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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW REPORT SHOWS STUDENTS VALUE CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION DESPITE FALL IN RESULTS

Australian students continue to value the importance of learning about our country's history and civic institutions, according to the latest report from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Despite this, the report shows that students' knowledge and understanding of Australia's democracy, our political system and civic processes has fallen.

The National Assessment Program sample Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) Report 2024 has also revealed that Year 6 and 10 students have a high degree of trust in civic institutions, but considerably less trust in the media or social media. Students have also expressed concerns about a range of issues affecting Australia, including pollution, climate change, crime and racism.

The 2024 report shows that, at the national level, results have fallen since the last assessment undertaken in 2019 and to the lowest levels since the assessment began in 2004:

- 43 per cent of Year 6 students attained the proficient standard in 2024 compared to 53 per cent in 2019.
- 28 per cent of Australian Year 10 students met the proficient standard in 2024 compared to 38 per cent in 2019.

This declining trend in student performance has also been observed in other recent international civics and citizenship assessments.

Students from both Year 6 and Year 10 also completed a questionnaire about their attitudes and engagement with civics and citizenship. Key findings from the questionnaire include:

- Students, especially in Year 6, expressed a high degree of trust in civic institutions but showed considerably less trust in the media or social media.
- Both year levels expressed concerns about issues affecting Australia, including pollution, climate change, crime and racism. Concern about water shortages was far less compared to the previous report.
- Year 6 students tended to report higher levels of participation in school-based civics and citizenship activities than Year 10 students.
- Participation in several civics and citizenship activities at school decreased between 2019 and 2024, particularly at Year 10 level, with the largest decline observed in excursions to parliaments or law courts.
- A large proportion of students at both year levels used the internet, including social media, to get news about current events. There was a notable drop in the proportion of students accessing news via traditional media.

The latest report includes further information on performance results for sub-groups of students based on their background and demographics, and shows that disparities for some of these groups persist, including:

- Year 6 female students significantly outperformed male students as in previous assessments, but there was no significant gender difference at Year 10, marking a change from the past trends where female students performed better.

- The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students attaining the proficient standard at both Year 6 and Year 10 remained significant in 2024.
- Like with other national assessments, students from schools in major cities generally outperformed those in regional and remote schools.
- Achievement in civics and citizenship gradually increased with increasing levels of parental occupation and parental education, resulting in large, significant differences between the highest and the lowest occupational and educational groups.

Commenting on the report, ACARA CEO Stephen Gniel said:

“Civics and Citizenship has always been a key part of the Australian Curriculum, including in the latest version.

“As with the recent Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report into civics education and political participation in Australia, the NAP Civics and Citizenship results highlight how we need to continue to support our teachers and educators with high-quality training and resources to help them effectively deliver engaging civics and citizenship education in classrooms across the country.

“Encouragingly, this latest report shows that most students rate citizenship behaviours, such as learning about Australia’s history, as important. Therefore, it is vital that all young Australians get a strong grounding with civics education to feel engaged with social and political issues, so that they can make a valuable contribution as society’s future stewards.”

The full report, the National Assessment Program (NAP) sample Civics and Citizenship (CC) Report 2024, can be found online at www.nap.edu.au/nap-sample-assessments/results-and-reports.

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Background

- ACARA conducts the NAP sample assessments on behalf of all education ministers, in order to provide useful information for all policymakers in education, including ministers and senior education officials, teachers and community members committed to improving educational outcomes for all young Australians.
- The National Assessment Program (NAP) sample Civics and Citizenship (CC) Report released today provides results from the assessment conducted in May 2024 (Term 2).
- The NAP–CC assessment is designed to measure students' cognitive competencies in civics and citizenship, including their knowledge of democratic principles, the Australian political system and related historical contexts. The assessment also evaluates students’ capacity to apply this knowledge to engage with, and participate in, civic processes.
- The NAP–CC 2024 assessment was administered online to representative samples of students in Year 6 and Year 10 in all states and territories across Australia.
- In total, 5,294 Year 6 students from 319 schools and 4,550 Year 10 students from 288 schools participated. Response rates were 87 per cent for Year 6 and 78 per cent for Year 10 students.
- The assessment was administered online via an assessment platform also used for NAPLAN. This ensured a consistent and familiar testing environment for students.
- The 2024 report presents the findings of the seventh NAP–CC assessment, the previous CC assessment being undertaken in 2019. There is a 5-year gap due to the cancellation of NAP sample in 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.