



# AUSTRALIAN PARENTS COUNCIL Incorporated

*The National Federation of Organisations Representing Parents of Non-government School Students*

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### NATIONALLY CONSISTENT CURRICULUM

APC supports the concept of an agreed nationally consistent curriculum framework that provides flexibility for locally relevant scope, content and context, providing that can be achieved without compromising academic quality and rigour. In fact it is unacceptable that in 2007 Australia is still trying to establish an effective framework for nationally consistent curriculum.

As far back as 1968 then Education Minister, Malcolm Fraser, contended that “the improvement of the quality of Australian education depends to a considerable extent on devising curricula and associated materials which reflect the changing needs of Australian life. This is the responsibility of the education authorities in the States, but the Commonwealth has a special interest in reducing the unnecessary differences in what is taught in the various States and hence the very real difficulties faced by children who move from one State to another.”

The Australian Parents Council believes that the sentiments expressed by Mr Fraser continue to be relevant and commends the Australian Government for its endeavours to achieve consistency of curriculum across all States and Territories. As the editorial in *The Australian* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March this year also stated, “There is no good reason for a country of 20 million people to host eight separate state and territory educational systems, each developing their own syllabuses. The advantages of a national system are myriad ... An accountable, centralised system that casts its net over the entire country makes far more sense than one that has education broken up into separate fiefdoms, each hijacked by various agendas, with parents and the community locked out at the gates.”

We note that State and Territory Ministers have agreed to work towards sharing curriculum content and ensuring that there are national standards, national assessment and national reporting and that a collaborative body will be established to provide oversight of curriculum development. APC is not at this time overly concerned whether that overseeing body should take the form of a national board of studies or a benchmarking authority, but would expect to participate in the dialogue leading up to such a decision being made.

APC therefore supports the current movement in Australia towards greater consistency in school curricula. In so doing, however, we encourage the Australian Government to utilise all measures at its disposal to ensure that the States and Territories make constant progress towards achieving national consistency in curriculum within a reasonable timeframe, and a complementary high quality and rigorous national coordination and oversight mechanism. This process should of course include a focus upon greater coordination and consistency in the assessment of student outcomes in Years 11 and 12.

We also propose that parents need to be involved in the development and implementation of those coordination and oversight processes, as the value of our role as critical friends and grounding agents in educational policy and process development has been proved over many years.