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**Submission to NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)**

**Review of Commerce Syllabus**

Economics and Business Educators NSW (EBE NSW) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the NESA feedback process with regards to the review of the Years 7 – 10 Commerce syllabus announced towards the end of 2017.

EBE NSW is a company limited by guarantee operating as a teacher association. The association represents and supports government and non-government teachers of Economics, Business Studies, Legal Studies and Commerce in schools in NSW and overseas in Australian International Schools. EBE NSW is an affiliate member of the national umbrella association, Business Educators Australasia.

As the current Commerce syllabus has been in operation since 2003 and considering the fact that in other states and territories in Australia schools are using the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Australian Curriculum: Economics and Business and Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship to learn Commerce related subject matter in the junior years, EBE NSW considers the review long overdue.

I attended a major national gathering of Economics, Business and Legal Education teachers in Hobart in September 2016, the Business Educators Australasia 2016 Biennial Conference, with other EBE NSW Directors. Whilst there was no official NESA representation at this forum, it was disappointing to note that when questioned about the NSW key directions in relation to the implementation of this curriculum, NSW was silent - not represented. Those of us who came from NSW were not able to shed any light on the matter either.

EBE NSW notes that curriculum priorities for NESA in recent times have been Stage 6 English, Maths, Science, History and Geography and appreciates the significant and critical nature of this work. However our members have been kept in the dark for a long time as NESA has kept silent about its plans for implementation of the Australian Curriculum for Economics and Business, and the Australian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship.

Recommendation 7 of the 2016 BOSTES NSW review contained explicit recommendations re the approach to be taken going forward in relation to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in NSW (“adopt and adapt”; greater agility etc).

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EBE NSW regrets that this review will consider “inclusion of Australian Curriculum content” in the area of Economics and Business and Civics and Citizenship for an elective course such as Commerce, rather than working towards ensuring the important knowledge and skills in the above curriculum is made mandatory in the junior secondary years as per other states and territories (EBE NSW also notes the clear absence of this area in K-6 as a result of the abandonment of this curriculum previously present in the K-6 HSIE syllabus).

Currently the Commerce syllabus is structured around core and option topics. This give schools a good opportunity to cater for different student interests. The current core topics focus on business and law, but a core topic that deals directly with economics subject matter is absent. EBE NSW would like to see the core topics consist of at least one economics topic, one business topic and one law topic to address the current imbalance. The inclusion of a core economics topic would provide students who intend to study economics in Years 11 and 12 a foundation of knowledge and skills to further build on.

EBE NSW would strongly suggest that NESAs connects strongly to communities of practice in education as the new syllabus is developed, in particular EBE NSW as the professional teacher association in NSW. This will ensure that NESAs work with regards to the development of the new Commerce syllabus is grounded in the practice of the classroom teacher and more closely linked to student outcomes in the area of economics, business and law. The end user of the NESAs product will be Commerce teachers in the classroom. This requires careful attention considering that structures like the Quality Teaching Council at NESAs which no longer operate have to some extent caused the removal of practicing teachers from the area of governance of their profession.

“Hasten slowly” would be the advice of EBE NSW with regards to the new Commerce syllabus implementation timeline, especially as new syllabuses in other areas of the Human Society and its Environment learning area are being implemented by HSIE teachers at present. EBE NSW holds the view that as a minimum one year is required for familiarization, planning, program writing and professional development with regards to a new syllabus.

EBE NSW would welcome future opportunities for NESAs to communicate directly with its Board of Directors and members and to participate in consultation and development re the new Commerce syllabus.

Joe Alvaro  
President – Economics and Business Educators NSW  
29 January 2018

*“Financial literacy is equivalent to reading and writing. It's not possible to participate effectively in today's society without it.” Annamaria Lusardi - Financial Economist*