



Australian Science Teachers Association
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Australian Curriculum Review

The Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA)

In formulating a response to the Australian Curriculum Review: Science, ASTA has sought the input from ASTA Council, representing each state and territory science teacher association, and previous members of the ASTA Executive who have had significant input into ASTA's contributions to the development of the curriculum.

ASTA's view and involvement in the extensive national consultation process (with academics, researchers and teachers) was inclusive and significant, and included representation on ACARA curriculum advisory committees during the development of specific subject content and achievement standards.

ASTA supports the Australian Curriculum: Science in its current format.

The Australian Curriculum: Science is still in the early stages of being phased in with different states and territories at differing stages of implementation, ranging from initial introduction to 3 years of implementation.

ASTA has a strong view that all teachers of science across Australia need more time to become familiar with the current national curriculum that was developed through an exhaustive consultation process, agreed upon by each state and territory, is truly comprehensive, is academically rigorous and has a dynamic framework. Consideration needs to be given to the time and expertise ASTA member associations contributed to the development of the current curriculum.

ASTA considers the review to be premature and recommends that more time be allowed to implement the current national curriculum.

To facilitate and support teachers in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Science, ASTA recommends a greater focus be placed on up-skilling teachers on the knowledge, skills & understandings that are required to teach and assess the new curriculum and senior courses of study. In Physics for example, there are many teachers who are from an era when

such topics as Relativity and Quantum Physics were not included in their university courses.

Content specific Professional Development is considered by ASTA to be a priority to support Australian Curriculum implementation.

The Science as a Human Endeavour (SHE) strand is the least well articulated within the curriculum as it currently stands but it is also the strand that has the greatest potential for helping students relate science to their everyday lives. ASTA would strongly support a greater focus on the development of contemporary resources and support for teachers to cover this aspect of the curriculum.

ASTA supports the General Capabilities and Cross Curriculum Priorities (like Australia's engagement with Asia) for the curriculum as a whole and agrees that a global context, mindset and skill set is vital for future success. It should be emphasised however that they should exist to provide support for teachers in the teaching of science when they have relevance to the content being taught. They should not distort the focus of the science concepts being taught.

Conclusion

ASTA supports the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Science in its current form and would recommend that a comprehensive national implementation and familiarisation take place before a formal review.

ASTA is supportive of the ongoing monitoring process by ACARA supported by a well-structured consultation process with national professional teaching associations and stakeholders.

Vic Dobos
Chief Executive Officer