



Physical, Personal and Social  
Learning Strand  
**CIVICS AND  
CITIZENSHIP**

REVISED EDITION JANUARY 2008



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### **Revised Edition January 2008**

This edition incorporates minor amendments to the domain introductions and learning focus statements to indicate their relationship with the National Statements of Learning.

# Physical, Personal and Social Learning

A curriculum designed to equip students for the challenging world of the twenty-first century needs to ensure that students develop as people who take increasing responsibility for their own physical wellbeing, learning, relationships with others and their role in the local, national and global community.

Within the Physical, Personal and Social Learning strand the learning domains are:

## Health and Physical Education

A healthy, physically active lifestyle is conducive to more effective participation in all that society has to offer and greater levels of success within and beyond school. This requires students to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to:

- maintain good health and live a healthy lifestyle
- understand the role of physical activity in ensuring good health
- engage in physical activity.

## Interpersonal Development

In our highly interconnected and interdependent world, students must learn to work with others by:

- building positive social relationships
- working and learning in teams
- managing and resolving conflicts.

## Personal Learning

As students progress through school they need to be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. This involves developing as individual learners who:

- acquire self knowledge and dispositions which support learning
- can learn with peers, including by seeking and responding appropriately to feedback
- increasingly manage their own learning and growth including by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these
- recognise and enact appropriate values within and beyond the school context.

## **Civics and Citizenship**

Students need to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to take action as informed, confident members of a diverse and inclusive Australian society. They need to understand the political and legal systems and processes and the history that underpins them. This involves a focus on students:

- understanding their identity and roles in their community
- knowing their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- appreciating Australia's role in the global community
- having the knowledge, skills and behaviours to participate in society and take responsible action in relation to other citizens and the environment at a local and broader level.

# Civics and Citizenship

## Introduction

The Civics and Citizenship domain provides students with knowledge, skills and opportunities to understand and practise what it means to be a citizen in a democracy. Citizens require knowledge and understanding of civic institutions and the skills and willingness to actively participate in society. They need knowledge of political and legal systems and processes and the history that underpins them in order to achieve civic understanding. They need to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and democratic values and principles such as democratic decision making, representative and accountable government, freedom of speech, equality before the law, social justice and equality. This domain facilitates the practice of citizenship skills, the exploration and development of values and dispositions to support citizenship and the empowerment of informed decision making. Teaching of civics engages students in active interaction with the community.

In a world where people, environments, economics and politics are inextricably linked, and where dislocation and change is accelerating, a strong sense of personal identity developed through participation in communities is a sound basis from which to connect with the world. Civics and Citizenship education strengthens understanding and valuing of the self. It teaches why citizens need a sense of personal identity within their own community and how they can contribute to local, national and global communities. Through Civics and Citizenship students develop an appreciation for the uniqueness and diversity of Australia's multicultural society and the efforts of individuals and groups to achieve political rights and equality. They value what it means to be an Australian and explore Australia's role in the global community. They consider human rights and social justice issues at local, national and global levels.

In Civics and Citizenship students investigate how, in a democratic tradition, informed and diverse contributions and participation by citizens are important. They learn about, contest and enact the values that are important to be an engaged citizen within a community. They are provided with opportunities to investigate and participate in activities that support sustainable practices, social justice and underpin the future wellbeing of societies from a local to a global level. Civics and Citizenship provides a vehicle for students to challenge their own and others' views about Australian society and to formally participate in and practise activities and behaviours which involve democratic decision making.

## Structure of the domain

The Civics and Citizenship domain is organised into six sections, one for each level of achievement from Level 1 to Level 6. Each level includes a learning focus statement and, from Level 3, a set of standards organised by dimension.

### Learning focus

Learning focus statements are written for each level. These outline the learning that students need to focus on if they are to progress in the domain and achieve the standards at the levels where they apply. They suggest appropriate learning experiences from which teachers can draw to develop relevant teaching and learning activities.

### Standards

Standards define what students should know and be able to do at different levels and are written for each dimension. In Civics and Citizenship, standards for assessing and reporting on student achievement apply from Level 3.

### Dimensions

Standards in the Civics and Citizenship domain are organised in two dimensions:

- Civic knowledge and understanding
- Community engagement.

#### Civic knowledge and understanding

The *Civic knowledge and understanding* dimension focuses on the principles and practices that underpin civic institutions and civic life in communities and societies. Students explore concepts of democracy and the key features of Australian and other democracies. They develop knowledge and understanding of the origins and key features of the Australian political, government and legal systems. They develop understanding of the origins, uniqueness and diversity of Australia's multicultural society. They learn about the principles and values which underpin Australian democracy, such as equality before the law, freedom of speech, democratic representation, accountability of government, social justice and respect for others. They explore the elements of sustainability in local, national and global contexts. They learn about the contribution democracy has made to Australia's history and national identity and Australia's place in the world.

### Community engagement

The *Community engagement* dimension focuses on the development of skills and behaviours students need to interact with the community and to engage with organisations and groups. Students participate in processes associated with citizenship such as decision making, voting and leadership, using their knowledge of rules and laws of governance, and concepts such as human rights and social justice. They think critically about their own values, rights and responsibilities and those of organisations and groups across a range of settings, and explore the diversity in society.

Students explore and consider different perspectives and articulate and justify their own opinions on local, national and global issues. They refine their own opinions, values and allegiances. They apply their knowledge and skills in a range of community-based activities.

## National Statements of Learning

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) incorporate the opportunities to learn covered in the national [Statements of Learning](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/the_statements_of_learning,11893.html) (www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/the\_statements\_of\_learning,11893.html). The Statements of Learning describe essential skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn by the end of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in English, Mathematics, Science, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The Statements of Learning were developed as a means of achieving greater national consistency in curriculum outcomes across the eight Australian states and territories. It was proposed that they be used by state and territory departments or curriculum authorities (their primary audience) to guide the future development of relevant curriculum documents. They were agreed to by all states and territories in August 2006.

During 2007, the VCAA prepared a detailed map to show how the Statements of Learning are addressed and incorporated in the VELS. In the majority of cases, the VELS learning focus statements incorporate the Statements of Learning. Some Statements of Learning are covered in more than one domain. In some cases, VELS learning focus statements have been elaborated to address elements of the Statements of Learning not previously specified. These elaborations are noted at the end of each learning focus statement.

# Level 1

## Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they begin to develop a sense of belonging to the school community. They are introduced to the idea of the classroom being a community and they learn about respect and concern for others and being fair. They learn about classroom rules and why they are needed. They begin to compare classroom and family rules and other rules that they know about such as those for games and sport. Students explore their responsibilities and rights and those of others in familiar contexts such as the family, the classroom, the school playground and local recreation areas.

Students learn about and celebrate special cultural, local, community and national days; for example, school sporting events and Clean Up Australia Day. They engage in school and cultural events in a responsible and active way.



## **Standards**

In Civics and Citizenship, standards for assessing and reporting on student achievement are introduced at Level 3. The learning focus statements for Levels 1 and 2 provide advice about learning experiences that will assist students to work towards the achievement of the standards at Level 3.

## Level 2

### Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they identify the range of groups to which they, their family members and their class belong. They begin to appreciate the similarities and differences between individuals and groups, including the language, cultural and religious groups which make up the Australian nation. They explore the roles, rights and responsibilities of various family and community members. They discover why groups and communities have rules, begin to question rules which they believe are unfair, and make suggestions about improving the rules within the community. They begin to appreciate the common values important to groups and individuals; for example, fairness, tolerance, understanding and respect.

Students begin to participate in a range of class and school activities such as recycling, taking responsibility for class resources, and marking local and national celebrations and commemorations. They explore the purpose and benefits of school, community and national events. Students investigate the ways individuals, families, groups and communities can work to improve their environment.

## **Standards**

In Civics and Citizenship, standards for assessing and reporting on student achievement are introduced at Level 3. The learning focus statements for Levels 1 and 2 provide advice about learning experiences that will assist students to work towards the achievement of the standards at Level 3.

# Level 3

## Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 3 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they build on their understanding of Australian society and investigate some of the different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities, that make up the Australian community. They learn about the contributions that people from diverse groups have made to many aspects of the Australian way of life. This includes contributions to the arts, industry, medicine and science, as well as to other aspects of their life including food, festivals and sporting events. They explore the ways that Australians are connected to other regional and global communities.

Students learn about some key events which contributed to the development of the Australian nation. They explore symbols and celebrations of Australia's and Victoria's past and present; for example, the Australian national flag, the ATSI flags, the Victorian flag, coats of arms, floral emblems, colours, flower, animal and bird emblems, the national anthem, Australia Day and the Queen's Birthday. They consider the meaning and values that are reflected in these celebrations and symbols. They consider what they value about Australia.

Students explore how and why people make decisions and identify places where people come together to discuss issues and make decisions. They know that voting is a key method for group decision making in a democracy. Students learn about the purpose of government and some familiar services provided by government, particularly at the local level such as pre-schools, libraries, recreational facilities and waste and recycling collections. They look at the roles of some leaders and representatives such as prime minister, premier and mayor.

Students learn about the different types of groups in the community and their functions; for example, school groups and local volunteer groups such as charitable and environmental organisations. From their research, they develop knowledge about their community and environment, and a sense that individuals' contributions can care for and improve the environment, their own lives and the lives of others.

They explore the differences between rules and laws, why we have them, what role they serve, and how they can be changed. They contribute to the development and support of classroom rules. They develop an understanding of the qualities of good laws, the importance of laws applying equally to everyone in a democracy, and the ways that laws are made.

Students engage in democratic processes to plan and carry out activities and events at the school or in the local community. They participate in community, school- and/or home-based projects designed to protect and care for the natural and built environment and promote the sustainable management of resources that they use; for example, by reducing, reusing and recycling paper and plastics, reducing use of fossil fuel by walking or cycling to school, reducing water consumption, and contributing to community events.

### **National Statements of Learning**

This learning focus statement, with the following elaborations and in conjunction with the Level 3 learning focus statements for Interpersonal Development, Communication and The Humanities, incorporates the Year 3 National Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship.

#### **Elaborations:**

They explore the ways that Australians are connected to other regional and global communities.

Students explore how and why people make decisions and identify places where people come together to discuss issues and make decisions. They know that voting is a key method for group decision making in a democracy.

## **Standards**

### **Civic knowledge and understanding**

At Level 3, students demonstrate understanding of the contribution of people from the many culturally diverse groups that make up the Australian community. They sequence and describe some key events in Australia's democratic history. They describe symbols and emblems of national life in Australia and identify values related to symbols and national celebrations and commemorations. They describe the purpose of government, some familiar government services and the roles of some leaders and representatives. They explain the difference between rules and laws and describe the qualities of a good law. They explain why protection and care for the natural and built environment is important.

### **Community engagement**

At Level 3, students contribute to the development and support of class rules and participate in school celebrations and commemorations of important events. They describe some of the roles and purposes of groups in the community. They work with other students to identify a local issue and plan possible actions to achieve a desired outcome. They describe the benefits of action at the local level and the democratic aspects of the process. They participate in activities to protect and care for the natural and built environment.

# Level 4

## Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 4 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they learn about the origins and establishment of the Australian nation at Federation. They examine the nature of the Australian federal system of governance that developed. They consider the effects of Australian federation on the democratic rights of different groups of people such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people, women and non-British migrants.

Students learn about the three levels of government in Australia and investigate examples of the functions and services of these governments such as currency, defence, education, health, parks and libraries. They examine other features of Australian democracy; for example, the role of government in representing the people, the key tasks of a member of parliament or councillor, how parliament makes laws and the importance of voting. They learn about the values of democracy, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

They consider the experiences of diverse cultural groups, including ATSI communities, and their contributions to Australian identity. They consider the values important in a multicultural society such as respect and tolerance.

Students learn about the processes of making and changing laws and the role of the courts and police. They consider important principles such as the independence of the judiciary, equality before the law, and the presumption of innocence. They compare Australian legal processes with those of other cultures, such as those of ATSI communities. Students understand that when Australians travel overseas, the laws of other countries apply to them.

Students understand the ways in which Australian citizens are influenced by and can influence local, state, national, regional and global decisions and movements, including issues of sustainability. They investigate the social and political links between Australia and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and explore global developments and their potential impact on Australia. They understand that protecting the environment requires that people work together as citizens and consumers and participate in appropriate actions as environmental stewards or in other civic action to effect positive change.

Students research an issue, or issues using a range of resources including electronic media. These could include current local, national and global issues; for example, natural disasters and human rights issues. They consider actual and possible actions by citizens and nations in response to the issue/s.

Students explore ways in which they can actively participate in their school and community. They investigate the qualities of leadership through past and present examples. They are provided with opportunities to participate in school events and experience class and school leadership roles and their responsibilities.

### **National Statements of Learning**

This learning focus statement, with the following elaborations and in conjunction with the Level 4 learning focus statements for Interpersonal Development, Communication, History and Geography, incorporates the Year 5 National Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship.

#### **Elaborations:**

Students understand that when Australians travel overseas, the laws of other countries apply to them.

Students understand the ways in which Australian citizens are influenced by and can influence local, state, national, regional and global decisions and movements, including issues of sustainability. They investigate the social and political links between Australia and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and explore global developments and their potential impact on Australia. They understand that protecting the environment requires that people work together as citizens and consumers and participate in appropriate actions as environmental stewards or in other civic action to effect positive change.

## **Standards**

### **Civic knowledge and understanding**

At Level 4, students describe the nature of Australia's democracy that developed as a result of Federation. They describe the three levels of government and some of the key functions of each level. They explain the basic elements of Australia's federal parliamentary system and key democratic principles and values such as freedom of speech and equality before the law. They explain the concept of multiculturalism and describe the contribution of various cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to Australian identity. They demonstrate understanding of the process of making and changing laws.

### **Community engagement**

At Level 4, students demonstrate understanding of the roles and responsibilities of leaders, and of democratic processes, when engaging in school and community activities. They present a point of view on a significant current issue or issues and include recommendations about the actions that individuals and governments can take to resolve issues. They demonstrate understanding that there are different viewpoints on an issue, and contribute to group and class decision making.

# Level 5

## Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 5 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they study the origins of democracy and various other types of government in an historical context. They learn about how past societies such as Ancient Greece and Rome have influenced modern democracies. They learn how Australian democracy developed from an autocracy to a modern democracy and the British foundations of Australian democracy.

Students learn about significant milestones in the development of Australian law, governance and rights. They explore the historical origins of some political rights, such as universal suffrage, secret ballot and payment of parliamentarians. They consider examples of the fight for political rights such as the Eureka movement, the eight-hour day and fair working conditions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and the vote for women. They look at the origins of Australian citizenship and how it can be acquired.

Students learn about key features of Australian democracy. They learn about the two houses of the Australian parliament and the ways that citizens are represented in the Senate and the House of Representatives. They compare the roles of federal and state parliaments. They learn about the general processes of elections in Australia. They consider the separate responsibilities of the three levels of government and the impact of each level on the daily lives of citizens. They develop understanding of aspects of political parties and their leaders, the role of the Australian Constitution, and the courts. They discuss examples in the media of people, laws, and issues concerning these features of democracy.

Students consider the English origins of Australia's legal system and the origins of common and statute law. They learn about the purposes of laws and consider examples of the process of making and changing them. They evaluate the merits and successes of the principles in Australia's legal system such as justice, the presumption of innocence and equality before the law. They identify the requisite conditions for a fair trial.

Through historical and contemporary examples, including those from Australia, students are introduced to the values and qualities of leadership. Students are provided with opportunities to take on a variety of leadership roles. They develop skills required for active and informed citizenship and use these in class and community contexts. For example, they use cooperative decision making to design and evaluate a group project, seek a variety of opinions and use a voting method to determine the majority view about an issue.

Students examine the ways in which Australians are connected to other people in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. They explore the responsibilities of global citizenship for individuals, organisations and governments and the roles and responsibilities of companies, producers and



consumers in relation to sustainability. They explore ways in which countries work together to protect the environment.

Students interact with a variety of groups and organisations in civic and community events. With assistance, they seek opportunities to actively engage in school, local and community events. They research issues and events of importance to the community, recognise a range of perspectives, and propose possible solutions and actions. These issues may be related to matters such as environmental sustainability, social justice and human rights and may have local, national and global significance.

### **Statements of Learning**

This learning focus statement, with the following elaboration and in conjunction with the learning focus statements for Interpersonal Development, Communication and Geography, incorporates the Year 7 National Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship.

### **Elaboration:**

Students examine the ways in which Australians are connected to other people in the Asia–Pacific region and around the world. They explore the responsibilities of global citizenship for individuals, organisations and governments and the roles and responsibilities of companies, producers and consumers in relation to sustainability. They explore ways in which countries work together to protect the environment.

## **Standards**

### **Civic knowledge and understanding**

At Level 5, students explain the origins and features of representative government. They identify significant developments in the governance and achievement of political rights in Australia. They explain key features of Australian Government including the responsibilities of the levels of government, the houses of parliament, political parties and the ways that citizens are represented, using some contemporary examples in their explanations. They describe the purposes of laws and the processes of creating and changing them. They identify and question the features and values of Australia's political and legal systems. They identify and discuss the qualities of leadership through historical and contemporary examples.

### **Community engagement**

At Level 5, students present points of view on contemporary issues and events using appropriate supporting evidence. They explain the different perspectives on some contemporary issues and propose possible solutions to problems. They use democratic processes when working in groups on class and community projects. They participate in school and community events and participate in activities to contribute to environmental sustainability or action on other community issues.

# Level 6

## Learning focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 6 standards in Civics and Citizenship, they explore the development of Australia's democracy from Federation, the development of the Australian Constitution and the federal system of government. They investigate some historical and contemporary issues, such as the republican debate, the inclusion of a bill of rights in the Australian Constitution, the design of the Australian flag, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) recognition in the Australian Constitution, and the division of federal and state powers. They compare Australia's democracy with other democracies.

Students investigate the nature and history of the concept of human rights. They become aware of national and international legislation designed to protect those rights. They explore human rights issues at the national and international level, including an investigation of the human rights of ATSI communities and other groups within Australia.

They explore key elements of modern democracy, such as the origins, purposes, objectives and constituencies of political parties, and the characteristics and operation of the electoral system. Students consider the ways that these allow citizens to participate in governance and how well these elements support democratic principles and values. They consider other processes for influencing the views and actions of others; for example, through participation in organisations such as unions, environmental and other interest groups. They consider the role of the media in a democratic society and the importance of a free press.

Students explore Australia's multicultural society. They learn about the past and present policies of government in relation to ATSI people and immigration, and the values and beliefs which support a harmonious multicultural society. They explore the concept of Australian identity and the contributions of various cultural groups. They consider the development of Australian citizenship over time and reasons why people choose to become Australian citizens. They link their understanding of multiculturalism to contemporary issues, such as the global refugee problem and population growth.

Students evaluate the role of the Australian Government in the global community including Australia's role in the United Nations, through contexts such as government responses to environmental concerns such as global warming or other issues of environmental sustainability, natural disasters, peacekeeping operations, world poverty and national and global security issues.

Students explore the roles and responsibilities of state and Commonwealth courts and the High Court of Australia. They learn about the differences between different types of law including statute, common, ATSI and international law. They examine case studies of changes in the law such as Mabo, the Franklin Dam, or combating terror or other contemporary examples. They consider the views of individuals and groups in the community about the change and the effects of the change. They examine the processes for bringing about change in Australia's legal and political systems including the role of open debate in a democracy. They evaluate the effectiveness of democratic processes in bringing about changes in the law.

Students apply their knowledge about representative democracy and systems of government by researching and proposing possible action on an issue relevant to them at the local, state or national level. They explore the potential impact of the issue on different groups within the community, and the effectiveness of the democratic process in balancing individual and community rights in resolving the issue.

Students understand the regional, global and environmental implications of being a citizen in a democracy. They explore Australia's relationship with other nations and examine the influence of global events and issues on these relationships. They examine how people's views on the environment influence government policy and non-government organisations and the ways in which governments attempt to address issues of development and sustainability. They investigate ways in which citizens can influence government and consider opportunities to take civic action on issues, including the environment.

Students explore what it means to be a leader, considering different leadership styles and learn how they can lead by example. Students are provided with opportunities to participate in leadership activities and projects that contribute to the wellbeing of others and which may have a local, national or global focus.

### **Statements of Learning**

This learning focus statement, with the following elaborations and in conjunction with the learning focus statements for Interpersonal Development, Communication and History, incorporates the Year 9 National Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship.

**Elaborations:**

They compare Australia's democracy with other democracies.

They consider the development of Australian citizenship over time and reasons why people choose to become Australian citizens.

Students understand the regional, global and environmental implications of being a citizen in a democracy. They explore Australia's relationship with other nations and examine the influence of global events and issues on these relationships. They examine how people's views on the environment influence government policy and non-government organisations and the ways in which governments attempt to address issues of development and sustainability. They investigate ways in which citizens can influence government and consider opportunities to take civic action on issues, including the environment.

**Standards****Civic knowledge and understanding**

At Level 6, students describe the origins and nature of Australia's federal political system and present a considered point of view on an issue about change in the political system and the law. They explain how the Australian Constitution affects their lives, and human rights issues, both national and international. They explain how citizens influence government policy through participation in political parties, elections and membership of interest groups. They explain the development of a multicultural society and the values necessary to sustain it. They describe the election processes in Australia and how to vote. They explain the roles and responsibilities of courts at state and federal levels and evaluate a change in the law. They analyse how well democratic values are reflected in aspects of the Australian political system. They take a global perspective when analysing an issue, and describe the role of global organisations in responding to international issues.

**Community engagement**

At Level 6, students draw on a range of resources, including the mass media to articulate and defend their own opinions about political, social and environmental issues in national and global contexts. They contest, where appropriate, the opinions of others. They develop an action plan which demonstrates their knowledge of a social or environmental issue and suggest strategies to raise community awareness of it. They participate in a range of citizenship activities including those with a national or global perspective, at school and in the local community.

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