



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Ms Jo Clay MLA:

Reference: Hearing on 16 November 2023, Annual Report of ACT Education Directorate

In relation to: Climate Change education

- (1) Is climate change education a compulsory component of the Australian curriculum?
- (2) If so, at what year levels?
- (3) Does the ACT Government have any plans or policies to embed climate change education into ACT public schools?
- (4) Does the Education Directorate have any policies compelling teachers to teach items that are classified as optional under the Australian curriculum?
- (5) The new Australian curriculum only includes climate change education in secondary years - do any Education Directorate policies compel teachers to teach climate change education in primary school years?

Minister Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

(1) Yes. Through the Australian Curriculum Science learning area, students are equipped with the scientific knowledge and skills to be able to understand climate change and make informed decisions.

All ACT public schools teach the Australian Curriculum. In addition to the Science learning area, teachers expose students to climate change education through the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability. Cross-curriculum priorities are taught through the content.

The Sustainability cross-curriculum priority explores the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to a sustainable future. Designing solutions and actions for a sustainable future requires an understanding of the ways environmental, social and economic systems interact, and an ability to make balanced judgements based on present and future impacts.

The Sustainability cross-curriculum priority is future-oriented and encourages students to reflect on how they interpret and engage with the world. It is designed to raise student awareness about informed action to create a more environmentally and socially just world. (Excerpt from the Australian Curriculum Sustainability cross-curriculum priority)

(2) The Science learning area and the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority are taught from kindergarten to year 10.

(3) The *Curriculum and Academic Reporting Policy* for ACT public schools outlines the requirements for curriculum planning and delivery, and the requirements for reporting student learning for all ACT public schools. Schools must implement the curriculum as described by the Australian Curriculum planning, teaching, assessing, and reporting guidelines. Climate change is a part of the Australian Curriculum as set out in the response to question 1 above.

(4) No. The Australian Curriculum states: *“The Content Elaborations within the Australian Curriculum provide teachers with suggestions and illustrations of ways to teach the content. The suggestions are optional material only: they are not a set of complete or comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught. They illustrate and exemplify content descriptions with a diverse range of examples.”*

(5) In the revised Australian Curriculum (V9.0), being implemented in ACT public schools in 2024, the Science learning area and the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority are taught from kindergarten to year 10.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and curves, positioned over the printed name of the Minister.

Date: 06/12/23

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry MLA