



supporting and advocating for technology educators

## **Written submission in response to the NSW Curriculum Review**

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This response has been prepared on behalf of the members of the Technology Educators Association. Please table this submission as a part of the consultation process.

Our association represents Government, Systemic Catholic and Independent Schools.

There is a great deal of apprehension about the current NSW Curriculum and the implications of making changes. These concerns can be categorised as follows:

- Equity in resourcing
- Teacher workload
- Access to professional learning

### **PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING IN THE 21st CENTURY**

When consulted about the purpose of education, 43% of our members believe that the current NSW Curriculum does not meet the purpose of schooling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. An additional 32% were not sure.

The following provides a summary of member responses about the purpose of 21st Century schooling:

- prepare students to think, apply and transfer knowledge between unknown contexts
- prepare young people for life, work and citizenship
- create curious learners who are able to think creatively and adapt in this ever changing world create global citizens and future focused learners
- enable students to be life-long learners
- equip students to meet the ever changing technology needs as well as reach as high a standard as possible in areas of literacy and numeracy

## CURRENT NSW CURRICULUM

When consulted about the current NSW Curriculum, 70% of members felt that the Curriculum is overcrowded and duplicates content in different KLAs.

The following concerns were noted:

- The prescriptive nature and content focus of current Curriculum that teachers are expected to deliver
- The need to address all of the content is selected over inquiry-based, concept-driven learning to allow for greater differentiation and increased student engagement.
- Feeling constrained by standardised testing and expectations of the Higher School Certificate (HSC).
- Identified that more content is being added to the Curriculum
- Teachers in rural/remote areas are not able to cater for the diverse Curriculum due to location and inequity in aspects including funding

It was acknowledged that it is possible to work within the current NSW Curriculum if the school context and teacher level of experience and expertise is appropriate.

## ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES FOR STUDENTS

36% of members agreed that the current NSW Curriculum addressed the essential knowledge, skills and attributes a student requires. An additional 50% felt that maybe some of the knowledge, skills and attributes are being addressed.

The following have been identified as essential knowledge, skills and attributes a student requires:

- The ability to solve problems
- Emotional intelligence, including resilience and empathy
- The importance of numeracy, literacy and digital literacy
- The ability to research and extract specific information
- Communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking
- Flexibility, organisation and the ability to work as a part of a team
- The importance of the development of fine motor skills through practical applications

## SUGGESTIONS TO BETTER SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus on world best practice rather than being driven by government agendas

Value and make decisions based on the input of the teachers

The importance of providing training to all teachers to support the implementation of a new curriculum.

The provision of exemplars and standard marking rubrics for teachers to adapt to their context

Provide more opportunities for students to transition to the workforce rather than enforcing attendance at school until the age of 17, to the detriment of other students.

More flexibility and less focus on the ATAR as the main measure of success

Embed formative assessment

Allow teachers to focus on their core business, i.e. to teach students

Provide greater support for teachers new to the profession, or those delivering a new course

## ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

There was no stand out belief about the current A-E grading as being the best way to assess and report on student achievement.

Suggestions to improve the way the current NSW Curriculum addresses assessment and reporting include:

Reduce the number of assessment tasks

Align the general A-E descriptors to each KLA to allow for a closer link between assessment and reporting

Provide a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge, including practical application of skills in real life contexts

Allow the student to manage their assessment in a continuum

Provide greater support for rural and remote schools for programming and writing assessments that differentiate for a range of learners.

## IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITION

93% of members value the importance of transition. They felt that the establishment of effective links between preschool, primary school, high school and universities is required to create consistency and develop strong foundation skills. A focus on goal setting, organisation and teaching intentional life skills are important, especially for those students that do not have a specific direction after schooling has ended.

Induction programs, mentoring and access to transition counsellors are important additions to support students.

Suggested ways to enhance the options and pathways for all students to further education and work:

Increase opportunities for student voice and the ability to direct their learning

Consider the delivery of VET subjects, especially the constant need for upgrades to training

Greater opportunities for students to access industry and workplaces to increase relevance between school and work.

Develop closer links between universities, TAFE and community groups.

## TEACHER WORKLOAD

93% strongly disagreed that the implementation of the current NSW Curriculum supports teacher workload.

It was acknowledged that the design of curriculum and accountability through mandatory requirements is necessary to improve rigor. The consensus was to implement changes gradually with a greater focus on time for teachers to understand, integrate and implement the changes to suit their specific school setting.

Limited funding for relief is increasing teacher workload outside of school hours. This is impacting on stress levels and work life balance. Increased expectations in administrative duties for teachers, including accreditation and maintenance of accreditation.

## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

87% disagreed that teacher professional learning was supported by the current NSW Curriculum

Time and equity in support were identified as the two most important considerations for teacher professional learning when any new approach to curriculum is implemented.

The lack of quality trained casual teachers was highlighted as a significant concern, especially for practical-based subjects.

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION

73% disagreed that school organisation was supported by the current NSW Curriculum

New leadership styles are less consultative. Effective curriculum and structural change will not shift if there is no support from the Principal and school leaders.

Buildings, timetables, rooming, indicative hours, funding and resourcing differs across school sites and settings, especially for a small school.

Need to increase funding to allow for the effective implementation of curriculum changes.

This submission is based on a body of professionals with an extensive knowledge base, teaching practice and engagement with the profession. As their advocate, the TEA provides this submission to assist with the development and implementation of a new Curriculum for NSW that supports both teachers and students.

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