



Submission to the draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education

Additional Detailed Written Comments Submission

Context

The Australian Sporting Goods Association Incorporated (ASGA), welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the draft *F-10 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education*.

ASGA was formed in 1981 as the industry association representing a broad spectrum of sporting goods and active lifestyle industry participants, including manufacturers, importers, agents, wholesalers and retailers.

ASGA is a leading industry voice on issues impacting the health, trade, regulation and taxation of the sporting and active lifestyle industries. ASGA aims to foster market growth, provide services and advocate for increased participation in sport and physical activity.

Members of ASGA include the world's leading sports brands and major Australian retailers.

Many ASGA members are significantly involved with Australian sport and physical activity. Members sponsor school and community sports teams, community physical activity events and senior and professional athletes, teams and codes.

A key pillar of the ASGA strategic plan is to *encourage Australians to participate in sport and an active lifestyle* and we have a particular focus on ensuring young people participate in and develop a lifelong passion for sports and physical activity.

ASGA, as a member of the [World Federation Sporting Goods Industry](#), has also signed up to the [Designed to Move project](#), an international physical activity action agenda that brings together health professionals, university researchers, sports scientists, sporting organisations and educators from around the world.

Designed to Move has two main policy 'asks':

1. Create early positive experiences for children (in sport and PE)
2. Integrate physical activity into everyday life.

Ensuring children are participating in sport and physical education during school time is a significant component of the first ask.

In this submission we look at the importance of not only teaching students about health and PE, but also about using the curriculum to achieve health and physical activity outcomes for those students. Children spend a significant portion of their time at school and with numerous studies proving the link between physical activity and health¹ and physical activity and improved academic performance², it is important the curriculum reflects the health needs of its students and of Australian society.

It should be noted that ASGA supports the general thrust of the draft curriculum – this submission hopes to make improvements, rather than make wholesale changes.

The following submission is divided into sections that follow the online feedback form.

¹ Ian Janssen, Allana G LeBlanc: Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth, *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2010, 7:40 (11 May 2010)

² Trost, S.G. Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007.

Rationale and Aims

The Rationale and Aims are, in general, well thought out and provide a thorough overview of the importance and direction of the draft curriculum. A few comments:

There is only a single mention of 'sport' in the Rationale and Aims (and little mention in other parts of the draft curriculum). This is surprising and concerning. While physical activity participation trends have been changing in Australia³, government funding, infrastructure and the way Australians think about physical activity are all based on the concept of organised sport.

There is also a direct link between children's participation in organised sports activities and their fitness levels, compared to children who are not involved in a sports club environment.⁴

ASGA believes one of the aims of the draft curriculum should be to engender in students a love of physical activity and a pathway to move them from play and games and into organised sport as they get older. To that end, it is important for the concept of sport to be a key component of the Rationale and Aims.

Physical activity and education needs to be age-appropriate and fun in order for children to participate in it, enjoy it and continue to do so as they get older. As stated in the Designed to Move Report:

“For kids to choose a lifetime of physical activity, sports and play, the options available to them must be fun. This is non-negotiable. If the choices are boring, kids will choose something more sedentary every time.”⁵

For the curriculum to be effective in providing a “foundation for lifelong physical activity participation” ASGA strongly recommends a sense of 'fun' be included in both the Rationale and Aims (the single reference to 'enjoy' in dot point 4 of the Aims is not enough). It should also be included in 'Key Ideas', 'Implications for Implementation', 'Band and Content Descriptions' and 'Content Elaborations', particularly at the younger grades.

Making the curriculum enjoyable also makes it easier to teach. I don't think any teacher will disagree with the idea that if students are enjoying their lessons they are more likely to remain engaged and motivated.

The curriculum has the opportunity to not simply teach students about health, but to actually provide positive health outcomes for students, through the delivery of a structured PE curriculum.

To that end, while it is important for teachers, schools and state education departments to have flexibility when teaching the curriculum, it is vital a minimum number of hours per week of physical education be delivered to students.

International recommendations of a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate physical activity a day⁶ do not all have to be delivered through structured PE classes. However, given the amount of time children spend at school each day, it is vital the majority of the exercise children undertake occurs during school hours.

Our final comment on the Rationale and Aims is that past work in this area suggests that combining 'Health' and 'Physical Education' into the same strand is detrimental to the successful teaching of PE.⁷ While ASGA

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics: 4156.0 - Sports and Physical Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 2012. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4156.0>

⁴ Telford, D. *Benefits of Early Engagement in Sport & Physical Activity: New Evidence from the Australian LOOK longitudinal study*. Presentation delivered to the ANPHA Symposium: Active Recreation and Sport for Health: Barriers to Young People's Participation, December 2012

⁵ *Designed to Move. Designing for early positive experiences: A deep dive* p. 40. www.designedtomove.org

⁶ Ian Janssen, Allana G LeBlanc: Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth, *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2010, 7:40 (11 May 2010)

supports the overall thrust of the Health and PE draft curriculum, it is important for ACARA, state education departments and schools, when finalising and implementing the curriculum, to ensure the PE component of the curriculum is taught to an appropriate standard and not subsumed into the 'Health' component of the curriculum.

RATIONALE AND AIMS: RECCOMENDATIONS

1. That the Aims include a dot point that says: “progress through stages of play and games and into organised sport in a way that engenders a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity.”
2. Reference ‘age-appropriate physical activity that is fun for students’ in the Rationale.
3. Change dot point 4 of the Aims, so it reads “engage in and enjoy age-appropriate and fun regular movement-based activities and learning experiences...”
4. That the Aims include a dot point that says “receive a minimum of 45 minutes of physical education a day that is fun and provides a learning experience appropriate to their age.”

⁷ Physical and Sport Education. Report by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts. Commonwealth of Australia 1992. p. xiii

Content Structure

The two strands of *Personal, social and community health* and *Movement and physical activity* work well together, with an easy-to-understand correlation between what is taught in both strands.

Following from comment three under 'Rationale and Aims' above, what is missing from the content structure is the opportunity to use the Movement strand of the curriculum to achieve actual health outcomes. It may be that improved health outcomes are implied by teaching about health in one strand and by engaging in physical activity in the other, but ASGA believes it is important for the link between the two to be explicit: teaching about health and movement should lead to healthy outcomes for students.

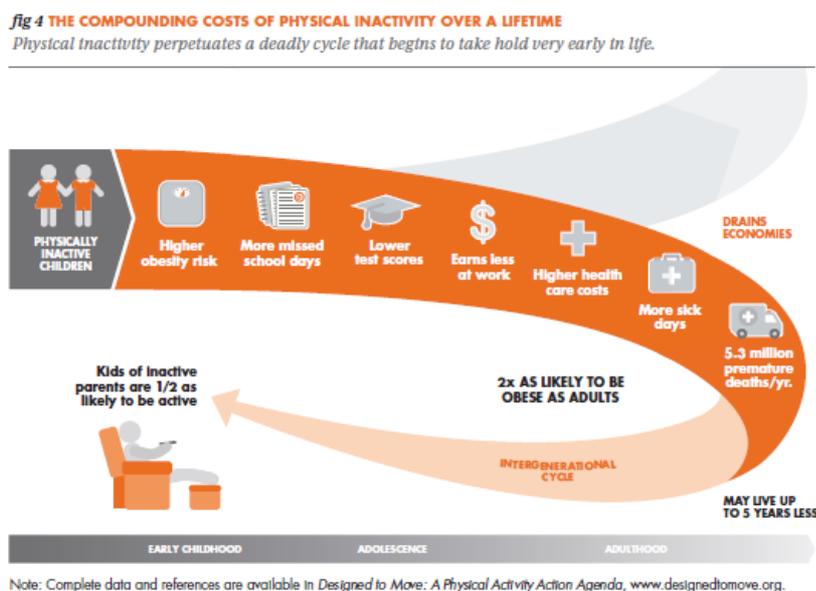
CONTENT STRUCTURE: RECCOMENDATIONS

5. That under the sub-heading 'Relationship between the strands and content' a sentence be inserted that reads: "Both strands work in conjunction to improve the health outcomes for students."

Key Ideas

The three key ideas in each of the strands provide a useful organisational element for the draft curriculum. Within the key ideas there are opportunities to be more explicit about achieving health outcomes and talking about sport.

In 'Being healthy, safe and active' the description focuses on teaching students the skills to make health-positive decisions. That is, of course, the main aim of that strand of the curriculum. There is also an opportunity to not only teach students those skills, but to ensure students implement those skills by providing opportunities to make those healthy decisions. Research shows physically inactive children have worse health, academic, wealth and social outcomes, to say nothing about their cost to societies and economies as they grow older, as shown in the figure below.⁸



⁸ *Designed to Move. A prelude to action: Why Now?* p. 7. www.designedtomove.org

Given that, ASGA believes it is important for the curriculum to not only teach about health, but to achieve health outcomes.

There is again no mention of 'fun' in the 'Moving our body' key idea, which is vital if students are to enjoy and continue participating in physical activity.

The fourth 'movement context for learning' – Games and Sports – is welcome in that it references sport, but it still seems there is a distinct lack of desire to talk about sport in a meaningful way. For example, 'touch football' is used as an example of a 'territorial activity'. Touch football is a sport, not a 'territorial activity'. It is unclear why this sort of avoidance of the term 'sport' occurs here and is perpetuated throughout the document. This section also makes no reference to team-based sports (or indeed, activities) as types of physical activities within the Games and Sports context, which seems to be a significant omission.

KEY IDEAS: RECCOMENDATIONS

6. That in the second sentence of 'Being healthy, safe and active' (p.4) the words "and implement" be added after the word "make", so it reads: "...supporting students to make and implement decisions about their own health..."
7. That in the 'Moving our body' section (p.7) the second sentence be edited to read: "The content in this key idea lays the important early foundations of fun and age-appropriate play and fundamental movement skills."
8. Under 'Games and Sports' (p.9) the third dot point be amended to read: "territorial games and sports (for example touch football)"
9. Under 'Games and Sports' (p.9) a new dot point be added that reads: "team sports (for example netball or a football code)"

Links to Other Learning Areas

ASGA supports and agrees with the comments in 'Links to other learning areas.'

One way the PE curriculum can be linked to other learning areas is through regular activity breaks. International research suggests that regular physical activity breaks can "improve cognitive performance and promote on-task classroom behaviour."⁹

LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS: RECCOMENDATIONS

10. That within this Curriculum and in other curricula, short, regular physical activity breaks, during class time, be implemented.

⁹ Trost, S.G. Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007

Implications for Implementation

The recent history of PE in schools, where under the National Education Agreement 2009 schools no longer had to offer even a minimum of two hours per week¹⁰, shows that mandatory minimum hours of PE and measures designed to prove students receive those minimum hours is vital. The implications of allowing state education departments and individual schools and teachers the 'flexibility' to offer PE how they like is frightening.

The sentence (p 11) under 'Guidelines for selecting movement contexts': "It is expected that students will experience a diverse range of movement and physical activities across their years of schooling that meet localised needs and student interests." is distinctly worrying. Past experience shows that in a crowded timetable, PE is one of the first subjects to go, which is why it should not be 'expected' that students will receive adequate PE classes, it must be mandated.¹¹

Of particular concern is the proper resourcing of schools so they can successfully deliver the PE curriculum. As noted in the 2009 report by the National Preventative Health Taskforce, children require 'adequate time for sport and recreation within school time'. The report recommended further training and support for teachers to teach PE and sports,¹² which ASGA supports.

As noted above, moving children through the pathway of PE and into organised sport needs to be a goal of the curriculum. As noted in the Crawford Report (2009), "a link should be encouraged between designated sport and physical education teachers and relevant local sporting clubs to encourage children to move from physical activity into a more structured sport environment."¹³

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION: RECCOMENDATIONS

11. That under 'Planning considerations' in 'Implications for implementation', a sentence be added that reads "It is preferable that qualified PE teachers teach the PE curriculum. Where this is not possible, non-PE teachers teaching the curriculum should receive extra training in PE."
12. That a new dot-point be added following the sentence "Assessment of the *Australian Curriculum...*" that reads: "Twice-yearly assessment of the amount of PE being taught to each student, to ensure minimum targets are being met."
13. That the sentence "It is expected..." be deleted and replaced with: "Students will receive a minimum of 45 minutes of PE instruction per day, using a diverse range of movement and physical activities at each year level that meet localised needs and student interests."
14. That under 'Planning considerations', a sentence be added that reads: "Schools should develop links with local sporting clubs and develop agreements that allows them to share resources and provide pathways from PE to organised sport."

¹⁰ Crawford D. *The Future of Sport in Australia*. pp. 27-28 2009

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² National Preventative Health Taskforce. *Australia: The healthiest country by 2020*. 2009

¹³ Crawford D. *The Future of Sport in Australia*. pp. 27-28 2009

Band Descriptions, Content Descriptions and Elaborations

In general ASGA support the band descriptions, content descriptions and content elaborations. Without going into too much detail for each of the year levels, some general points have been noted below.

The biggest concern again is the lack of 'fun' involved in the curriculum. Particularly at lower year levels, it is vital that students enjoy the physical activity they undertake during physical education. The concept of fun, age-appropriate physical activity should be integral to the band and content descriptions and content elaborations.

We strongly encourage the descriptions around using appropriate language and ensuring people aren't excluded from activities, especially in the younger year levels. As mentioned in the *Designed to Move* report: "Create a safe physical and emotional space; adopt no-tolerance policies around name-calling and verbal/physical abuse among peers; eliminate publicly choosing teams."¹⁴

Designed to Move also strongly encourages children to invent games and activities for themselves, which is incorporated well in section 2.12 (p. 36) and other sections of the draft curriculum.

As noted above, the focus on learning about how to make healthy decisions overshadows any attempts to actually make and implement healthy decisions. While the two go hand-in-hand, the fact remains the Health and PE curriculum is an ideal place to introduce students to healthy options and to lead-the-way for the entire school community. Opportunities for doing so are already included in some of the content elaborations (ie: 5.12, dot-point three: "devising and implementing a proposal to involve parents in supporting students to actively travel to school"), but could be more explicit.

BAND AND CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

15. That the concept of 'age-appropriate fun' be made more explicit throughout the band descriptions, content descriptions and content elaborations.

Achievement Standards

The achievement standards appear to appropriately measure the academic and movement skills / knowledge gained by students working through the Health and PE curriculum. There do not appear to be any achievement standards that measure the health outcomes of the curriculum or ensure the schools and teachers delivering the curriculum achieve their own standards.

As noted in Crawford, "There is a high risk that physical education will not be given appropriate priority while it is part of a broader key learning area (as it currently is with Health). There is no guarantee that any physical education will be delivered in a particular school which only has an obligation to deliver it in a key learning area, that is, health and physical education. The outcome may very well be that the school's obligation to deliver on the health and physical education key learning outcome is done so by delivering on the health elements only (for example, personal hygiene) with no physical education being delivered."¹⁵

¹⁴ *Designed to Move. Designing for early positive experiences* p. 40. www.designedtomove.org

¹⁵ Crawford D. *The Future of Sport in Australia*. P. 122. 2009

Physical education is too important for the academic, social and health outcomes of students for it to be relegated to second place in the curriculum. To that end, ASGA believes the achievement standards should reflect the not only the academic and movement skill outcomes of the curriculum, but also the integrated health outcomes for each student.

Ideally (although perhaps in a different section), the achievements of each school in delivering the curriculum, including a minimum number of hours of PE a week, should also be measured and evaluated, to ensure it is delivered to an acceptable standard.

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS: RECCOMENDATIONS

16. That students be measured for health outcome achievements, including BMI, endurance measurements, etc.
17. That schools be evaluated for delivering a minimum number of PE hours per week and other measures to ensure the PE curriculum is being taught to an acceptable standard.

General Capabilities

ASGA strongly believes, and Australian and international research proves, that physical education in schools, whether that is a full PE class or a five-minute physical activity break during a maths lesson, improves health outcomes and may improve academic results.¹⁶

ASGA supports the current general capabilities but is concerned there is no capability around exercise or physical education. Nor does movement feature in any meaningful way in any of the current capabilities (except perhaps under The Arts, with Dance as a key movement medium).

As noted in the 1992 report by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts “physical education is an educational end in itself, and when properly supervised and taught, leads to both increased performance in other areas of the curriculum, and the development of skills which enable lifelong physical activity.”¹⁷

To that end, Physical Capability, or something similar, should be considered for inclusion as a new ‘General Capability’ within the Australian National Curriculum.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES: RECCOMENDATIONS

18. That a new ‘General Capability’ focused on physical capabilities be added to the National Curriculum.

¹⁶ Trost, S.G. Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007

¹⁷ Physical and Sport Education. Report by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts. Commonwealth of Australia 1992. p. xiv

Cross-Curriculum Priorities

ASGA is generally supportive of the cross-curriculum priorities. In particular, we strongly support the Sustainability priority and its focus on the built environment.

ASGA agrees with the concerns of the Designed to Move action agenda that points out how cities, towns and public infrastructure around the world are designed and built in such a way that discourages physical activity.¹⁸

ASGA encourages schools and teachers implementing the curriculum to teach students about pro-physical activity design for urban areas and what students can do in their own communities to improve physical activity opportunities.

This also translates to the school environment, where the physical and organisational design of schools, including the layout of buildings and classrooms, the structure of classes and the use of recreation time can all be designed to increase and enhance the opportunities of physical activity.

Simple activities like painting brightly coloured lines on school grounds to appeal to children, local bike paths and accessible storage facilities for children's bikes and regular, in-class physical activity breaks are all relatively simple actions that can help increase physical activity.¹⁹

Conclusion

ASGA is aware that we have gone beyond simply commenting on the draft curriculum and delved, in several cases, on how we believe that curriculum should be implemented. Nevertheless, the Association and our members feel it is vital that educators and education policy makers look at the wider implications of the draft curriculum and not simply at "what to teach and when to teach it."

Our concerns can be summarised as:

1. Make it age appropriate and fun – the students will be more engaged, stay involved and be easier to teach.
2. Don't let 'PE' be overshadowed or displaced by 'Health'
3. Teaching PE and Health should lead to actual health outcomes, which should be measured
4. That minimum hours of PE be adopted and measured / evaluated
5. That while PE classes are vital, physical activity breaks throughout the day are a useful way to get kids moving and improve cognitive function.

ASGA would be pleased to discuss any of our thoughts or recommendations with ACARA at your convenience.

ENDS

¹⁸ *Designed to Move. Framework for Action* p. 26. www.designedtomove.org

¹⁹ *Designed to Move. Designing for a physically active built environment: A deep dive* p. 51. www.designedtomove.org