Abstract

Purpose

In this paper we examine the extent to which the Australian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship Education provides opportunities to educate young people to be active, critical citizens, capable of ethical decision making and democratic participation in their own communities, nations and in the wider world. We ask if the formal curriculum is implemented, will it enable young Australians to be active citizens and participants in the 21st century as local and global citizens, whose learning goes beyond national education, to encompass current realities and issues of global interdependency that will impact on their future lives?

Methods

This conceptual paper examines theories relevant to the development of active, critical and participatory citizenship. It discursively analyses the extent to which the Australian Curriculum offers a framework for the development of participatory citizens, prepared for uncertain futures, in a global world.

Results

While the various dimensions of the curriculum do include elements of ‘national education’, there are opportunities to frame the civil, political and social components of citizenship in ways that include local, national and global understandings. However, a review of the curriculum indicates that the knowledge and skills lack participative opportunities for social action.

Conclusions

Civics and citizenship knowledge and skills can be developed if all elements of the curriculum are implemented in school classrooms. However, the achievement of active citizenship also requires students’ participation in whole school programs and contemporary concerns, through authentic actions relevant to their own lives.

Keywords

Civics and Citizenship Education, critical citizenship, national education, Australian Curriculum
Introduction

In recent decades in Australia, as in many other parts of the world, there has been considerable interest in the purpose, scope and pedagogies for civics and citizenship education (CCE) and involving young people in democratic and participatory citizenship (United Nations, 2012; Henderson & Tudball, 2016; Tawil, 2013). The policy to develop the broad dimensions of active and informed citizenship identified in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), and through various aspects of the first national curriculum to be implemented in Australia from the early years or Foundation (F) to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum (AC), are discussed in this paper¹. This three-dimensional curriculum provides the expectation that *all* schools should teach the subject, Civics and Citizenship (CC), and also include, where appropriate, significant links to enrich student knowledge, understanding and skills in three cross-curriculum priorities (CCPs). These are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. The AC also identifies seven essential 21st Century skills or general capabilities that young people need to acquire. Of these, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding, have clear connections to CC.

We contend that it is vitally important to educate young people to be active, critical citizens, capable of ethical decision making and democratic participation in their own communities and nations and in the wider world. In this paper, we explore and review the extent to which these goals can be achieved through the knowledge, understanding and skills defined in the AC. We ask if the formal curriculum is implemented, will it enable young Australians to be active citizens and participants in the 21st century as local and global citizens, whose learning goes beyond national education, to encompass current realities and issues of global interdependency that will impact on their future lives?

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¹ In this paper we refer to the term ‘national curriculum’ as the broad conceptualization of what might be achieved in a single curriculum for all states and territories in Australia. We employ the term ‘Australian Curriculum’ with reference to the current online version (v8.3) produced under the auspices of the statutory body currently charged with its development, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).
We problematize the notion of ‘national education’ in our discussion, as curricula are shaped by historical and social conditions and are forms of discursive practice which embed particular “terminology, values, rhetorical styles, habits and truth” (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 665). Accordingly, national curriculum documents are able to privilege some ideological perspectives over others, embed certain interpretations of the heritage and values of the nation and can define particular forms of civic identity together with specific beliefs and values about the nature of citizenship. It is hardly surprising then, that CCE is a contested curriculum field that is difficult to define and implement in schools. In what follows, first we provide a brief explanation of the evolution and purpose of citizenship education and examine theories relevant to the development of active, critical and participatory citizenship. Second, we engage critically with the CC subject as it is discursively framed in the Australian Curriculum and analyse the extent to which it offers a framework for the development of participatory citizens, prepared for uncertain futures, in a global world.

We argue that multi-dimensional approaches to citizenship education (Cogan, Grossman & Liu, 2000) that go beyond ‘national education’ are possible in the current version of the online AC (Version 8.3). But we foresee that teachers will need to plan their enacted curriculum to include all three aspects of the AC, namely, subject based learning, the general capabilities and all cross-curriculum priority areas, as well as opportunities for active involvement in student governance and community concerns. This will require ongoing professional development so teachers have the knowledge required to build appropriate pedagogies to achieve an engaged citizenry.

At a time when diversity in communities and global mobility is calling into question people’s sense of local and national identity, it is important for young people to answer such questions as where do I belong, and how do I connect in my own community, the nation state and the wider world? Currently, the world is grappling with issues such as new and more frequent manifestations of terrorism, the growth of the new right, the implications of the Brexit decision in the United Kingdom (UK) and the election of Donald Trump in the United States (US). While Australia differs from the UK and US in key ways, most notably by having frequent elections and compulsory voting, a recent study of Australian politics by Cameron and McAllister (2016) found that Australian voters' faith in democracy has plunged to its lowest point since the 1970s, suggesting that Australia is starting to experience the kind of dissatisfaction with mainstream political parties seen in the UK and US.
This was evidenced during the 2016 federal election with the resurgence of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party on an anti-immigration platform, representing people concerned that their will is being ignored by the two major political parties. It could be argued that the re-emergence of the One Nation Party in Australia on an anti-Muslim platform reflects similar moves to more neo-conservative politics in Europe, in response to the increased number of refugees seeking shelter and safer lives there. Such issues and events can only be understood by young people if they have the opportunity to experience robust civics and citizenship learning that includes a focus on contemporary issues and their contexts, so they can function as informed, active citizens of the polity at local, state, national and global levels in an increasingly interconnected world. We argue that this requires multiple dimensions of knowledge and understanding (Cogan & Derricott, 2000) that goes beyond traditional conceptions of civics and citizenship education and speaks directly to the challenges of the 21st century in a multinational context.

**Evolution of CCE in Recent Decades**

Since the late 1980s, there has been a considerable emphasis on the development of CCE curriculum and policy in Australia, at national and state levels. However, the commitment to CCE has varied in Australia and has been subject to the vagaries of those in power. Moreover, bureaucratic decision making has not always recognized the importance of active engagement in CC for young people. Print (2008) argued that:

…until the 1990s, learning civics education … was characterized by studies of government institutions and political processes liberally laced with adages about being a good citizen … taught in a rote, pedantic, and expository manner, with a heavy dependence on a conservative text book. (p. 8)

The report *Whereas the People ... Civics and Citizenship Education in Australia* (Civics Expert Group, 1994), commissioned by then (Labor) Prime Minister Paul Keating, confirmed a national chronic deficit of education for democratic citizenship in Australian schools and concern about the levels of commitment to Australian political institutions. The report recommended an extensive program to educate young Australians on civic knowledge and skills, but not as a separate school subject. After the Keating government’s defeat in 1996, the
Howard-led Liberal-National Coalition conservative government announced the development of the national project, Discovering Democracy. This provided an impetus for a strong focus on citizenship education for all schools from 1997 to 2003, through the injection of more than $32 million into curriculum resources and teacher professional learning. However, despite evidence of the development of many innovative school programs in CCE across Australia, the Evaluation of the Discovering Democracy Program (Erebus Consulting Group, 2003) found that implementation of the program was highly variable in schools. While there is not space here to fully discuss the evolution of CCE in this period, it is important to mention that the focus shifted to the Values Education Program (2004-2010), led by then Minster for Education, Brendan Nelson, who pursued a particular notion of national identity linked to Australia’s past through the teaching of values in Australian schools which emphasised the personal value and moral dimensions of citizenship through a series of national good practice in schools programs.

The period 2005-2007 was something of a hiatus for CCE. The Howard government shifted its approach to securing ‘national education’ in the push for a national history curriculum as part of its conservative political agenda. This embodied a particular notion of what it meant to be an Australian citizen, emphasis on the institutions and values of British political culture and more transmissive approaches to teaching and learning. After the Howard government’s defeat in the Federal election in 2007, the newly elected Rudd Labor Government continued the push for a national approach to curriculum development. Subsequently, the establishment of the independent statutory authority charged with developing the curriculum, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the inclusion civics and citizenship as a subject within the ‘national’ curriculum has offered the strongest focus to date on the development of CCE.

Before the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship (ACCC) was endorsed for implementation, the newly elected Abbot Liberal-led Coalition government announced that a review of Australian Curriculum would occur in 2014. Considerable controversy accompanied the review’s purpose, timeline and the decision of new federal Education Minister, Christopher Pyne, to appoint two critics of the curriculum, Dr Kevin Donnelly and Professor Ken Wiltshire, to head the review process. In its response (Australian Government, 2014), the government was silent on many of the conservative critiques raised during the review process but bowed to pressure from Australian primary principals to reduce the
amount of subject matter content in the ACCC by integrating history, geography, civics and citizenship, and business into Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) for the primary school years. The reviewers’ recommendations to place greater emphasis on the origins of the Australian system of government, including its constitution and Judeo-Christian heritage were accepted. While this signalled a stronger focus on a ‘national approach’ to CC, the government largely ignored other review recommendations, and the cross curriculum priorities and general capabilities that were criticised by the reviewers were retained in the ACCC. By September 2015, the Education Council, the forum through which strategic policy on school education and early childhood development is coordinated at the national level, endorsed the Australian Curriculum in eight learning areas including CC. There is now evidence across the nation, that many young people “are involved in learning about what good citizens do and how they can participate in meaningful engagement with the community, civil society and politics to develop understanding of democratic practice” (Peterson & Tudball, 2017, p.1), but we are still a long way from the subject CC being fully implemented in all schools.

Citizenship education in Australian education policy

While the current agreed national goals for schooling policy is nearing the end of the ten year cycle before revision, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) has placed citizenship education firmly on the national agenda. Analysis of the language and concepts included in the Melbourne Declaration, and now developed from that document in the new Civics and Citizenship (CC) curriculum, and other elements of the Australian Curriculum show that schools are asked to develop many dimensions of citizenship education, to ensure learners build their capacity to be “reflective, active and informed” citizens (ACARA 2016a).

The Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008) also acknowledges the necessity of new capabilities and skills for 21st century citizenship in response to global integration, increased regional engagement and international mobility that go beyond the scope of the earlier Discovering Democracy program. Goal 2 of the Melbourne Declaration states that students should be able to:

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia’s system of government, history and culture
understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

be committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia’s civic life

relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia

work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments

be responsible global and local citizens. (p. 8–9)

These are challenging goals that include what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) see as a “spectrum of ideas about what good citizenship is and what good citizens do that are embodied by democratic education programs” (p. 1). The goals go beyond ‘national education’ to extend to a focus on Australia’s relationship with the countries of the Asia region and beyond and include a specific reference to concerns including Reconciliation, encompassing unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians, and sustainability. But the larger question is, how can teachers interpret and utilize curriculum and policy to develop classroom learning and wider school programmes to achieve these diverse goals? In the Melbourne Declaration it is evident that “being an active and informed citizen involves both a cognitive domain (e.g. knowing, understanding and reasoning) and an affective behavioural domain (e.g. engagement, perceptions and behaviours)” (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 9). Fraillon et al., (2014) note that over the past two decades, “there has been a broadening of the concepts, processes and practices in civics and citizenship education. In particular there has been an increased emphasis on the role of active citizenship both as explicit content and as a key outcome of civics and citizenship education in Australia and internationally” (p. 2).

The impact of federalism on curriculum development for Civics and Citizenship

National curriculum development and implementation has been, and continues to be, a complex process in Australia, given that the nation is a federation where the Constitution declares that the Departments of Education in the six states and two territories have power in matters connected with education. Essentially, every stage and milestone to develop the national curriculum has been mediated by Australia’s federal political structure. Each phase in the development of the Australian Curriculum had to be approved by intergovernmental
councils in education, consisting of all education ministers who are advised by state and territory based bureaucrats. Another complicating factor in this process is that the federal, state and territory governments can be of different political persuasions. While the 2007 election of the Rudd Labor government in Australia marked an increased national presence in schooling in the federal system, the current Turnbull-led Liberal-National Coalition is not so centralist in its agenda. This shift has been accompanied by the establishment of cooperative forums and agencies that comprise representatives of all education jurisdictions including the Catholic and Independent sectors. Hence, there is now diffused power in education decision-making at the national level, so the states and territories are implementing the AC through their jurisdictions according to those time-frames and frameworks that suit their own emphases.

The Victorian Curriculum for citizenship education, for example, is similar to the AC and is mandatory for all government schools, but the state dropped literacy and numeracy as capabilities. Meanwhile, although the Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority has decided that state schools are required to fully implement the Australian Curriculum by the end of 2020; CC now has a diminished presence in the school curriculum in response to concerns that the curriculum is too crowded and that more emphasis needs to be placed on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) together with literacy and numeracy. Currently, primary schools are being encouraged to implement Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) including civics and citizenship, but it is no longer compulsory to study CC after year 6, as it is designated an optional subject in the junior secondary curriculum. We are concerned that this decision conflicts with the intent of the national goal that all young Australians should become active and informed citizens. It raises questions about the sort of education young people are entitled to receive during the compulsory years of schooling.

It is therefore not possible to claim that all elements of the AC are being implemented across the nation. Despite these differences, what is constant is the alignment of the nation’s leaders through the Melbourne Declaration which all Ministers signed, to the recognition that, “(i)n the 21st century, Australia’s capacity to provide a high quality of life for all will depend on the ability to compete in the global economy on knowledge and innovation” (MCEETYA, 2008, p.4). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) theorise this focus in terms of the economisation of education policy. The Declaration also recognises “the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship”
emphasising personal capabilities for engagement and informed citizenship in an ethnically-diverse interconnected world, as well as instrumental goals to achieve Australia’s economic ends.

The scope and purpose of civics and citizenship education
In broad terms, civics involves developing knowledge and understanding of those civic institutions and processes relating to a nation’s system of governance including its law, heritage, tradition and national identity and the organisation of civil society (Tudball & Henderson, 2013). Civics can prepare students to think critically about how a democratic society functions for the public good, as well as studies of other systems of government across the world. The focus of citizenship education is on developing attitudes, beliefs, values and skills for participation and engagement in civic life (Tudball & Henderson, 2013). Following Marshall (1950), this notion of citizenship is informed by concepts such as rights and responsibilities, participation and representation, as well as social values and community involvement. Citizenship can refer to the development of dispositions and skills for participation in the civic life, or formal membership of a nation. For example, belonging to a nation has primary significance for formal identity such as access to passports. Yet increasingly, people are globally mobile and have multiple allegiances to nation states. A global citizen can also be conceptualised as someone with a particular state of mind (Davies & Pike, 2009); who cares about the world as an interconnected system in ways which transcend national borders and who is also willing to participate in communities of discourse and practice (Khondker, 2013). Fostering Global Citizenship is a priority of the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First initiative, which states that, “(e)ducation must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century” (UNESCO, 2016).

Mellor et al., (2010) argue that, “the most succinct description of the difference [between Civics and Citizenship] is that Civics is cognitive, whereas Citizenship is dispositional in nature” (p.5). Together, Civics and Citizenship (CC) can encompass diverse emphases including social and moral considerations, active community involvement, and the acquisition of political and civic literacy (CitizED, 2012; Lee, 2006). In some countries, including Australia, citizenship as ‘national education’; ensuring that young people know and understand governance, heritage, contemporary politics and identity of their nation, is
central in the curriculum, but as we show in this paper, the ACCC has moved beyond this focus. In Australia, some critical commentators observed that the *Discovering Democracy Program* was too strongly focused on the nation state, and neglected shifting identities caused by increasing global mobility, dual-citizenship, lack of allegiance to one nation and growing cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006). The latter refers to a sense of belonging to a global political community through identification with those values that inspire principles such as social justice, equality of rights and respect for human dignity upon which the tenants of international frameworks, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 1948), are based.

We contend that while the *Discovering Democracy Program* encompassed the study of democracy, its origins, development, structures and the processes of national organisation, the current version of the Australian Curriculum (v 8.3) extends beyond a focus on the nation, stating that the “curriculum provides a broad understanding of the world in which we live, and how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed for the 21st century” (ACARA, 2016a). Further, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website states that:

> The Civics and Citizenship curriculum aims to reinforce students’ appreciation and understanding of what it means to be a citizen. It explores ways in which students can actively shape their lives, value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society, and positively contribute locally, nationally, regionally and globally. As reflective, active and informed decision-makers, students will be well placed to contribute to an evolving and healthy democracy that fosters the wellbeing of Australia as a democratic nation, in a dynamic, multicultural and multi-faith society. (ACARA, 2016a)

This represents a broader conception of CC that uses key words such as ‘active’ decision makers, and being able to ‘contribute’ beyond the nation, for instance though the Asia priority. Iwabuchi (2015), for example, argues that “the time has come to make Asia literacy a project that re-imagines Australia in an inclusive way in terms of its mutual engagement with other Asian countries and its own composition as a society” (p. xvi). The AC sustainability priority emphasises that young people need to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.
According to the UNECE Expert Group (2013), a focus on sustainability should include developing understanding of alternative energy resources, disaster risk reduction, declining biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. We contend that this must also involve informed participatory action to motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development as local and global citizens (Henderson & Tudball, 2016).

While there is now a wider conception of citizenship in the AC, we argue that it is only through the development of whole school approaches including formal civics learning in classrooms, student active participation in school governance and wider community participation which builds local, regional and global understanding, that learning appropriate for these times can be achieved. Indeed, Apple (2015) reminds us:

… the times we are living in makes the question of whether education has a role to play in preparing students to live in a world where conflicts and controversies are ever present, and in helping to produce a more democratic civic culture even more salient … a democratic polity needs active citizens who are willing and able to continue the vast experiment of building a just and responsive society that works for all of us. (p.xiv)

**Curriculum theory for these times**

A review of recent curriculum theory indicates that two often competing foci shape curricula in global times. These are an emphasis on what students ought to learn, in contradistinction to a focus on what students ought to become (Biesta, 2012; Biesta & Priestley, 2013; Lingard & McGregor, 2014; Yates & Grumet, 2011). Knowledge of traditional subject disciplines (Young, 2013) is emphasised in curricula aimed at establishing what young people ought to learn, whereas an emphasis on learning that shapes what young people ought to become is evident in curricula which addresses notions of building capacities and capabilities for the future.

We contend that both curricula emphases are not only encapsulated in the goals of the Melbourne Declaration, but are also evident in the three-part structure of the Australian Curriculum and in their connections to citizenship education. As noted earlier, the curriculum architecture identifies discipline-based learning areas, as well as cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities, both of which are focused on the sort of Australian the curriculum
wants young people to become. The priorities and capabilities are explicitly framed to include historical understanding and bring a *futures orientation* to the curriculum around contemporary issues that are important in the nation. They aim to ensure that young Australian citizens will understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and be better able to work towards Reconciliation which is as yet unfinished business for the nation. We suggest that the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities create opportunities for teachers to enact the curriculum in ways that make learning relevant and engaging to young people through issues and concerns related to their future.

**Theories relevant to the development of active, critical and participatory citizenship**

It is helpful for educators to draw on theories on active citizenship which view the concept as a means by which young people can “voice their will, needs and opinions” and “participate … in civic action” (Aldenmyr, Jepson Wigg & Olson, 2012, p. 256). An emphasis on transformative learning sees active citizenship in terms of encouraging students to “critically engage with and seek to affect the course of social events” (Ross, 2012, p. 7) and ultimately act as “agents who shape and change society” (Onyx, Kenny & Brown, 2012, p. 56). It is this kind of participatory citizenship that can lead to social action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 2006), which active and responsible local and global citizens should be able to achieve in practice.

Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004, p. 2) three visions for citizenship education go further and argue the need to develop “the *personally responsible citizen*; the *participatory citizen*; and the *justice-oriented citizen*”. This implies that in our CC programs we should help students to develop a critical and informed view on societal issues, think about their own personal rights and actions, and develop a commitment to action for a more equitable world. Other useful theoretical insights can be drawn from the findings of the multinational *Citizenship Education Policy Study* (CEPS). In his introduction to the research outcomes, John Cogan reported that in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we need a more comprehensive vision of citizenship, theorised as ‘multidimensional citizenship’. This requires citizens to develop interconnected dimensions of thought, belief and action including *personal, social, spatial, and temporal* dimensions, and a focus on content that includes *civic knowledge, values and environmental education*.
The report recommended that this should become the central priority of citizenship education policy. Commonly used titles for subjects; geography and history for instance, are not the focus of the model, rather, the concept promotes the broader notions of ‘spatial’ and ‘temporal’ understanding. The need for spatial knowledge recognises the increasing mobility of people, and the notion that local, national or regional spaces where people live and work do need to be considered as crucial elements in the ways that people construct their identity, and sense of citizenship. The use of the term ‘temporal dimensions’ instead of ‘history’ as a curriculum organiser, recognises that students need knowledge and understanding of the past, present and future. Frequently, the latter two dimensions have been under-emphasised in school curriculum. The multidimensional citizenship model also argues that school education in CE should include values, civic knowledge and studies of the environment. While the Australian Curriculum has retained traditional discipline naming, there is scope for development of more connected understanding if schools deliberately plan to include all the dimensions of the architecture of the AC.

Critical citizenship education encompasses ideas from Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) study of three forms of citizenship enacted in the curriculum, and from Cogan and Derricott’s (2000) multidimensional model. According to Dejaeghere & Tudball, (2007):

Critical citizenship aims to create a citizenry prepared and motivated to address societal problems and to create social change, particularly related to injustice. To address this goal of citizenship, both knowledge and participation are used to empower learners by helping them to understand the underlying causes of social problems. (p. 48)

Many educators also share the view that the personal dimensions of education are of critical concern, and there has been a re-emphasis on the need for personal and social learning, values and moral education (Lee and Leung 2006; Daedeghere & Tudball, 2007). Students should have opportunities to form opinions on questions including: where do I belong, and how do I connect in my own community, the nation state and the wider world? Debating these questions adopts a view of CCE as being linked to student wellbeing, social connectedness, and community belonging. It requires a whole school approach to CCE that in Australia is still only developed through pockets of exemplary practice, but not across all
schools (Erebus Consulting Group, 2003). Grossman (2002) agreed that through the multi-dimensional citizenship concept, students must:

…be able to work and interact with other people in a variety of settings and contexts, engage in public debate and discussion, participate in public life, deal with the problems and issues that face them, in ways that at the same time equip them to deal respectfully with people whose ideas and values differ from their own. … The social dimension suggests that educational programs should include opportunities for students to connect with and engage in their communities in processes that include community service, and social action. (p. 4-5)

**Civics and citizenship in the Australian Curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum is providing a national opportunity for educators to rethink curriculum priorities and to re-emphasise the importance of CC for all young Australians. In this section, we provide a review of the possibilities for citizenship learning for young Australians to be and to further develop as critical, active and participatory citizens if the curriculum is implemented with the kinds of knowledge, skills and understandings that global experts argue for in the multi-dimensional citizenship concept and other theoretical frames discussed in this paper. Specific focus on CC is provided in the aim:

…[students develop] dispositions required for effective participation in everyday life, now and in the future, including critical and creative problem-solving, informed decision making, responsible and active citizenship, enterprising financial behaviour and ethical reflection. (ACARA, 2016b)

In the primary years, the Humanities and Social Science (HASS) subjects are integrated from the Foundation years to the end of year 6, in order to “provide a broad understanding of the world in which we live, and how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed for the 21st century” (ACARA 2016b). Inquiry questions are developed within a framework for developing students’ knowledge, understanding and skills. Young learners begin to develop understanding of their personal worlds, including their personal and family histories and the places they and their families live in and belong to. Our critique is that having the ‘disposition’ to act and being able to ‘suggest ways they can care for places’ or ‘describe possible actions’ is insufficient, as schools must provide
authentic opportunities for young people to take action now, through programs such as reducing their home and school’s energy use and other sustainability actions, or selling products from the school kitchen garden to develop financial literacy.

In the year 1 HASS curriculum, “the idea of active citizenship is introduced as students explore family roles and responsibilities and ways people care for places” (ACARA, 2016c). The content provides opportunities for understanding key concepts that are consistent with multidimensional citizenship including “significance; continuity and change; place and space; roles, rights and responsibilities; and perspectives and action” (ACARA, 2016c) that require integrated approaches. In the year 2 HASS curriculum, the emphasis is mainly on history and geography, but there are opportunities for students to begin to think about their own identity, through investigating how people are connected to their place and other places. The curriculum elaboration for teachers states that this can involve the development of early conceptual understanding of global mobility, globalisation, ethics, and cultural awareness that clearly has potential to be linked to citizenship. These ideas are extended in year 3, where the curriculum requirement is that students study how communities express themselves culturally and through civic participation; and recommends that opportunities are provided for students to learn about diversity within their community, including the Country/Place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and about other communities in Australia and neighbouring countries. Clear reference to the cross curriculum priorities demonstrate that there is explicit connection to these aspects of the curriculum. In year 4 the inquiry is based on the question; how have laws affected the lives of people, past and present? This includes a focus of elements of world history and the movement of peoples, as well as studying the consequences of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and early traders, explorers and settlers.

A ‘civics’ focus on CC learning is found in years 5-7, where “the curriculum introduces studies about Australia’s democratic values, its electoral system and law enforcement. In studying human desire and need for resources, students make connections to economics and business concepts around decisions and choices, gaining opportunities to consider their own and others’ financial, economic, environmental and social responsibilities and decision-making, past, present and future” (ACARA, 2016d). The inquiry questions; what is the relationship between environments and my roles as a consumer and citizen and how do
people influence the human characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them, encourage students to think critically, and consider their values, ethical views, rights and responsibilities, which once again reflects a multidimensional focus. However, in reviewing the skills listed at year 5, terms such as ‘describe’, ‘identify’, ‘recognise’ and ‘reflect’ lack an action dimension. This is also evident in the requirement for students to work with others in order to generate alternative responses to an issue or challenge and reflect on their learning to independently propose action, describing the possible effects of their proposed action, but not to be active citizens themselves, to achieve kind of participatory citizenship that can lead to social action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 2006).

At year 6 level, “(s)students investigate the importance of rights and responsibilities and informed decision-making, at the personal level of consumption and civic participation, and at the national level through studies of economic, ecological and government processes and systems” (ACARA 2016d). They explore inquiry questions such as: how have experiences of democracy and citizenship differed between groups over time and place, including those from and in Asia? This once again provides opportunities for making connection to the cross curriculum priority on engagement with Asia, which is furthered with the question: how has Australia developed as a society with global connections, and what is my role as a global citizen? However, the action dimension is again lacking in the achievement standards which rely on effective teacher planning for teachers to be authentically involved in real, contemporary issues.

Our contention is that action competence must provide opportunities for young people to learn how to work or function in civil society in an action-oriented way. According to Schnack (1994), actions should be intentional, and we argue that this notion of responsible intentionality aligns with the concepts of democratic and participatory citizenship that empowered young citizens can achieve, where school programs provide such opportunities. We argue that action competence provides opportunities for young people to participate in civil society in an action-oriented way, and in doing so, develop young people’s hope and optimism through practical experiences in working collaboratively to address environmental and socio-ecological challenges (Henderson & Tudball, 2016).
The Australian Curriculum 7–10 Civics and Citizenship provides aims for students to develop “a lifelong sense of belonging to and engagement with civic life as an active and informed citizen in the context of Australia as a secular democratic nation with a dynamic, multicultural, multi-faith society and a Christian heritage” (ACARA, 2016e). We know that the CC curriculum focuses on defining the knowledge and skills to achieve this aim including:

- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the values, principles, institutions and practices of Australia’s system of democratic government and law, and the role of the citizen in Australian government and society;
- skills, including questioning and research; analysis, synthesis and interpretation; problem-solving and decision-making; communication and reflection, to investigate contemporary issues and foster responsible participation in Australia’s democracy, and to develop the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation. (ACARA, 2016e)

However, we are concerned that there is no tradition of CC being a ‘subject’ in schools, and it will be challenging for teachers with no prior experience of the content or pedagogy to achieve these aims.

While there is a stronger focus on critical inquiry and planning for action in year 7-10 curriculum around the themes of government and democracy; laws and citizens; and citizenship, diversity and identity than the younger years, these dimensions still require the development of programs that ensure active student involvement. For example, year 7 students are asked to: “(a)ppreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences” and be involved in “identifying the influences or circumstances that may have informed different perspectives about a civics and citizenship issue” and “identifying where there is a common understanding or points of agreement in a discussion as a basis for resolving a conflict or differences” (ACARA, 2016e). This has the potential to involve young people, but being action competent involves “taking concrete action as part of in-school learning so that young people’s reflections, values, knowledge and action are seen as valued within the school and wider community” (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p.8). We note that the curriculum includes skills development such as: “(u)se democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action”, and ‘students take into account multiple perspectives to develop solutions to an issue,
and ‘they identify ways they can be active and informed citizens’ (ACARA, 2016e). However, this language still implies passive, albeit well informed solutions to citizenship concerns.

The Year 8 and 9 curriculum provides a study of the responsibilities and freedoms of citizens and how Australians can actively participate in their democracy. In year 9 there are opportunities to build students’ understanding of Australia’s political system and how it enables change. Significantly, one of the key inquiry questions is (h)ow do citizens participate in an interconnected world? The accompanying achievement descriptor refers to planning for action and for students to analyse the ways in which they can be active citizens and informed citizens, but no actual reference is made to taking action to achieve such change. In year 10, students are expected to develop understanding of Australia’s system of government through comparison with another system of government in the Asian region and to consider Australia’s roles and responsibilities within the international context, such as its involvement with the United Nations.

However, a review of specific content descriptions, elaborations and achievement standards for these year levels show once again that the focus is content led and knowledge based rather than participative, values based and interactive, in spite of the skills listed including questioning, analysis, problem solving, communication and reflection. We recognise that it was beyond the remit of the curriculum writers to go beyond learning that could be achieved in classrooms, and also they were constrained by an approximate guideline of 20 hours of content delivery per year level in the secondary years. But we argue for whole school approaches to citizenship education that extends classroom learning to include student voice through programs such as Student Action Teams (Holdsworth, 2010) which encourage democratic participation, as well as community involvement.

Conclusion
In this article, we have argued that while the various dimensions of CC in the Australian curriculum do include elements of ‘national education’, there are opportunities to frame the civil, political and social components of CC for young Australians in ways that include local, national and global understandings. Our discussion shows that civics and citizenship knowledge and skills can be developed if all elements of the curriculum are implemented in
school classrooms. However, the achievement of active citizenship also requires students’ participation in whole school programs, and contemporary concerns through authentic actions relevant to their own lives.

We have discussed the view that multidimensional approaches reflected in the three areas of the AC architecture can assist teachers and school leaders in thinking about key areas that must be included in the enacted curriculum. This will ensure educators can plan outside traditional subject based frames, to consider complex issues young people will face in the future as the nature of their own communities change in response to globalisation and national, regional and global shifts. In the overview of the Asia priority in the AC, it is noted that, “Australia is increasingly looking to Asia strategically, politically and culturally as well as economically.” (ACARA, 2016f). The curriculum states that, “(s)tudents can investigate the reasons behind both internal migration in the Asia region and from Asia to Australia, and so develop understanding of the experiences of the people of Asian heritage who are now Australian citizens … By exploring the way transnational and intercultural collaboration supports the notion of shared and sustainable futures, students can reflect on how Australians can participate in the Asia region as active and informed citizens” (ACARA, 2016f).

In addition, as with other areas of the AC discussed in this paper, we believe that schools will need to ensure a stronger focus on the sustainability CCP. The AC states that students should “explore contemporary issues of sustainability and develop action plans and possible solutions to local, national and global issues which have social, economic and environmental perspectives” (ACARA, 2016g). But as we have argued, planning is not action, and young people must not be seen as citizens in waiting until they achieve legal status as citizens in adulthood; rather, they are entitled to be participatory citizens who can make a difference in their communities now.

Citizenship education is a critical aspect of school education connected to various content areas. Young people do need to clarify their sense of identity, they need to know their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and how the law and government functions democratically. They should understand core and accepted values in their communities. But most importantly, students require opportunities, while still at school, for active citizenship participation now, so they can begin to be active and informed citizens who achieve social action competence. Young Australians must be able to engage with Asia and the world, live
sustainably and develop the capacities to be involved in issues that impact on their lives and know how to respond to the inevitable challenges of new issues as they unfold. Put simply, this focus extends the more traditional ‘learning about’ an issue, to include how the issue can be addressed and student involvement in developing solutions through informed democratic participation and action.

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