

SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

Learning Area Statement



The Society and Environment learning area develops students' understanding of how individuals and groups live together and interact with their environment. Students develop a respect for cultural heritage and a commitment to social justice, the democratic process and ecological sustainability.

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Definition & Rationale

The Society and Environment learning area develops students' understandings of how and why individuals and groups live together; interact with and within their environment; manage resources; and create institutions and systems. Students further understand that, over time, these relationships and interactions may change to varying degrees.

Students develop these understandings through processes of social inquiry, environmental appraisal, ethical analysis and the skills to constructively critique various perspectives from past and present contexts.

Students are encouraged to apply their understandings and skills in their own lives, in developing environmental consciousness, social competence and civic responsibility. In doing so, they are engaged in actively exploring, making sense of and contributing to improving the world around them.

Participating in a rapidly-changing world

Acknowledging that students are operating in a rapidly-changing world, the Society and Environment learning area equips them with the knowledge, skills and values needed to understand and participate effectively in these changing contexts.

Changes confront students in a number of contexts – local, national, regional and global and include increasing interdependence as a result of globalisation; the use and impact of new technologies; the dynamic nature of social, economic and political structures and relationships; the increasing demand for declining natural resources and the emergence of sustainable management practices; and the acquisition and application of new knowledge.

The Society and Environment learning area is important for students in that it fosters in them the capacity to develop new and integrated approaches to seeking solutions to a range of social and environmental issues of importance to humanity.

Acquiring knowledge, skills and values

Knowledge is developed that is relevant to students in Western Australia, within local, national, regional and global contexts. This will enable them to more effectively understand the changing world around them in terms of places, cultures, use of resources and natural and social systems in the past, present and future.

Students learn the skills of social inquiry to assist them in becoming more autonomous, purposeful, tolerant and involved members of the Australian and global society. These skills include investigating, reasoning, participating and communicating.



They explore the values of democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability, enabling them to exercise judgment on moral and ethical issues, and to develop a commitment to the core values shared by most Australians. Empowered with this knowledge and these skills and values, students will become better thinkers and better decision makers. They are then able to take action in a socially-responsible manner to contribute to the achievement of more desirable futures for all.

Connecting different perspectives

This emerging competence and responsibility in students is informed by the knowledge, processes and perspectives of complementary social science disciplines and integrated approaches: for example, history uses the perspective of time to explore the past and aspects of continuity and change; political science and law use the perspectives of political and legal institutions to explore the structure and processes of government; geography uses the concepts of place and space to explore environmental patterns and processes; anthropology analyses the origins, perspectives and viewpoints of different cultural groups; economics provides perspectives on the efficient use and management of resources; and sociology explores the behaviour and roles of individuals, groups and institutions, and the resultant diversity of relationships. The perspectives of these and other disciplines can be reflected in a variety of integrated approaches, including Australian studies, Asian studies, environmental studies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, and studies in citizenship education, social education and vocational education.

Aiming for civic responsibility and social competence

The Society and Environment learning area, with its focus on civic responsibility and social competence, has a unique place in the Curriculum Framework. Its basic aim is to give individual students the ability to make reasoned and informed decisions as citizens of a culturally-diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. It does this by developing students' sense of their social world and their place in it; their respect for their own cultural heritage and that of others; their respect for the rights of other people; their commitment to uphold, critically and compassionately, the values of social justice, democratic process and ecological sustainability; and their capacity to contribute to the quality of life on the earth, now and in the future.



Society & Environment Learning Outcomes

<p>INVESTIGATION, COMMUNICATION & PARTICIPATION</p> <p>1. Students investigate the ways in which people interact with each other and with their environments in order to make informed decisions and implement relevant social action.</p>	<p>PLACE AND SPACE</p> <p>2. Students understand that the interaction people have with places in which they live is shaped by the location, patterns and processes associated with natural and built features.</p>	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>3. Students understand that people attempt to meet their needs and wants by making optimum use of limited resources in enterprising ways.</p>
<p>CULTURE</p> <p>4. Students understand that people form groups because of their shared understandings of the world, and, in turn, they are influenced by the particular culture so formed.</p>	<p>TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE</p> <p>5. Students understand that peoples' actions and values are shaped by their understanding and interpretation of the past.</p>	<p>NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS</p> <p>6. Students understand that systems provide order to the dynamic natural and social relationships occurring in the world.</p>
<p>ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP</p> <p>7. Students demonstrate active citizenship through their behaviours and practices in the school environment, in accordance with the principles and values associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.</p>		

INTRODUCTION

The learning outcomes of the Society and Environment Learning Area Statement describe learning that occurs from kindergarten to year 12. They are intended to enable students to construct a positive view of themselves as responsible citizens, capable of devising and acting on solutions that improve our society and environment.

The Society and Environment Learning Area Statement identifies seven learning outcomes. These describe the key learning processes, understandings and values that all students should develop. They are interrelated in that understandings and values are developed through inquiry learning, which results in students demonstrating behaviours and practices of active citizenship. Outcome 1 indicates the processes and skills students need to investigate and appropriately apply these understandings and values in socially-responsible ways. Outcomes 2 to 6 describe what citizens need to understand about their society and environment. These outcomes are informed by the concepts of place and space; resources; culture; time, continuity and change; and natural and social systems. Outcome 7 describes active citizenship and the associated values of democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.

Each of the outcomes is accompanied by a paragraph which elaborates the outcome and provides kindergarten to year 12 examples. The focus of essential knowledge for these outcomes will be on the Australian society and environment with particular reference to Western Australian and local settings where possible.



INVESTIGATION, COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

1 Students investigate the ways people interact with each other and with their environments in order to make informed decisions and implement relevant social action.



Students investigate aspects of time, place, culture, resources and systems to understand and act on important issues in their social and environmental world. In these investigations, they use skills of critical inquiry and ethical decision making in order to become better-informed, active citizens.

Students plan investigations by reflecting on their direct experiences or prior knowledge and by posing questions or formulating hypotheses. They clarify the purpose of their inquiry to determine what is relevant and important, and they predict some possible answers. They design suitable methods for organising and gathering information from a variety of sources, including familiar objects and experiences, fieldwork and research involving primary and secondary source data.

Students conduct their investigations by identifying sources of information, and use a range of techniques, such as summarising and note-making skills, to collect, organise and evaluate information. They question their sources of information by comparing the sources, identifying bias and ensuring that they consider perspectives in a balanced way. Students record their information in a variety of forms, such as in the spoken or written word, or through the use of symbols, graphs, maps, diagrams, tables, statistics and models. They also question whether the information collected is sufficient and appropriate to the investigation.

Using the information they have collected, students translate and interpret it into a form that has meaning to them and which describes as accurately as possible the focus of their investigation: for example, social and natural features, events, actions or processes. They might use forms such as drawing a picture, making a summary, constructing a table or creating a database. They are then able to analyse the information by distinguishing between fact and opinion, and by judging the credibility and relevance of the information. Because of the variable nature of information and evidence collected, students recognise that interpretations will be subjective and need to be applied with some caution.

Students synthesise information by identifying relationships such as cause and effect, patterns, trends and similarities and differences. They endeavour to empathise with the motives and beliefs of people.

Students then formulate their conclusions and judgments and decide how best to communicate them. They share and communicate their findings according to purpose and audience: for example, a study of an environmental issue might result in an official report, a press release, a journal article or a talk.

Students then predict consequences and identify issues and questions arising from their conclusions and suggest areas in need of more evidence or investigation. They actively apply their learning to other relevant situations and contexts. They identify personal implications of their actions, and the immediate and future implications for society and environment.

As a consequence of being involved in the process of investigation and communication, students develop the capacity to participate effectively in small groups, whole-school activities and in the community.

In dealing with a variety of information derived from cultural and natural phenomena, students recognise that any views formed will be tentative. They will seek to constantly test the integrity of information, recognise the perspectives of all stakeholders and modify conclusions and action where appropriate.

PLACE AND SPACE

2 Students understand that the interaction people have with places in which they live is shaped by the location, patterns and processes associated with natural and built features.

Students develop an understanding of the components of the natural landscape and the various processes that contribute to the development of natural landscapes around the world. These components include flora, fauna, physical features (e.g. mountains, coasts, rivers) and soil. The types of processes shaping natural landscapes include those that form and modify the earth, especially climate, as well as the ongoing influence of human activity.

Students also understand that today's natural landscapes are a result of the interplay of these processes over long periods of time and that the pattern of natural landscapes varies on local, regional and global scales.

Students recognise that built landscapes are the result of activities by groups of people over time. Examples of built landscapes include settlements, agriculture and mining. Some of the features of built landscapes include buildings, industrial activity, transport links, dams and open space.

Students will also recognise that built landscapes, like natural landscapes, will vary in their characteristics on local, regional and global scales.

Through an examination of natural and built landscapes students recognise that there is a relationship or interdependence between people and places. They understand that natural landscapes can be modified by human activities such as clearing forests, reclaiming rivers and levelling hills.



Similarly, the activities of people will be influenced by aspects of the natural landscape. Examples include the effect of slope on transport networks and settlement, the influence of soil on agriculture and the impact of climate on the lives of people and the economy. Through study of local and global examples, students demonstrate that this interdependence will vary for different peoples and natural landscapes, and will be subject to change over time.

Students constantly recognise the importance of caring for landscapes and their features. They apply principles embedded in the concept of ecological sustainability to describe ways in which natural landscapes can be managed appropriately.

RESOURCES

3 Students understand that people attempt to meet their needs and wants by making optimum use of limited resources in enterprising ways.

Students recognise that all people need food, water, shelter, health and education. In addition, needs and wants may include communication, transport, clothing and home comforts.

They understand that, as people strive to satisfy unlimited needs and wants, there is increasing pressure on the available resources. This usually necessitates prioritising and making choices: for example, students manage simple budgets, prioritise their work and leisure time, and coordinate team and group activities. Students refer to a range of examples from local, regional, national and global contexts to demonstrate how these needs and wants are met in different ways.

Students recognise that resources can be classified broadly as land (natural resources such as forests, crops, fertile soil), labour (human resources), capital (human-made resources such as machinery, cars, transport routes) and enterprise (risk taking and organisational skills).

They understand the importance of markets in meeting needs through the exchange of goods and services. Market forces help to determine the value that is placed upon resources and the unequal distribution of wealth that may result. Students identify the unequal distribution of resources among people and how this has led to patterns of relative wealth and poverty over the earth. They evaluate these patterns and the policies that may be responsible for them, and make judgments about the unequal distribution of these resources. They also consider options for a fairer distribution of the world's resources and their responsibilities as consumers of limited resources.

Students understand how enterprise and management may lead to optimal use of resources: for example, the impact of technology on people's work and efficiency, how fertilisers and improved farm technology increase agricultural outputs, and how recycling techniques affect minerals production. Students understand that enterprise refers to the various organisational and management practices as well as to the technology adopted by people.

Students further recognise that enterprise and management models vary according to a range of factors, including culture, history and economic system, and this leads to variations in how resources are valued and used.

Students understand the role of workers. They recognise that different occupations bring various skills and competencies to the workplace and this contributes to productivity in many ways.

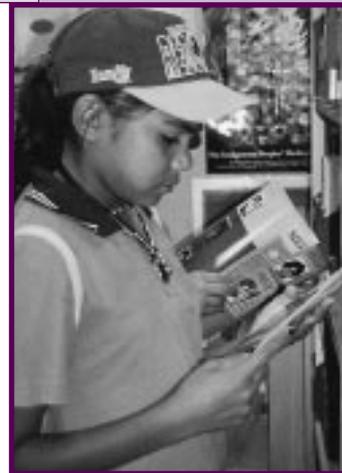
Students understand how occupational and structural changes in the workplace have impacted on the skills and competencies required of workers and on the nature of work itself, which encompasses full-time, part-time, paid and unpaid labour, and unemployment. They relate this to worldwide trends and how this has led to changing attitudes towards work and levels of personal satisfaction in work. As a result, students are able to describe the features of various occupational groups and identify pathways or careers that may match their areas of interest.

CULTURE

4 Students understand that people form groups because of their shared understandings of the world, and, in turn, they are influenced by the particular culture so formed.

Students recognise that peoples' ways of life are shaped by their values and beliefs over time and that people with shared values and beliefs form groups in order to develop ways of living that satisfy both material and spiritual needs. The values and beliefs associated with ways of living are represented in peoples' ethics, codes and rituals, cultural practices, ideas and symbols: for example, students identify the characteristics of groups by describing the respective roles of men and women and identifying the diverse range of groups based on ethnicity, language, religious beliefs, and political, social, environmental and lifestyle needs.

Students understand that a culture has a significant influence on the ways in which individuals and groups behave. They recognise that cultures structure relationships among people in various ways which influence their thoughts and behaviours. Students further understand that individuals have an identity or sense of self that has developed from their membership of family, cultural and societal groups: for example, they are able to describe the roles and responsibilities of members of families, schools and peer groups. They examine how gender, race and socioeconomic expectations influence a person's identity and they explain how environmental factors and the media can influence a person's identity. Students are also able to understand that this influence can extend over a considerable period of time. They may identify, for example, how Confucian philosophy and architecture have exerted considerable influence on Chinese society, and recognise how like these have influenced contemporary thinking and activity in these and other regions of the world.



Students recognise how all cultural groups are characterised by varying degrees of cohesion and diversity as they seek to survive and retain a sense of community and that cultures are, internally, both diverse and cohesive. They examine practices in language, religion, education and the arts as well as the codes, rituals, kinship structure, customs and norms which collectively provide the diversity and cohesion within cultural groups. Students understand that cultures change and develop over time in order to make meaning of the world and to survive: for example, they identify changing roles within families and kinship groups and analyse the effects of information technology on a particular cultural group. Students also understand that cultures change to varying degrees and develop over time in order to make meaning of the world and to survive

Students come to understand the cultural diversity and cohesion among distinctive cultures coexisting in Australia and the world: for example, for different cultural groups within Australia, they understand cultural mores such as personal space, eye contact and demonstrations of respect; different religious and spiritual activities; and shared values related to life in a democratic society.

Students identify how and why these groups are able to coexist and why, over time and in terms of factors such as group size, community attitude and political power, some are considered dominant and others are marginalised: for example, students examine the relationship between Aboriginal beliefs, customs and laws and those of non-Aboriginal society in Australia; they explore the multicultural nature of Australian society; they analyse a country's response to internal dissent; and they examine civil rights movements.

TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

5 Students understand that peoples' actions and values are shaped by their understanding and interpretation of the past.

Students recognise that by studying people and events of the past, they can better understand the present and make informed judgments about the future. They realise that people's ideas and values are influenced by the actions and values of those who have come before them. Students can, for example, identify significant activities and events in their personal and family life or in their local community over recent generations; trace the impact and contribution of a group or individual on a community or society; and explore the impact of technological and economic developments, religious and philosophical ideas or social, environmental and political movements.

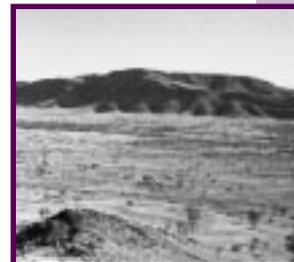
Students understand that at any point in time, groups value certain aspects of the past and this can change with the passage of time. They recognise elements of heritage in the form of such things as celebrations, practices and traditions; cultural artefacts; and political, social and economic institutions: for example, they identify mementos of

lifestyle or customs that their own family, local community or society have retained; they relate to the democratic tradition and the nature of citizenship in ancient cultures such as Athens and how it has influenced and shaped contemporary processes; and they analyse attitudes to and interaction with the natural and built environments from different cultural, political and economic perspectives in Australia's past.

Students identify how people have attempted to either change or preserve certain aspects of society; are able to explain the ideas, values and motives behind these attempts; and recognise the traditions and institutions that have emerged. This enables them to better understand themselves and their own origins: for example, they examine aspects of community life which may have changed or stayed the same over several generations; they identify the role of support for heritage and conservation movements and organisations over time; they outline how and why land use patterns have changed over time at local, national and global levels; they describe the origins, activities and impact of social and political movements such as gender equity, land rights, human rights and conservation; and they examine the present revolution in information technology and the ongoing industrial revolution.

Students seek to understand the dynamic relationship between continuity and change. They recognise that some people's interests are best served by change and others by continuity (for example, a family moving to live in another location); that initiating and implementing change is not always easily achieved (for example, the Mabo decision); that the consequences of change are not always those that are intended (for example, the Chinese Cultural Revolution); that change is a necessary part of a society's growth but, at the same time, there are enduring elements of belief and practice which give stability to a society (for example, the democratic institutions in Australia).

Students further recognise that historical knowledge is tentative and that interpretation may be subjective and may need to be applied with some caution. They come to understand that people's versions of the past result in them making decisions and taking actions that shape their own and other societies, now and in the future. They identify relationships between events, the different types of possible causes (immediate, underlying, related, long-term) and their short-and long-term consequences.



NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

6 Students understand that systems provide order to the dynamic natural and social relationships occurring in the world.

Students identify and describe the elements of natural systems such as soil, vegetation, landforms, water and fauna. They recognise how these elements can be combined to produce distinctive systems such as communities, ecosystems and natural cycles (e.g. air, nitrogen, water). They come to understand the processes that enable these systems to operate and the factors that lead to equilibrium or balance within these systems, e.g. sustainable food chains. They recognise natural and human factors such as floods, fire, earthquakes, over-grazing, soil depletion and deforestation which contribute to an imbalance in the system. Students are then able to describe how equilibrium is reestablished in systems. They further describe how people can act to sustain these systems. The study of these systems will vary from local contexts (eg. small wetlands) through to global contexts (eg. tropical rainforests).

Students recognise that a number of social systems that exist vary both in their function (e.g. political, legal, economic) and scale (e.g. family unit, national, community, global): for example, power and decision making structures may be defined in political and legal systems. Students understand that the creation of rules and laws is necessary to ensure civic rights and associated responsibilities. They further understand that where rights are infringed and responsibilities are not met, consequences are evident. They recognise that these systems vary in accordance with social contexts (e.g. autocratic, communist and democratic systems). Students describe the structures that underpin these systems and how they adapt to ensure adherence to civic rights and responsibilities.

Students also identify ways in which people influence the structures.

Students understand that economic systems (past and present) help to determine what goods and services will be produced, how much, how and for whom, in attempting to satisfy peoples' needs and wants with limited resources. Examples of parts of economic systems in Australia that could be studied range from the local store to the national economy. Using a range of such examples, students understand the role played by the forces of supply and demand and by governments in the operation of economic system. Examples might include taxes and exchange rates and the resultant effects on the supply and demand of goods and services.

A study of operations of a local market or food store might enable students to understand how a system operates and how it is connected to other systems and economies: for example, the provision of fresh produce from a local food store might be affected by supply in other agricultural regions and demand from consumers,

including those from other regions and countries. Students are therefore able to identify that economic systems adapt to the changing needs and wants of people.

Examples of such adaptations may include changes in the price and quality of goods, the reduction in the importance of cash as a means of exchange and the movement towards part-time employment in the Australian economy.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

7 Students demonstrate active citizenship through their behaviours and practices in the school environment, in accordance with the principles and values associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.

The behaviours and practices students display as active citizens reflect their commitment to the values and principles associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability. This process of active citizenship is the basis for students to formulate, guide and critically review responsible social and environmental action.

Students critically analyse their heritages and traditions, institutions and organisations. Through this analysis, they demonstrate behaviours consistent with the values associated with the **democratic process**, such as acknowledging individual freedom and the rights and responsibilities of participating in a democracy; respect for the law and for legitimate and just authority; respect for different choices, viewpoints and ways of living; and ethical behaviour and equitable participation in decision making.

Students critically analyse heritages and traditions of social justice and human rights, and policies and practices related to discrimination and disadvantage. Through this analysis they demonstrate behaviours consistent with the values associated with **social justice**, such as a respect and concern for the welfare, contribution, rights and dignity of all people; empathy with people of different belief systems and cultural groups; fairness and equity in dealing with people; and redressing disadvantage and changing discriminatory and violent practices.

Students critically analyse their environmental heritage. Through this analysis they demonstrate values consistent with the values associated with **ecological sustainability**. Students act in equitable ways to ensure the present and future quality of life. They develop strategies to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and the maintenance of healthy natural cycles; the importance of biodiversity and the integrity of all living species; and the preservation, conservation and enhancement of our natural and cultural heritage.



Students investigate interactions in their everyday world and make decisions from which they identify ways of acting in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. They develop skills of democratic social action, such as organising and working in school and community groups, writing letters, lobbying and representing interests. They develop action strategies and skills in social contexts such as displaying appropriate behaviour, manners and courtesies, accepting leadership roles and participating effectively in group activities. They display initiative and enterprise in these actions and thereby develop further their personal and interpersonal skills: for example, by putting forward original ideas, participating in student and school decision-making processes and demonstrating leadership qualities. Students develop skills of democratic and social action, such as organising and working in school and community groups, participating in community service and volunteer activities, writing letters, lobbying and representing interests.



The Scope of the Curriculum

This section identifies two important elements that should be considered when developing appropriate learning experiences for students to achieve the learning outcomes.

The first element is the knowledge which is essential for students to acquire, to enable them to achieve the Society and Environment Learning Outcomes. This essential knowledge will be addressed in different ways from kindergarten to year 12. Teachers will make judgements about the particular emphasis they will give, the specific examples they choose, and where the knowledge is placed in the different phases of development.

The second element relates to the nature of the curriculum, and the teaching and learning experiences that will typically occur during the four overlapping phases of development from kindergarten through to Year 12.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

The essential knowledge relates specifically to the five learning outcomes that identify what students need to know and understand about their society and environment. It is also essential to the achievement of Overarching Outcome 8, which requires of students an understanding of their cultural, geographic and historical contexts as well as the knowledge, skills and values necessary for active participation in life in Australia.

Programs to achieve these conceptual outcomes will be informed by the processes of the investigation, communication and participation outcome, and within a framework that develops the active citizenship outcome and the associated values of social justice, democratic process and ecological sustainability.

The important perspectives in the treatment of the essential knowledge include:

- the experiences, achievements and contributions of all cultural groups in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;

- gender; and
- the diversity among and within groups.

It is expected that in all years of schooling from kindergarten to year 12 the focus of this essential knowledge will be on Australian society and environment, with particular reference to Western Australia and local settings where possible. Regional and global links will be made where appropriate.

Therefore it is important that students know about the following with the above focus in mind:

- the cultures, beliefs and practices of indigenous groups since human occupation;
- the diversity of and interaction between cultures, beliefs and practices in the past and present;
- changing patterns of leisure, work and family structures;
- the historical origins of diverse peoples, cultures, practices and institutions;



- significant continuities and changes in settlement patterns;
- regional influences on the policies, beliefs and practices of societies; and
- the origins and operations of political and legal systems and their impact on individuals, societies and environments;
- the origins and operations of economic systems and their impact on individuals, societies and environments;
- the origins and operations of religious and belief systems and their impact on individuals, societies and environments;
- the structure and functioning of business and commerce;
- the diverse and dynamic nature of ecosystems;
- the patterns of human use and management of the natural environment and resources;
- the features of, and processes operating in, natural environments;
- the global links between societies, cultures and natural environments.

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Each phase of development focuses on the ways in which learning might typically progress and what teachers would typically expect to be teaching to children. They include examples of curriculum content and pedagogy that might be used.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (typically kindergarten to year 3)

In the early childhood years children tend to have a natural curiosity about their society and environment and about how and why people interact with each other and their environment. They generally operate within their familiar world, while displaying a growing sense that they are participants in wider contexts.

As they gain awareness of the concepts and processes used to explain how and why people interact, young children are able to provide literal, personal perspectives on Australian society and environment. These perspectives may be fragmented and largely unrelated to each other.

The learning and teaching program should provide opportunities for students to investigate themselves, their relationships and their immediate experiences in family, school and community.

There is a focus on the similarities and diversity of people, places, cultures and lifestyles. Emphasis should be given to the development of social skills of inquiry, decision making and working with others: for example, young children develop a respect for the needs and rights of others and are encouraged to develop cooperative attitudes and behaviours. They learn to use a range of media to investigate societies and environments in the world, including aspects of the past.

Investigation, Communication and Participation

Children should be provided with opportunities to explore everyday situations. They are encouraged to ask questions to guide their observations and to find new information using all their senses.

Children already experience and respond to a wide range of literature, including stories from the past, films, photographs, drawings, charts and diagrams in forms such as books, pamphlets, newspapers and computer software. As they progress through this phase they are able to read, view and construct simple maps, graphs and tables.

They learn, for example, how to record and interpret data from talks, interviews, observations and surveys and, as they explore their own environment, they should use descriptions for location, direction and distance. Where appropriate, they can describe their feelings in the interactions they have with others and the environment.

In helping young children to develop concepts of their society and environment, teachers assist them to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, to identify, compare and classify the main elements of information; and to identify simple sequences and patterns. Young children should be encouraged to present their findings in a variety of ways, such as writing, telling stories and poems, role-playing, drama, models, paintings and displays.

Place and Space

The learning and teaching program should enable children to become aware of the diversity of human habitats at home and around the world and see the location of their home in relation to other features of the local community. They learn how people move in and beyond the local area and become aware of the different responses people make to places.

Later in this phase, they should be able to distinguish local, Australian and global landscapes through aspects such as climate, natural features, human activities and types of land use. They begin to appreciate the different perceptions and preferences people have for different landscapes.

At home, at school and in the community, they are given opportunities to participate in activities that introduce them to the need for fairness and cooperation in the use of environments. They understand how different uses affect the environment and the need to conserve and care for environments.

Resources

At home, school and in the local community, young children can investigate paid and unpaid work and the inequities people experience in being able to meet their needs. They explore many types and uses of natural resources and the values attached to resources by different groups. They begin to understand how people gain access to natural resources and the need for conservation. In structured play activities (such as operating a shop in the classroom), they learn about goods and services, how people obtain them and the use of money as a source of payment.

By extending this to the local community, for example, teachers can help young children investigate sources of personal income; the differing financial resources of some individuals, groups and communities; and how people can manage personal resources. They participate in activities designed to help them manage their personal time, tasks and the care of their possessions.



Culture

Young children can be introduced to the concept of culture by investigating the shared and unique features of all human beings. They are made aware of children's needs and rights and what people, groups and societies do to help each other meet these needs.

As part of this, children develop an awareness that not everyone's needs are met and that some people suffer, for example, the effects of stereotyping, prejudice, harassment and discrimination. All of these aspects are challenging and broaden young children's view of their social world. As this develops, they come to understand the importance of social groups and the sense of security and belonging that may come through group membership. They also experience how groups influence individual behaviour and identity.

The family as a key social group is a focus for investigation. Children investigate what it is like growing up in different kinds of families and become aware of the effects of changing roles and relationships in the family and other important social groups.

Later in this phase, they broaden their understanding to other cultural groups in the school and wider community: for example, in developing awareness of the diversity of cultural beliefs, customs and practices and the unique heritages and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-indigenous peoples of Australia.

Time, Continuity and Change

In this phase, learning programs introduce children to the world beyond themselves and to times past. Typically, children are introduced to the past through their personal and family history, and later through the history of their local

community: for example, historical records, such as photographs, artefacts and personal accounts, provide a sense of personal time.

They may be given opportunities to compare this history with descriptions of time in other cultures, such as the Dreaming or myths and legends. It is through this exploration of their past that young children become aware of the beliefs and practices valued in their own families and the different traditions among them.

As young children extend this awareness of the past to their local community, they learn about ways heritage is celebrated and the material representations of heritage in the local community. Through all of these investigations they should develop an understanding of the changes and continuities in their own lives, in their family, school and in natural and built environments, including the factors responsible for them.

Natural and Social Systems

At this phase of development, a concept such as systems is quite abstract but can be explored by providing young children with opportunities to investigate the ways in which all living things are connected: plant and animal life; air; water and soil and landforms. They are introduced to human dependence on nature and the impact of humans on nature.

Social systems can be introduced by looking at rules and the relationship between who makes them and who has to obey them. Young children can investigate decision making in the family, classroom and school, and, later, in community organisations. They can observe the effects of decisions made by these institutions on where and how people can safely play, work, travel, live and shop. Through these observations they become aware of the dependence families and social groups have on each other.

Active Citizenship

Young children begin to develop active citizenship by considering their rights and obligations and imagining alternative ways of doing things. As part of their learning environment, they should participate in school routines and activities, and develop and practise rules of classroom interaction.

They are encouraged to show respect for others and appreciate difference and support those who are treated unfairly. As part of their investigations, they practise group discussion and decision making, and learn how to monitor the operation of groups, including the participation of girls and boys.

As the breadth of their experiences widens, they should be provided with opportunities to initiate conversations with significant adults and show concern for living creatures and the environment. At all times, teachers need to provide practice in various culturally-appropriate social conventions such as politeness, friendliness, seeking and giving advice, and the recognition and resolution of conflicts.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (typically years 3 to 7)

Children in the middle childhood years develop a greater breadth of knowledge about societies and environments and make inferences and assertions which may be quite simplistic. Later in this phase children begin to link cause and effect, provide supporting evidence and generalise beyond the specific context being investigated.

Children in this phase tend to form quite stereotypical views of society and environment, with some awareness of the interdependence within and between societies and environments.

Teaching therefore aims to broaden and extend children's knowledge of the past and the world beyond their immediate environment. Investigations focus on the purposes underlying the interactions in society and environment, and how these purposes lead to different practices, which are often in conflict.

As part of these investigations and through the increasingly independent use of technology, students need to learn how to evaluate these practices, make judgments about how just they are, consider alternatives and develop strategies for taking responsible civic action. The investigations centre on assisting students to become aware of the interdependence of people and their environments.

Investigation, Communication and Participation

In this phase, the processes of investigation, communication and participation build on the skills from the previous phase, but foster greater independence and precision: for example, students interview people about issues; plan questions and observations for excursions; select and organise print



materials, such as newspaper clippings; and speak with confidence to a range of audiences.

They also gather evidence from a range of sources, including historical documents, journals and biographies; summarise and paraphrase material; recognise different purposes and audiences in the mass media; identify trends and patterns in tables, graphs and maps; read, construct and interpret various types of maps, timelines, tables and graphs with precision; and use compass points, latitude and longitude and different scales in reading and constructing maps.

As part of these investigations, students increasingly make independent use of CD-ROMs, the Internet and computer software to gather and present information and ideas. As part of their investigations, students identify different points of view in pictures, texts, media, discussions, cartoons, advertising and films. They consider the positions and arguments in local issues, evaluate their own prejudices and behaviours towards others, and develop and present arguments.

Place and Space

Understanding by students of place and space is extended by assisting them to make connections between the local area and broader national and international contexts.

The emphasis is on students being able to identify patterns and processes in natural landscapes and environments, especially in Australia. Through their investigations they identify spatial variations in aspects such as climate, the availability of water in the environment and landform types, and understand how these relate to different human livelihoods and lifestyles.

They also recognise patterns and processes in human activities and their association with various landscapes, at the regional,

national and global levels, in areas such as commerce and industry, trade, communication, media and travel networks. Students begin to generalise about settlement patterns and how they are changing in Australia. They may refer to such aspects as greater access to movement and transport, immigration, differences in social welfare among communities and regions, and the varying cultural significance of places to people.

Students can make value judgments in identifying desirable landscapes in Australia and around the world focusing on the natural and social relationships in them. They investigate the distribution of resources and their sustainability in particular landscapes, the issues related to environmental quality and the need for conservation and protection in particular landscapes.

Resources

Students understand the types, locations and uses of Australia's resources. They recognise that these can be broadly classified as including land, labour, capital and enterprise.

In terms of land, they identify and locate natural resources such as minerals, agricultural land, water sources and forests. They can assess these resources in terms of whether they are renewable or non-renewable and how this affects patterns of use and management practices. They understand that resources are used and valued in different ways by different cultural groups.

Students develop an understanding of why the principles of ecological sustainability are important in managing resources.

In terms of labour, students understand different types of paid and unpaid work and the relative value attached to each of these. They investigate job stereotyping and

recognise that duties associated with employment types are changing. They also recognise how people with disabilities and unemployed people access work.

In terms of capital, students investigate different types of equipment and how this equipment relates to resources. Examples include information technology, dams, machinery, railways and tools.

They can distinguish between natural resources and manufactured products. They also recognise that money *per se* is not capital, but represents a form of exchange of goods and services. In terms of enterprise, they understand the role of management and decision making.

They see how these can lead to more efficient and innovative approaches to decisions about resources, especially in terms of some uniquely Australian innovations. Examples include agricultural machinery, land management practices, solar water heating, medical technologies and information technology systems. A study of their home, school or industries in the local area provides concrete examples of enterprising approaches to the use of land, labour and capital.

Culture

Students in this phase have the ability to infer the beliefs and practices underlying the interactions between people, cultures and nature and how these interactions can lead to divergent practices which are often in conflict. Students investigate these interactions and begin to develop their understanding of how membership of different groups influences the identity of individuals. They also investigate gender roles and relationships in the home, school, community and various cultural groups.

Students understand how different groups function to meet their needs. They understand how these groups have a social organisation that reflects particular beliefs

through investigation of aspects such as the influence of religion on cultural practices and societal features and the customs, norms, symbols and myths.

Through investigation of the diverse cultural heritages of people in Australia, students should understand changes to the composition of Australian society. This will enable them to identify some of the reasons for conflict and tension in Australian society and consider how peaceful, non-violent resolution of conflict can occur. They also understand that beliefs and traditions influence the nature of cultures and see evidence of this in the survival of traditions and heritages of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This can also be developed through investigation of the perception of Australians by others, (for example, different Asian views of Australia and diverse Australian views of Asia).

Time, Continuity and Change

The development of student's understanding of time, continuity and change is achieved mainly through Australian history.

They investigate the important people, ideas and events and infer reasons for their significance. They also investigate the causes of major changes and continuities in their local area, Australia and other selected countries over time, and understand that changes in the past have affected peoples' beliefs and ways of life. They use information from a variety of sources, including photographs, local histories and first-hand accounts and understand that different perspectives on people, events and ideas at a particular time can be gained through these historical accounts. They should further develop this understanding to see that the different perspectives people have reflect their beliefs and heritage.



Through these investigations, students understand significant elements of heritage in the local community, such as buildings, place names and memorials and natural places of significance to Aboriginal people. Student's understanding of celebrations held every year enables them to reflect on elements of heritage in modern Australia such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, British, other European and Asian beliefs and traditions. They also consider the impact of these beliefs and traditions on Australian institutions and practices such as government, law, religion and culture, and how they have resulted in advantages and disadvantages for people and the environment.

Natural and Social Systems

Students build on their previous understanding of the elements of systems by identifying the ways in which these elements link to form flows and cycles that enable the system to achieve an equilibrium: for example, they can investigate food chains, natural cycles (such as the water cycle), distinctive ecosystems within Australia and the world and the earth as part of a natural system called the 'solar system'.

This understanding should also be developed in social systems through investigation of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the structure of community organisations, the institutionalisation of some rules and laws and an understanding of the flows that exist in the production and distribution of goods and services.

Students realise that systems are dynamic and that there is interdependence between and within people and their environments. They understand how different elements respond and adapt to changes in these systems: for example, they investigate the

formal structures for making and enforcing laws to ensure people's rights and responsibilities; the role of the consumer and access to the benefits of economic production and distribution; and the impact of agricultural and industrial systems on the natural environment and on people.

Active Citizenship

Students demonstrate behaviours and practices of active citizenship by using ideas of social justice and the democratic process to evaluate social situations, decisions and change: for example they plan more just and democratic ways of relating to others and organise group work democratically and efficiently to promote group participation and cohesion. They resolve conflicts by accepting people's strengths and weaknesses, knowing when and how to disagree, and by jointly proposing and acting on solutions to interpersonal issues.

Students can act on their decisions by identifying how they might appropriately participate in community issues. They plan and work on environmental improvement projects at home, school and community. They interact, through visits and invitations, with members of cultural groups and practise tolerance of cultural difference.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE (typically years 7 to 10)

Students' growing capacity for abstract thought enables them to generalise more appropriately from particular contexts. They develop their awareness of the complexity of the interdependence within Australia, and between Australia and other societies and environments.

As this understanding of society and environment becomes more sophisticated, students become aware of the tentative nature of their generalisations and leave those generalisations open to the logical consideration of alternatives.

Investigations into the nature, background and implications of significant issues in society and environment are facilitated. Students are encouraged to relate to issues, where appropriate, to personal and global dimensions. The search for connections and relationships among ideas and experiences, beliefs and practices is the focus of these investigations.

Students use library systems, the Internet, e-mail and CD-ROMs to access and present a broader range of information. Issues in Australia today can be enriched by studies of people in other times, places, cultures and societies. The position of humans in the ecosystem and the different ways people view and use resources are important contexts. Students critically evaluate how they and others make choices, exercise power and plan for the future, while displaying a commitment to the values of social justice, the democratic process and ecological sustainability.

Investigation, Communication and Participation

The learning and teaching program should be designed to enable students to display a growing independence in decision making and a willingness to take on greater responsibility. Typically, by the end of this phase, students are able to plan investigations and engage at a fundamental level in inquiry and problem solving.

They are able to identify the consequences of using different tools and techniques. They are able to gather information from a range of sources, including electronic and print media, on local, national and global issues.

Students are encouraged to evaluate the reliability of sources of information by considering different perspectives and viewpoints which will enable them to develop a balanced investigation or inquiry.

It is in this phase that students typically become aware of their own values and beliefs and make judgments on issues as they examine the opinions and motives of others. They present their findings or argue for a personal view with a growing sense of confidence in their communication skills, by attending to the needs and perspectives of a range of audiences.

They can identify and use a range of formats, conventions and genres and use maps, graphs, tables and diagrams as appropriate to show changing patterns and trends. These skills can be supplemented by controlled use of various media, including music, drama and video.



Students' conclusions and viewpoints may be incorporated into a relevant social activity in the school or local community: for example, they could plan a program of action to remedy a school-based problem, evaluate ways in which groups and individuals can effect or influence change, or assist in the work of school or local organisations.

Place and Space

Students examine the factors and processes that shape and change the characteristics of natural and built features within places. They identify and account for similarities and differences between places and begin to understand the nature of spatial associations and variations over the earth's surface. Students need to analyse and represent spatial data in a variety of ways, including, for example, using atlases and maps and interpreting maps and photos to identify relationships between phenomena.

Students further learn that there is a range of factors, processes and values that influences the interdependence of people and places, that changes occur in people's use of the natural environment over time; and that patterns of settlement and agricultural and urban land use change.

Students are encouraged to reflect on plans of action and past actions in terms of the value positions underlying them, including their commitment to the principles of ecological sustainability.

They investigate the various positions and views held by people on issues. They offer explanations as to why individuals and groups may hold different views on issues that include the care of places.

They can apply their understandings about the consequences of human modifications to the natural and built features and predict future consequences of planned modifications to places.

Resources

Students recognise that resources can be broadly classified as land, labour, capital and enterprise.

They should understand that people manage and use these different types of resources to increase their ability to satisfy their needs and wants. As students investigate the use of resources, they consider important issues relating to ownership, access and equity.

Their knowledge of important business and economic concepts is expanded through examining the relationship between specialisation of production, exchange and effective resource use and their markets.

They learn about the workplace and how people act in various ways to make workplaces safe and effective. They gather information about occupations, entry requirements, changing vocational patterns and past and present trends in the labour market including work opportunities. They identify structural factors which influence employment opportunities, the general competencies required in the workplace and the occupational pathways available. All this contributes to their development of career-related action plans.

Culture

Students examine aspects of individual and group identity, including beliefs, values, norms, customs and practices. They learn that beliefs and traditions influence the nature of cultures and that groups in society have social organisations that reflect particular beliefs.

They further learn that these beliefs and social structures change over time in response to rapidly-changing social, political, environmental, and economic contexts. This adaptation results in the maintenance of both cohesion and diversity to varying extents.

At the same time, students should recognise that cultures exert a significant influence on people's identities and their roles, rights and responsibilities. They further learn that aspects of gender, race and socioeconomic status, together with core values, influence personal, group and cultural identity.

Time, Continuity and Change

The learning and teaching program assists students to develop their understanding of the impact of people, events and ideas from one time period to the next, and over time. Further, they should be able to comprehend that the past has impacted on today's society and environment.

They can describe causes and consequences of events or social and political movements or economic, technological and industrial developments. They can, for example, describe those features of Australian social, political and economic life which have changed over time and those which have remained the same.

They can identify the constructive and destructive consequences of continuity and change and describe examples of both evolutionary and revolutionary change. Typically, they are able to conclude that perspectives and interpretations of people, events and issues differ, depending on one's beliefs and heritage.

They can compare different views of people about the same issue or identify sources which offer different perspectives on the same event and then suggest reasons why, over time, these portrayals and attitudes may have changed. A key context to be developed by the curriculum, among others, is Australia in the twenty-first century, through a focus on the nation's identity and its place in the world.

Natural and Social Systems

The learning and teaching program for natural and social systems should provide opportunities for students to gather information on local, national and global environmental issues, to stimulate planning decisions and to debate alternative solutions. Students identify their own beliefs and perspectives on environmental issues and examine how they acquired them, to help them understand others' beliefs and perspectives and to identify possible areas of agreement on which to base decisions.

Students identify key features of political, legal and economic structures and systems at local, State and national levels in Australia. This includes identifying decision-making processes; the different levels and arms of government; and resource allocations for production and consumption. They also provide a global perspective on political, legal and economic systems and begin to analyse their interaction on national and international scales.

They may do this by examining international disputes and attempts at cooperation through international agencies, covenants and treaties.

Active Citizenship

Students are given increasing opportunities to demonstrate behaviours of active citizenship which reflect a better understanding and a continuing commitment to the principles and values associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.

Students typically become more aware of their own beliefs and begin to develop more informed opinions and value stances. Learning experiences provide students with the opportunities to identify the positions and perspectives held by others, and to explore why they hold them. Further, issues-based investigations will enable them



to engage in values awareness activities and development activities which will develop, in the first instance, their ability to evaluate people's actions and to make some informed judgments about the appropriateness of these actions.

In the second instance, they begin to develop their own positions and commitments, which they need to be encouraged to articulate and to support with sound reasoning.

Later in this phase, students should be challenged to reflect on their stances and to develop the capacity to review and even to modify their positions and perspectives. This developing social conscience can manifest itself in different ways, including a keenness to debate community issues of social significance; to interact with people who have been involved in community-based decision making; to attend parliament and view its operations and examine its impact on the community; to explore the functions of the judiciary and to examine the law as it reflects the mores of societies at different times; and to debate the role of the media in creating or reflecting social standards.

LATE ADOLESCENCE/ YOUNG ADULTHOOD (typically years 10 to 12)

During this phase, young adults have a more sophisticated understanding of society and environment and can make generalisations about situations they have not personally experienced.

They consider alternative rational conclusions and explanations (and their implications) and propose ways in which problems might be solved. This transferability to varying contexts and scales is assisted by the growing use of theories and models. Through forming these viewpoints, young adults demonstrate their commitment to core values and their capacity to become more informed and responsible citizens.

Teaching should build upon the substantial conceptual understandings, knowledge and processes developed in earlier phases, spanning all dimensions from the personal to the global. Investigations which facilitate young adults to become autonomous and self-regulated learners should be encouraged.

This independent research increasingly focuses on accessing both primary and secondary sources. Technology should be more frequently used to identify, collect, analyse, communicate and evaluate information.

Young adults should be encouraged to develop critical perspectives and to modify their views as a result of broad inquiry and negotiation. They identify and question aspects of the past, and demonstrate empathy with the perspectives of others.

Human rights, environmental stewardship and other moral and ethical issues are an important focus of learning and would typically be developed within a values analysis framework.

During this phase, young adults are increasingly involved with the genre, methodologies and content of various social science disciplines, such as economics, geography, history, political science and law. Some will be involved in learning associated with vocational education programs.

In these instances, work-based learning in and out of school situations may be important and teachers need to cater for such contexts in their learning and teaching and assessment models: for example, work-based learning may help develop key competencies and assessment tends to be competency based.

Investigation, Communication and Participation

In terms of the processes of Investigation, Communication and Participation, young adults use a variety of methods to investigate issues. The hypotheses they develop provide a wider context for research.

Models and theories should be used to structure and initiate research: for example, the various biochemical cycles and food chains would provide useful vehicles for studying ecosystems and relationships in an environment.

Data collection will involve both primary and secondary sources, including empirical investigation. Young adults may refer to sources such as a range of computer information systems, books, journals, newspapers, audiotapes, videotapes, films, pictures, diagrams, cartoons and maps to collect data. Familiarity with statistical techniques, including graphs, tables and mapping, will be well developed. Young adults continue to evaluate data for bias, reliability and the perspective of the source and should select data that provide an appropriate treatment of the topic being

investigated. Findings should be presented in a variety of ways, including attempts to correlate findings from a number of sources. Formats and conventions of newspapers, the television news, political speeches, letters to key stakeholders and environmental impact statements are some examples.

'Communication' refers to a range of genres founded in the various methodologies of disciplines in this learning area. Young adults develop plans and strategies which will enable them to participate appropriately in various ways. These action strategies will support the values embodied in the Active Citizenship outcome. In the first instance, these actions will be observable within the school setting, such as elections, clubs and groups.

Place and Space

Young adults apply models and theories to analyse the processes that help to shape built and natural landscapes. A study of subjects such as geography, practical geography and Australian studies provides an important focus.

Young adults learn how combinations of various features in both natural and built landscapes give rise to observable (and sometimes predictable) patterns on local, regional and global scales. Climatic and vegetation regions and areas of volcanic activity are examples. Young adults transfer these understandings from one scale to another to explore generalisations. They can represent data using a variety of maps, diagrams and other forms.

They use these understandings to describe and evaluate impacts that human activity may have on natural and built landscapes. The primary focus will be on the natural and built landscapes of Australia, at local, regional and national levels.



Global examples should also be used to provide a basis for generalisation and comparison. Young adults use their understanding of ecological sustainability to evaluate various management practices with respect to the natural and built landscapes and to make judgments about their effectiveness.

An important outcome is the formulation of action strategies in matters concerning the care of built and natural landscapes and the demonstration of a commitment to environmental stewardship.

Resources

A study of resources should focus on management practices and enterprise that lead to more efficient patterns of use.

Students will refer to concepts contained in disciplines such as economics and geography to provide sound theoretical and practical basis for such understandings. Using their understandings of a range of contexts in which resources are used, they can develop critical perspectives regarding appropriate practice.

Young adults identify the relationships between resource use, economic growth, standards of living and ecological sustainability. They critically evaluate various national and international policies and treaties involving resource utilisation.

They identify the key underlying values and ethical issues involved in these policies and treaties and are able to debate key issues such as global poverty, deforestation, pollution and native land rights. The values of social justice and ecological sustainability are used as a critical context for such debate.

Young adults recognise how Australia is part of a regional and global economy and the effects this has on resource utilisation (including that by individuals and families). With respect to workforce issues, young adults identify and evaluate key structural changes that have occurred in the economy, including the influence of globalisation and technological change, and critically evaluate their effects on various workforce roles.

Unemployment – causes and associated economic and social issues – will be a focus of study.

Australian contexts are important, although these will be balanced with a study of other economies, such as near Asian and global examples. Young adults' recognition of careers and appropriate pathways is well developed during this phase.

Culture

An important outcome of a study of culture is the development of a close understanding and empathy with various cultural groups, especially those in Australia. Young adults recognise the cultural mores that underpin groups and appreciate why these are valued and important. They understand the various influences that shape cultural identity, including gender, socioeconomic status, nationality, religious affiliation, physical characteristics, and racial and ethnic heritage, and how these affect cultural diversity and cohesion. The evaluation of cultures should include historical perspectives.

The study of multicultural Australia should remain an important focus, including debate on key issues such as land rights, discrimination, stereotyping, immigration and harassment. Groups of people to be studied will include the elderly, adults, teenagers, males, females, Aboriginal people and people from non-English and English-speaking backgrounds.

History, Australian studies, and political and legal studies provide a basis for comprehending such issues. An understanding of social justice and the democratic process should enable young adults to appreciate the importance of valuing the perspectives of different cultures.

Time, Continuity and Change

The perspectives of time, continuity and change provide young adults with an opportunity to conduct more detailed inquiry into how people's ideas and identity have been shaped by their interpretation of past events.

In studies of history, young adults gather evidence from a range of both primary and secondary sources and critically evaluate the credibility of the information. They classify information in terms of reliability, accuracy and bias. They identify periods of rapid change and continuity and evaluate how they have shaped the past and the present, and how they may affect the future.

In terms of chronological periods, young adults should be familiar with ancient, medieval and modern periods. They will study major periods of contact between different societies and civilisations, including examples involving imperialism, colonialism, trade, communications and cultural influence.

Heritage transmission will be a second major focus. This includes the beliefs, institutions and practices that endure over time within societies and are influential across societies.

Examples include significant beliefs and practices of Aboriginal people and European elements of heritage in Australia, including Christianity, civil rights, constitutional monarchy, federalism, the parliamentary system, law, free enterprise and unionism.

A third area of focus should be the study of important themes. These include those related to political, economic and social organisation (for example, economic and political theories over time), the development and application of technology (for example, scientific discovery and its effect on social life and the natural environment), changing attitudes to the environment (for example, the history of environmental movements and policy), global contact, control and influence (for example, imperialism and colonialism), conflict and cooperation (for example, world wars and revolutions) and major world movements of liberation and emancipation (for example, political belief and Aboriginal land rights).

Natural and Social Systems

Through the study of geography, history, economics and political and legal studies, young adults apply models and theories to Natural and Social Systems to enhance understandings of how they operate in a variety of contexts. In Natural Systems, young adults demonstrate a firm understanding of concepts such as adaptation, interdependence and equilibrium and are able to explain these in a variety of ecosystem contexts at various scales.

Integrated with their studies of Place and Space and Resources, they apply the principles of ecological sustainability to assess various policies and management practices for the care of natural systems. They make judgments about the appropriateness and equity of such policies.



Social systems are examined in detail, with a particular focus on Australian examples. Young adults demonstrate an understanding of political, legal and economic structures, particularly in respect of policy generation. They evaluate these systems and policies from social justice and democratic process perspectives and identify ways in which citizens can actively influence the operation of these systems. They evaluate these potential courses of action and identify those that would be most appropriate.

Young adults also understand various power relationships on both micro and macro scales, evaluate the access that various groups have to decision-making procedures and understand how inequalities can be addressed through action and policy.

Active Citizenship

Young adults should demonstrate a commitment to active citizenship. They build upon their understandings and experiences in earlier phases of development in continuing to apply a critical perspective to a range of issues involving people and the environment. They are less concerned with their own personal context in this phase and broaden their analysis of issues to an extensive range of local, national and international examples.

They should be able to synthesise these various scales, contexts and understandings to develop integrated overviews. They evaluate policies and actions relating to the natural and built environment. They recognise the perspectives of all stakeholders and identify both positive and negative effects. They make judgments about which course of action or policy is the most

appropriate in that context. They internalise and integrate the principles of democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability to create personal stances on issues.

Their stances recognise the holistic nature of policy formulation and decision making, and do not focus on one perspective, as may be the case in earlier phases of development.

Young adults demonstrate the capacity to apply their stance in identifiable ways in the school setting in the first instance.

Examples may include elections of student groups, membership of clubs and societies, letters to newspapers and other key stakeholders, debates and presentations in other media.

Assessments by teachers should provide opportunities for young adults to articulate and justify their views and to identify appropriate forms of action to redress problems or inequalities. Young adults should continue to demonstrate a capacity to review, and, if necessary, modify, their personal perspectives.

Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Learning and teaching in Society and Environment is grounded in inquiry that is personally relevant, values oriented and action intending. The ultimate intention is to provide teaching and learning opportunities in order that the students develop a more sophisticated understanding of their society and environment and are able to relate this to their personal lives. For students learning and teaching is directed towards answering the question, 'What does this mean to me and to my family, my neighbours, my community?'

Consideration needs to be given to selecting resources, identifying relevant knowledge, establishing appropriate contexts, providing relevant learning and teaching strategies and meaningful assessment practices.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

This section provides a Society and Environment perspective on learning, teaching and assessment.

It builds on the premises of the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment* section of the Overarching Statement. It also should be read in conjunction with the *Scope of the Curriculum* section to assist in the development of learning and teaching programs which best support students to achieve the Society and Environment outcomes.

■ **Opportunity to learn**

Learning experiences should enable students to observe and practise the actual processes, products, skills and values which are expected of them.

Students should be provided with opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and values to real-life situations. The Active Citizenship outcome requires students to identify lines of responsible and appropriate personal action: for example, students may apply their understanding of models and practices of environmental management to real-life situations such as the school environment, local wetland, mining area or a stretch of coastline. Similarly, students may develop their understandings of democratic process through experiences in school council elections, letters to newspapers, surveys in the local area and debates on important issues. Involvement in and by the community will further enhance such opportunities for inquiry learning.

■ **Connection and Challenge**

Learning experiences should connect with students' existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and challenging their current ways of thinking and acting.

Students need to build on existing experiences, knowledge and values and connect these to less familiar contexts. In early phases of development, students typically use examples that are familiar to them, such as the family home, the school and the family.



As they develop students use models and theories and apply these to unfamiliar contexts and non-routine situations. The Active Citizenship outcome motivates students to examine issues of interest to them and to plan strategies for action and form values stances.

Students should be provided with skills and opportunities to critically evaluate new information and adjust their stances where necessary. They may view local, national, regional and global perspectives and apply their understanding to different contexts.

■ **Action and Reflection**

Learning experiences should be meaningful and encourage both action and reflection on the part of the learner.

Students need to be provided with opportunities to engage in social and environmental inquiry, including identifying and applying methodologies for investigation of issues. Investigation should involve practical and active processes, such as surveys and interviews as well as data collection from texts, the Internet and other current information technologies. Similarly, communication will involve a variety of techniques, with active student involvement as a key factor. As a result, students should be encouraged to integrate their knowledge, skills and values to formulate opinions.

This reflective stage will see students forming, evaluating and modifying their values. They will be encouraged to develop the skills necessary to become active responsible citizens, with perspectives firmly based in the values area of democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.

■ **Motivation and purpose**

Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose clear to the student.

Learning experiences should connect knowledge, skills and values to life in and out of school. Their purposes should be made clear and students should be given the opportunities to negotiate learning experiences and assessments. It is also important that learning experiences connect students' current interests to those contexts that are likely to affect them in the future. The Active Citizenship outcome provides students with tangible ways of applying and acting upon their learning and thereby provides increased relevance for their personal world. The Society and Environment outcomes all lend themselves to a study of the local area or region, whether it be about land use, the past or social systems. An opportunity to explore and examine the local area will contribute to some of the most purposeful and motivating learning and teaching. In later phases of development, for example, students will find it useful to connect learning to career and training pathways.



■ ***Inclusivity and difference***

Learning experiences should respect and accommodate differences between learners.

The process of social and environmental inquiry is an important way of providing the flexibility to accommodate the various styles and rates of learning. Students should be provided with opportunities to design their own methods of investigation and data collection. Similarly, a range of learning, teaching and assessment strategies need to be provided. The presentation of data could involve a variety of techniques: for example, oral, written and computer assisted presentations, videos, graphs and charts, drawings, performances and debates. Students should be provided with opportunities to form stances and action strategies that best suit their needs: for example, some students may feel comfortable in debating an environmental issue and speaking to a wider audience while others may prefer to produce an article or letter to a newspaper.

■ ***Autonomy and collaboration***

Learning experiences should encourage students to learn both independently and from and with others.

Learning is based on the processes of investigation, communication and participation, which lead ultimately to an enhanced ability to participate and collaborate effectively in society. These approaches encourage a richness of interaction with others: for example, in investigating a social or environmental issue, students will collaborate to establish the views and perspectives of others and to solve problems. They will be encouraged to seek and establish the points of view of different stakeholders as well as possible courses of action which take account of and empathise with these perspectives. Learning strategies such as group problem-solving activities, debates and communication with various interest groups within the broader community will be important.

On the other hand, it is equally as important that students be provided with opportunities to develop autonomy, responsibility and independence in learning. They can conduct investigations individually and formulate personal opinions and values.

■ ***Supportive environment***

The school and classroom should be safe and conducive to effective learning.

The key values areas of social justice and the democratic process should underpin learning, encouraging students to acknowledge the welfare and dignity of all people, the need for equitable participation in decision making and the need for just and peaceful resolution of conflict.

Teachers should model classroom practice and learning experiences on these values as a basis for developing responsible and empathetic citizens. The processes of social inquiry and Active Citizenship encourage students to take risks in forming their opinions. This risk-taking ability strengthened when students are encouraged to respect the points of view of others.



■ **Explicit**

Assessment criteria should be explicit so that the basis for judgements is clear and public.

Teachers may elect to negotiate the structure of inquiry-based tasks, including assessment, with students. Given the nature of social and environmental inquiry, it is feasible that students will undertake investigations and inquiries which reflect their interests and backgrounds. The negotiation of this curriculum and learning, although varied, will be underpinned by some clear outcomes and negotiated assessment criteria. These could stem from a hypothesis, a series of focus questions or specific tasks or research requirements.

■ **Fair**

Assessment should be demonstrably fair to all students and not discriminate on grounds that are irrelevant to the achievement of the outcome.

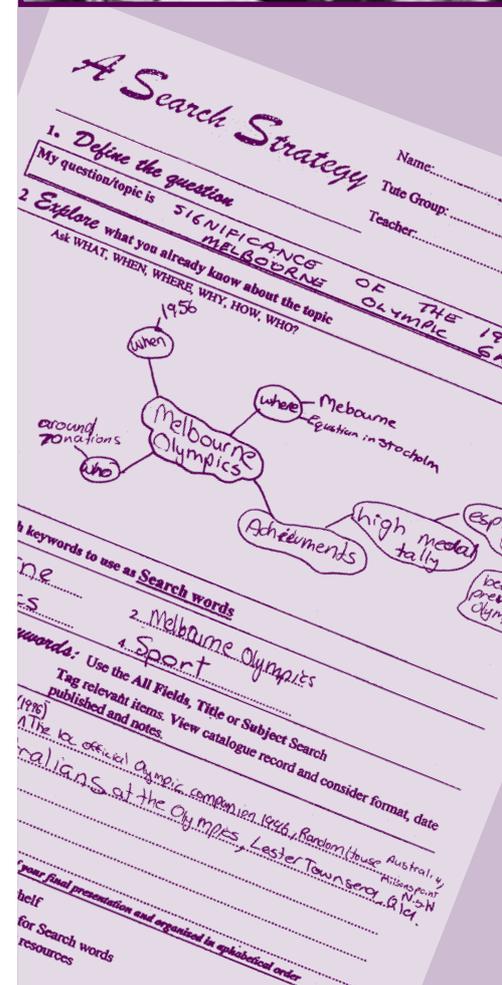
Assessment needs to be sensitive and responsive to student needs relating to gender, culture, linguistic background, physical disability, socioeconomic status, geographic location and learning difficulties. This is evident, for example, with assessment related to Place and Space, in which a focus on an unfamiliar geographic context would disadvantage some students. Similarly with the Culture outcome, curriculum and assessment which focused on one particular culture's set of norms would privilege some students and disadvantage others. Students should have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way that best suits their background and learning styles.

■ **Comprehensive**

Judgements on student progress should be based on multiple kinds of sources of evidence.

The processes of investigation, communication and participation require a comprehensive assessment regime. Assessment strategies associated with investigation could include strategies such as fieldwork, interviews, Internet searches, secondary data collection and questionnaire analysis. Assessments associated with communication include graphs, charts, maps, drawings, written responses and oral and video presentations. For participation, assessments could include written work (such as letters or essays), speeches, the organisation of an event, group presentations and interviews. A range of contexts should be used, including in-class and out-of-class assessments.

An appropriate balance between assessment of process skills and content should also be maintained.



Links Across the Curriculum

There are two parts to this section. The first describes how the outcomes are based on concepts, processes and values that contribute to the achievement of the Overarching Statement's outcomes.

The second identifies specific opportunities for linking learning to other areas.

LINKS TO THE OUTCOMES IN THE OVERARCHING STATEMENT

In this section, the Overarching outcomes are listed in order. Under each outcome there is a paragraph which illustrates how the achievement of Society and Environment Learning Area Statement outcomes contributes to the achievement of Overarching outcomes. The relevant Society and Environment Learning Area Statement outcomes are indicated in the brackets at the end of the paragraph.

1
Students use language to understand, develop and communicate ideas and information, and interact with others.

■ As part of the inquiry process, students use various communication strategies including the Internet and e-mail, and written information and oral conventions associated with interviewing, to gather, make meaning of and present information. Awareness of cultural contexts and perspectives assists students to identify and use appropriate communication and interaction strategies. Students are also aware of the appropriate language conventions and vocabulary of the learning area that support effective communication and interaction. (Outcomes: direct 1, 4; indirect 2, 3, 5, 6, 7)

2
Students select, integrate and apply numerical and spatial concepts and techniques.

■ Students understand the underlying processes and factors associated with spatial awareness and structural patterns. They apply these to explain social and environmental phenomena. Students can use statistical data, graphing and mapping techniques in the process of representing, analysing and evaluating information. They evaluate their strategies as they seek to better understand relationships and trends and predict consequences in social and environmental phenomena. (Outcomes: direct 1; indirect 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

3
Students recognise when and what information is needed, locate and obtain it from a variety of sources and evaluate, use and share it with others.

■ An integrated inquiry approach is central to achieving outcomes in this learning area. Students investigate social and environmental phenomena by creating propositions, collecting relevant information, seeking to identify the reliability of the information, selecting appropriate ways of communicating or representing information and then using this information in the decision-making process. Students develop positions on social and environmental issues and evaluate these as a consequence of their interaction with others. (Outcomes: direct 1; indirect 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

■ In an inquiry-based learning context, students use a range of technologies to identify, collect, process, represent and evaluate information.

(Outcomes: direct 1, 4; indirect 2, 3, 5, 6)

■ Fundamental to this achievement of this outcome is a study of the relationship between pattern and process and how this may change over time in social and environmental contexts. Patterns may include spatial patterns (such as population distributions) or structural patterns (such as the structure of Australian culture and society). The focus on pattern and process enables students to reason logically, make predictions and draw conclusions. (Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 6, 7; indirect 4, 5)

■ The process of investigation, communication and participation and the Active Citizenship outcome provide students with the opportunity to investigate issues, understand the perspectives held by others and develop empathy with people in a variety of contexts. They use these experiences to reflect on their own positions and develop and modify their commitments where appropriate. As students develop skills in analysing their own values, attitudes and actions and those of others, their own capacity to solve problems creatively and cooperatively is strengthened.

(Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 7)

■ Students develop understandings related to natural and social systems, including the interplay between elements of the natural and built environment and the role that changing technology has played in patterns of resource use. The values associated with ecological sustainability encourage students to develop a sense of care for the natural environment and to make informed decisions which support this goal. They further explore the impact of technology on their lives, on the local environment and in a wider global context. (Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7; indirect 5)

■ An understanding of Australia's society and how it has changed over time are key outcomes. Students' awareness of cultural and historical contexts allows them to understand how peoples' values and beliefs influence the way they behave and how people and events of the past have helped to shape the present. The outcome related to Active Citizenship encourages students to reflect on the key values of the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability to form stances which will provide a basis for them operating as informed and responsible citizens in contemporary Australian society. (Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

4

Students select, use and adapt technologies.

5

Students describe and reason about patterns, structures and relationships in order to understand, interpret, justify and make predictions.

6

Students visualise consequences, think laterally, recognise opportunity and potential and are prepared to test options.

7

Students understand and appreciate the physical, biological and technological world and have the knowledge and skills to make decisions in relation to it.

8

Students understand their cultural, geographic and historical contexts and have the knowledge skills and values necessary for active participation in life in Australia.

9

Students interact with people and cultures other than their own and are equipped to contribute to the global community.

■ Students develop an awareness of the social and cultural perspectives of other people. They learn about societies and environments from the local to the global. The global emphasis provides students with a grasp of the roles of societies and nations in the world and an understanding of ecological, economic, social and political interdependence. Information technologies assist with this innovation. (Outcomes: direct 4, 7; indirect 1, 5)

10

Students participate in creative activity of their own and understand and engage with the artistic, cultural and intellectual work of others.

■ Students learn about the achievements of individuals and groups of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds and their contribution to Australia's artistic, cultural and economic development. They explore the value of literature and the visual and performing arts as means of communicating ideas and understanding the viewpoints of others. Through the process of investigation, students present their personal viewpoints by engaging in activities such as debate, role play and dramatic presentations. (Outcomes: indirect 1; indirect 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

11

Students value and implement practices that promote personal growth and well-being.

■ Students acquire knowledge, skills and values which enable them to make informed decisions that affect their well-being. This includes personal matters, such as family budgets and occupational choice, and community matters, such as participation in service organisations or government. The Active Citizenship outcome encourages students to implement practices related to the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability. (Outcomes: direct 7; indirect 1)

12

Students are self-motivated and confident in their approach to learning and are able to work individually and collaboratively.

■ Inquiry-based learning, as well as encouraging of students to form and review value stances, helps them to not only become independent and autonomous learners but also to interact widely with others in developing these qualities. Teaching practices reinforce these approaches by using strategies such as debates, group discussions, interviews with significant adults and role plays. (Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

13

Students recognise that everyone has the right to feel valued and be safe, and, in this regard, understand their rights and obligations and behave responsibly.

■ The Active Citizenship outcome acknowledges individual freedom, the rights and responsibilities associated with active citizenship, respect for the law and legitimate authority and ethical behaviour. Students understand the perspectives of others in respect of these values and develop responsible strategies to uphold these rights in a practical way. (Outcomes: direct 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

LINKS WITH OTHER LEARNING AREAS

■ In Society and Environment, students gain cultural understandings which are important to the achievement of outcomes in many learning areas. For example, in The Arts, students need an understanding of cultural beliefs, heritage and diversity to achieve outcomes related to artistic expression and the evaluation of arts works. Cultural understanding facilitates communicating of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) and enables students to express themselves in the target language. Appreciating the extent to which Science can contribute to the well-being of societies is based upon cultural understanding. It is also necessary in Technology and Enterprise, as students determine responsible, enterprising behaviour and create appropriate solutions to social problems related to human needs and wants.

■ The concept of systems is also common to many learning areas. In Society and Environment, students develop understanding of the nature and purpose of natural and social systems. Systems are learning outcomes in Science (systems that support life on earth), Health and Physical Education (health issues and social systems), and Technology and Enterprise (systems to solve design problems).

■ Awareness of spatial patterns developed in this learning area is particularly relevant to students achievement in Mathematics and Science. In Mathematics, students examine spatial features of objects, environments and movements. They also learn about locations, distributions, shapes and arrangements which is highly consistent with the development of spatial concepts in Society and Environment. In Science, students learn about spatial patterns and offer explanations of the physical world around them as well as patterns of interdependence.

■ An understanding of continuity and change is an important focus in all learning areas. In Science for example, students examine changes in energy, life and living things and in the patterns of use of natural and processed materials. In Technology and Enterprise, change is fundamental to an understanding of materials use, enterprise models, technological processes and the dynamic role of technology in society. In The Arts, students are aware of the changing trends of artistic expression and of changing techniques, processes, conventions and technologies.

Culture

Systems

Place and Space

**Time,
Continuity and
Change**

Use of Resources

■ An understanding of resources and effective patterns of use is also important in the Technology and Enterprise learning area: for example, in the Enterprise outcome, students understand the use of resources and how to create solutions for various needs. They also make decisions about selecting appropriate materials and the factors influencing the use of materials and resources.

Investigation, Communication and Participation

■ The inquiry processes and skills of investigation, communication and participation in Society and Environment are common to all other learning areas. They give students repeated opportunities to practise, apply and transfer their learning. These processes and skills are reinforced in Technology and Enterprise (Technology Design Processes), Science (Working Scientifically), The Arts (Expressing and Doing), Mathematics (Working Mathematically) and Health and Physical Education (Decision Making). Communication processes and skills are integrated across all learning areas, especially English, LOTE, The Arts (Expressing and Doing, Developing Aesthetics), Science and Mathematics. These participation skills are developed in Health and Physical Education (the self-management and interpersonal skills), The Arts (Using Arts Processes) and Technology and Enterprise.

Active Citizenship

■ This outcome underpins all studies in Society and Environment and is important in most other learning areas.

Active Citizenship develops values related to social justice, the democratic process and ecological sustainability. Students acquire a commitment to these values in many learning areas as they form the ethical bases for decisions and solutions: for example, learning in Science, Technology and Enterprise and Health and Physical Education promotes a better quality of life in accordance with the values of ecological sustainability. Learning in English, LOTE and The Arts encourages students to empathise with other people and to find out what is fair and just in society. Values of the democratic process which relate to rights and responsibilities, respect and ethical behaviour are promoted in most learning areas. These guide students in their decision making and contribution to society.