

## National curriculum extension shelved

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**THE national curriculum will end at Year 10 after education ministers yesterday decided to shelve the development of further courses for Years 11 and 12 with the states and territories having no intention of adopting the subjects.**

At a meeting of the nation's education ministers in Canberra yesterday, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority was told to drop the development of national curriculum in subjects beyond the initial five that have been written, and sitting untouched for two years.

Courses in English, maths, science, history and geography were endorsed by ministers in December 2012 "as the common base" for developing state and territory courses, with the intent that ACARA work with the states to "explore" the content that would be integrated into the state syllabuses.

Ministers yesterday resolved that ACARA go no further in extending the national curriculum in Years 11 and 12, with federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne saying that given ACARA's stretched resources and the lack of interest from the states, it would be in ACARA's interests not to pursue it further. The ministers also referred to ACARA the federal government's curriculum review, by academics Ken Wiltshire and Kevin Donnelly, released in October, asking it to provide advice early next year on the recommendations.

The meeting passed a resolution supporting the four broad themes for change outlined in the federal government's initial response, which are reducing the overcrowding in the curriculum, promoting a parent-friendly version of the curriculum, improving accessibility for students with disabilities, and rebalancing the curriculum with the removal of the overarching themes of indigenous, Asia and sustainability issues embedded in every subject.

After the meeting, Mr Pyne welcomed his colleagues' decision, saying it was an "important first step in strengthening our curriculum and a victory for practical, commonsense reform".

"The curriculum should never be viewed as a static document; it is necessary to ensure it is the best it can be and the review of the curriculum makes many commonsense recommendations and was widely welcomed," he said.

Mr Pyne hopes changes to the national curriculum will be introduced for 2016 but there is little appetite among the states to make any adaptations to the newly introduced courses.

The states failed to secure any agreement from federal Assistant Education Minister Sussan Ley to provide timely notice about the future of funding for universal access to preschool. The existing finding expires at the end of next year and a motion by South Australia sought to set a timeline for Canberra to inform the states and territories of its intentions. The motion was rejected by Ms Ley.