellbeing of each student.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with the principal, history and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- School's curriculum documents

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

This school has a History Committee that has overseen the development and implementation of the *AC: History* with the school. Members of the committee attended a range of professional development including from the QSA (as was, now QCAA ) and a QHTA conference. The history committee was responsible for raising awareness of the curriculum within the school and providing support to all teachers on implementing the new history

curriculum. In term four of 2012 there was strong focus on introducing teachers to the curriculum and preparing them for the following year implementation.

In 2013 the *AC: History* was implemented using Education Queensland's mapping document. Lessons were conducted according to each teacher's preference, providing that the intent and the indicators of the curriculum were followed. Teachers adapted and adjusted the curriculum in order to accommodate many technologies. The curriculum while not followed prescriptively, the teachers placed more emphasis on the overall intent of the curriculum document, it is *realised* within this school.

### **DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL HISTORY CURRICULUM**

The *AC: History* was implemented slowly in this school beginning with an initial stage of increasing awareness of the document amongst the teachers so they were comfortable with it before implementation. Time management has been a determinative consideration in the delivery of the curriculum. There were deliberations over how to conduct the teaching of history, whether it was through weekly sessions of short periods of time or whether to utilise longer periods of time at less frequent intervals over the term. *"Do you want to make it so you do an hour every two weeks instead of half an hour every week and things like that? I think it will just – that will be the biggest challenge"* (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012).

Difficulties with time management arose due to the added workload of implementing the curriculum while still teaching SOSE while the transition occurred. History was previously taught within other subject areas, most commonly English, but is now taught discretely. Another challenge has been accessing and developing appropriate resources *"the challenges will be what is the difference and then ensuring that those differences, skilling people up or developing resources or what are the changes"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

### **Curriculum adaptation to students needs**

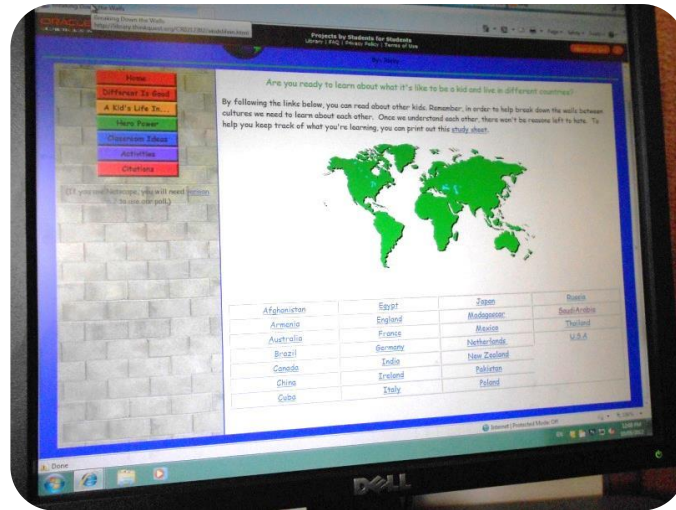
The multi-age unit in the *AC: History* was used for a composite Year 6/7 class with the Year 7 students being given extension work.

### **HISTORY TEACHING**

#### **Teachers were seen to be teaching history through:**

- Excursions and trips to Canberra
- Internet, texts, novels, paintings, art, maps, old letters
- Giving students individual and group work
- Timelines, mapping
- Scaffolding of concepts





**IMAGE 22: GIVING STUDENTS A GLOBAL SENSE OF THE WORLD**

### History is content-based

At this school the teaching of history applies content knowledge of a range of topics such as Indigenous culture, Stolen Generation, Australian politics, Ned Kelly and Australian artists such as Sidney Nolan. In the Foundation/1/2 years, the curriculum focuses on personal and family history. In the middle years it focuses on country, state, and world history. The challenge for teachers was being creative with developing students' knowledge while experiencing a lack of resources *"I think in the limited resources that we have, being able to use online resources – that's a great tool that we have these days...looking at photographs"* (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012). Teachers use the history content and look at ways to combine this with other subject areas.

### History involves inquiry-based learning

The school utilises *Dimensions of Learning* to frame inquiry questions and all the students are familiar with this process. The teaching of history at this school is expected to expand upon this framework and to further develop students' historical inquiry skills. Teachers offer varied sources for the students to explore topics. In depth study is conducted by using *"inquiry questions, but they've [students] got to come up with the inquiry questions"* (History teacher, interview, 2012).



**IMAGE 23: A WAY TO MAINTAIN STUDENT FOCUS**

With the topic of European settlement of Australia questions might include: “*where were you born? Were your parents born in Australia? Were your grandparents born in Australia?*” (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012) Students then explore different perspectives so that they may gain a more balanced view of the topic. In this example students began by investigating the Europeans arrival in Australia aboard the First Fleet and their reasons for settling here. They then proceeded to look at European settlement from the indigenous perspective and moved on to studying those that explored the continent.

#### **History requires engaging pedagogy**

The teaching of history requires teachers to use pedagogical approaches that engage students and encourage them to explore, to think, to ask questions and to want to know more.

*Making history come to life for them is – jumping off the pages of a book so that, even if they can’t visit those places, they can experience it in some way, whether it be through an artefact or listening to a story of someone who was in the Stolen Generation.* (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012)

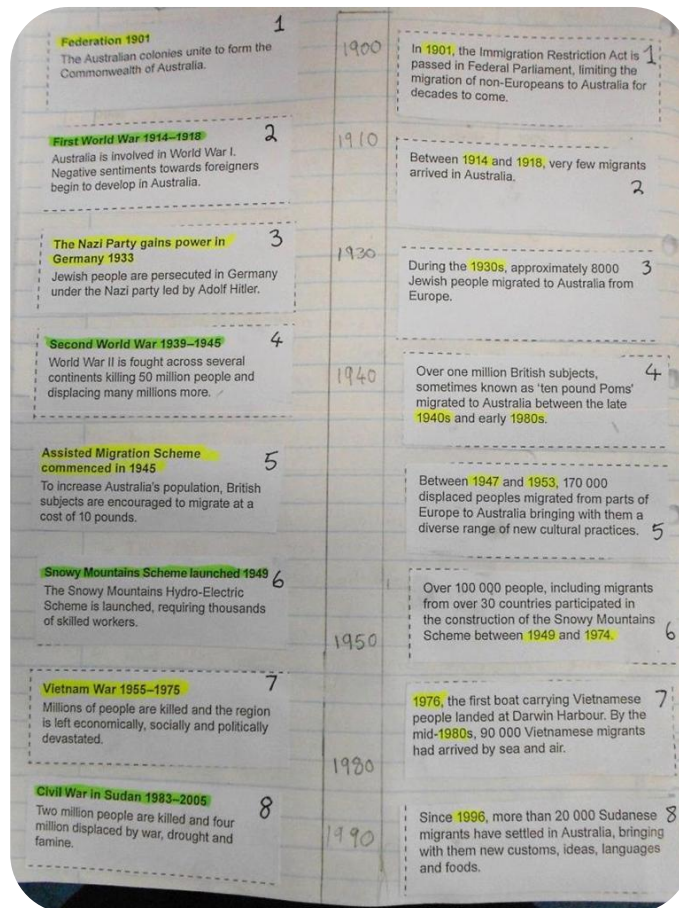
Inquiry based learning is combined with different activities to engage students in the learning of history. Concepts such as longevity and diversity were explored in relation to a timeline of the arrival of the First Fleet comparing the history and timeline of the Indigenous people. Resources were used to complement and enhance activities and learning was extended by taking students on an excursion to the museum to look at artefacts such as photographs and utensils.

#### **HISTORY LEARNING**

**Students were seen learning history through:**

- Writing in different genres: reports, plays, task sheets, comprehension activities, speech presentations, timelines, historical recounts, persuasive text, PowerPoint presentations
- Watching videos

- Reading and researching with pictures, books, paintings
- Researching on the Internet
- Individual and group discussions
- Individual and group work
- Interviewing relatives and other people of interest as related to a topic



**IMAGE 24: DEVELOPING THE KEY HISTORICAL SKILL OF CHRONOLOGY**

### History is learning through content

Students developed their knowledge and enjoyed exploring different topics each term:

*I like learning about every time....so one term we could do about studies about World War II, and the next time we could do studies about Egypt. (Year 3 student A, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*I wanted to learn more about it because I really didn't know anything about Ned Kelly other than he died at a young age. So when I heard that we got to learn about Ned Kelly I was like "Yes!" (Year 6/7 student C, focus group discussion, 2012)*

Students engage in different activities, for example a play about convicts and the arrival of the First Fleet. This enhances their understanding of the content *and* different perspectives.

The role of the teacher is of particular importance to student learning as is the *availability* of the teacher to explain concepts or content that students struggle to understand:

*So if we don't get it, we can put our hand up and she can explain it to us... she'll pull us aside and explain it. (Year 3 student D, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*Yeah, after school sometimes it's like...she does some research on the internet and if we stay in late, she gets to show us all the websites so we can do some at home. (Year 3 student E, focus group discussion, 2012)*

Additionally, questions about concepts and content were used as teaching tools for the whole class so that all students could benefit:

*If you didn't understand what that was we would have about half a lesson and we would have a big discussion on what we think multiculturalism is and what it is and then how it's changed. It turns into a big discussion so one question can be a whole lesson. (Year 6/7 student F, focus group discussion, 2012)*

### **History is learnt through inquiry**

Students learn about history by inquiring about the what, why and how of things in the past and the subsequent impact this has had on the present and what might occur in the future. For example, students were looking at the cause and effect of migration in Australia and also migrants in other countries:

*We're looking at what are the reasons that Australia had those huge waves of migration. We're looking at well, World War 1 happened, or the Nazi's and Hitler from 1933. The Nazi rule in Germany and how that lead to Jewish – a large number of Jewish migrants. (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012)*

The process of inquiry might be seen by some as quite prescriptive in that it involves students exploring a topic, engaging with the material, generating questions and then analysing primary and secondary sources of information, especially in relation to significance.

Student learning is demonstrated through their assessment:

*They do have to analyse and work out what is important and what's not important and how that shows the changes that have occurred. (Teacher, interview, 2012)*

*Yeah we've done lots of significance. Like sort of the significance of this picture. What is the significance of all these percentages? (Year 6/7 student F, focus group discussion, 2012)*

Students take pride in their learning, especially when there is a difficult concept that they have struggled to understand.

*It was a bit difficult to take them all in [details about Aborigines] and then kind of think about, what does this really mean. That's what I found difficult and challenging but when I figured it all out I felt really proud of myself. (Year 6/7 student C, focus group discussion, 2012)*

### **THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY**

In this school the discipline of history is viewed as being essential to understanding Australian society and is valued as a discrete subject area. However the content is viewed as being delivered separately in comparison to when units were more integrated and a key feature of planning and organisation. *"I believe that all children need to know, particularly about Australian history. They seem to know lots about American history. They don't know a lot about Australian history."* (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012)



**IMAGE 25: STUDENTS STUDY ICONIC FIGURES**

In comparison to Study of Society and Environment, as was under state based curriculum, history is taught more explicitly. As the previously quoted specialist history teacher commented “*you’ve got to really teach it; [be] a lot more explicit*” (Interview, 2012). In this school as in so many schools there is much focus on literacy and numeracy, therefore history, while viewed as an important subject, is at risk of not receiving as much attention as is needed. The *AC: History* is described as an important guide with good learning material and suggested directions to follow “*it is very specific in those skills and the knowledge and understanding as well*” (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012). History is viewed as requiring historical skills as well as content and knowledge.

#### **BEST PRACTICE**

Teacher attitude towards teaching the *AC: History* is important as teachers have a direct impact on how students engage with the content “*you really need to be passionate about everything you teach so that you can engage the children*” (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2012).

Familiarising themselves with the new curriculum and raising awareness about history *before implementation* has helped teachers to feel more comfortable with the process and less intimidated by the discipline.

Knowing the intent of the curriculum and working within the parameters of what structure is provided by it is the critical aspect of implementing the curriculum. Additionally, a pedagogical approach to implementing the curriculum is essential so that active learning occurs and so that students are most engaged.

*What I don’t expect is that it’s all just factual; a lot of information, a lot of reading, research it and regurgitate. That’s what I don’t want to see...how they engage is more of that interactive or that hands on sort of approach.* (Principal, interview, 2012)

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 3: REGIONAL 1

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this established F-7 state school had an enrolment of 1139 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 1156. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff decreased from 68.9 to 68.1 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English grew from 3% to 4% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous also grew from 3% to 4%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 16%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 34% and 32%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 18%.

NAPLAN results –this school had an improvement in one area tested and drops in only two areas, the rest remaining steady against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** issue relates to resources and how students are taught in the classroom. For example, students in Year 6 all use laptops and this impacts the teaching and learning of the *AC: History*. Students engage in a range of work that is digital, written, and oral.

The **second contextual** issue is professional development. In addition to classroom teachers, there is a *Special Education Program* and there are difficulties in managing staff in terms of attending professional development and findings replacement teachers. Professional development often takes the form of staff meetings.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with the Principal and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- C2C materials

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

In 2012, teachers were becoming familiar with, and gaining an understanding of, the *AC: History* through school initiatives such as accessing a virtual classroom with relevant information and attending targeted staff meetings. The Head of Curriculum sent weekly bulletins to staff and an introductory session in preparation was organised. A softly-softly approach was taken in regard to implementation of the first four subject areas (English, Mathematics, Science and History) by introducing them in Term 4 of 2012 so as to limit teacher stress.

In 2013, there were still some SOSE units being combined with the new curriculum. The *AC: History* was implemented in the classrooms and teachers were adapting as best as they could, considering the workload and demand of other subject areas and by the end of the data collection period of this project this school had *enacted* the new curriculum.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### Implementing the history curriculum

Teachers were using their experience and pedagogy to implement the curriculum and learning as they go, *"so while we will be implementing the history curriculum from Term 1 next year, next year will also be learning on the job"* (Principal, interview, 2012). Teachers are required to manage the other subjects within the curriculum and not every subject has the same amount of time allocated to it. Teachers make adaptations to the curriculum using the assessment as a basis for deciding on what needs to be taught:

*It's a balance of time managing and that's the problem with all the teachers, but I do history as a priority. Because we're so time-poor, we haven't been able to do every part of every lesson...we've been basically looking at the assessment pages and working out well, what do we really need to be focusing on.* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

### Curriculum adaptation to students needs

There is commentary that the concepts presented in the national curriculum do not necessarily match the age level of students, *"one of the challenges this year has been with the Australian Curriculum concepts that are being introduced that to our minds are very challenging for the age of the children"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

## HISTORY TEACHING

### Teachers were seen teaching history through:

- Role playing, comic strips, writing, group discussions
- Units focussed on Australian history, democracy, Aboriginal culture, Ancient civilisations
- Internet, books

### History requires engaging pedagogy

Teaching history requires making the content appear interesting and engaging while working out students' prior knowledge and focusing the teaching and learning of the curriculum so that it builds upon this knowledge.

*I try to make it more of a story where it makes sense and they can be really involved in it instead of just writing things up on the board and asking them to copy it down.* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)

*Use role-playing, making it fun and really engaging, because history just lends itself of that so much.* (Teacher A, interview, 2012)



**IMAGE 26: STUDENT-CREATED WALL POSTER**

### **History requires learning historical skills**

Teaching history involves developing and refining students' historical skills. Students are learning about history by researching a variety of topics, *"to teach history, the past, it makes the present seem more, like where we are now, they can understand the present by looking back at the past."* (Teacher A, interview, 2012). Students are taught to develop their historical skills, especially in the middle years by researching given topics, then looking at primary and secondary sources of information and referencing these sources, with a focus on not plagiarising the content. As described by these Year 6 students:

*[We are] trying not to plagiarise...*

*I just cut it and paste it and then I have a look at it and I type in my own words and then I delete...*

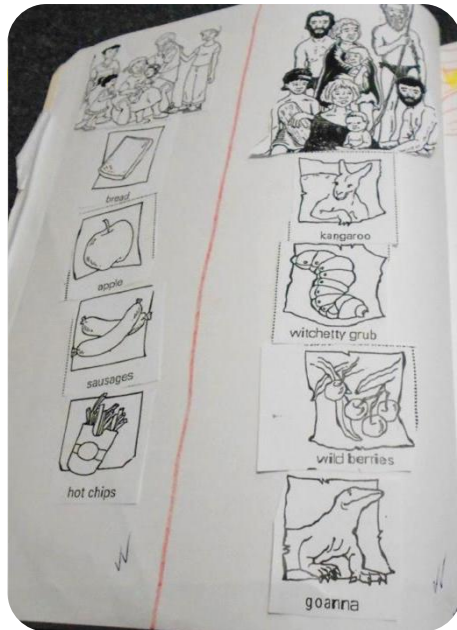
*We have to research it and write down in a PowerPoint all that work. Like, say, get information about it...*

*Looking at valuable websites and working out whether sources are – how useful they are, and having the continuum to say well we put it on a scale of five and then having to actually explain why they don't think it's as useful as some. (Focus group discussion, 2012)*

### **History is content-based**

Teaching history requires teachers to have knowledge of the content they are teaching so that they can implement the curriculum, *"I'm a [non-Australian]. So I have my own indigenous history. So it's been learning for me too about Australian indigenous cultures as well"* (Teacher B, interview, 2012).





**IMAGE 27: MAKING A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOODS**

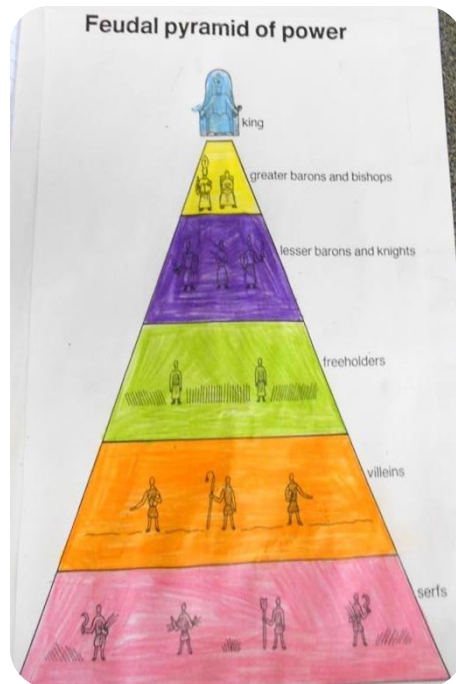


**IMAGE 28: USE OF ABORIGINAL SYMBOLS**

## HISTORY LEARNING

Students were seen learning history through:

- Using the internet and specific online resources such as The Learning Place
- Researching, writing, fact files, oral stories, picture books, making maps, role-playing
- Units focussed on Australian history, Indigenous culture, and democracy in the United Kingdom, ancient civilisations such as Egypt and China



**IMAGE 29: STUDENTS STUDY FEUDALISM**

Number 1      The King John Rap

King John ruled England in 1215  
 An unpopular man, lazy and mean.  
 Imagine him pacing his castle's tall tower  
 Believing he had absolute power.

Absolute power.  
 Absolute power.  
 King John believed he had absolute power.

John wanted to rule in Poitou in France.  
 He needed much cash to give it a chance;  
 So John taxed his barons to pay for the fight,  
 But the barons said, 'No! You don't have the right.'

'You don't have the right!'  
 'You don't have the right!'  
 The barons told John, 'You don't have the right!'

'I'm the king,' answered John. 'I can do what I like.  
 I can tax - I can kill - put your head on a spike.  
 I can take all your money, your lands, any hour.  
 I'm the king thanks to God! I have absolute power!'

Absolute power!  
 Absolute power!  
 King John believed he had absolute power!

The barons rebelled to prove they had might.  
 Without their support the king could not fight.  
 Absolute power just wasn't a starter.  
 The king had to bow to Magna Carta.

Bow to the charter!  
 The barons' great charter!  
 The king had to bow to Magna Carta!

**IMAGE 30: TAKING THE 'DRYNESS' OUT OF HISTORY**

### History is learnt through inquiry

Students learn about history through inquiry-based learning. In the early years, inquiry-based learning is scaffolded to develop students' skills in starting to ask questions on how and why in the context of the past and present, "we look at how those animals came be to and their Aboriginal explanations for why they're like that" (Teacher B, interview, 2012).

As students' progress to the middle years, expectations are increased in relation to the *depth* of inquiry-based learning, using a range of sources and mediums. As described by these Year 7 students:

*We do lots of stuff on the computer, like research and Power points and stuff.*

*I kind of like analysing because it's like you're finding out about the source. (Focus group discussion, 2012)*

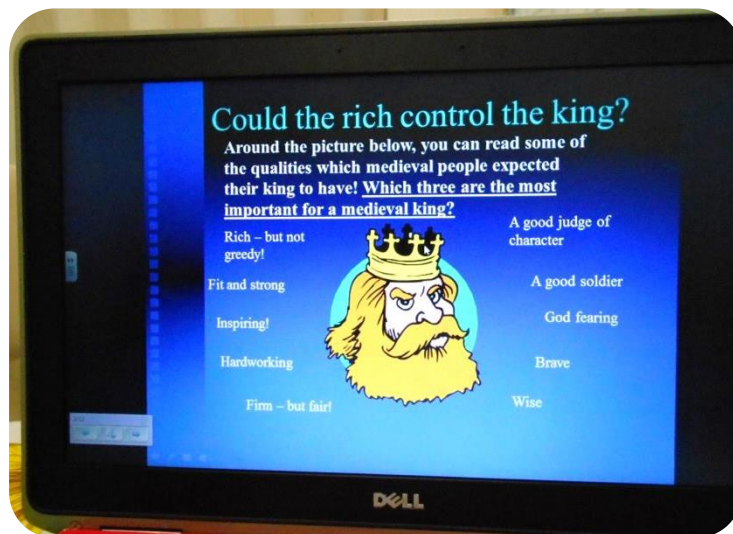
### History is learnt through content

A common theme is the teaching of history through content. Students develop their historical knowledge by learning about the past in relation to the present and this knowledge is actively used to develop students' skills and how they can use and translate this into their lives.

*You're providing your children with knowledge of where they've come from to help them understand who they are today and where their place is and where they're going. (Teacher B, interview, 2012)*

*We've been making pirate maps and we've been making maps that lead us to the park and tuckshop. (Year 1 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*The strategies and how their technology adapted more, faster than the other states of China. (Year 7 student, focus group discussion, 2013)*



**IMAGE 31: ICT ENRICHING STUDENT RESEARCH**

Students in the early years explore topics such as Aboriginal cultures and dreamtime stories as well as national days of significance such as Anzac Day. Local resources including war veterans are utilised to explore living history *“they’re real, living – they’re not just something that’s from the past that we see on a movie but it’s a living history”* (Teacher B, interview, 2012).

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The discipline of history is viewed as a way of teaching and integrating other subjects such as literacy, science, and health while being acknowledged as presenting some challenges in the different year levels.

*It’s a great vehicle to do many things. (Teacher B, interview, 2012)*

*The challenge will be to make sure that the history is a child-centred approach [in the early years] and certainly with obviously a huge focus on literacy. (Principal, interview, 2012)*

History is viewed enthusiastically as a way of teaching students about different people and cultures, the different ways this is interpreted and the impact this has on society *“I love history...it opens up worlds for kids to look back at the past.”* (Teacher A, interview, 2012) As a Year 7 student commented *“I like pretty much all history, especially ancient history, because I like to hear about and learn about all the different civilisations and their ups and downs and how they contributed to the way the world is at the moment”* (Focus group discussion, 2013).

### **BEST PRACTICE**

A key feature of the curriculum is student-centred teaching and learning which is implemented and supported by all levels in this school. The student-centred focus aims to improve the social and emotional outcomes in citizenship for students. The principal noted that *“the History curriculum will allow us to explore how being a productive citizen and how that can look within a school setting”* (Interview, 2012).The teachers were enthusiastic about teaching history and this approach encouraged students to want to learn history.

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 4: RURAL 2

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-7 state school had an enrolment of 381 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 436. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 25 to 30.1 over the same period. During this time there were no students with a language background other than English and the number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 6% to 8%.

ICEAS data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 50%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 30% and 17%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 2%.

NAPLAN results – this school had improvements in half the areas tested and remained steady in the other half of the areas tested, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*.

The **first contextual** issue is the location of the school in the Lockyer Valley region of Queensland and consequently the restrictions in accessing appropriate resources including professional development that come with that, consequently much of their professional development is school-based. There were limited opportunities for professional development in regard to the implementation of the *AC: History*; however there has been considerable training on the overall implementation of the new curriculum.

The **second contextual** issue is the focus on ensuring that the local Indigenous community is included in the school environment and that they are drawn upon as a living resource of history in the local area. The school prides itself on being community focussed and as such emphasizes the history of the region and the generations of people and families.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with the Principal, a specialist History teacher and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- School's curriculum documents

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

In 2012, the teaching and learning of history was developed utilising the Essential Learnings that are a part of the Queensland Curriculum. At that time teachers continued to be individually responsible for the teaching of SOSE while developing an awareness of the requirements of the new national curriculum to be implemented the following year. The Regional Office and One Channel sessions were utilised in the lead-up to implementing the Curriculum.

In 2013, the *AC: History* was implemented in this school using additional resources such as those available through the School of Distance Education.

In contrast to the previous year where each year level teacher was responsible teaching SOSE that included History, a specialist teacher working with students from Foundation to Year 6 primarily delivered the rollout of the *AC: History*. By the end of the data collection period of this project this school had *realised* the new curriculum

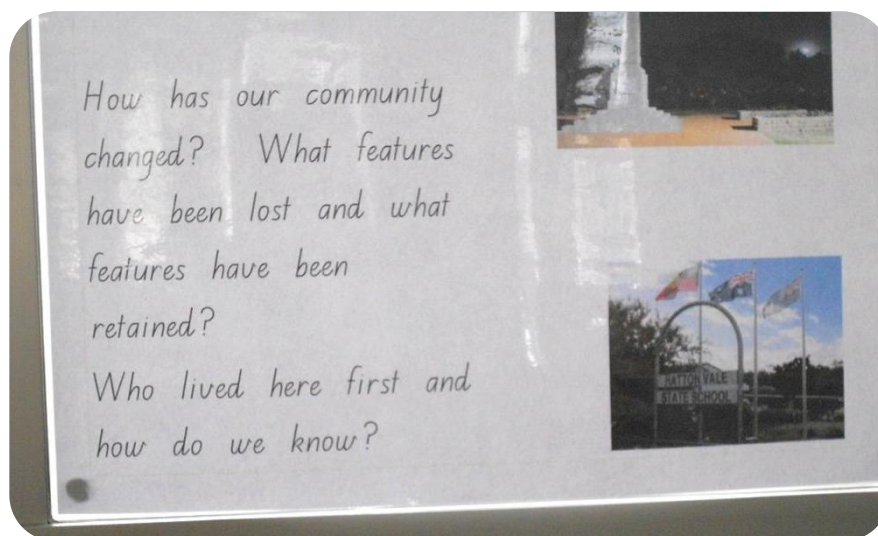
### DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

The *AC: History* is seen by the staff as linear and progressive, and described as a building block to achieving results with student teaching and learning. The curriculum is considered to be more relevant and applicable for a classroom teacher, rather than a specialist teacher who has limited time each week teaching students in different year levels.

Although there can be benefits of using a specialist teacher – monitoring and evaluating student progress through the curriculum at each year level and how the curriculum transitions and progresses between the year levels, and through the whole school.

*The way the C2C unit was designed was very much more so for a classroom teacher to be teaching it, who has the knowledge of the kids...Yet from teaching the other grades, I could see how, if you've done the progress up, that you would be able to cope and do the assessment... (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)*

One of the common themes across the year levels is that a lot of the units have continuity and change. Each year level looks at the theme of continuity and change while the context or topic changes depending upon the Year level. For example, Year 3 explored the environment and buildings while Year 4 examined the Aboriginal community.



**IMAGE 32: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY**

### Assessment as a curriculum determinant

Curriculum and assessment are very interlinked and as noted by the specialist teacher, the assessment shows a progression through the grades. Students would be able to achieve and complete the assessment at each year level provided that they had gone through the curriculum in prior years. The assessment from Year 4 onwards is consistent in that it uses a five-step model as a means of teaching history. Assessment is viewed as a determinant of the curriculum and also pedagogical practices. In particular, assessment is viewed as a way of identifying what needs to be specifically taught and where the gaps were in the teaching and learning of the students. The specialist History teacher noted:

*I try and do it through the assessment and through tasks in class and what we do... Then I get a piece of assessment and you can clearly see there's no linking there, which is where I've probably tried to focus more on skills than anything else. (Interview, 2013)*

The assessment highlighted that the knowledge of students was very important for students to make links between subjects and content and to generalise this information. Subsequently, the knowledge level and relevant skill set of students' impacted their ability to complete the assessment.

*They seem to have difficulty taking what was learnt in school and transferring it to a slightly different situation to be able to use it. They just don't have the knowledge base. Particularly for those upper grades, so the 4s, 5s, and 6s, they – the assumed knowledge and skills, they just didn't have and therefore, they weren't able to do what C2C was saying as their assessment task... (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)*

### Curriculum adaptation to students needs

Teachers adapted the curriculum to meet the year level and the needs of the student population in their classrooms. Assessment was modified and adapted to meet the context of the local community and to make the curriculum relevant to the students' lives. The specialist teacher stated:

*Then for the assessment that I'm looking at, I put it into a more noticeable context for them. So I picked the school here, because we have an old school that used to be over by the highway...instead of being something they totally didn't understand. It was back into their context. (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)*

Developing students' historical skills requires conceptual understanding of the content; each of these aspects – content and skills – plays an integral part in the curriculum. Teachers are assessing student knowledge and ability and adjusting the curriculum as needed for each year level from Foundation to Year 6.

*I found last semester very difficult, because there was a lot of assessment on knowledge. But in essence, they couldn't get the knowledge because they didn't have the skills. So this semester, I've gone back to trying to focus more on what skills we need to be able to complete the work. (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)*



**IMAGE 33: STUDENTS SIT IN GROUPS TO LISTEN TO TEACHER EXPOSITION**

## HISTORY TEACHING

### Teachers were seen teaching history through:

- Inquiry based learning activities and assessment
- Using external resources such as the School of Distance Education material
- Timelines, recording dates and occurrences
- Units focussed on time, continuity and change
- Developing skills

### History is taught through content and skills

Teachers were consistently working between the delivery of content while being aware of a lack of skills in the students impacting on the success of this teaching and learning of history. Additionally, skills were more difficult to teach and learn in classes where students demonstrated difficult behaviours.

*The fact is we need to teach children how to research and be able to judge information.* (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)

*We investigate on the Internet from the interactive whiteboard. Look at the words and the websites to find out how they say things.* (Year 3 student, focus group discussion, 2012)

The history curriculum is viewed as separate to the previous teaching of SOSE; however explicit links are made between history and other subject areas so that students are able to generalise the information and the skills learnt. Students are given multiple opportunities to learn through multiple means and ways; this follows the principles of *Universal Design for Learning* in that this type of pedagogy caters for the needs of all students.

*I think [of] history as those connotations, that it's a bit droney and a bit boring. But with all the resources that are available, all the different technologies that you can [access] I think that's the most important thing, is that they are given the multiple opportunities...we've moved away from the old days of the test.* (Principal, interview, 2012)

*My favourite thing would probably be when we read the book and looked all it up on the Internet and then wrote it out.* (Year 5 student, focus group discussion, 2012)

Similarly, teaching history was seen as needing to be engaging for students in order for them to learn and engage with the content. Teachers who previously lived in the area were viewed as a positive resource to teaching history and through the use of community resources such as specific members of the community *"some of the teachers do live in the area. I think the teachers will be able to tap into a lot of, like I said, a lot of local people who can come and share information"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

### History is a process of inquiry

History provides a means for students to make meaning and to understand the current state of the world. Students are encouraged to explore questions such as why, how, where, and when events occurred to create a current state of affairs based on the past. Teachers are engaging with the content and taking ownership of the curriculum and actively promoting its worth. History is seen as a 'valued' subject that helps students develop knowledge and understanding on a broader sense.



*I think it's nice to see that it's actually been valued; that we are saying that history is actually an important part of a child's learning and that we need to have some of that understanding to be able to make better sense of where we are currently, and why things are the way they are. (Specialist History teacher, interview, 2013)*

### **History is linked with assessment**

Assessment provides the means for teachers to determine students' learning and progress while informing future directions and where adjustments to the curriculum need to be made. At the same time, history teaching is assessing knowledge and upfront teaching.

*Assessment – like what happened and when we read at the back of the story and what happened to the start of the story when the Europeans started settling in and I think that would probably be the hardest. (Year 3 student, focus group discussion, 2012)*

*Then I get a piece of assessment and you can clearly see there's no linking there, which is where I've probably tried to focus more on skills than anything else. (Teacher B, interview, 2012)*

## **HISTORY LEARNING**

### **Students were seen learning history through:**

- Whole class interaction
- Practicing and developing skills
- Celebrations and commemorations
- Individual research on the Internet
- Developing awareness of the country and indigenous students
- Timelines, photo pictorial timelines
- Researching money and the people who appear on our currency notes
- Dreamtime stories and traditional stories

History is facilitated through the use of resources, particularly in the community. Teachers promoted the teaching and learning of history by relating content to people and places in the community. Time, continuity and change were explored via the history of the school and surroundings. As these Year 3 students shared:

*[We looked at] old buildings and how they changed over time.*

*We learn about the past of what happens in local areas or in different parts of Australia or Queensland.*

### **History is learnt through inquiry**

Students actively participate in learning activities, both individual and group. Developing historical skills is facilitated through sourcing information, asking questions and evaluating found information. To accommodate the grade level of students, teachers facilitate their learning by providing more structure and content in the early years and then encouraging the students to develop their abilities as they progress through the middle years.

Students from Foundation to Year 6 are seen creating timelines based on the pedagogical content and developing their skills such as: recording information; asking and designing questions; sharing of knowledge amongst peers and with classroom teachers. Students are also making links between the past and the present. One Unit where History was combined with Technology, focussed on money and important Australians in history.

*We looked at those in relation to money and who was actually put on the money...these children were coming up and going, hey, there's that guy on the note and he did this...that realization. They'd had no idea before that of these people and who they were, and realized that there... (Specialist teacher, interview, 2013)*

Students were keen to investigate further and wanted to explore topics such as kings and queens and to explore the early beginnings of humans and things that had changed in their local community. Students expressed a strong desire to develop their inquiry skills, focusing on their questioning skills, such as how and why, while exploring alternatives to what might have happened.

### **THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY**

The discipline of history is viewed as an important part of the school and community. While history is acknowledged, at this school, as being content-based and requiring considerable content knowledge for teachers to implement the curriculum, history is also acknowledged as being skills-based. Teachers view history as providing students with skills that can be transferred and generalised across a range of subjects and into all aspects of life, now and in the future. In this respect, history is understood to be a building block for learning. As the Year 4 teacher commented:

*History I think really offers like an all-encompassing skillset. There's so many different skills that you learn from engaging in the history curriculum that are applicable to English...Science..., that provides skills that students will need in high school and in university and about evaluating sources. (Teacher B, interview, 2012)*

History is viewed as similar to SOSE in that inquiry is a key feature; however the structure of the AC: History is more defined. The discipline of history begins in the early years by exploring the basics of inquiry and developing skills, and transfers to a more structured approach in the middle years in using a five step model of inquiry. The content knowledge passed on to students provides a useful basis for expanding students' viewpoints and understanding. As Teacher B stated, *"History's really great for teaching children about perspectives and different points of view and different opinions and those things are okay"* (Interview, 2012).

Students were seen to be keen to further develop their research skills and to explore in further detail whichever topic was being taught and also alternate outcomes and consequences in the discipline of history. As a Year 4 student expressed, *"let us go on the computer and research our things that we're going to learn."*

Students acknowledged the difficulties in learning history – when the emphasis was on content – as they developed their historical skills. A female Year 3 student noted difficulties with, *"finding the same things as the pictures of [Queensland town named] and the different things."* (Focus group discussion, 2012) Similarly, a male Year 3 student noted difficulties with, *"figuring out what Aboriginal people used to do back in the past."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

## BEST PRACTICE

One of the main features of the history curriculum for this school was the emphasis on the local community and the role of generations of families and how they have shaped history in the region. People, buildings, and the local environment are seen as sources of information and used as an asset in the teaching and learning of history. Specific attempts are made to provide links between theory and practice and to help students make those links explicitly and implicitly. Real world examples combined with an inquiry approach provide concrete examples of the relevance of history in everyday life and support the promotion and worth of history in relation to the other subject areas. The structure of the curriculum simplifies the work for teachers and improves the learning outcomes for students. One teacher anticipated that having History *“as its own entity and hopefully simplifying that will make it easier and make it more clear for everyone involved in teaching and learning”* (Interview, 2012).

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 5: URBAN 2

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-7 state school had an enrolment of 811 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had increased to 846. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff increased from 44.2 to 45.4 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English fell from 10% to 8% and there were no students identifying as Indigenous.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 4%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 11% and 25%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 61%.

NAPLAN results – this school had improvements just under half the areas tested, drops in only two areas, the rest remaining steady against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*

The **first contextual** issue is that this school develops its own curriculum using the eight *Key Learning Areas* documents produced by the QSA (now QCAA) in addition to the *AC: History*. While the school focuses on literacy and numeracy there is an emphasis on Information and Communication Technologies, problem solving, and creative and critical thinking. The curriculum at this school focuses on Australia's engagement with Asia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and sustainability. The general classroom curriculum, special programs and events and the enrichment programs operating throughout the school support these priorities. This school is an *Independent Public School* – it has increased autonomy compared with most government schools – and that contributes to some of the curriculum choices in the school.

The **second contextual** issue is access to professional development within the region. The staff attend both professional development offered through the *Professional Development Network* professional development conducted in-house.

### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with the Principal and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- School's curriculum documents

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

In 2012, the school was still utilising *Essential Learnings* teaching SOSE and implementing the [Queensland] *Early Learning Years Curriculum* for its Foundation students. Towards the end of 2012, school staff were learning about the new national curriculum and preparing to implement the curriculum the following year. The teaching of History in the Foundation year was completed in two units; whereas the teaching of History in other year level was offered over three units. The curriculum was viewed by the school as useful in providing a broad outline and lesson plans but lacking in sufficient detail. Consequently, teachers chose to follow the curriculum concept by concept instead of lesson by lesson. By the end of the data collection period of this project this school had *realised* the new curriculum

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

### Implementing the curriculum

While the new national curriculum versions of English, Mathematics and Science were being implemented little was being made of History. This was due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the *AC: History*: *"we can go and search for it ourselves, but most teachers are snowed under at the moment, and are coping with what they've got"* (Teacher A, interview, 2012). History is dependent upon teacher interpretation, knowledge, and ability. Initially teachers were encouraged to look at and develop an awareness of the curriculum but developing awareness and knowledge of the *AC: History* beyond that was left to individual teachers:

*As I said, it's anyone who's a little bit interested has probably done it off their own bat to have a look...when it comes in next year it'll be totally new.* (Teacher B, interview, 2012)

*I think the main challenge is teacher interpreting what needs to be done as part of the Australian curriculum and what they currently do, and what they've currently done in SOSE.* (Principal, interview, 2012)

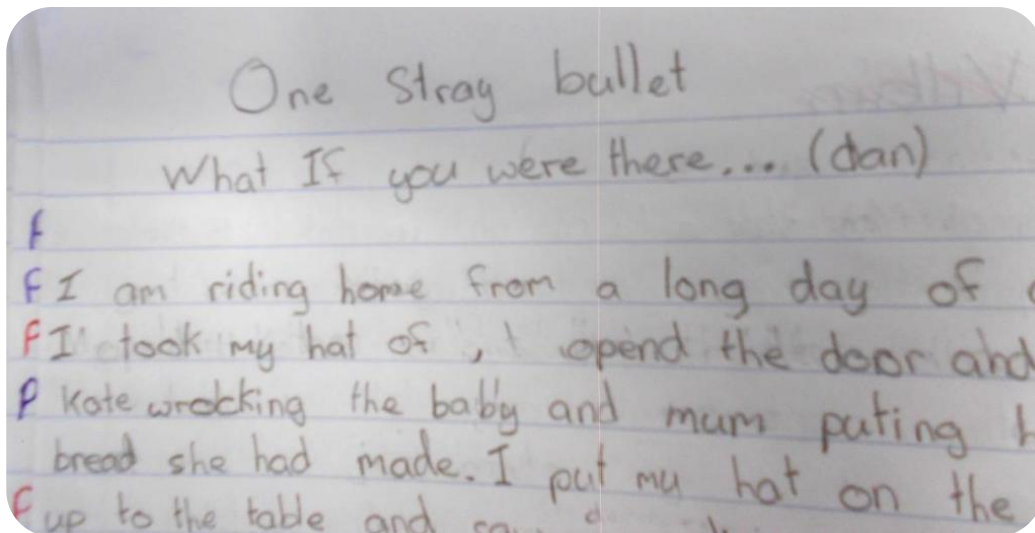
Implementing a new curriculum requires teacher collaboration. The school has a curriculum coordinator who was responsible for much of the implementation with teachers playing a minor role. In 2012, it was felt that, there was limited professional development made available to teachers, *"as far as history goes, we have not been offered, at this point...there's been the odd thing that might have come through that you could do out of school hours"* (Teacher A, interview, 2012). With the implementation of the *AC: History* in 2013, there was an increase in professional development opportunities.

### Curriculum adaptation to students needs

The lessons for students in the early years were adjusted to meet their learning style and needs. Content was taught in a condensed timeframe of two lessons over five weeks instead of the specified ten-week period. This approach was also replicated for other subject areas such as science. Teacher A argued that: *"sometimes the content is just not stimulating enough to stretch over a 10-week lesson"* (Interview, 2013).

The use of implicit and explicit teaching was used to promote students' deeper understanding of the content, *"it's not always just an explicit, let's sit down and learn this, but it comes up in the teachable moment type situation"* (Teacher A, interview, 2013).

The early years tend to focus more on building the founding concepts of history starting with themselves, their lives, families, and moving into Australian history. This approach helps students develop their knowledge base over their schooling, *"I focus mostly on Australian history for this stage because I think they've got a better chance and I think it's good to build on for later years"* (Teacher A, interview, 2013).



**IMAGE 34: STUDENTS ENGAGE IN IMAGINATIVE WRITING**

## HISTORY TEACHING

Teachers were seen teaching history through:

- Small and whole group discussion
- Reading comprehension
- Modelling of inquiry-based learning
- Using primary and secondary sources to make judgments and analyse sources
- Linking History with other subject areas
- Excursions to the science centre and museum



**IMAGE 35: PREP STUDENTS CREATE THEIR OWN MUSEUM**

History requires engaging, knowledgeable and resourceful pedagogy

Teaching history requires teachers to have enough knowledge of the content so that they feel comfortable in leading students through the inquiry approach. As Teacher B commented, *“unless you know and are confident in the knowledge of what you should know, you can’t take them off the path and then bring them back to where they’re meant to be”* (Interview, 2012).

As history can be focussed on content, to meet the intended outcomes of the curriculum, it would require teachers to use their content knowledge and understanding in combination with their planning and pedagogy skills. The curriculum is also seen as lacking in detail and deep knowledge but useful as a broad outline to teach history.

*To be honest I don't think it's absolutely fantastic. I think it's a bit; as we have experienced with a lot of the C2C; not very deep knowledge and you know I think deep knowledge is good for preps, but that's where your own teaching comes in and your professionalism and your pedagogy. (Teacher A, interview, 2012)*

To encourage student engagement in the AC: History the content needs to be presented in interesting ways to capture students' interest and attention:

*I think in terms of pedagogy, with the teaching of history, you have to bring it alive. We use interactive white boards...You need to be able to get on a bus and go to the museum. So you've got to mix your pedagogy up a little bit in terms of teaching history because if you don't bring it alive, then it can be seen as a dead subject. (Principal, interview, 2012)*

### History requires development of historical skills

Teaching history involves building upon the prior knowledge and learning of students. Inquiry-based learning is a key feature of teaching history that requires the development of students' historical skills by analysing sources in order to make judgments "what does it tell us about them and who they were and what relationships they had within the society?" (Teacher B, interview, 2012). Sometimes these skills were developed through discussion group work – in small groups and as a whole class. At other times a teacher would model skills then the activity would be worked through in groups until students gained confidence to work independently. Two of the challenges for teachers were developing students' understanding of concepts such as past and present and teaching students how to analyse sources.

*It's more about the sources... it's more about your primary source or secondary source; where has it come from; what does it tell us? (Teacher B, interview, 2012)*

*With grandparents day it was really good for prep because we talked about how things would have been with their grandparents, or certainly their great grandparents. (Teacher A, interview, 2012)*



**IMAGE 36: USING IMAGES OF 'OLD' THINGS**

## HISTORY LEARNING

### Students were seen learning history through:

- Visiting the museum and creating a museum in the classroom
- Learning timelines through people representation
- Cutting and pasting pictures as a basis for discussion
- Analysing and making judgments on sources of information including original documents
- Using inquiry-based questions to explore feelings and understand culture
- Impressionist art of Prime Ministers
- Persuasive writing, class debates, note taking, song analysis, researching and preparing narratives

### History is learnt through inquiry

Students learn about history by developing their historical skills and actively participating in their learning. The Foundation students learned about the past and present in relation to themselves, their families and other people and had their learning linked in with other subject areas. They were able to make interesting connections:

*The Queen is old...and she's in a paper that's old. The queen is on the back of all our money*

*My grandma. She's the best of my history because she helps me to learn knitting.*

(Focus group discussion, 2011)

Students' investigative skills are developed through research and needing to support their arguments with evidence. While this Year 7 student states that learning about history is limited *"the teacher explains what we have to do [worksheet] and we just do it. Like look in books to try and find answers and things."* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

Others students were more enthusiastic about the process of learning history:

*I reckon the best thing for me was like doing the poems and songs because you don't only research them you get to listen to them and read them and explore what they mean and things.*

*We wrote down evidence in our book and then we had to choose from there. We felt involved in it, like because we got to research it ourselves and read it ourselves.* (Focus group discussion, 2012)

### History is learned through content

A common theme is the teaching of history through topics such as Australian history and culture, other cultures, key figures in history, and the environment. Students in Foundation explored the museum and looked at artefacts from the past, *"we collected old things, documented and charted them."* (Focus group discussion, 2012) Older students investigated the early years of Australia, the First Fleet, Aboriginals, and people such as Ned Kelly. One student described his favourite topic in history:

*Probably my favourite thing was actually Ned Kelly as well because in some books they would explain him as he was great, he did things for the things and in some books it would explain he was evil and was a dastardly villain and stuff. So you kind of had to go into full depth to find out which do you believe... (Focus group discussion, 2012)*

Students meaning making is enhanced through looking at content combined with developing their historical skills.



## THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

The discipline of history is viewed as connections between the past and present. Primarily, teachers at this school described history as being about the past and how the learning was scaffolded significantly through the modelling of inquiry-based skills. History is considered as a curriculum priority and as a key factor in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. People's lives, families, and culture are explored in terms of past and present. History is viewed as being essential to living in Australia and an important part of Australian culture, *"you need a sense of history to be an American, and Americans do it so much better than we do because they live their history"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

The role of teachers is to teach history content and also change over time. This is considered particularly relevant for students new to Australia so that there is mutual understanding of different cultures, *"History, I think, is teaching about history but also teaching about understanding and acceptance of change"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

## BEST PRACTICE

Performance indicators for the principal and the school primarily involve literacy and numeracy, whereas teaching of history is seen as a means of meeting these performance indicators. Teachers are not specifically viewed as teachers of history, *"the main focus for me as a principal in terms of my performance indicators and the school's performance indicators is to ensure the kids are well focussed on literacy and numeracy"* (Principal, interview, 2012).

Content areas are explicitly linked to help students see the relevance between different subjects. Specifically, learning and understanding history is about living our history in Australia. Teacher pedagogy has had an important role in the implementation of the AC: *History* along with professional development and teacher collaboration.

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY 6: REGIONAL 2

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the data collection period this long established F-7 state school had an enrolment of 341 students. By the end of the data collection period enrolments had decreased to 298. The fulltime equivalent teaching staff decreased from 27.6 to 23.5 over the same period. During this time the number of students with a language background other than English fell from 1% to 0% and the number of students identifying as Indigenous grew from 14% to 16%.

ICSEA data – by the end of the data collection period the number of students placed in the bottom quarter was 28%; the numbers of students in the middle quarters were 33% and 26%; the number of students at this school in the top quarter was 13%.

NAPLAN results – this school had improvements in half the areas tested and drops in the other half, against similar schools and the national average, during the period of the projects involvement with the school.

**Contextual issues** relevant to the school's implementation of *The Australian Curriculum: History*.

This school is in a remote location hundreds of kilometres from the state capital of Brisbane. This isolation means that there is no face-to-face professional development from government statutory authorities like QSA (now QCAA) or from professional associations such as the QHTA. The Head of Curriculum networks with other Heads of Curriculum.

The development and implementation of the *AC: History* at this school was accomplished by the teachers. In 2012 teachers opted to specialise in core subjects so each teacher could be well versed in the fundamentals of a particular discipline and so they could train each other. There is value, according to the staff, in focussing on one core discipline at a time. For example a teacher specialising in history would swap classes with another teacher who specialises in science for those lessons. This way the students study all disciplines with teachers who have made a concentrated study of a discipline – just not necessarily with their regular teacher. Within the discipline, history is further split, with one teacher focussing on historical skills during one school term and another teacher focusing on content in the next term. This way, students were able to utilise their historical skills to investigate historical content.

At this stage it was acknowledged that addressing content for one hour a week may not be sufficient, but at least with *AC: History* it is definitive on the content, and it provides an explicit pathway for investigating phenomena to be covered, unlike SOSE, as was under the state based curriculum, which was found to be vague on content.

By 2013, teachers demonstrated a greater awareness of the *AC: History*, referring to the cross curricula priorities, and not teaching across multiple levels, allowing students in composite classes to focus on their particular level, in depth. Teachers were drawing students in with conversations regarding the skills of history. This allowed students to identify inquiry questions, base their research and communicate their findings around answering the inquiry questions originally posed.

## DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

- Formal interviews with Principal, curriculum coordinator and classroom teachers
- Informal conversations with students
- Photos taken by students, teachers, and researcher
- Observation of history classes
- School's curriculum documents

## STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

By the end of 2013 the implementation of the *AC: History* had been *realised* at this school. Teachers' use of historical language was clearly apparent. Teachers spoke of students using their historical skills of chronology and '*cause & effect*' – they could base a report around a timeline of events – as well developing their skills of communication and explanation by doing comparative studies, using a variety of media. Teachers modelled by developing a master timeline which students then used to create a whole class time line to demonstrate '*cause & effect*' in migration patterns.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY CURRICULUM

SOSE, as was under the state based curriculum, was regarded as vague in regard to history. The school now has a more definitive – especially in regard to content – history curriculum. Even though teachers were taking turns in teaching history and science lessons they were ensuring that they did not become too estranged from the subject they were not specialising in. Because the professional development is mostly conducted in house – due to the distance from urban centres – the Head of Curriculum's networking with other Heads of Curriculum became vital. Unlike inquiry in other subject areas, historical inquiry does not necessarily provide a definitive answer. This is something that teachers know will be a challenge to students who often expect immediate answers to problems.

### Curriculum adaptation to students needs

Students and teachers expressed enjoyment in the study of ancient civilizations and how what they learned from these studies was of value in the understanding of society today. Teachers also used the word 'we' suggesting that they saw themselves learning alongside the students.

## HISTORY TEACHING

### Teachers were seen teaching history through:

- Using substantive conversation
- Scaffolding students' inquiry questions
- Addressing content of ancient societies
- Explaining differences between primary and secondary sources

The challenge for teachers is to take into account students' prior learning so history can assist in addressing any misunderstandings. Asking or posing questions is a key historical skill students must have in order to conduct productive research, so teachers modelled ideas by talking aloud about, for example, conditions of refugees, before posing a series of questions. Then together as a class they brainstormed ideas that would lead to effective questions to help the students in their research. This was an '*I do, we do, you do*' process.

Teachers modelled the process again for those students who needed it. Teaching history provides an opportunity to challenge students' conceptions and misconceptions about the world, especially that there is a requirement for learner-centred and explicit teaching. It is important that students make that connection between the past and the present.

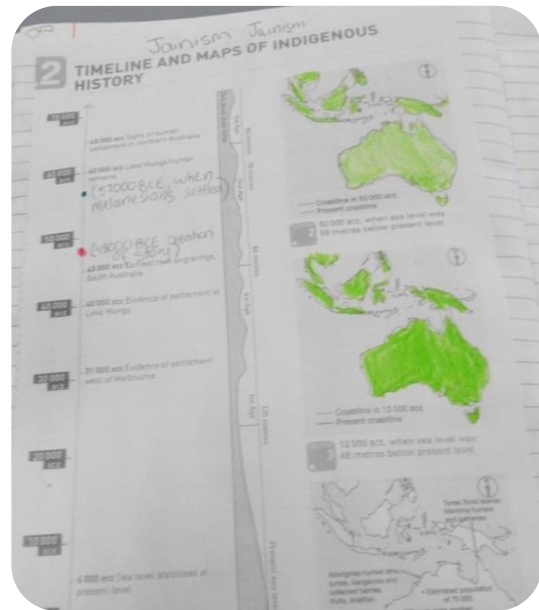


IMAGE 37: THEMED TIMELINE

### Engaging in an inquiry process

Teachers emphasised the importance of modelling particularly when having students develop the skill of posing inquiry questions. Teachers spoke of the difficulties of embedding the idea of historical inquiry into students' thinking, and they allowed more time than that recommended in C2C on inquiry questions.

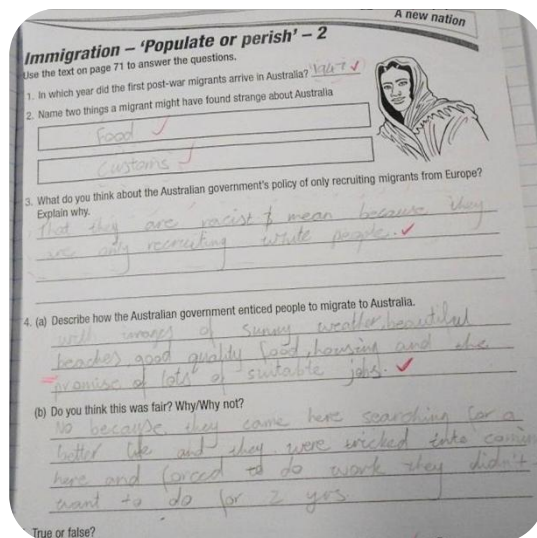
### HISTORY LEARNING

Students were seen learning history through:

- Role playing
- Using timelines to base their report
- Posing historical questions
- History is learnt through inquiry

In classrooms there was strong evidence of historical inquiry. Teachers modelled posing inquiry questions before having students develop their own. As one student noted: *"but mostly we have to create our own question [sometimes the teachers] show us maybe a bit of a slide show or a little bit of a movie clip"* (Year 6 student C, focus group discussion, 2012).

In their study of migration, teachers used the pedagogical approach whereby: *"we compare the two countries with different facts about it"* (Year 6 student B, focus group discussion, 2012).



**IMAGE 38: A – WHY, WHERE AND HOW – THINKING ACTIVITY**

Teachers conclude history units with a 'reflection' question; in this example it was consideration of the concept of *cause & effect*. One student said, "my favourite thing was when we learnt about immigrants and migrants. We role played the challenges faced by migrants" (Year 6 student E, focus group discussion, 2012).

### THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

As noted earlier, teachers considered SOSE, as was under the state based curriculum, too vague because it was attempting to cover too many disciplines, whereas the *AC: History* is definitive on the content to be covered and the concepts and skills to be developed are clearly stated.

Unlike inquiry in other areas historical inquiry does not necessarily provide a definitive answer. This idea of historical inquiry has been a challenge for students. For example, framing their responses around a key historical concept of 'cause & effect' has proved challenging. Students were given grounding in the differences between primary and secondary sources, between written and non-written sources.

Even though teachers were taking turns in teaching history and science lessons they were ensuring that they did not become too estranged from the subject they were not specialising in.

### BEST PRACTICE

Students were able to develop historical skills through role playing.

A challenge for teachers was to take into account students' prior learning so history can assist in addressing any misunderstandings. The rationale for studying ancient societies like Rome was not only to build content knowledge but to also build *understanding*, for example, of the origins of our systems of government.

Students utilised their understanding of the historical skill of chronology. Basing their report around a timeline of events and developing their skills of communication and explanation through comparative studies, using a variety of media.

Asking or posing questions is a key historical skill students must have in order to conduct productive research, so teachers modelled ideas by talking aloud about, for example, conditions of refugees, before posing a series of questions. Then together as a class they brainstormed ideas that would lead to questions to help the students in their research. This was an '*I do, we do, you do*' process. Teachers modelled the process again for those students who needed it.

Teachers spoke of students using their historical skills of chronology and '*cause & effect*' – they could base a report around a timeline of events – as well as developing their skills of communication and explanation by doing comparative studies, using a variety of media. Teachers modelled by developing a master timeline which students then used to create a whole class time line to demonstrate '*cause & effect*' in migration patterns.

## CHAPTER 10: NEW SOUTH WALES

Nicole Green and Satine Winter

### POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

#### CONTEXT

##### Research focus

The research reported is underpinned by the notion that the many layers of the new *AC: History* context - such as policy, school management and leadership, curriculum implementation, classroom practice, teacher identity, children's and families' experiences - can be better explored through careful examination of the political, economic, social, cultural, macro and micro contexts of curriculum implementation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 39).

#### DATA COLLECTED AND ANALYSED

The following data was collected between 2011 and 2013: Policy drafts, official email updates and website announcements / webpage content from the NSW DEC, HTANSW, and ACARA; formal interviews with policy actors representing or consulting with these organisations; and observations of professional development events. Further cross-referencing occurred into 2014. All of this data is presented in the table and informs the analysis below.

**TABLE 6: NSW Policy documents**

Date	Document	Author	Topic
Date Unknown	Pdf one-page document on draft syllabus	history-k10-draft-syllabus-guide.pdf	How content is presented in the draft K-10 History Syllabus – NSW content is focus of consultation
Date Unknown	48 page document	Board of Studies NSW	New South Wales response to the draft K-10 Australian curriculum for English, history, mathematics and science
2009	Curriculum document	National Curriculum Board	The Shape of the Australian Curriculum
2010	History Years K-10 Draft Australian Curriculum: Consultation Report	Board of Studies NSW	Consultation Report – response from the Board of Studies NSW
20 July 2010	Memorandum to Principals	Board of Studies NSW Association of Independent Schools Catholic Education Commission Department of Education & Training	Consultation on the draft senior secondary Australian Curriculum
November 2010	Memorandum to Principals and Stakeholders	Board of Studies NSW Association of Independent Schools Catholic Education Commission Department of Education & Training	The Australian Curriculum

8 March 2011	Curriculum	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority	The Australian Curriculum
9 August 2011	Letter to Principals	Board of Studies NSW	Implementation of the Australian curriculum in NSW
14 June – 22 August 2011	Draft syllabus	Board of Studies NSW	History K-10 Draft syllabus
December 2011	Interview Transcripts	6 participants	Australian Curriculum in NSW

The Office of Education, NSW Department of Education & Communities (DEC) has cross-sectoral responsibilities in policy - national, non-government, early childhood education, and in higher education policy. Of interest to this research, and presented in this section of the report, is the storylines uncovered by an analysis of the DEC's management and advice on NSW participation in official national education with regard to History (F-6), along with discourse analysis of communique from the NSW History Teachers Association and statutory authorities. Structured interviews were also conducted and digitally recorded with (a) tertiary educators (b) industry partners, and (c) other stakeholders. Respondents were interviewed regarding pedagogical content knowledge, teacher professional identity and the effectiveness of professional learning initiatives. To protect anonymity, all participants have been given pseudonyms.

### School enrolments

645,245 students were enrolled in NSW primary schools in 2013, with the highest number of enrolments nation-wide. 44% of primary student enrolments were in non-government schools. In 2013, there were 1600 NSW government primary schools, and 489 non-government primary schools. Home-schooling is also an option in NSW.

### STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

In September 2010, the NSW Board of Studies (BoS) released a review of the draft national curriculum for English, Maths, Science and History – Kindergarten to Year 10. The review warned that the draft was vastly inferior to the existing NSW curriculum. Additionally, the past NSW Minister for Education identified issues to do with the conceptual presentation of the curriculum, indicative subject time, volume of content, achievement standards, and the proposed general capabilities. The Board considered the Australian Curriculum to be *vastly inferior* to the NSW curriculum. The New South Wales Board of Studies criticised the Australian Curriculum and threatened to delay the implementation until a better curriculum was developed.

Nonetheless, the *AC: History* was endorsed on 8 December 2010 by all federal, state and territory education ministers. From there, the responsibility for implementation fell to the state and territory curriculum bodies. A delay in implementation in NSW was announced the following year, with the Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli (2011) citing the reason for the delay as: *“MCEECDYA the Commonwealth failed to commit any funds to the professional development of teachers required to implement the Australian curriculum. Given the time required to make the implementation a success we have no alternative but to defer the introduction in the interests of the teachers and students of NSW”* (Piccoli, 2011). Furthermore, the BoS chose to develop a History syllabus, which required the approval of the Minister and also via legislation.



During 2011 and 2012, the Board of Studies NSW developed new K–10 syllabuses for English, Mathematics, Science (incorporating Science and Technology K–6) and History that incorporate the agreed Australian curriculum content. In October 2012, the NSW BoS released the NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum via their website. The syllabuses were to be introduced into schools in 2014. History was optional in 2014 and remains so in 2015. From 2016 with the mandatory implementation of K–6 History all primary schools will be expected to fully implement all of the new syllabuses.

A timeline for the development and implementation of the History curriculum in NSW is detailed in Figure 8 (below) beginning with directions for syllabus development followed by actual syllabus development. The directions for syllabus development commenced in May 2010 and progressed for approximately one year upon which the syllabus development commenced in March to May 2011 and progressed for the remainder of the year.

*History K–10 Draft Syllabus*

**Timeline for the development of the History K–10 syllabus**

<b>Steps in the syllabus development process</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><i>Directions for syllabus development</i></b>	
K–10 Board Curriculum Committee established to provide advice to the Board of Studies during the syllabus development process, including actions for the development of a quality syllabus	Established May 2010
Endorsement of the Australian curriculum content descriptions as the basis for development of the NSW syllabus	8 December 2010
<i>Directions for Syllabus Development</i> prepared	February to March 2011
<b><i>Syllabus development</i></b>	
Draft syllabus and survey prepared	March to May 2011
Consultation	14 June to 22 August 2011
Consultation report and final syllabus to K–10 Board Curriculum Committee	September 2011
Consultation report and final syllabus to Board of Studies for endorsement	October 2011
Publication of the syllabus	Term 4, 2011

**FIGURE 8: NSW BOS DRAFT HISTORY K-10 SYLLABUS**

As highlighted in Figure 8 (above), the History curriculum was moving towards the enacted stage of the curriculum development continuum at a NSW state/systemic level (Taylor, 2001; Harré and Slocum 2003; Dixon, 2008) at the end of 2013.

**DEVELOPING THE HISTORY SYLLABUS IN NSW**

This section investigates which stakeholders and organisations interacted in the development of the history curriculum, and the processes that were involved. The positioning of history is also examined.

## The consultation process

Two separate documents, the NSW syllabus and the Australian Curriculum, influence the consultation process in NSW. Since NSW considered its NSW syllabus to be of a high quality standard, the spotlight turned to the Australian Curriculum and whether it met the same standards as the NSW syllabus. Initially, key stakeholders were invited across Australia to provide feedback to ACARA on the draft History curriculum. Second, key stakeholders were invited to provide feedback to the BoS NSW on their draft history syllabus for K-10. The key stakeholders in the NSW education sector are the Minister for Education, the Board of Studies New South Wales (BoS NSW), NSW TAFE institutes, professional teachers' and history associations, and education professionals. Teachers who engaged in attending K-10 consultation meetings were accredited with two hours of professional development. One stakeholder that appeared to be less involved in relation to both documents was that of Universities. Similar to general stakeholders, Universities were welcome to give feedback however were not specifically sought to be included in the process.

In official communication to the NSW education sector, the president of the Board of Studies (BoS NSW), outlined "responsibilities" of ACARA and the BoS NSW (<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/>). The president did not state it was the responsibility of system authorities, school associations, and professional bodies to undertake a level of consultation to inform their own position, but it was "also likely". Could consultation conducted by other authorities, associations and professional bodies inform NSW BoS too? Could consultation have been coordinated to gain multiple and varied perspectives?

While the president of the Board of Studies (BoS NSW) noted that the phases and details of the implementation process in NSW will be substantially informed by this consultation process, in-person consultation highlighted a limited number of opportunities across the State of NSW. There were 6 locations for History consultation meetings plus a further 3 for primary focus group meetings. Chatswood is 12.6 kilometres from Sydney city centre; Kogarah is 18.9 kilometres; Campbelltown is 58 kilometres; Batemans Bay is 278 kilometres (coastal); Wingham is 322 kilometres (coastal); Orange is 250 kilometres in the mid West region of NSW; East Maitland is 163 kilometres; Wagga Wagga is 458 kilometres and St Mary's is 45 kilometres. The locations of the face-to-face consultations indicate no engagement with remote communities.

The numerous memorandums to schools suggest a one-way flow of information from the Board of Studies to principals and stakeholders, who were in turn responsible for communicating and distributing for 'how' and 'when' this information was communicated and distributed to other relevant stakeholders. However, this viewpoint does not take into account the amount or flow of information and feedback from key stakeholders and interested parties to the BoS NSW during the consultation process. This specific information is not known.

The BoS NSW then presented a History K-10 Draft Syllabus that was accompanied by an online consultation survey available on the BoS NSW website (2010). Positive and negative feedback was sought in written format either online, via email or fax. The draft syllabus was structured in relation to introducing the K-10 curriculum including a section on students

with special education needs followed by the rationale, place of the History K-10 Syllabus in the K-12 curriculum, aim, objectives, outcomes, content, Years 7-10 Life Skills outcomes and content, continuum of learning in History K-10 and assessment.

Further consultations were made with actual schools in drafting a new syllabus for NSW. The Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre (CLIC) within the Department of Education is responsible for the project – Curriculum Collaboration. This project involves 10 schools in NSW who work on tasks associated with the syllabus and how to incorporate the Australian Curriculum within the NSW syllabus. The BoS NSW has a clear vision for implementing a curriculum that has been considered, measured, planned effectively, and will merge with their existing quality framework. While NSW has received much criticism for delaying the implementation of the curriculum, an alternate perspective is that the BoS NSW has taken prudent time to effectively plan a smoother transition to the new curriculum and to adequately prepare teachers through further professional development and training on the new curriculum.

On Monday, 22 October 2012, the NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum were released online. The BoS NSW has a comprehensive website that provides links and information on all aspects of the new curriculum and syllabuses (<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/>). Subsequent guides to the NSW syllabuses were made available to schools and parents in addition to subject-specific guides. The end of 2012 saw the finalisation of the new History syllabus documents with an expectation of releasing a programming tool for teachers the following year. This tool, the Program Builder, was launched online in April 2013 and is a programming tool that helps teachers create scopes, sequences and units. Implementation of the new curriculum was scheduled for 2014, leaving 2013 as a preparatory year for teachers to become familiar with the new K-10 syllabus for History and also the other three subject areas of English, Science, and Maths.

### **The un-national curriculum**

The NSW Board of Studies communicated in various meetings and communicate that the Australia Curriculum is viewed as constituting a key component of new curriculum documents for NSW schools in each of the relevant learning areas. The Australian Curriculum appeared to be viewed as fitting with current NSW curriculum documents. In 2011, the NSW BoS supported National Curriculum yet developed new syllabuses that incorporated content of the Australian curriculum. Questions arose: What is NSW BoS' definition of 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' – what is the relationship between the two? Will one supersede the other? There was support from a selection of University academics in NSW for the State having its own syllabus in relation to the national curriculum.

*I think it's good because the national curriculum was sort of your big umbrella and I think teachers needed a little bit more meat to go with it to be able to teach it successfully (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011).*

### **History is political**

NSW has mandated legislation that requires approval of all educational changes to curriculum policy. The BoS NSW is accountable to the NSW State Government and must advise and liaise with the NSW Minister for Education and Training on the appropriateness of the Australian curriculum. Any changes to the NSW education system are conducted in a

top-down approach whereby the State is responsible for making the changes. Once these changes have been approved through legislation, the education system is then responsible for implementing these changes. Any changes to content in History require State Government approval in the first instance. Policy-making requires considerable political support and it is interesting to note that key stakeholders in the education sector in NSW were keen to keep their pre-existing syllabus. These key stakeholders deemed that the NSW syllabus was quite adequate in comparison to the incoming AC that, once reviewed, was deemed inadequate – *“I think our curriculum still makes more sense than the national curriculum”* (Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011).

### **A secondary curriculum for primary schools**

The two primary school teachers interviewed expressed the observation that the primary perspective in the drafting of the Australian Curriculum was an afterthought.

*I got the sense that it was – that primary – the Australian Curriculum never really was seen from a primary perspective ... There was a lot of preconceptions about what primary students and the primary learner could do and think. There were preconceptions about what primary teachers could do and not do as well* (Teacher 2, Interview, December 14<sup>th</sup> 2011)

While the primary perspective is considered in the Australian Curriculum, there was concern that the overall approach to teaching and learning is more secondary based rather than working to the different year levels or the ability of the student.

*The Australian Curriculum is a very secondary model imposed on primary teachers* (Teacher 1, Interview, December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011)

Kiem (2011) reflected on the development of the curriculum and noted a clear lack of rationale underpinning the curriculum while highlighting concerns about assessment. Kiem commented on the overall effectiveness of ACARA and stated “for this is an organisation that, bewilderingly, has shown a very limited capacity for self-assessment” (p. 61).

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories in The ACH**

There is limited discussion in most policy documents, especially in the interviews and from official organisations about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories in the Australian Curriculum. The BoS NSW history draft syllabus for K-10 identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories as a cross-curricular priority.

### **The history curriculum as crowded/prescriptive**

Comments on the ACARA shaping paper criticise the curriculum as being too content heavy.

### **A state-based approach**

NSW is one of the last remaining states to implement the Australian Curriculum. A state-based approach is very much prescribed according to the BoS NSW and their recommendations. Progress and movement in the Education sector is dependent upon political, legislative, and government approval. NSW is quite critical of the development of the Australian Curriculum (Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011) and the haphazard method in which the new curriculum has been shaped, created, attempted consultations, and all attempts for implementation (Kiem, 2011). The development of the

Australian Curriculum involves competing tensions from other states and differences in approach to detailed content of the new curriculum.

### **NSW History collaborations**

The BoS NSW advised that schools were to continue using the existing NSW K-12 syllabuses in 2011 until new syllabuses were developed incorporating the Australian curriculum. In 2013, teachers were encouraged to become familiar with the new syllabuses for History and also English, Mathematics, and Science. As previously outlined, actual implementation of the new History syllabus was scheduled for 2014.

### **HISTORY TEACHING**

This section investigates how history teachers are perceived in primary schools. It also takes a critical look at how education departments and organisations have supported or facilitated professional learning for history teachers in the phasing-in period of the History syllabus in NSW.

Since the implementation has not yet been conducted, speculations may be made purely from the previous NSW syllabus and from the processes undertaken in developing the Australian Curriculum. The role of the teacher is to facilitate to the learning of the student and that *the lens of the learner was really important (Interview, Participant from the ACARA Advisory panel, December 13, 2011)*. The impact on the primary teacher of being responsible for 12 new curricula may be overwhelming and teachers will need to make connections with their current work in order to accommodate the new curriculum. In an effort to look at potential connections between the NSW curriculum and the Australian Curriculum, the BoS drafted a response to how the Australian Curriculum aligned with the NSW curriculum and sought feedback from key stakeholders.

### **Good teachers do things well**

Since NSW is the only state to have had mandatory history for the last 15 years, there is the perception that history is an area that is already done well by secondary teachers. The exception arises for primary teachers who will need to become more familiar with history as a discipline once there is *“a specific syllabus written and a specific focus” (Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011)*.

### **Primary practitioners teach history already**

Primary teachers already teach history in the NSW syllabus, however their teaching is more generic rather than being discipline specific. CS commented, *“If you look at HSIE fits in the Change and Continuity Strand and that’s subject matter but then it takes a very generic view of enquiry and skills” (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011)*.

### **Professional association support**

One of the difficulties in associations providing support to primary school teachers is their lack of attendance at professional association events. Reasons for this may include lack of time and also lack of knowledge about the benefits of belonging to professional associations. *“The professional association isn’t part of the culture of the primary teacher” (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011)*. Secondary teachers are more likely to join a professional association than primary teachers. The Professional Teachers’ Council (PTC) in NSW has made attempts to encourage primary teachers to join a minimum of six

professional associations in order to access key resources and professional development pertinent to their education profession. The difficulty in NSW is that there is great political dissent amongst the associations and warring factions over who should have control. For example, “the PTC is regarded by some as wanting to have too much control” (*Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011*).

### **Professional Development**

References to teacher training have been discussed in the section on professional associations since they often provide content specific professional development for teachers. Professional development has been offered to primary teachers in the Catholic Education Sector. The BoS NSW has indicated that professional development will be critical in implementing the new curriculum in 2014 with the support of professional associations and that, to date, some professional development has occurred to prepare primary teachers. The BoS NSW has expressed uncertainty about how they will conduct professional development whereas the Catholic Education Sector appears to be more cohesive and structured in their approach to professional development.

The Catholic Education Office has been proactive in preparing for the incoming Australian Curriculum by spending considerable money, effort, and time in conducting professional development sessions for their teachers. This professional development was conducted in an attempt to prepare teachers by giving them opportunities, training, and time to explore the new curriculum. Catholic Education appears to be more flexible and open to the Australian Curriculum (*Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011*) whereas the sentiments expressed by the BoS NSW are that the new curriculum does not meet NSW standards (*Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011*).

Recommendations for professional development for primary teachers include a more specific focus on viewing History as a discipline and then expanding on the more detailed areas such as skills, knowledge, conceptual foundation and understanding, and historical enquiry. Primary teachers will need to have knowledge of content and process. CS recommended that primary teachers will “*still need to develop historical knowledge but I think it’s got to be – I think they come to it from pedagogy*” (*Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011*). One reason put forward for the delay in the implementation of the new curriculum in NSW is the teacher demand for professional development:

*Talking to a lot of teachers who are still in the system, a lot of this professional development is often happening after school or on weekends (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13, 2011).*

Education officials have indicated that teachers will receive primarily online information and training on the new curriculum.

*The teachers will just need to access that and take themselves through - well not necessarily themselves but schools will be responsible for taking their teachers through that training (Interview, Quality Teacher Team Leader, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011).*

## HISTORY LEARNING

The policies used in this analysis position the learning of history as a significant discipline in its own right although due to the lack of implementation in NSW, the role of learning history must be based on prior syllabus documents and interpreted in light of the policy actors involved in the ACARA shaping paper as well as draft ACARA documents and the submissions by BoS NSW.

The NSW History Teachers Association commented on the ACARA shaping paper and noted that the content was more teacher-centred rather than student-centred. A participant from the BoS NSW expressed concern that students' learning and capabilities were underestimated and that there was a need to engage and motivate student learning in History. Alternately a participant from the BoS NSW (interview 2011) highlighted the role of student as inquirer and that learning history required students to engage in detective skills and to investigate. This inquiry-based learning approach encouraged and motivated students to learn about history and to view the subject as a process and application of skills rather than just content to be learnt.

So far, the key themes in learning history have been the role of student as inquirer and learning history as an inquiry-based and developing of skills subject. The role of the teacher is pivotal in the learning of history in terms of facilitating opportunities to learn. Here the student is perceived as a blank slate rather than a conscious human being who is further developing their understanding and appreciation of life's rich tapestries.

### Multiple approaches to learning

Learning history requires students to explore multiple perspectives and in order to do this multiple approaches must be taken to ensure different ways are approached. The assistant principal at a state school acknowledged five different approaches to learning history: 1) Inquiry, 2) Bloom's taxonomy, 3) De Bono's Six Thinking Hats, 4) Perrozo's Thinking Tools, and 5) Assessing students' outcomes using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Each of these approaches, when combined, allow for multiple perspectives to be viewed when learning history.

### The teacher as lifelong-learner

Teachers are expected to undertake professional development in order to implement the new curriculum. NSW is the only state in Australia that has had mandatory history which Secondary teachers are quite familiar. Primary teachers in NSW will need to expand their skills in terms of delivering the history component of the new curriculum.

Teacher training at the University of New England (UNE), for example, incorporates a first year subject that focuses on history and developing history skills. In particular, the UNE is training their pre-service teachers to become skilled in inquiry methodology.

*The methodology that we're working on can be used for all of the discipline areas in social science but also in science as well because we teach Inquiry Methodology. It's trying to show trainee teachers that it's not just a way of teaching history. You can teach lots of subject areas through that inquiry methodology (Interview, University Lecturer 1, December 15, 2011)*

The UNE primarily uses the BoS NSW draft syllabus for History to facilitate and use as a foundation in their pre-service teacher courses.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Best practice applies to multiple areas in the teaching and learning of history, primarily from theory at a research level, the teacher pedagogy level, and also teacher training at a tertiary level.

*You can't teach something well if you don't have any background in it whatsoever. You can't teach it well if you haven't really looked at, specifically how that subject should be taught and you can't teach it well if you're not an enthusiastic teacher who wants kids to learn in the first place (Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011)*

Best practice also employs current research to understand the perspective of the learner and how they are positioned in learning history. In particular, best practice looks at “developing historical thinking and understanding” (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 15, 2011) in students and also explores pre-service teachers education at a tertiary level. The teaching of a history course in the higher education sector needs adequate time and quality teaching where “it's not just going to be a 10 hour course or whatever, there you are, you've done history, in preparation for a teaching place (Interview, Participant from NSW BoS, December 15, 2011).

Universities represented have responded to concerns of lack of adequate knowledge and skills demonstrated by pre-service teachers by focusing on providing them with skills. Unfortunately, and perhaps somewhat realistically, based on time and budget constraints, Universities are only able to “expose you [pre-service teachers] to what you have to teach but gaining that knowledge is something that you're going to have to do” (Interview, University Lecturer 1, December 15, 2011).

### **The micro: Practical suggestions**

The benefits of learning history is that students are able to “journey from two-dimensional to greater awareness of others and environments” (Teacher 1, Interview, December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011). The approaches to the teaching and learning of history will require students to engage in and utilise key theoretical approaches such as Inquiry-based learning, Bloom's Taxonomy, De Bono's Six Thinking Hats, Perrozo's Thinking Tools, and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Primary teachers are encouraged to use an inquiry-based approach in history as stated in the NSW syllabus. An inquiry-based approach uses the IGASAR model - initiate, gather, analyse and organise, synthesise and conclude, apply and reflect – when investigating questions. Pre-service teachers have noted that while on practicum, teachers are not using inquiry-based approaches but rather a content-orientated approach (Interview, University Lecturer 2, December 13th, 2011) revealing that teachers need further training and professional development in pedagogy.



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## APPENDICES:

### APPENDIX A: PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Professional Development Network Queensland 2012 – *Learning and Doing History: Preparing for the Australian Curriculum* – workshop facilitated by Dr Paul Reitano

Queensland Studies Authority State Conference 2012 – *Australian Curriculum: Curriculum Policy shaping teachers and students Years F-10* – presented by Dr Paul Reitano on behalf self and Dr Nicole Green, A/Prof Mary Dixon, Dr Kim Senior and A/Prof Tony Taylor

Australian Association for Research in Education International Conference 2012 – Symposium: *Australian History Curriculum: Provocations, resistance and possibilities*.  
Papers presented: *History 2012 – whose story?* by A/Prof Mary Dixon and Dr Kim Senior;  
*Large scale research: Doing research with five year olds, three state departments and national curriculum bodies* by A/Prof Mary Dixon and A/Prof Tony Taylor;  
*History: Time and place where context matters* by Dr Nicole Green and Dr Paul Reitano

Queensland History Teachers Association Conference 2013 – *Seeing, Touching, Feeling and Smelling: Using Artefacts in the Primary Classroom* – presented by Dr Paul Reitano and Dr Nicole Green

History Teachers Association of New South Wales Conference 2013 – *Seeing, Touching, Feeling and Smelling: Using Artefacts in the Primary Classroom* – presented by Dr Paul Reitano and Dr Nicole Green

Griffith Institute of Educational Research 2013 – Seminar: *Images, words, policies: research entanglements* – presented by A/Prof Mary Dixon, Dr Nicole Green and Dr Paul Reitano

History Teachers Association of Victoria Primary Conference 2013 – *The New Historians* – presented by A/Prof Mary Dixon

International Journal of Learning 17(8), 307-320 (2010) – *Teaching and Learning History in Primary Schools: Pedagogical Shifts, Complexities and Opportunities* – Dr Paul Reitano, Dr Nicole Green and A/Prof Mary Dixon

Critical and Reflective Practice in Education 3, 4-13 (2012) – *Mapping expertise in social science teaching: The professional development of a beginning teacher* – Dr Paul Reitano and Dr Nicole Green

Moments in Time: Investigating a National History Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Classrooms Interim report (2012) – A/Prof Mary Dixon, Dr Nicole Green, Lea McEvoy (RA), Dr Paul Reitano, Dr Kim Senior and A/Prof Tony Taylor

*Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* 41(2): 198-218 (2013) – *Beginning teachers' conceptual understandings of effective history teaching: Examining the change from "subject knowers" to "subject teachers"* – Dr Paul Reitano and Dr Nicole Green

*The Curriculum Journal* 23(4): 531-552 (2012) – *The politics are personal: The Australian versus the Australian curriculum in history* – A/Prof Tony Taylor

*Q History* 1, 4-10 (2014) – *Seeing, touching, feeling, and smelling: Using artefacts in primary classrooms* – Dr Paul Reitano and Dr Nicole Green

Moments in Time: Investigating a National History Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Classrooms Final report (2014) – A/Prof Mary Dixon, Dr Nicole Green, , Dr Paul Reitano, Rebecca Sahr (RA), Dr Kim Senior, Adjunct Professor Tony Taylor and Satine Winters (RA)

## APPENDIX B: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENTS AND CONSENT FORMS

*This is an example of the plain language statements and consent forms that were given to all participants. Forms were modified to address participants and participation*

### DEAKIN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT – PRINCIPALS



As the *principal* of your institution we seek your assistance in the research project “*Moments in Time: Investigating a National History Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings and Primary Classrooms*” located at Deakin University and with collaborating universities (Monash University, University of Southern Queensland and Griffith University) as part of a joint project funded by the Australian Research Council.

This school has been selected as one of a group of Australian schools in which we wish to investigate the pedagogical and curriculum implications of the introduction of the National History curriculum for early childhood settings and primary classrooms in Queensland, New South Wales and Victorian schools. We invite you and your school to participate in this project, as we consider that it has particular relevance to yourself as principal, the school and local community in terms of providing insights into evidence-based curricular and pedagogical theorising of effective and productive teaching and learning of History in those contexts.

We also seek to interview you as a key actor in the school to discuss your approach to the teaching of History in early childhood/primary school settings, and the implications of the national History curriculum for your school. For example: How have you engaged the introduction of the History Curriculum in your school? What have been the opportunities provided by this initiative? What have been the challenges provided by this initiative? What professional learning opportunities have your teachers been offered? What does it mean for early years teachers to be history teachers? What does it mean for your early years students to learn history? What are your expectations of the place of this curriculum in the future in your school? What can be identified as successful pedagogical content knowledge for History in these settings? How do early childhood and primary students productively engage with the knowledge, skills and values of History? How is the discipline of History reconstructed by the National curriculum initiative?

This interview will take approximately 45 –60 minutes, and we would seek to organise a time and place convenient to you. The interview will take a semi-structured format (rather than a questionnaire form) broadening the scope for your context specific response. The research will not require any personal information.

With your permission, the interview will be recorded and you are asked to sign the attached consent form. Participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the project at any time and the data will not be used. Names will be changed in any publication and care will be taken that participants are not identified by position or by the information provided to protect confidentiality, unless the individual consents to its use. The data will be stored according to Deakin University Ethics Guidelines in a locked project office at Deakin for the required six years. The identifiable consent forms will be stored separately to collected and encoded data. Only members of the research team listed below will have access to the data/records. We will provide a report at the end of the project to each school (and to relevant state and federal education departments and authorities involved in the project) in the hope that it will further its own understandings about the processes of change.

We are happy to answer any questions. You may contact me, Mary Dixon, at Deakin University Faculty of Arts and Education Burwood Campus on 03 9244 6361.

Associate Professor Mary Dixon [mary.dixon@deakin.edu.au](mailto:mary.dixon@deakin.edu.au)  
Dr Kim Senior [kim.senior@deakin.edu.au](mailto:kim.senior@deakin.edu.au)  
Dr Paul Reitano [p.reitano@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.reitano@griffith.edu.au)  
Dr Nicole Green [nicole.green@usq.edu.au](mailto:nicole.green@usq.edu.au)  
Associate Professor Tony Taylor [Tony.Taylor@uts.edu.au](mailto:Tony.Taylor@uts.edu.au)

### **Complaints**

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact: The Manager, Office of Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581; [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au) Please quote project number [2011-178].



**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
CONSENT FORM - SCHOOLS**



I, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name)

principal of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school)

hereby give permission for this school to be involved in a research study "*Moments in Time: Investigating a National History Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings and Primary Classrooms*" being undertaken by the Australian Research Council under the direction of Associate Professor Mary Dixon, Chief Investigator, Deakin University.

I understand that the purpose of the research is to undertake a case study in this school. Involvement for the institution means the following: an interview of approximately 1hour duration with identified staff at a place and time convenient for the interviewees; observation of students in the classroom; students taking photographs.

**I acknowledge**

- That the aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
- That I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution to participate in the above research study.
- That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution will not be used if I so request.
- I understand that aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

**I agree that**

- The institution MAY / MAY NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.
- I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution.
- I / We EXPECT / DO NOT EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## APPENDIX C: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### VICTORIA: FORMAL INTERVIEWS

Museum educator, Museums Victoria  
University History educator, Melbourne University  
University History educator, Ballarat University (as was, now Federation University)  
Representative, VCAA  
University History educator, Deakin University [2]  
Principal, Primary school  
Assistant principal, Primary school  
Curriculum coordinator, Primary school  
Teacher, Primary School [3]  
University History educator, Monash University [2]  
Museum educator, Museums Australia  
PhD candidate (and primary school teacher), University of Ballarat  
Representative, History Teachers Association of Victoria [2]  
Representative, DEECD  
Pre-service teacher, Australian Catholic University  
Principal/curriculum coordinator case study school *Rural 1*  
Parent case study school *Rural 1*  
Teacher case study school *Rural 1*  
Assistant principal case study school *Urban 1*  
Teacher case study school *Urban 1*  
Principal case study school *Regional 1*  
Teachers [2] case study school *Regional 1*  
Teacher, Primary school  
Curriculum coordinator case study school *Outer Urban 1*  
Teachers [2] case study school *Outer Urban 1*  
Curriculum coordinator case study school *Urban 2*  
Teachers [3] case study school *Urban 2*  
Curriculum coordinator case study school *Rural 2*  
Teacher case study school *Rural 2*

### VICTORIA: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 2013 PARTICIPANTS

Leading Teacher from case study school, *Urban 1*  
Teacher from case study school, *Rural 1*  
Principal from case study school, *Regional 1*  
Teacher from case study school, *Rural 2*  
Teacher from non-case study school

### QUEENSLAND: FORMAL INTERVIEWS

Early Childhood educator, Griffith University  
Representative, Queensland Studies Authority (as was, now QCAA)  
Teacher educator, Griffith University  
Representative, Queensland History Teachers Association  
University History educator, Queensland University of Technology  
Principal case study school *Rural 1*

Teachers [2] case study school *Rural 1*  
Principal case study school *Urban 1*  
Specialist History Teacher case study school *Urban 1*  
Teacher case study school *Urban 1*  
Principal case study school *Regional 1*  
Teachers [2] case study school *Regional 1*  
Principal case study school *Rural 2*  
Specialist History Teacher case study school *Rural 2*  
Teachers [2] case study school *Rural 2*  
Principal case study school *Urban 2*  
Teachers [2] case study school *Urban 2*  
Head of Curriculum case study school *Regional 2*  
Teacher case study school *Regional 2*

#### **QUEENSLAND: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 2013 PARTICIPANTS**

Curriculum coordinator from case study school, Rural 1  
Teacher from case study school, Regional 1  
Teacher from case study school, Urban 2  
Teacher from case study school, Rural 2

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES: FORMAL INTERVIEWS**

Representative, Board of Studies NSW  
University History educator, University of Sydney  
University History educator, University of New England  
Representative, New South Wales Department of Education and Communities  
University History educator, University of Canberra  
University History educator, Macquarie University

## APPENDIX D: LIST OF POLICY DOCUMENTS ANALYSED

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Australian Curriculum developments and implementation updates
- VCAA Transition to the Australian Curriculum – Professional Development and online support program
- VCAA State Reference Group
- VCAA Notice No 185/2010
- VCAA Useful Links For Planning The Transition To The Australian Curriculum
- VCAA Update Australian Curriculum July 2011
- VCAA Approaches to implementation: School Curriculum and Assessment Planning, PowerPoint
- VCAA Implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Victoria, PowerPoint
- VCAA Transition to the Australian Curriculum in Victoria
- VCAA Bulletin EY–10 and Notices/Notices to Schools
- VCAA AusVELS (The Australian Curriculum in Victoria) website
- VCAA F-10 curriculum planning and reporting guidelines
- AusVELS Curriculum Planning Resource website
- VCAA AusVELS Resources and Support website
- History Teachers Association of Victoria (HTAV) email updates, links and publications [including *Bulletin* and *Agora*]
- HTAV Primary Conference handouts
- HTAV Primary Resource Pack 2012
- HTAV Prime Resource
- DEECD Teacher Support Resources
- Board of Studies New South Wales (BOSNSW) History K-10 Draft Syllabus
- BOSNSW History K-10 Draft Syllabus Guide
- Memorandum to Principals and Stakeholders: The Australian Curriculum from BOSNSW; Association of Independent Schools; Catholic Education Commission and Department of Education and Training – November 2010
- Media Release *NSW to Delay Implementation of Australian Curriculum* from the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP Minister for Education August 2011
- Open letter to Peter Garrett from Louise Secker 2011
- Putting History into HSIE Jennifer Lawless 2009
- The national curriculum process, a reflection Paul Kiem 2011
- BOSNSW Consultation report History K-10 Draft AC 2010
- BOSNSW Official Notices and Notices to Principals
- BOSNSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum website
- BOSNSW Guide to the new History K-10 Syllabus
- BOSNSW K-6 Navigation Guide to K–10 Syllabuses
- BOSNSW K-6 Schools Guide
- BOSNSW Parents' Guide to the new NSW K-10 syllabuses
- BOSNSW Schedule for Implementation
- BOSNSW Program Builder
- BOSNSW Foundation Statements
- BOSNSW K-6 Human Society and It's Environment (HSIE) Syllabus

- BOSNSW K-6 HSIE Consultation Reports
- BOSNSW History/HSIE Resources for Teaching and Assessment
- History Teachers Association of Australia (HTAA) Australian Curriculum History Units
- Queensland response to draft K(P)–10 Australian Curriculum May 2010
- HTAA Statement – National Curriculum & Teacher Pre-service Training February 2010
- Australian Curriculum K(P)–10 trial Feedback from Queensland schools July 2010
- QSA Supporting implementation of Australian Curriculum P-10
- QSA Transition to the Australian Curriculum – FAQ’s
- QSA Time allocations and entitlement Advice on implementing the Australian Curriculum F(P)-10
- QSA Assessment, moderation, certification and the Australian Curriculum – FAQ
- QSA Draft Planning for implementing Australian Curriculum P-10
- QSA Draft Whole school curriculum and assessment planning Australian Curriculum P-10
- QSA F-6 Audit tools
- QSA Whole school curriculum and assessment plan: Australian Curriculum P-10
- QSA Planning templates and exemplars
- Outline of Key benefits and key differences for Queensland
- QSA memos and newsletters
- QSA Australian Curriculum and Resources website (also includes assessment, reporting and policies)
- QSA Assessment Bank
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Communications emails
- ACARA General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, training and Youth Affairs Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for young Australians 2008
- NCB Framing Paper November 2008
- NCB Framing Paper Consultation Report: History May 2009
- NCB Shape of the Australian Curriculum: History May 2009
- ACARA The Draft Australian History Curriculum F-10 March 2011
- ACARA AC: *History* F-10 December 2011

## APPENDIX E: LIST OF SCHOOLS

All schools in the project were co-educational, government schools.

NB: The project did not work with any schools in NSW, despite outlining plans to do so in the original proposal, because the Board of Studies NSW (as was, now BOSTES) delayed implementation beyond the scope of this project.

**TABLE 7: VICTORIAN AND QUEENSLAND CASE STUDY SCHOOLS**

<b>VICTORIAN SCHOOLS</b>
<i>Rural 1</i> is in the central region of Victoria
<i>Urban 1</i> is in the northern metropolitan area of Melbourne
<i>Regional 1</i> is in the South Gippsland region of Victoria
<i>Outer Urban 1</i> is in the outer west metropolitan area of Melbourne
<i>Urban 2</i> is in the western metropolitan area of Melbourne
<i>Rural 2</i> is in the lower western plains region of Victoria
<b>QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS</b>
<i>Rural 1</i> is in the Darling Downs region of Queensland
<i>Urban 1</i> is in the north eastern metropolitan area of Brisbane
<i>Regional 1</i> is in the Gold Coast region of Queensland
<i>Rural 2</i> is in the Lockyer Valley region of Queensland
<i>Urban 2</i> is in the southern metropolitan area of Brisbane
<i>Regional 2</i> is in the central west region of Queensland

## APPENDIX F: Abbreviations

**AC: History:** *Australian Curriculum: History*

**ACARA:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

**AG:** Advisory group

**AusVELS:** AusVELS is the integration between the Australian Curriculum and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

**ALP:** Australian Labor Party

**BOSNSW:** Board of Studies New South Wales, as was, now BOSTES

**BOSTES:** Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (NSW)

**C2C:** *Curriculum into the Classroom* materials to assist state school teachers implement the Australian Curriculum in Queensland

**CECV:** Catholic Education Commission Victoria

**DDA:** Disability Discrimination Act (Queensland)

**DEECD:** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)

**HSIE:** Human Society and its Environment

**HTAA:** History Teachers Association of Australia

**HTANSW:** History Teachers Association of New South Wales

**HTAV:** History Teachers Association of Victoria

**IB PYP:** International Baccalaureate – Primary Years Program

**ICSEA:** Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage

**ISV:** Independent Schools Victoria

**MCEECDYA** Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

**NAPLAN:** *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy*

**NCB:** National Curriculum Board

**NSWBOS:** Board of Studies New South Wales, as was. Now BOSTES

**NSWDEC** New South Wales Department of Education and Communities

**QCAA:** Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, superseding the QSA

**QCAR:** Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting framework

**QHTA:** Queensland History Teachers Association

**QSA:** Queensland Studies Authority, superseded by the QCAA

**SEAA:** Social Educators Association of Australia

**SOSE:** Studies of Society and Environment

**SPARQ-ed:** *Students Performing Advanced Research Queensland*

**VCAA:** Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority

**VELS:** Victorian Essential Learning Standards