



VCAA Bulletin P-10

Regulations and information about curriculum and assessment for Prep to Year 10

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CEO's column

National Curriculum and Assessment

Discussion around national consistency in curriculum and assessment continues to grow. There are a number of documents available which provide some solid background about the issues and directions than simply relying on media commentary, much of which is partisan and less than fully informed. I would advise all school curriculum leaders to familiarise themselves with the report of the Council of the Australian Federation – The Future of Schooling in Australia, available at www.dpc.vic.gov.au

This report includes a twelve-point action plan, the first of which represents the thinking of the states and territories about how to proceed collaboratively to produce a desired level of national curriculum consistency. The principles outlined here formed the basis of the recent decision of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) to develop content and achievement standards in English, Mathematics and Science for the end of secondary schooling and key junctures during schooling.

Allied with the continued work in developing national testing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in literacy and numeracy, this constitutes a major renewed effort in the area of national consistency. Both the major political parties at the Commonwealth level endorse this direction although they differ in their emphasis and procedures. There are at present many more

questions than answers. The next 12 to 18 months will be a time of major activity with implications for all key groups in education. The VCAA will be consulting our key stakeholders on what their priorities are as the national proposals unfold. We are keen to ensure that much of what has been learnt over the last three years in the development and implementation of the VELs, the continuing development of VCAL and review of VCE studies incorporated into the national debates.

An informed community is best placed to participate effectively. We will continue working with our schools and their communities to provide advice based on the evidence of what is working well and where the greatest opportunities lie for real improvement in student learning to result from greater national consistency. Our key goal must be that greater national consistency leads to improved student learning.

Retirement of Professor Pargetter from VCAA Board

Professor Robert Pargetter completed his second term as a VCAA Board member at its recent May meeting. Following two terms as a member of the predecessor Victorian Board of Studies, Professor Pargetter is retiring as a Board member. Over this period of service of more than a decade, Robert has been a source of much sound advice to the various Boards upon which he has served. He has been an active contributor at Board and Committee levels as

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Sustainability perspectives in the VELS

One of the explicit aims of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) is to support students in developing a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours that will prepare them to create a future which is sustainable, by developing an understanding of the interaction between social, economic and environmental systems and how to manage them.¹ How is this aim translated into a curriculum? Where, specifically, does education for sustainability appear in the VELS?

Education for sustainable development is often equated with environmental education. The distinction is eloquently made in UNESCO's 'Draft International Implementation Scheme' for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2015:

... (Environmental education) is a well-established discipline which focuses on humankind's relationship with the natural environment and on ways to conserve and preserve it and properly steward its resources. Sustainable development therefore encompasses environmental education, setting it in the broader context of socio-cultural factors and the socio-political issues of equity, poverty, democracy and quality of life. The development perspective – that of social change and evolving circumstances – is also central to any treatment of sustainable development. The set of learning goals of sustainable development are thus wide-ranging. Sustainable development must be integrated into other disciplines and cannot, because of its scope, be taught as a discreet (sic) subject.²

Sustainability education includes ecological, economic and social perspectives. Concepts and principles which may be considered in school sustainability programs have been listed in the table below.

| General sustainability concepts and principles | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic human needs • Decision making • Ethics • Indigenous knowledge and perspectives • Needs and rights of future generations • Precautionary principle • Quality of life • Spirituality • Stewardship • Sustainable development | | |
| Ecological sustainability | Economic sustainability | Social sustainability |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Habitat • Carrying capacity • Conservation • Ecological footprint • Ecology • Ecospace • Ecosystems • Interspecies equity • Natural cycles and systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-benefit analysis • Economic development • Eco-efficiency • Life-cycle analysis • Natural capital • Natural resource accounting • Steady-state economy • Sustainable consumption • Sustainable production • Triple bottom line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Conflict resolution • Cultural diversity • Cultural heritage • Democracy • Health • Human rights • Intergenerational equity • Participation • Peace • Power • Respect • Risk management • Social justice • Tolerance |

Table adapted from 'Educating for a Sustainable Future', 2005³

The VELS support UNESCO's approach to education for sustainable development. The sustainability perspective is embedded within the three core strands of the VELS and incorporated into specific standards in many of the domains. While it is possible for individual teachers to include sustainability education in their programs, an approach that involves all teachers in planning school sustainability programs, including the consideration of co-curricular programs, would be preferable. Such an approach is supported by The National Environmental Education Statement (NEES) which provides a framework for including community groups in sustainability education within schools. 'Effective environmental education for sustainability is not just a curriculum issue; it requires the involvement of the whole school.'⁴

Interweaving of VELS strands and domains presents opportunities for schools and teachers to evaluate their existing learning programs and to consider how skills in each of the domains may be best addressed through a whole school planning approach. Deeper learning can be achieved through collaborative curriculum planning; for example, the concept of 'ecofootprint' may be traditionally taught within a Science/Geography program, where students may calculate their own footprint, compare it with other students/schools/countries and make resolutions about reducing their own footprint.

Energy as an example of teaching across domains

In a whole school approach, a particular aspect of the ‘ecofootprint’, such as energy, may be investigated further. Relationships between teaching the concept of energy and VELS domains are identified below:

- energy audits could be taken for the class/school over designated periods (Economics, Mathematics, Science)
- patterns investigated (Thinking Processes)
- problems identified (Interpersonal Development, Thinking Processes)
- different action plans developed and implemented by groups of students (may be peer groups or cross-age groups) to focus on solving identified problems (Civics and Citizenship, Communication, Interpersonal Development)
- evaluation of work (both plan itself and operation of the problem-solving team), (Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Thinking Processes)
- appropriate communication of outcomes (Communication)
- extended community involvement (home/local industry/comparison with other schools, both local and international through electronic collaboration) (Civics and Citizenship, Information and Communications Technology)
- planning for future outcomes (Thinking Processes).

Further activities to extend the teaching and learning of energy may extend to:

- student groups seeking funding/raising funds for installing energy-efficient devices at school/supporting energy efficiency/access for communities in need (Communication, Civics and Citizenship)
- writing articles for school newsletters and local newspapers (Communication, English)

- forming student leadership teams/clubs (may include students/teachers/parents/community energy experts) to continue monitoring energy usage and to take further action at school/home/community (Interpersonal Development)
- establishing democratic processes to vote on measures which the school could take to become more energy efficient, producing multi-language brochures on energy efficiency hints, or working with school management teams to save energy (Communication, Civics and Citizenship, Interpersonal Development, Languages Other Than English).

Sustainability links to the standards

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards website’s <<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>> support material section includes a table which provides examples of standards across the domains that support, and demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of, sustainability education.

In domains where standards do not apply at all levels, the learning focus statements provide advice for educators as to teaching and learning foci. In addition, a number of domains (English, Mathematics, LOTE, ICT, Thinking Processes and Communication) have standards that, although not specific to sustainability education, may be applied to the teaching of sustainability particularly in relation to local and global issues.

Sustainability and Schools

The Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) is a partnership with the Australian Government, states and territories that supports schools in working towards a sustainable

future. In Victoria the Department of Education and CERES Community Environment Park administer the program.

Schools joining the program develop a holistic approach to sustainability whilst working towards a five-star accreditation in the modules of Core, Water, Waste, Energy and Biodiversity.

Visit the CERES website <www.sustainability.ceres.org.au> for further information about the program and to read more about schools and their journeys towards sustainability.

Endnotes

1. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority March 2005, ‘Victorian Essential Learning Standards’, Overview, Victoria, p. 4.
2. UNESCO October 2004, United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014, ‘Draft International Implementation Scheme’, p. 16.
3. UNESCO October 2004, United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014, ‘Draft International Implementation Scheme’, p. 17.
4. Department of the Environment and Heritage 2005, ‘Educating for a Sustainable Future’, A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 7.

Resources

The NEES publication may be accessed at www.deh.gov.au/education

The Department of Education’s website <www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/curriculum/default.htm> provides support for schools in developing programs within the VELS.

Approaches to teaching Civics and Citizenship

The Civics and Citizenship domain focuses on developing students' knowledge and understanding of civic institutions and processes, community engagement and practice of democracy. Student learning is enhanced by providing opportunities and links to events and issues that are real and relevant for students and the community. The following advice provides examples and strategies for:

- using contemporary events
- using current issues
- providing democratic classrooms
- developing opportunities for school and community engagement.

Use contemporary events

Schools mark events that are significant to the school, the community and the nation. Such events provide opportunities to teach students about significant aspects of our democracy, practise skills and enact and question democratic values. Events often incorporated into the school calendar include:

- Australia Day
- Anzac Day
- Remembrance Day
- Clean up Australia Day
- Queen's Birthday
- Harmony Day
- National Flag Day
- May Day
- International Women's Day
- World Environment Day
- Celebrating Democracy Week
- NAIDOC (National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee) Week.

As well as these, there are celebrations that are significant to particular groups that make up the Australian nation such as Chinese New Year. These provide students with an entry into understanding the histories, cultures, beliefs and values that are part of our modern multicultural nation.

A basic approach to these events would see the following questions considered:

- Why does our community celebrate or mark this occasion?
- Why is it significant in terms of our nation's history, culture, values and beliefs?
- Why is it significant for us today?
- How do we celebrate this event in our school, our community and nation?
- How do Australian citizens participate in these events?
- What opportunities are there for our school?
- How can our students participate?

There are many examples available of learning programs that schools provide around these national events. See resources on page 5.

Use current issues

Current issues and events provide a way for students to understand civics and citizenship. They are a means of linking what students already know from the media to the theory about democratic political and legal institutions and values such as fairness, equality, representation and accountability that underpin a democracy. A focus on contemporary issues also provides a means of developing students' thinking and critical capacities. They also provide models of the ways that citizens can actively participate, question and improve democracy.

Some regular events that provide such opportunities include:

- local planning issues and citizens rights
- elections
- leadership changes
- legal cases, debates over changes to the law and legal rights of citizens
- annual government budgets and fairness
- international events and crises and Australia's role as a global citizen

- international protocols in areas such as carbon emissions and whaling and Australia's reaction as a global citizen
- ethical debates relating to science and technology.

Provide democratic classrooms

Effective learning about democracy requires students to not only learn about democracy but also act on the basis of their understandings. The classroom provides a key means through which students learn the practice of democracy. The culture, processes and protocols of the classroom will provide students with democratic understandings which are transferred to the playground, their home, the local community and national and global contexts.

There are a range of classroom practices which will support and enable students to practise democracy. Some of the key aspects include:

- teaching the language of democracy (including values such as inclusion, equality, fairness, freedom, respect, responsibility, care), using the language and have students use it in the classroom
- providing opportunities for students to make decisions about what they will learn and how they will go about it
- having students negotiate classroom rules and protocols – and rights and responsibilities
- creating opportunities for student responsibility – for learning, class resources, representing others in the class and contributing to school events
- providing learning contexts which emphasises collaboration and develops skills such as listening, asking questions, responding, negotiating, developing plans, assuming a range of roles – cooperative skills that underpin a community

- providing links to the student's world and the world outside of school by focusing on the significance of their learning in terms of real events and issues
- encouraging students to develop informed points of view about issues
- providing students with opportunities to explore a range of perspectives in their learning and recognise that there are many points of view about issues that affect communities and groups.

Develop opportunities for school and community engagement

The involvement of students in a range of school governance and broad school and community programs is an essential part of learning about society, developing skills and practising what it means to be a responsible citizen in a democratic society.

Specific teaching and learning programs and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to develop:

- civics and citizenship understandings and skills including understanding identity and roles in the community and the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- understanding of the school and wider community and their own connections to it
- values which underpin democratic communities such as freedom, equality, responsibility, accountability, respect, tolerance and inclusion
- skills and knowledge in making judgments, forming conclusions and making plans for action
- a sense of school, community and civic engagement, participation and contribution
- connection to the school and community
- personal responsibility and self discipline
- personal and social skills such as managing their own learning, building positive social

relationships, working in teams and values such as respect for others, care and compassion

- a sense of confidence, achievement, self-esteem and identity which complements the learning that takes place in the classroom.

Schools provide opportunities to develop these knowledge, skills and behaviours in activities such as:

- participation in school's governance including class and year level representation
- sports coaching
- participating in school sports programs
- school environmental programs
- social service activities
- student-run assemblies
- transition programs
- enterprise and service learning programs
- volunteer programs and partnership programmes with local council and employers.

These programs develop understanding and skills across all strands and in domains such as Health and Physical Education, The Humanities and Thinking Processes.

The value of these programs is such that they are important for all students and should be structured into all school programs.

Resources

Knowledge Bank

www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/knowledgebank
There are a range of ideas and models of how Victorian schools develop civics and citizenship learnings.

A number of case studies relating to civics and citizenship education in schools have been published in the 'Whole School Improvement' and 'Community, Involvement and Partnerships' sections of Knowledge bank. These include:

- SCRAYP – Youth Arts with an Edge (Primary and Secondary)
- Bicycles for East Timor (Secondary)

- The City Project – Moving In (Secondary)
- Old Mates: An intergenerational Project, Bringing Two Generations Together in Learning (Primary and Secondary)
- Harmony Week – Celebrating Our Diversity and Increasing Student Well-being (Primary)

Discovering Democracy Resources

All Victorian schools have been provided with a range of resources under the Discovering Democracy Program (1997–2004). Teachers will find that there are a number of valuable units and resources in the Discovering Democracy materials that support the learning focus and standards in Civics and Citizenship.

Learning materials and activities in the Discovering Democracy units are designed with a strong focus on stimulating students' interest and active engagement. The material incorporates a range of approaches to teaching and learning including:

- the use of focused inquiry, including investigation, communication and participation;
- the use of historical narrative in supporting students' critical thinking about past and present-day issues;
- analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary source material, including written texts, pictorial images, statistical tables, graphs and maps;
- building on students' existing knowledge, skills, values and interests;
- research skills including the use of evidence in support of a particular perspective;
- presentation of different interpretations of people, events and traditions;
- analysis of relevant prose, poetry, artwork, film and music;
- active citizenship approaches, both at school and in the wider community.

The resources include:

- *Discovering Democracy Kits*
- *Discovering Democracy Australian Readers* for Lower, Middle and Upper – Primary and Secondary
- *Discovering Democracy Through Research* which covers research investigations in the community
- *Discovering Democracy Assessment Resources* for Middle and Upper Primary and Lower and Middle Secondary.

Discovering Democracy Units are available online at: <www.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/units.htm>. Teachers will also find a range of teaching and learning activities at this site.

Other valuable resources

The Big Australia Day Book (2004 Curriculum Corporation), for lower primary students. (Covers themes of identity, harmony and diversity through stories, songs, poems and pictures.)

Being Australian (2005 Curriculum Corporation) for upper primary students. (Themes of heroes, symbols of Australia, identity, harmony, multiculturalism.)

Our Voices, a range of stories, songs, poems, historical extracts and artefacts. (Resources for primary students developed by the National Museum of Australia and Rigby which cover themes of Australian identity and history. More information: www.rigby.com.au)

Access Asia resources: Japan Diary, The Really Big Food Project, Australian Kaleidoscope and others. Themes of intercultural understanding and Australian identity. See: www.curriculum.edu.au

Incorporating CAS technology in the VELS

Computer algebra system (CAS) technology advice has been developed to assist teachers to incorporate CAS technology in curriculum planning for implementation of the VELS at Level 6 Mathematics. The corresponding sample mathematics courses can be implemented across Years 9 and 10.

This advice is presented in several sections:

1. Technology in the Mathematics domain of the VELS
2. CAS technology – a brief background
3. CAS-related activities for dimensions
4. Sample course planner
5. Case studies
6. Resources

Resource advice is available on the VELS website in the ‘Support Materials’ section at: <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/index.html>

Application of technology with CAS functionality should be considered within the broader context of the use of technology to support the teaching and learning of mathematics in the Prep to Year 12 curriculum. In particular, it should be noted that hand-held and computer-based technologies that incorporate symbolic manipulation functionality (or computer algebra as it is also known), either built in, or by supplementary programs or applications, also variously support or incorporate text, numerical, statistical, graphical and geometry functionality. Therefore, while there has sometimes been a focus on the incorporation of symbolic manipulation as a particular type of functionality of interest on certain hand-held devices, commonly called CAS calculators, the scope for working mathematically using such technology is, in practice, broader than this one aspect.

Teaching Indigenous perspectives

The 1967 Referendum

On May 27 1967, Australians voted overwhelmingly to change the Australian Constitution. Provisions which excluded Aborigines from being counted in the census and which prevented the Federal Government from making laws for Aborigines were removed from the Australian Constitution. The ‘Yes’ vote of 90.77 per cent remains a record in the history of Australian referendums.

The 1967 Referendum is extremely significant to Indigenous Australians. It symbolised the end of formal discrimination against Aborigines and the promise of full and equal citizenship. The overwhelming ‘Yes’ vote also signalled that white Australians were ready to embrace social and political reform and expected that the Federal Government would take the lead.

To mark the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum the VCAA, with the support of the History Teachers Association of Victoria (HTAV) and Social Education Victoria (SEV), has published an online unit of work on the 1967 Referendum. This is available on the VELS website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/level6/index.html>

The *1967 Referendum* sample unit features:

- a background essay for teachers which provides an historical context as well as civic information on the Australian Constitution and referendum processes
- a timeline of key events in the achievement of civil and political rights
- a glossary of key terms
- teaching and learning activities with downloadable student resources
- student handouts featuring primary sources from the period
- a resource list for the 1967 Referendum and a range of other Indigenous topics
- suggestions for further activities
- assessment advice.

The unit links primarily to the domains of History (Level 6), Civics and Citizenship (Levels 5 and 6), Thinking Processes (Levels 5 and 6) and Communication (Levels 5 and 6).

Indigenous perspectives in the VELS

Indigenous perspectives are an integral part of the VELS. The study of Indigenous perspectives is essential for developing student understanding of Australian history, culture and identity as well as providing understanding of contemporary society. The VELS domains of Civics and Citizenship, History and Geography contain a range of specific references to Indigenous content. The Arts also emphasises the exploration of cultural expression, including Indigenous cultures of Australia throughout the VELS and English teachers will recognise the opportunity to include Indigenous texts at all levels of schooling.

There are five interrelated Indigenous themes in the VELS. These are: land, culture, history, political and civil rights and Indigenous cultures today. The VELS domains of Civics and Citizenship and History also emphasise the values that underpin a harmonious democratic society including equality, freedom, respect and understanding.

The table on pages 8 and 9 of this Bulletin provides extracts from relevant focus statements and standards as they relate to Indigenous themes in various domains is provided at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/index.html>

from: PAGE 7 **VELS links to Indigenous perspectives**

| Level | Strand | Domain | Learning focus | Key elements of the standards |
|--------------------|--|------------------------|---|--|
| 2 | Discipline-based learning | The Humanities | [Students] begin to grasp the role and importance of the various cultural groups that make up the Australian community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They explore what their local area might have looked like before European settlement. | No standards at Level 2 |
| 2 | Physical, personal and social learning | Civics and Citizenship | [Students] begin to appreciate the similarities and differences between individuals and groups, including the language, cultural and religious groups which make up the Australian nation. | No standards at Level 2 |
| 3 | Discipline-based learning | The Humanities | [Students] examine stories, artefacts and other evidence from the past and present to learn about Australian society and its origins... They examine the histories of the cultural groups represented in their classroom, community and nation. Students consider ... features of their local community that have changed over time. | <i>Humanities knowledge and understanding</i> Students describe and sequence some key events ... and key aspects of histories of cultural groups that make up their class, community and nation. They describe how aspects of places in the local area have changed over time. |
| 3 | Physical, personal and social learning | Civics and Citizenship | [Students] build on their understanding of Australian society and investigate some of the different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that make up the Australian community. They learn about the contributions that people from diverse groups have made to many aspects of the Australian way of life. This includes contributions to the arts, industry, medicine and science, as well as to other aspects of their life including food, festivals and sporting events. They explore symbols and celebrations of Australia's and Victoria's past and present; [including] for example, the Indigenous flag. | <i>Civic knowledge and understanding</i> Students demonstrate understanding of the contribution of people from the many culturally diverse groups that make up the Australian community. |
| 4 | Discipline-based learning | History | [Students] learn about the organisation and lifestyle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the past, the impact of European settlement and as enduring cultures today. They learn about the significance of key events [and] people in Australia's history (for example, William Barak) that have brought about change. Through structured activities they explore links and comparisons with contemporary Australia. | <i>Historical knowledge and understanding</i> Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of significant events in Australian history including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history ... They make links and appropriate comparisons with contemporary Australia. |
| 4 (Years 5 & 6) | Discipline-based learning | Geography | Students explore how humans have affected the Australian environment. Examples could include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' care of the land; clearance by farmers and subsequent problems of land degradation and salinity; and protection of the natural environment through the creation of nature parks, national parks and marine parks. | <i>Geographical knowledge and understanding</i> [Students] compare the various ways humans have used and affected the Australian environment. |

VICTORIAN ESSENTIAL LEARNING STANDARDS

| Level | Strand | Domain | Learning focus | Key elements of the standards |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 4 (Years 5 & 6) | Physical, personal and social learning | Civics and Citizenship | [Students] consider the effects of Australian federation on the democratic rights of different groups of people such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women and non-British migrants. They consider the experiences of diverse cultural groups, including Indigenous communities, and their contributions to Australian identity. They consider the values important in a multicultural society such as respect and tolerance. | <i>Civic knowledge and understanding</i> ... students describe the nature of Australia's democracy that developed as a result of Federation ... They explain the concept of multiculturalism and describe the contribution of various cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to Australian identity. |
| 5 (Years 7 & 8) | Discipline-based learning | Geography | [Students] identify patterns of distribution and occurrence of major physical features and their interrelationship with human activities such as farming, fishing, manufacturing and settlement. Students become aware of contrasts within the regions of Australia and those surrounding it ... They develop an appreciation of differences in the culture, living conditions and outlooks of people, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in these areas. | <i>Geographical knowledge and understanding</i> [Students] explain, using examples, how the interaction of physical processes and human activities create variations within the regions ... Students describe differences in culture, living conditions and outlook, including attitudes to environmental issues, in these regions. |
| 5 | Physical, Personal and Social Learning | Civics and Citizenship | Students learn about significant milestones in the development of Australian law, governance and rights ... They consider examples of the fight for political rights [including] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and the vote for women. | <i>Civic knowledge and understanding</i> They identify significant developments in the governance and achievement of political rights in Australia. |
| 6 | Discipline-based learning | History | Students examine the impact of European colonisation of Australia, including the representation of that settlement as invasion. They learn about the struggles and successes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gain political and social rights, and their campaigns for land rights and self-determination. They investigate the contribution of significant Australians such as ... Charles Perkins. Students analyse significant events and movements which have resulted in improvements in civil and political rights for groups of Australians and describe the contributions of key participants and leaders in these events. | <i>Historical knowledge and understanding</i> Students evaluate the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the fight for civil and political rights and land rights ... They compare different perspectives about a significant event and make links between historical and contemporary issues. |
| 6 | Physical, Personal and Social learning | Civics and Citizenship | [Students] investigate some historical and contemporary issues, such as ... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition in the Australian Constitution. They explore human rights issues at the national and international level, including an investigation of the human rights of Indigenous communities and other groups within Australia ... Students explore Australia's multicultural society. They learn about the past and present policies of government in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and immigration. | <i>Civic knowledge and understanding</i> [S]tudents describe the origins and nature of Australia's federal political system and present a considered point of view on an issue about change in the political system and the law. They explain how the Australian Constitution affects their lives, and human rights issues, both national and international. |

Year 9 AIM Testing 2007

Year 9 AIM tests were conducted for all schools for the first time in 2007 and the VCAA is pleased to note that 582 schools participated. Over 60 000 Year 9 students across Victoria undertook the AIM tests in Reading, Writing and Mathematics on 8 and 9 May 2007. Marking of the tests has been completed and the results and parent reports will be delivered to schools in the week commencing 16 July.

When discussing State-wide test reports with parents, teachers are advised to become familiar with the data so they can answer parents' questions about particular aspects of their children's results. During these discussions, teachers should point out

that the information about each student is confidential to the parent, the teacher and the school.

Further reports can be accessed via the AIM Data Service to provide supplementary information to the parent reports.

It is important that the parent reports are delivered in a timely manner as many parents are awaiting the Year 9 results at the beginning of Term 3. The reports contain personal information about each student and how they compare to others within the school and across the state. The VCAA asks schools to consider a direct mail out of results to their parent body or issue them directly to parents. This can be done, for example, through

information nights or by arranging for parents to collect them directly from the school.

The VCAA provides only one set of parent reports to the school for distribution. Should a parent request a replacement copy of a report, the school will be able to provide a copy of results from the AIM Data Service Student Profiles Report. Schools may photocopy the printed report. Parents who contact the VCAA with queries about their child's report or results will, in all circumstances, be referred to the school. If the school has queries about results of particular students, please contact the AIM Help Desk on freecall 1800 648 637 or email: vcaa.aim.help@edumail.vic.gov.au

AIM test package delivery

In the week beginning Monday 16 July 2007, the Year 3 and Year 5 test packages will be delivered to schools by secure courier. Year 7 test packages will be delivered in the week beginning 23 July 2007. For schools that registered authorised staff on the VCAA website, test packages will come with these names printed on the outside of the packages. This will help to ensure that test materials are tracked at the school end.

Principals and AIM coordinators should ensure that appropriate staff members are briefed about the pending arrival of the test packages. The member of staff who signs for the test packages should inform the principal or one of the authorised staff about the delivery. It is important that the name of the staff member who signs for receipt from the courier is recorded and that the receipt, tracking, storage and distribution of the materials is documented in the AIM Test Materials Security Log. The Packing Slip should be used to check that the correct quantity of materials has been provided.

The number of test booklets and materials is based on the pre-enrolment data provided by schools for each year level. Extra copies of all materials are provided to allow for new enrolments. However, schools complete a Request for Extra Materials form and fax it to VCAA on (03) 9225 2333 if additional materials are required. The form can be found on the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/schooladmin/forms/aim.html

Pre-printed student details

Students undertaking the AIM tests in 2007 are pre-enrolled using data provided to the VCAA by schools. Pre-enrolment and verification of student details results in significant time savings in the administration of the tests at the school level. In addition, this assists the VCAA to more efficiently process student test results.

Pre-enrolment allows individual student details, including names, date of birth, gender, indigenous status, and language background other than English (LBOTE) status to be printed on the front cover of the test booklets.

Each school's package contains:

- a) test booklets with student and school details printed on the front cover
- b) test booklets with school details only printed on the front cover.

The information which appears on the front cover of the test booklets should be accurate as schools have provided the student data. However, the VCAA acknowledges that changes may need to be made to student details submitted in a school's student details file, for the following reasons:

- an error has been identified in the data, either by the school or by the VCAA
- a student leaves the school after the student details file has been submitted
- a student enrolls at the school after the student details file has been submitted.

Incorrect details should be amended on the test booklet cover.

Students should not complete the test in another booklet if they have a pre-printed booklet nor should they complete the test using another student's pre-printed booklet under any circumstances.

Test booklets with only school details printed on the front cover are to cater for those students who have enrolled at the school after the electronic data file was submitted to the VCAA. Principals should ensure that the following information for these students is recorded on the front cover of each test booklet using a 2B pencil:

- student's first name and last name in block letters
- date of birth
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATIS) status
- LBOTE status.

On Demand Testing

The VCAA updated the On Demand testing system during 2006 following the release of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The VCAA is currently developing new On Demand Progress Tests to support the delivery of the VELS. The new tests are scheduled for release towards the end of Term 4. The first release of tests will cover the domains of Mathematics and English. The VCAA will trial the first round of Progress Tests in early September.

In addition, the VCAA is developing new Computer Adaptive Tests in English and Mathematics to expand test coverage to Years 9 and 10. It is also anticipated that the new Adaptive Tests will be trialled in September.

The Progress Tests and Adaptive Tests are suitable for primary or junior secondary year levels. Tests covering domains other than English and Mathematics are scheduled for development and release in 2008.

If your school is interested in participating in either the Progress

Test trials or the Adaptive Test trials please contact Fran O'Mara in the P-10 Assessment Unit at <o'mara.frances.f@edumail.vic.gov.au> or by telephone on (03) 9225 2369.

Interested in joining On Demand Testing?

For more information regarding On Demand Testing, including technical requirements and details for registering for the program, please visit the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/ondemand/index.html

AIM Teacher Assessed Writing Task

The 2007 Marking Guide for the AIM Year 3 and Year 5 Teacher Assessed Writing Task was updated in 2006 to reflect the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

The complete Marking Guide will be included in the 2007 *AIM State-wide Tests Schools' Guide – Implementation Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7* and can be printed from the AIM website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au>. An extract of the marking guide, excluding Strategies, can be found on the following two pages.

The VCAA website also includes examples of teacher assessed and annotated student work for the Teacher Assessed Writing Task. These examples can be found on the website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/aim/publications.html

There are six examples featured, three of which will also be included in the 2007 *AIM State-wide Tests Schools' Guide – Implementation Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7*.

Teacher Assessed writing task marking guide

| Mark | Text and Contextual Understandings (TCU) | Linguistic Structures and Features (LSF) |
|------|---|--|
| 7 | <p>A Sophisticated Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex or thought provoking content Sustained and consistent analysis Ability to reflect on abstract attitudes, values and issues Highly effective engagement of the audience. | <p>A Sophisticated Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless manipulation of linguistic techniques to enhance the text A high level of confidence in the use of complex sentence structures Manipulation of rhythm, tone and style. |
| 6.5 | <p>A Complex and Fluent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex text which may include experimentation with different techniques Inclusion of abstract attitudes or values A clear ability to position the reader to accept a particular view of events, or characters or issues. | <p>A Complex and Fluent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended use of vocabulary, grammar and syntax Confident application of a range of language techniques High level editing skills evidenced by a near absence of errors. |
| 6 | <p>A Sustained and Cohesive Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex or challenging content Attention to consistency of viewpoint when presenting an argument or developing a narrative. An emerging ability to position the reader to accept a particular view of events, characters or issues. | <p>A Sustained and Cohesive Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled use of vocabulary, grammar and syntax to convey the subject matter precisely Effective application of a range of language techniques to convey a viewpoint or for stylistic effect Inclusion of complex sentences with embedded clauses and phrases. |
| 5.5 | <p>An Effective and Cohesive Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently shows the ability to speculate, hypothesise, persuade and reflect Successful planning and organisation of complex content Convincing development of characters, plot or viewpoint An attempt to position the reader to accept a particular view of events, characters or issues. | <p>An Effective and Cohesive Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of linguistic structures and features Appropriate choice of language and grammatical strategies to enhance plot and characterisation Editing skills evident in the clarity of the text. |
| 5 | <p>A Consistent and Coherent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extended text with development of a resolution Consistency of viewpoint or storyline Careful selection of content to add interest, detail and accuracy An ability to engage the audience. | <p>A Consistent and Coherent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of vocabulary to convey precise meaning Established control of tenses, subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement Selection of verbs, adverbs, adjectives to enhance the text Appropriate use of punctuation including apostrophes. |
| 4.5 | <p>A Clear and Consistent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear development of narrative or persuasive writing A convincing text with a consistent view Clearly defined plot, characters or sequence of events A developing ability to engage the audience. | <p>A Clear and Consistent Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate and accurate use of varied or specialised vocabulary Inclusion of some complex grammatical features to enhance the text Accurate use of a range of punctuation Developing confidence in the use of figurative language. |
| 4 | <p>A Well Developed Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of detail to enhance the text Structure within the introduction, body and conclusion Careful development of content such as characters or issues Attempted manipulation of language for special effects such as the inclusion of dialogue, images, suspense or surprise. | <p>A Well Developed Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of an extended vocabulary Use of different parts of speech including nouns, pronouns, adverbs, comparative adverbs and adjectives, and the inclusion of appropriate prepositions and conjunctions Punctuation used to enhance accuracy and readability Use of language to convey precise meaning and for special effects such as simple figurative language. |

| Mark | Text and Contextual Understandings (TCU) | Linguistic Structures and Features (LSF) |
|------|--|--|
| 3.5 | <p>A Reasonably Ordered Text with Supporting Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical sequencing of events Clear expression of ideas Developing ability to select content to add interest Some strategies for audience impact such as use of images or dialogue. | <p>A Reasonably Ordered Text with Supporting Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A developing range of vocabulary Attempts at using a range of grammatical features including complex sentences Appropriate use of structures such as paragraphing Appropriate use of punctuation. |
| 3 | <p>A Text with Developing Structure and Some Supporting Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a storyline or viewpoint Attempt at selection of content to add interest Increased awareness of expression Ordering of information and sequencing of events using details or supporting evidence. | <p>A Text with Developing Structure and Some Supporting Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects vocabulary that is appropriate for audience and purpose A variety of sentence structures used appropriately including some compound sentences Established control of tenses, subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement A range of punctuation including full stops, commas, question marks, exclamation marks and quotation marks, used to support meaning. |
| 2.5 | <p>A Text with Some Attempt at Structure and Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An emerging storyline or viewpoint A reasonable attempt at structuring an introduction, body and conclusion The inclusion of some background information or supporting detail for clarity or interest Adapting writing for audience and purpose. | <p>A Text with Some Attempt at Structure and Detail may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to use vocabulary with an awareness of purpose and audience Inclusion of a variety of sentence structures Emerging tense consistency Attempts accuracy with a range of punctuation. |
| 2 | <p>A Short or Limited Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An attempt at an introduction to set the scene or steps towards a conclusion An attempt at the elaboration of ideas Use of relevant detail to enhance the text Some awareness of writing for an audience. | <p>A Short or Limited Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some variety of sentence beginnings Developing control of sentence structures using pronouns, conjunctions and adverbial phrases Attempts at the selection of verbs and the inclusion of adjectives Some control over common punctuation such as full stops, commas, question marks and exclamation marks. |
| 1.5 | <p>A Simple Text with Related Ideas on the Topic may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some organisation of the text that shows an understanding of the task A basic organisation of ideas Some details relevant to the topic Content selected with some sense of audience other than self. | <p>A Simple Text with Related Ideas on the Topic may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimentation with word choice Attempts at using extended sentences Variable control of tenses and some subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement Inclusion of common punctuation such as full stops, question marks and exclamation marks. |
| 1 | <p>A Simple Text with Some Related Ideas on the Topic may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text that is interpretable Little elaboration of the ideas included Two or more ideas in sequence Little sense of audience. | <p>A Simple Text using Basic Conventions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple vocabulary related to the topic Simple sentences Correct use of nouns and verbs related to the topic Use of capital letters and full stops. |
| 0.5 | <p>A Simple Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brief response that may or may not be related to the topic Writing that is generally interpretable but may have to be read more than once or read aloud Some ideas with no development A string or list of words or ideas. | <p>A Simple Text may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some vocabulary related to the topic Some proper sentence structures Some correctly spelled words Some attempts to use capital letters or full stops. |

AIM State-wide Testing program

Important dates for 2007 – Years 3, 5 and 7

Administration of Year 3 and Year 5 AIM Teacher Assessed Tasks

| Task | Date 2007 | Time allocation Year 3 | Time allocation Year 5 |
|-------------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Mathematics | 18–30 July | 30 minutes | 40 minutes |
| English (Writing) | 18–30 July | 90 minutes* | 90 minutes* |

*The 90 minutes for Writing may be allocated in two or three sessions on one day or in a number of sessions on different days.

Administration of Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 AIM Centrally Assessed Tests

The tests must be administered on the dates, in the order and within the timeframes specified in the table below. It is recommended that students be given a break between test sessions conducted on the same day.

Please note that the time allocation does not include the time teachers and students spend working through the practice questions at the start of the test booklets. These are to be completed immediately before students attempt each of the Mathematics and English tests.

Year 3

| Test | Date 2007 | Administration time for the test | Introduction and practice questions | Time allocation |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Mathematics | Tuesday 31 July | Before recess | 10 minutes | 35 minutes |
| English | Wednesday 1 August | Before recess | 10 minutes | 40 minutes |
| Spelling – (Dictation and Editing) | Wednesday 1 August | Before recess | | 15 minutes [†] (includes introduction) |
| Writing | Wednesday 1 August | Before lunch | 15 minutes | 35 minutes |

Year 5

| Test | Date 2007 | Administration time for the test | Introduction and practice questions | Time allocation |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Mathematics | Tuesday 31 July | Before recess | 10 minutes | 45 minutes |
| English | Wednesday 1 August | Before recess | 10 minutes | 50 minutes |
| Spelling – (Dictation and Editing) | Wednesday 1 August | Before recess | | 15 minutes [†] (includes introduction) |
| Writing | Wednesday 1 August | Before lunch | 15 minutes | 40 minutes |

Year 7

| Test | Date 2007 | Administration time for the test | Introduction and practice questions | Time allocation |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Mathematics – Test 1 | Tuesday 31 July | Before recess | 10 minutes | 45 minutes |
| Mathematics – Test 2 | Tuesday 31 July | Before lunch | 5 minutes | 40 minutes |
| English | Wednesday 1 August | Before recess | 10 minutes | 40 minutes |
| Writing | Wednesday 1 August | Before lunch | 15 minutes | 40 minutes |

[†]This time is an estimate only. Allow sufficient time to complete both spelling tests (Dictation and Editing)

April 2006 to April 2007

The detailed contents for this issue are on the front cover. This index records items in all issues from February 2006 to February 2007. Index items in issues prior to April 2006 are followed by issue number, month, year of issue and page number. Items for April 2006 onwards are given an issue number and page number only.

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well as working parties on such matters as the development of the VELS and extension studies. He was an early and active proponent of an enhanced role for VET programs in the VCE. He has served on the Executive committee and chaired many discipline committee hearings. He has made a major contribution to the development of Victorian curriculum and assessment. On behalf of the Board and the staff, I thank him and wish him well for the future.

VCAA Plain English Speaking Award

I congratulate all of this year's participants in the VCAA Plain English

Speaking Award for their willingness to stand up and be counted. Oral communication is a key aspect of the VCE, the VCAL and the VELS. We encourage teachers to become involved in the PESA as a way of encouraging their students to give voice to their opinions or to listen to other students who are doing just that.

Regional finals will take place during June (Term 2); semifinals during July (Term 3) and the state final will be opened by the Minister for Education, John Lenders MP, on Friday 3 August. Minister Lenders was a public speaker at school himself and has endorsed the use of plain English in government communications.

Teachers are invited to bring student groups to any of these events, details of the semifinals and the state final is published on page 9 of the VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET No. 49.



John Firth
Chief Executive Officer

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Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Internet

Assessment maps – Progressing towards the standards

The Arts (3.25, 3.5, 3.75, 4.5, 4.75, 5.25, 5.5)
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Communication 3.5

Progression points

The Arts Dance Levels 5–6
Assessment of learning: Standards, assessment maps and progression points – PowerPoint
1967 Referendum Sample Unit at Levels 5 and 6

Achievement Improvement Monitor

AIM 2007 State-wide Test – Schools' Guide – Implementation Year 9

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Victorian schools only may photocopy this publication for use by teachers and students.

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