



The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Education
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House ACT 2600
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Dear Ms Gillard

We understand that the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) is scheduled to meet in Melbourne on Thursday, April 15. We are writing to you and State and Territory Ministers for Education to request that at this meeting you consider and support the proposal that Health and Physical Education (HPE) be included as a priority in the new Australian K-10 curriculum.

We recognise that there will always be pressures on the curriculum. We are, however, deeply concerned that the well-being of our young people is under threat from a wide range of health problems.

You will be aware of growing concerns about issues such as chronic disease, alcohol, tobacco and drug problems, injury prevention, mental health and the rising tide of obesity. Approximately a quarter of our children are already overweight or obese, and even if current trends get no worse, the life expectancy for Australia children alive today will fall two years by the time they are 20 years old. This is a legacy that we should not leave our children, and the education system has a vital role to play in addressing these issues.

We understand that the first stage of the new Australian Curriculum includes English, mathematics, science and history, while the second stage includes geography, languages and the arts. HPE is recognised as a learning area for consideration, but has no such priority. There is also no currently reliable information about how much and how well HPE is implemented in schools around the country. We are, however, aware that there is a strong national consensus amongst those working in the HPE area that would lead to a smooth development process with strong support.

Schools have a critical role to play in equipping young Australians with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to lead healthy active lives and in developing behaviours that will keep them healthy well beyond

their school years. A high priority for health and physical education in schools has been recommended by the National Preventative Health Task Force, and the Crawford Report on Sport and Recreation. We believe that there would be very strong community support for health and physical education to be in the first or second stages of the new Australian Curriculum, with at least the same priority as the arts.

It would be very disappointing if HPE were left to a third phase of the curriculum which is clearly of lower priority and yet to be developed.

We also note the special importance of health and physical education in schools for disadvantaged populations. Given the wealth of evidence on the contribution of preventable death and disease to the Aboriginal life expectancy gap, HPE as a priority in schools would play a vital role in supporting many of the Close the Gap objectives.

We therefore seek your support for the following commitments:

- Inclusion of the health and physical education learning area within stage two of the Australian curriculum for K-10 students.
- A minimum 150 minutes per week of physical education for all K-10 students.
- A minimum 80 minutes per week of health education for all K-10 students.

Our organisations would be very happy to provide any assistance in support of these proposals which we believe to be of vital importance for the health of our children.

Yours sincerely



Professor Mike Daube
President
PHAA



Graeme Quelch
President
ACHER



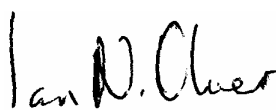
Dr Lyn Roberts AM
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Professor Fiona Stanley
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CC Hon Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health and Ageing
State and Territory Ministers for Education