

THIRTEENTH MCEECDYA MEETING

14 October 2011, Melbourne

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs met today in Melbourne. The Council made a number of major decisions in relation to national education and early childhood reforms.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

A major milestone in early childhood quality reforms was reached today with Ministers announcing the release of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, which contribute towards the first national regulatory system for the early childhood education and care sector.

The National Regulations are a part of the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care services, which comes into effect from 1 January 2012. As well as improved educator to child ratios (except in jurisdictions where these national ratios are already met or exceeded) a new quality rating system will provide families with information about the quality of early childhood education and care services to assist in their choice of services.

The National Quality Framework, including the National Regulations, covering long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and most preschool services, has been the subject of extensive consultations with the sector throughout 2010 and 2011.

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Council agreed the 18 month review of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education was complete, and that where necessary, bilateral discussions will continue. Adjustments already agreed include recognising three-year trained Early Childhood teachers who graduate by 30 June 2013; considering pre-school distance education programs as meeting the National Partnership objectives, and targeting fee reductions to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, where cost is likely to be a barrier to participation. Ministers also agreed to progress development of advice on sustainable national funding arrangements.

Australian Curriculum

Another historic milestone towards implementation of Australia's first national school curriculum was reached with Ministers endorsing the achievement standards for Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history. Following Ministers' endorsement of the curriculum content for these first four learning areas in December last year, the achievement standards were refined after a validation process this year that involved feedback from classroom teachers and state and territory school and curriculum authorities. The final Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards for Foundation to Year 10 English, mathematics, science and history can be found at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au from midday Monday. ACARA will provide student work samples that illustrate achievement against each standard in the four learning areas in 2011 and during 2012 to enable the standards to be consistently interpreted and assessed across the nation.

Ministers also endorsed the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*. The revised version provides an overview of the organisation of the whole Australian Curriculum, with more detail on all of the learning areas, general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities that are at the heart of the Australian Curriculum.

My School

Ministers supported important work by ACARA to plan for the next version of the *My School* website to continue to offer high value to parents, students, teachers, schools and systems.

Collection of Nationally Consistent Data on Students with Disability

Ministers have agreed to develop a plan for the collection of nationally consistent data on school students with disability, following the successful trial that took place earlier this year. A working group will include representation of all jurisdictions, the Catholic and independent sectors and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. It will collaboratively develop, by April 2012, a detailed plan to enable the collection of nationally consistent data on students with disability and the level of adjustment that is provided for them. This information will address a significant gap in the national schools data set for this disadvantaged group of students.

Nationally Consistent Registration of Teachers

Another major milestone was reached as a result of work by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) with Ministers endorsing the elements of teacher registration that will be made nationally consistent. The elements of the nationally consistent approach to teacher registration include requirements for initial registration, change in registration status, renewal of registration, discipline and de-registration, suitability to teach, English language proficiency and mutual recognition.

Teachers seeking registration from 1 January 2013 will do so under the agreed nationally consistent approach based on the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Other AITSL activities

Ministers also endorsed a draft *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (the Charter) and a proposal for a *Nationally Consistent Approach to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers*, both developed by AITSL. The Charter provides an approach to supporting and promoting national consideration of, and engagement with, teacher and school leader professional learning. The *Nationally Consistent Approach to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers* proposes principles and features of a nationally consistent approach to the assessment process for teachers against these two standards.

AITSL will consult and engage widely with teachers, school leaders, jurisdictional and sectoral representatives across the nation about both proposals, with a view to presenting the final versions to Ministers for endorsement in 2012.

Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership

On 13 October Ministers attended the inaugural National Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership. Winners were awarded a scholarship to study and work with recognised experts and practitioners and engage in research, best practice and innovative developments in teaching and school leadership nationally or internationally.

Winners in five Award categories were selected from 39 state and territory finalists through a national judging process. They include:

- Australian Primary Teacher of the Year (including early childhood and special education): Jo Sherrin
- Australian Secondary Teacher of the Year (including special education): David Henderson

- Australian Primary Principal of the Year (including early childhood and special education): Lee Musumeci
- Australian Secondary Principal of the Year (including special education): David Hamlett
- Excellence in Teaching or Leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (Australian Government Minister's Award): Graham Blackley

Rural and Remote Education

Ministers have identified closing the divide between rural and urban students as a key priority in their forward work plan for national collaborative action.

As a first step, a Ministers' forum on rural and remote education was conducted prior to the meeting. NSW Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP delivered a presentation detailing current trends in education and early childhood development in rural and remote locations, drawing on analysis of national data, from early childhood development through to post-school destinations. Ministers took the opportunity to exchange information about local level rural and remote initiatives, and agreed that NSW would lead further work on the action required to address the needs of rural and regional communities.