

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

DECEMBER 2019

Preamble

Young Australians are at the centre of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

Education has the power to transform lives. It supports young people to realise their potential by providing skills they need to participate in the economy and in society, and contributing to every aspect of their wellbeing.

This Declaration sets out our vision for education in Australia and our commitment to improving educational outcomes for young Australians.

It builds on past declarations signed in Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne, which have guided our journey over three decades. In developing this Declaration, we have heard from young people, parents, educators and the broader community and listened to what is important to them. They have told us that the Melbourne Declaration has stood the test of time, so in developing this new Declaration, we have sought to further build on and update it to meet the needs of today's young Australians.

Our vision is for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.

This begins with making sure that every young child has the opportunity to benefit from structured play-based learning before they start school, because this helps build the social, emotional and cognitive skills they need to succeed in the years to come.

To achieve excellence, and for our system to be equitable, every student must develop strong literacy and numeracy skills in their earliest years of schooling, and go on to develop broad and deep knowledge across a range of curriculum areas.

However, our education system must do more than this – it must also prepare young people to thrive in a time of rapid social and technological change, and complex environmental, social and economic challenges. Education plays a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion. They need to deal with information abundance, and navigate questions of trust and authenticity. They need flexibility, resilience, creativity, and the ability and drive to keep on learning throughout their lives.

As the importance of a high quality education grows, so does the complexity of being an educator. We entrust Australia's educators and education leaders with delivering the goals in this Declaration, and educators in particular need to be supported appropriately as they play their part but they cannot do this alone. Learning is a partnership with parents, carers and others in the community, all of whom have a role to play in nurturing the love of learning needed for success at school and in life.

We recognise the more than 60,000 years of continual connection by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a key part of the nation's history, present and future. Through education, we are committed to ensuring that all students learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to seeing all young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples thrive in their education and all facets of life.

As Australia's education ministers we are proud custodians of Australia's education system. Our challenge is to turn the aspirations set out in this document into actions – a task that we are committed to achieving.

Our best efforts will translate into opportunities for every young Australian. We will ensure that we place young Australians at the centre of our education system as they navigate their learning and set out on their own journey.

The Education Goals for Young Australians

Improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

The Declaration has two distinct but interconnected goals:

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- confident and creative individuals
- successful lifelong learners
- active and informed members of the community.

Achieving these education goals is the responsibility of Australian Governments and the education community in partnership with young Australians, their families and carers and the broader community.

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Australian Governments commit to promoting excellence and equity in Australian education.

This means that all Australian Governments will work with the education community to:

- provide all young Australians with access to high-quality education that is inclusive and free from any form of discrimination
- recognise the individual needs of all young Australians, identify barriers that can be addressed, and empower learners to overcome barriers
- promote personalised learning and provide support that aims to fulfil the individual capabilities and needs of learners
- ensure that young Australians of all backgrounds are supported to achieve their full educational potential
- encourage young people to hold high expectations for their educational outcomes, supported by parents, carers, families and the broader community
- ensure that education promotes and contributes to a socially cohesive society that values, respects and appreciates different points of view and cultural, social, linguistic and religious diversity
- ensure that learning is built on and includes local, regional and national cultural knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work in partnership with local communities
- collaborate internationally to share best practice and help young Australians learn about and engage with the world
- support all education sectors – government, non-government, secular and faith based education
- promote a culture of excellence in all learning environments, by providing varied, challenging, and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all learners to explore and build on their individual abilities, interests, and experiences
- ensure that Australia's education system is recognised internationally for delivering high quality learning outcomes.

Goal 2: All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community

Australian Governments commit to working in collaboration with the education community to support all young Australians to become:

- confident and creative individuals
- successful lifelong learners
- active and informed members of the community.

Confident and creative individuals who...

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing

- develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, empathy, loyalty, responsibility and respect for others
- are resilient and develop the skills and strategies they need to tackle current and future challenges
- are able to recognise, adapt to, and manage change
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future
- show initiative, use their creative abilities and are enterprising
- have the imagination, knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- understand their responsibilities as global citizens and know how to affect positive change
- have the confidence and capability to pursue learning throughout life, leading to enjoyable, fulfilling and productive employment
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- are well prepared for their potential life roles as friends, family, community and workforce members
- embrace opportunities, make informed decisions about their own lives and accept responsibility for their own actions
- have a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning that enable them to thrive in their learning environment.

Successful lifelong learners who...

- develop their ability and motivation to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy as the foundation for learning
- engage in respectful debate on a diverse range of views
- are productive and informed users of technology as a vehicle for information gathering and sharing, and are able to adapt to emerging technologies into the future
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines and deep content knowledge
- are inquisitive and experimental, and have the ability to test different sources and types of knowledge
- are responsive and adaptive to new ways of thinking and learning
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- continue to improve through formal and informal learning in further education, and training or employment, and acquire the skills to make informed decisions throughout their lives
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are confident and motivated to reach their full potential.

Active and informed members of the community who...

- act with moral and ethical integrity

- have empathy for the circumstances of others and work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments
- appreciate and respect Australia's rich social, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity and embrace opportunities to communicate and share knowledge and experiences
- have an understanding of Australia's system of government, its histories, religions and culture
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life by connecting with their community and contributing to local and national conversations
- understand, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians
- are informed and responsible global and local members of the community who value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences, and engage in the global community, particularly with our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific regions.