

# **Governing Through Curriculum**

A Poststructural Analysis of the

“Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education”

By

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**Statement of originality**

This is to certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work.

This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Becki Jean Philip

## Abstract

One of the central contributions of poststructuralism to the rethinking of curriculum is to more deeply and critically consider what curriculum *does*. As an epistemological and methodological lens, poststructuralism offers ways of thinking about curriculum as a product of a particular time and space which works to govern through constructing particular knowledges and ways of being. The recent development of a new national curriculum in Australian provides a particularly relevant context for analysing curriculum in this way. Following Carol Bacchi's (2009, 2012, 2016) argument that we are governed through problematisations, I reason it is pertinent to extend existing poststructural engagements with curriculum by interrogating problematisations. Primarily concerned with how curriculum governs, I employ *What's the 'problem' represented to be* (WPR) (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) to analyse the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE). This analysis considers the productive effects of the curriculum rather than merely naming and describing its elements and contours.

The analysis begins by identifying key 'problems' that the AC: HPE is proposed to respond to, focusing on the ways HPE is rationalised as an investment in the future of the Australian population, which relies on the figures of healthy, safe, and active citizens. It then interrogates these problem representations, with specific attention to their shape, the socio-political and historical conditions that make them possible, and the potential effects of 'problems' being represented in these particular ways. Finally, the analysis opens up space for proposing alternative ways of thinking about, and approaching, HPE and curriculum. Offered as an example, the application of WPR establishes how such an approach allows for interrogating problematisations within curriculum, thereby analysing how curriculum governs.

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# **Chapter 1. A case for poststructural perspectives in the analysis of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education**

The inception of this project lay at the intersection of personal and political events, evolving from my own personal experiences across high school HPE and pre-service teacher training. Since the completion of my own high school education in 2006, the development of a national curriculum has been one of the key areas of focus in educational reform in Australia. There were a wide range of rationales for educational reform, and the impetus for developing a national curriculum can be seen to reflect the broader Australian political landscape of the late 20th and early 21st century. Throughout this time, reforms were often framed in terms of a need to respond to growing economic globalisation through producing a population able to be competitive in a global context. As such, education policy was increasingly conscripted to support the national government's broader structural reforms.

The conscription of education as a means for progressing a governmental agenda can be observed in the language of increasing urgency that linked the education of Australian students to investment in Australia's future. For example, in a speech at the University of Melbourne, Kevin Rudd proclaimed: "Education must lie at the core of our long-term strategy for our national security, our national prosperity – even our national survival" (23 January 2007). The urgency and resoluteness of Rudd's vision for a national curriculum points to the ways in which education is bound to a project of nation building. Importantly, Rudd's 'education revolution' was not simply about ensuring shared outcomes to order student learning across Australia, but tied education to economic prosperity and national security. A national curriculum was

mobilised as a way of ensuring the next generation of young Australians would be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and abilities perceived necessary in facing emerging challenges of the new century.

Enrolled in a Bachelor of Education at the University of Sydney 2010–2013, I was interested in the particular effects of HPE content and pedagogy and how this learning area uniquely connected with and influenced the lives of young people. In examining and questioning best practice in relation to teaching and learning in HPE, I was struck by the taken-for-granted assumption that good pedagogical practice was intrinsically linked to positive health outcomes for students. Fellow students, and future teachers, saw their profession as closely tied with the production of ‘healthy’ young people who not only learned and understood content related to health and physical education, but embodied the particular practices that were espoused as being ‘healthy’ or ‘good’. Following this, I sought a way to interrogate my own presuppositions and how education, and particularly the learning area of HPE, may contribute to the production of particular normative subjects. Combined with the production of a new national curriculum and the rhetoric surrounding its implementation, I centred my inquiry on how curriculum contributes to the government of young people.<sup>1</sup>

Poststructural perspectives provide the conceptual apparatuses for asking and answering these questions about what curriculum does. In this thesis, a poststructural analysis provides insight into the Australian Curriculum. I employ Carol Bacchi’s (2009a, 2012) *What’s the problem*

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<sup>1</sup> The term curriculum has been applied to a plethora of concepts and products. For a discussion of what ‘curriculum’ has historically been understood to be, see Chapter 2. For the purposes of this thesis, the ‘curriculum’ taken up as the object of analysis is a curriculum document produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority (ACARA). I also acknowledge throughout the analysis chapters that curriculum is a political product, and a set of effects and governmental modalities, as well as both text/document.

*represented to be?* (WPR as the method of analysis to interrogate the role of the learning area of Health and Physical Education (HPE) and how particular skills and knowledges inherent to HPE contribute to the construction of particular problematisations or problem representations. The analysis focuses on the curriculum text and I argue for the importance of this as a means for considering how curriculum shapes and produces particular norms, knowledges, and ways of understanding.

A growing body of academic scholarship has debated the perils and possibilities of a unified national curriculum and many of these studies look at whether or not a national curriculum will be able to successfully achieve its stated intentions (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014; Luke, 2010; Usher, Edwards, & Cudmore, 2016; Yates & Collins, 2010). Another body of literature considers the broader policy landscape surrounding a national curriculum (Atweh & Singh, 2011; Brennan, 2011; Lingard, 2018; Savage, 2016). In this thesis, I attempt to step back from analysing the ‘success’ of curriculum, to instead interrogate how it is possible that the intentions and purposes of curriculum are articulated in particular ways at this particular time. To do so, I focus on a curriculum text as an object of study, in this case the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE).

One of the key assumptions in analysing text is that it is the product of choices that are limited by “the repertoires of meaning making tools” that an individual has access to (J. Wright, 2003, p. 41). Poststructural perspectives recognise that these choices are limited by access to institutional or cultural resources. Further, poststructural perspectives consider how meaning and ways of acting are valued differently across social contexts. Because of this, a text can be read as discursive practices. The analysis undertaken in this thesis reads curriculum in this way, and is

specifically interested in the perceived problems the AC: HPE is proposed to respond to. It does so against a broader field of HPE literature that has shaped and interacted with curriculum, and will ultimately inform and guide the acceptance, engagement with, and implementation of the AC: HPE. I maintain that realities emerge in practices and therefore examine what the curriculum says, what it does, and how it is possible for it to say and do so at this particular moment in time.

Poststructural perspectives consider knowledge to be socially constructed (Allan, Iverson, & Ropers-Huilman, 2009; Cherryholmes, 1988; B. Davies, 1994). Therefore, in the analytic work of this thesis, I am not claiming to capture ‘truths’, but am instead “concerned with how individuals, groups, cultures, and institutions construct realities and with what effects” (J. Wright, 2003, p. 42). In particular, the analysis interrogates a curriculum text to consider the ways it contributes to constructing realities. The following three research questions guide this inquiry:

1. How does curriculum govern, and why and how does a national Australian curriculum operate as a technology of government?
2. In what ways does the learning area of HPE uniquely contribute to practices of governing in and through curriculum?
3. How does the articulation of ‘problems’ in HPE govern in particular ways and to particular ends?

## **A particular moment: The emergence of a national curriculum**

The rhetoric surrounding a national curriculum in Australia was imbued with a sense of urgency and necessity around educational reform. Kevin Rudd became Prime Minister of Australia in December of 2007, and one of the signature policies of his election platform was the aforementioned ‘education revolution’ which proposed the development of a national curriculum (Department of Education, 2008). Although the proposal seemed to imply that the call for a national curriculum was entirely novel, the formulation of a unified, national curriculum has a long history. Spanning four decades, this history is informed by an assortment of ideological positions and social, political, and economic imperatives. The research of Lyn Yates, Cherry Collins, and Kate O’Connor (2011) found a striking number of policies in Australia which attempted to create new statements, frameworks, or visions for curriculum.<sup>2</sup> These policies reflected contemporary notions that Australian education needed to be revolutionised: “All around the country, authorities have felt some obvious need to keep having new goes at it” (Yates, 2012, p. 266). This need to ‘have a new go’ at education played a huge role in Rudd’s platform for election. Rudd (2017) defined education as “the central nervous system of both equity and the economy” and argued there was a need for “an integrated education revolution from early childhood through to higher education” (para. 7). Curriculum was one of the key vehicles for enacting the proposed ‘education revolution’, and with Rudd’s election as Prime Minister the wheels were set in motion for the formation and development of what is now known as the Australian Curriculum.

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<sup>2</sup> Across the four decades of their study, a hundred state-based, and fifteen Commonwealth-level, curriculum policies were produced (Yates et al., 2011)

The rationale for a nationally-focused educational system has varied over time, with arguments including: the pursuit of equality; a desire to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government; the tying of education to a national economic agenda; a problematising of state/territory variance; and a perceived failure of state curricula to meet both national imperatives and the 21st century demands on young people. Inherent to all these arguments is the assumption that a unified national curriculum could provide a means for addressing a plethora of societal issues in Australia. The proffering of curriculum as part of a political reform agenda causes one to question the unique role curriculum plays, or is assumed to play, in government. A national curriculum is the product of taken-for-granted ‘truths’ and assumptions around global and national society, education, and each of the learning area disciplines. A move towards nationalising curriculum is presupposed by a view of curriculum as a particular means of educational government, which is evident in curriculum being mobilised in a national form to meet the intents and purposes of a broader Federal agenda. Faced with the recent emergence of a national curriculum it is pertinent to consider how curriculum is mobilised in Australia as a particular technology of government.<sup>3</sup>

While contemporary politics may not articulate the purpose of curriculum using the term *problem-solving*, the offering of curriculum as a mode of governing the population in response to particular needs is deeply embedded within a problem-solving discourse. Throughout calls for

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<sup>3</sup> Viewing curriculum as a technology of government draws on Foucauldian notions of governmentality. This is elaborated upon and discussed throughout Chapter 2, and in particular on pp. 44–47. Chapter 2 understands governmentality as a vast and contradictory set of modalities that produce and normalize curriculum and its effects.

curriculum reform, a unified national Curriculum has been offered as a proposed solution to uniquely Australian requirements:

The long-term challenges we face – on the economy, on education, on climate change, on ending the blame game – are far too great.

It is time we started raising the bar. It is time we started raising the standard. It is time we started thinking in terms of how much better we as a nation could become.

It is time to invest in our future – and there is no better place to start than by investing in the education of our children. The time has come for this nation to bring about an education revolution. (Rudd, 2007, para. 19-21)

Rudd (2007) argues for education, and subsequently curriculum, as the proposed solution to a plethora of ‘challenges’ – economic, educational, environmental – facing Australia, now and into the future. This pronouncement reflects the mobilisation of the Australian Curriculum as a proposed response to perceived challenges or problems.

Basil Bernstein (1971) considers that “differences within and change in the organization, transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest” (p. 156). This idea provides the starting point for Bob Lingard’s (2018) critical interrogation of the Australian Curriculum, in which Lingard confirms his predecessor’s insight that changes in curriculum are often evidence of broader social changes. The emergence of a national curriculum provides a unique moment in the history of Australian schooling to consider

the role and purpose of curriculum alongside the broader social changes that have led to, and are reflected in, these educational developments.

### **The Australian Curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum is a nationally agreed upon document that sanctions particular knowledges and determines what is to be taught to an entire generation (or more), across distinct and diverse States and Territories. The scope and power of such a document raises questions around curriculum as a unique technology of government. As a response, this thesis seeks to understand how the Australian Curriculum, at this particular time and in this new national form that is mediated for the first time primarily through an online platform, is able to say what it says. Although it has been adopted in varying respects across schools around the country, and invariably experiences all the usual perils of policy such as layering, filtering, and slippage,<sup>4</sup> the curriculum still says something about what it is possible to say, think, and do, at this particular moment in time. The Australian Curriculum can be seen as a manifestation of who we think we are, and who we want to be; “how much better we as a nation could become” (Rudd, 2007, para. 4).

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<sup>4</sup> Elmore (1996, p. 499) argues that education reform policy typically (and somewhat naively) assumes three key things; (1) the newest set of reform policies automatically takes precedence over all previous policies; (2) reform policies emanate from a single level of the educational system and embody a single message about what schools should do differently; and (3) reform policies should operate, more or less, in the same way in varied settings

A number of documents were drafted in the initial development phase of the Australian Curriculum to consider the shape that this new national curriculum would take. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum, Version 4.0* says: “The curriculum development work of ACARA is guided by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians”<sup>5</sup> (ACARA, 2012b, p. 4). The Melbourne Declaration was formulated during the first Rudd government and provides a justification for the development of a national “world-class curriculum” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 13). The term *world-class* implicitly locates the Australian Curriculum in a competitive global context, and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority has recently published a number of reports that include comparative studies which match the Australian Curriculum against curricula from high-performing schooling systems around the world (ACARA, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e). The undertaking of such research reiterates an intent for the curriculum to be a means of shoring up Australia’s competitiveness on a global scale. This global competitiveness is further seen in popular media’s coverage of the reports: “Australian primary and high school students spend nearly 74 per cent more time in the classroom... but are receiving far lower scores in international tests than students in similar countries” (Singhal, 3 August 2018). Comparing the performance of Australian young people with the performance of young people from other countries (re)positions curriculum as a means for managing the achievement, productivity, and economic competitiveness of Australia on a global scale. The curriculum is simultaneously posited as an endeavour to prepare young people for an increasingly globalised

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<sup>5</sup> ACARA is the acronym for the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority. ACARA was established in 2008 as a new national policy organisation and was given the task of developing three national policy initiatives: a national curriculum, a national assessment program, and a national data collection and reporting program. These three initiatives subsequently became the Australian Curriculum, the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and the My School website.

world and as a means of shoring up a national citizenry that is part of “thinking in terms of how much better we as a nation could become” (Rudd, 2007, para. 4).

Doune Macdonald and Dawn Penney (2009) predicted that the political context in Australia, characterised by “various tenets of neoliberalism”, would invariably impact on the production of the national curriculum (p. 251). Lingard and Sellar (2013)<sup>6</sup> propose five elements of neoliberal education policy frameworks that are “sutured together in particular national policy assemblages” (p. 20). The first of these – the centralised prescription of curriculum – suggests the Australian Curriculum is both an outcome and example of neoliberal education policy. Neoliberal governmentalities describe the political rationalities, techniques, and technologies of government that are characteristic of modern liberal democracies (Dean, 1999). As a shift from liberal ideology that imagined society to be divided into distinct public and private spheres, neoliberalisation instead erases this line and conceptualises society based on market competition. Importantly, within neoliberalism, the state does not lose its function but rather it is “deconstructed and reconstructed toward the new end of expanding private markets” (Wilson, 2017, p. 23). Neoliberalisation constitutes techniques and technologies of government that work to produce responsibilised citizens – promoting active self-government across all spheres of life. Neoliberalism is markedly part of the larger social, cultural, and political systems of government the Australian Curriculum is embedded within. Yet, it would be trite to position a neoliberal rationality as deterministic of the curriculum, and it is hoped that throughout the discussions of this thesis a more nuanced critique is instead offered.

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<sup>6</sup> Drawing on the work of Pasi Sahlberg (2011, 2014).

The Australian Curriculum has arisen within a problem-solving discourse and enters this context as a proposed solution to these perceived national problems. The broader political narrative that brought about a national curriculum is evidence that there are presumed needs and challenges that need to be addressed at a national scale. Lingard (2018) argues a national curriculum “simultaneously expresses and constitutes specific spatio-temporalities, helping to create the national in the context of globalization” (p. 56). That is, a national curriculum conveys and (re)produces the shoring up of a national citizenship against a perceived global threat to national identities. He further suggests that;

the Australian curriculum with its three components, learning areas, General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities, works together what knowledge students need to know (disciplines) and what sort of people they ought to become (cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities). (Lingard, 2018, p. 57)

Lingard’s (2018) analysis recognises the particular role and purpose of curriculum in governing the population to become certain ‘sorts of people’. While the above excerpt locates this government particularly in the realm of Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities, this thesis proposes that the learning area, or ‘discipline’, of HPE also governs by linking the knowledge students need to know with the sort of young people and future citizens they ought to become. As such, HPE is a particularly rich and significant case study for considering the role of curriculum in governing.

HPE as a learning area uniquely contributes to the formation of young people due to the way it intersects with not only their knowledge and understanding, but also their personal choices,

behaviours, and bodies. From my own memory of HPE, the content was rarely abstract and, more often than not, targeted towards influencing the individuals 'healthy' decision making. It was not until later, at University, where I was introduced to a more critical approach to considering how discourses of health are constructed and (re)produced, that I reflected on my own experience of studying HPE at school. It became evident to me that my positive experiences of HPE were centred on how I easily 'fit' the espoused characteristics and requirements for being deemed a 'healthy', 'good' young person.

Following this, I was interested in how motifs of health have shifted and changed over time, and how some become taken-for-granted and embedded in the way society approaches and understands health. Due to studying to be a HPE teacher myself, my particular focus was on the educational context and how my own pedagogical practices would contribute to this reproduction of particular knowledges around health, and the effects of these. Combined with the fledgling emergence of a national HPE Curriculum, with calls for it to be reviewed by those in the field, I further narrowed my focus to consider what knowledges and discursive practices were being nationally sanctioned in the current context of HPE Curriculum.

### **Health and Physical Education (HPE) as a Learning Area**

Health, physical education, and physical activity, as key curriculum areas, have existed in diverse capacities throughout Australia's schooling history. Over this time, the professional HPE community have contributed immensely to its imagining as a learning area across distinct states

and territories (Leahy, Wright, & Penney, 2017). HPE is now one of eight *Learning Areas* that have been specified in the new Australian Curriculum framework (ACARA, 2017b).

There can be difficulties in mapping the general field of research into health and physical education. For example, Nis Primdahl, Alan Reid, and Venka Simovska (2018) recognise that in a purview of studies addressing health and wellbeing in curricula and schools there was “very little if any consensus concerning an associated education’s purposes, desired outcomes, effective teaching strategies, or legitimate curriculum content” (p. 736). In part this is due to the theoretical landscape typically being divided among two general discourses which are not readily reconciled with one another; a bio-medical discourse and a socio-ecological discourse (Green, Tones, Cross, & Woodall, 2015). A bio-medical approach is centred on individualistic, preventative, and behaviour-regulating principles, whereas a socio-ecological approach often provides critical reflections on structural, socio-cultural, and other determinants of health and physical activity. Underpinned by different epistemological paradigms, each discourse privileges particular approaches to health and physical education and have been taken up to varying extents across a range of state-based HPE curriculum texts in Australia.<sup>7</sup>

In speaking of her role as Lead Writer for the AC: HPE, Doune Macdonald (2013) comments that her task was “to consider the predicted needs and interests of children and young people” (p. 96). Implicit here is the assumption that curriculum is a means for addressing governmental

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<sup>7</sup> For examples of such texts, see *NSW Personal development, health and physical education K–6* (Board of Studies NSW, 2007); *NSW Personal development, health and physical education 7–10* (Board of Studies NSW, 2003); *The Tasmanian curriculum health and wellbeing: K–10* (Department of Education Tasmania, 2008); *Health and Physical Education: Years 1 to 10 Syllabus* (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 1999); *Victorian essential learning standards: Health and physical education* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2008).

hopes or the particular ‘needs’ of young people, whether these are imagined future needs, or more present presumed needs. Deana Leahy (2014) argues that “within Australia, school-based health education operates as one of a multitude of governmental sites that seek to govern the health[y] conduct of the population” (p. 171). Leahy (2014) makes the case that health education operates as an apparatus of governmental hopes. Recently, Primdahl et al. (2018) have asked “what happens if we treat such questions of what it means to be healthy, educated for health, and health literate, as radically open and not those that require answers before we engage in a critical curriculum exercise” (p. 2). While the efforts of Primdahl et al. (2018) centre on an analysis of scholarly research and literature, this thesis contends that it is both possible and valuable to consider these questions by interrogating curriculum texts through poststructural perspectives.

Poststructuralism has been influential in curriculum studies, but rarely in poststructural studies have curriculum texts themselves been taken up as an object for analysis. This thesis argues for, and provides an example of, analysing curriculum texts from a poststructural perspective. It presents a case for undertaking critical analysis of curriculum by demonstrating the value of rethinking curriculum through a poststructural lens. A poststructural perspective highlights how curriculum contributes to the formation and privileging of particular knowledges that “have a significant role in how we are governed and in producing the kinds of ‘subject’ we are encouraged to become” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 5). The use of knowledges in the plural reflects the scepticism poststructuralism brings. This scepticism is further signalled through scare quotes around ‘things’ wherever there is concern that the contingency of a term is not immediately visible (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

## Thesis outline

The emergence of the Australian Curriculum provides a unique context and frame for analysis. This introductory chapter has posited that the proposal for a national HPE curriculum is embedded with particular assumptions around curriculum as a technology of government. Further, it has considered how curricula are positioned as ‘solutions’ to particular ‘problems’ – problems that education and schooling are charged with responding to. This chapter has also identified the place of HPE in Australia as a learning area that is often charged with responding to ‘problems’ of health and citizenship.

Chapter 2 considers how poststructuralism has shaped contemporary understandings of curriculum. It maps the intervention of poststructural perspectives in curriculum studies, and considers how the tools and approaches offered by poststructuralism can inform ways of thinking about and analysing curriculum. Of particular interest is the way poststructural perspectives disrupt taken-for-granted norms and encourage different ways of thinking about curriculum and HPE. The key Foucauldian concepts of knowledge/power, subjectification, and governmentality are also explored. The chapter argues for a view of curriculum-as-discourse, and for adopting poststructural perspectives in curriculum analysis. Additionally, it proposes WPR as an analytic tool for this poststructural analysis and, in doing so, positions curriculum as *problem representing*.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the epistemology and methodology of WPR and how it has been used as a tool for poststructural analysis within this thesis. It outlines how Bacchi’s epistemological parameters and Michel Foucault’s theoretical tools are taken up within WPR as

a means for analysing *prescriptive texts*. It offers a justification for the selection of the AC: HPE Rationale as the text chosen for analysis, and details how WPR was applied. The chapter provides a detailed overview of both the object and methods of analysis, setting up how the succeeding analysis chapters are organised.

Chapter 4 outlines the initial findings of the WPR analysis, and interrogates the first and overarching problem representation of the Rationale – the ‘problem’ of the future Australian population. It considers the role and purpose of schooling by mapping from the Rationale the ways the AC: HPE is positioned and rationalised as a means for constituting particular forms of ‘good’ citizenship in response to this ‘problem’. This chapter primarily works to identify the key ‘problems’ the AC: HPE is represented as responsive to, and provides the platform and framework for the archaeological and genealogical work of the following three chapters (5–7).

Chapters 5 through 7 interrogate additional ‘problems’ nested within the broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population, illustrating how HPE is assembled within the curriculum and broader contemporary discourse to ‘make’ healthy, safe, and active citizens. These chapters do the archaeological work of exploring the assumptions and presuppositions about health, risk and safety, and physical activity and movement, embedded more broadly within the AC: HPE. They also consider the history of how these particular ways of thinking and knowledges have come to be sanctioned and endorsed by government and related institutions. These chapters draw widely on academic literature to frame key arguments and probe how and why it has become possible for the AC: HPE to say particular things, at a particular time, in a particular place, and with particular effects.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 8, which reflects on the research, provides a review of findings, and proposes how curriculum and HPE may be thought about differently. In doing so, it opens new central spaces for thinking in relation to the curriculum text itself, and offers novel theoretical and methodological musings in terms of how poststructural perspectives can intervene in HPE and curriculum.

## **Chapter 2. What does curriculum do? Towards a view of curriculum as problem representation**

This chapter establishes the contributions of poststructural thinking in the shift from asking what curriculum *is*, to considering what curriculum *does*. The chapter begins by providing a brief account of the field of curriculum studies and acknowledges how poststructural perspectives have unsettled more traditional approaches to curriculum. While the chapter outlines key bodies of thought in curriculum theory, it in no way represents a complete history of this field. It surveys some of the key critical interventions offered by poststructural scholars working in the areas of education, curriculum studies, and Health and Physical Education (HPE). Finally, the chapter outlines a case for poststructural perspectives in analysing the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE), and in doing so, proposes a specific analytic for thinking critically about curriculum.

### **Curriculum as an object of study**

For UK educational historian and curriculum theorist Ivor Goodson (1988) curriculum is a complex, interacting matrix which includes schools in the state and private sectors, teachers and how they are trained, the resources available, and the subjects taught. Goodson's (1994) broad understanding of curriculum reflects how the term *curriculum* is mobilised in various and often quite contextually specific ways. Curriculum studies have evolved to become an enormous and varied field, informed by multidisciplinary perspectives. Educational historian Adah Ward

Randolph (2008) defines curriculum studies as an “interdisciplinary field that examines the history of curriculum, the ideology that drives curriculum development, and the lived experiences of curriculum in the lives of students, teachers, and the community” (p. 55). Ward Randolph (2008) acknowledges the importance of historical understandings of curriculum and contends that these understandings must be analysed against the contemporaneous practices of how curriculum shapes the experiences of those who live it.

Michael Young (2014) maintains that curriculum is “the single most distinctive concept that has emerged in the field of educational studies” (p. 197). Yet, James McDonald (1975) claims that “essentially there are no generally accepted and clear cut criteria to distinguish curriculum theory and theorising from other forms of writing in education” (p. 5). This suggestion from the 1970s continues to ring true, with a 2008 Perspectives section in the *Journal of Curriculum & Pedagogy* focused on the question; What is curriculum studies? Guest editor Craig Kridel (2008) invited “a number of brave educators” (p. 22) to respond to the question. Within the range of answers offered to the question – what is curriculum studies? – it is evident that a simple and distinct definition cannot be pinned down. As Linda Tillman (2008) contends:

scholars in curriculum studies realize that there is no one-size fits all definition, no one way to theorize, design, and practice curriculum studies, and no one solution to answering critical questions about how we will educate every child. (p. 26)

Tillman (2008) argues this recognition broadens the scope to allow for innovative interrogations of the ‘work’ curricula do. In the same volume, Renée Clift (2008) offers a practitioner view that

sees curriculum “at the nexus of policy, subject matter, context, and individual and cultural differences among students and teachers” (p. 29). Clift’s (2008) perspective takes into account not only theoretical and political positions of curriculum formation but also the material and lived effects of curriculum implementation, situating curriculum studies at the interface of theory and practice. Clift (2008) also acknowledges the relationship between both intended and enacted curricula and educational policy. Providing a perspective similar to Ward Randolph (2008), Jennifer Sandlin (2008) defines curriculum studies as;

an interdisciplinary field within education that focuses on understanding how learners and teachers understand and experience the ‘curriculum,’ which is very broadly defined and means something like the kinds of experiences that occur both within formal educational spaces like schools and outside of them. (p. 66)

This definition is reminiscent of what Philip Jackson (1968) coined the ‘hidden curriculum’, and which Sandlin (2008) mentions as one of the early ideas within curriculum studies she was exposed to as a graduate student in the 1990s. Sandlin (2008) considers what curriculum ‘is not’, blurring the line between the places and spaces in which curriculum operates and extending recognition to its effects outside of schools as well as within them. She also emphasises the *experiences* of learners and teachers, although again situates these subject-positions outside the traditional domain of schools (Sandlin, 2008).

What all of these scholars acknowledge is the diffuse and interdisciplinary nature of curriculum studies, exemplified within the broad understanding of curriculum itself: as a body of knowledge; process; praxis; a contextual social endeavour (Tyson, 2008); as intended, enacted,

and hidden (Clift, 2008); or even “the essence of what students should know” (Schwartz, 2008, p. 57). Kridel (2008) considers the contributions of the various authors as offering “a hopeful vision of this ever-changing, wonderfully interdisciplinary, and interestingly diffuse and amorphous field that has been deemed curriculum studies” (p. 23). With a lack of agreement around definition, curriculum studies borrows instead from other disciplines (philosophy, sociology, anthropology) to guide its inquiry and methodology. Hence, as Donald Sharpes (1988) maintains, curriculum still has no methodology of its own. It seems that McDonald’s (1975) observation remains an apt description of the field; “essentially there are no generally accepted and clear cut criteria to distinguish curriculum theory and theorising from other forms of writing in education” (p. 5). The recent release of the third edition of William F. Pinar’s (2019) book entitled; *What is Curriculum Theory?* suggests that the question continues to be asked. It appears it continues to be the case that curriculum theory exists, at least in part, because a reasonable number of esteemed professional people say that it does, and that they do it. In other words, the field of Curriculum Studies has been produced in and through a changing set of governmental modalities and authoritative truth effects. It hasn’t just emerged naturally, but has been constructed by a set of debates and bodies of knowledge, a canon of research and literature in the area.

### **Theoretical perspectives in curriculum studies**

Isaac Gottesman (2016) argues that it is important to examine our intellectual history as this “offers insights into the contexts and traditions that underpin many of the ideas our current

critical scholarship both embraces and struggle with, it offers us a reflective window into our own theoretical work” (p. 71). The account of curriculum perspectives given here encompasses a nonteleological view of history; it does not subscribe to a progressivist view that sees history moving toward a necessarily more-enlightened position. Instead, the account maps the poststructural turn in curriculum perspectives by observing the changing thinking and patterns of theoretical perspectives which are introduced by poststructural analyses of curriculum. Important to note at the outset is how the field of curriculum studies has been characterised by a range of theoretical perspectives formed across varying geographic locations. As such, scholars mentioned throughout this chapter are mapped to their geographic location in order to appreciate their specific contributions to curriculum perspectives. The dominance of Anglo or north-American scholarship in shaping the global field must be acknowledged. Baker (1996) argued that the field of curriculum history has been characterised by blindspots, and that “the ways in which curriculum history has been constructed in different national contexts ... contribute[s] to erasures of who and what is studied” (p. 105). Recognising this, it is important to note that the history provided here is limited in scope and will, in some measure, contribute to the perpetuating of these blindspots. For differing views of earlier curriculum histories, the author points the reader to consider the work of Herbert Kliebard and Bernadette Baker.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kliebard, H. (2018). *Forging the American Curriculum : Essays in Curriculum History and Theory* (First edition.). Boca Raton, FL: Routledge.; Baker, B. (2009). *New curriculum history* . Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

‘Curriculum’ emerged as a substantial field of study within educational research throughout the 20th century. Hilary Bourdillon and Anne Storey (2002) suggest the word *curriculum* took hold in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s but did not become a prominent idea in the educational language of the United Kingdom until the 1960s. Kliebard (2018) argues that his own historical analysis of curriculum theory and history was “a way of disentangling what we could possibly mean by curriculum theory” (p. xi). As this suggests, the field of curriculum studies is vast and complex, however, scholars such as Pinar and Reynolds (1992) and Valerie Janesick (2003) have usefully categorised the field of curriculum studies by acknowledging differing epistemological approaches. Pinar and Reynolds (1992) describe two traditions of scholarship and research along the frontier of American curriculum studies: phenomenology and poststructuralism. Likewise, Janesick (2003) suggests the field can be defined by three key schools of thought: the traditionalists, the reconceptualists, and the postmodern/poststructural theorists. Janesick’s (2003) work focuses on the United States, but does make an effort to trace influences from England, other parts of Europe, and Asia. ‘Traditionalist’ or phenomenological approaches to curriculum were underpinned by structuralist theory and were interrupted, in part, by a poststructuralist turn in thought.

Early curriculum scholarship predominantly comes from traditionalist scholars<sup>9</sup> in North America. This work focused on the purpose of schooling, what should be taught, and how these educational experiences could be organised. Philip Jackson (1992) traces the influences of some of the historical giants in the field who it would be remiss to omit in any account of influential

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<sup>9</sup> Traditionalist scholars such as Ralph Tyler, Franklin Bobbitt, Hilda Taba, Joseph Schwab and John Dewey. Taba was born in Estonia, but worked and published in North America.

curriculum scholarship: Ralph Tyler, Franklin Bobbitt, and Joseph Schwab. While there is much curriculum theory and history that predates these understandings,<sup>10</sup> the work of these men was integral in shoring up the field as a key area of educational scholarship. The *Tyler Rationale*, as it is referred to, is one of the most influential texts written on curriculum (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). Tyler's (1949) basic principles<sup>11</sup> consist of four questions to be asked when developing curriculum. These questions centre on considerations of objectives, design, scope and sequence, and evaluation. The Tyler Rationale can be viewed as an extension and refinement of Bobbitt's (1918, 1924) two-step model<sup>12</sup> of curriculum development that looked to consider educational objectives followed by designing learning (Jackson, 1992). Schwab's (1978) model<sup>13</sup> was underpinned by similar ideas to both Tyler and Bobbitt, with three questions seeking to ascertain the 'what?' of curriculum's purpose, objectives, and role. With their focus on the *what* of curriculum, these key 'traditionalist' curriculum scholars came to represent the leading figures in the field. Their ideas have had a significant influence on curriculum scholarship, 'practice', design, and implementation.

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion around earlier contributions, see Baker (2009), particularly Chapters 8 and 9.

<sup>11</sup> Tyler's (1949) four questions are: (1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?, (2) What educational learning experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?, (3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?, and (4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

<sup>12</sup> Bobbitt's (1924) two steps are: (1) defining educational objectives, and (2) devising learning experiences.

<sup>13</sup> Schwab's (1978) three questions are: (1) What is the "art of the practical" and how does it relate to curriculum?; (2) What is the role of school-based curriculum specialist who seeks to practice that art?; and, (3) What is the role of the university-based specialist?

Following this earlier ‘traditionalist’ scholarship, the 1970s–1980s was a period of particularly prolific growth within curriculum studies (Schubert, 1986). Between 1968 and 1980, four new international academic journals emerged,<sup>14</sup> each devoted to discussion and research on curriculum (Yates, 2011, p. 27). Around this time, the core concerns of the field began to be redefined by ‘reconceptualists’ such as Elliot Eisner and Elizabeth Vallance (1974) who reoriented approaches to curriculum studies by including cognitive process, technology, self-actualisation, social reconstructionist, and academic rationalist approaches. ‘Reconceptualists’ attempted to forestall the effects of a growing business orientation both in teacher education and in public schools through the conceptualisation, organisation, and development of the curriculum (Reynolds & Webber, 2016). Fundamental matters of curriculum definition were largely neglected, such as who constructed the curriculum, within what kinds of political or epistemological parameters, and for whose benefit (Goodson, 1994). Before the interventions offered by reconceptualists, much of the scholarship in ‘curriculum studies’ focused on the objectives of the curriculum, curriculum development and research, and curriculum as a tool for instruction.

While more traditional approaches have profoundly shaped the focus of curriculum studies and still play a part in curriculum design and debate, poststructural thinking posed important questions about not only what curriculum is, but also what it does to shape practice and broaden discourse. Into a broad field which had come to focus on particular ways of understanding curriculum, poststructural critique “ushered in a period in which possibilities for understanding

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<sup>14</sup> *The Journal of Curriculum Studies* (UK), *Curriculum Inquiry* (Canada), *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* (USA), and *Curriculum Perspectives* (Australia).

curriculum in ways as yet not conceived [would] increase exponentially” (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 514). The questions poststructural scholars began to ask were no longer about what curriculum was or how to improve it. Instead, they began to consider curriculum as political and as a productive modality that normalised knowledge, power relations, and subjectivities. A shift in time, and thinking, began to see a range of issues that impact curriculum re-examined through a poststructural lens. Poststructural perspectives shifted the paradigm from what curriculum *is* to what curriculum *does* and allowed particular ways of thinking about curriculum: as political; as historically and culturally situated; as deconstructed text; and as discourse.

### **Poststructural perspectives and the rethinking of curriculum**

Poststructuralism emerged in France in the 1960s and became defined through opposition to structuralism (Williams, 2014). In the field of curriculum studies, Pinar et al. (1995) argue that one of the first theorists to introduce poststructuralism was a north-American scholar, Peter Taubman. Taubman (1982) turned to the work of Foucault to map the ways sexuality and gender had been historically produced and constituted through curriculum.<sup>15</sup> Within poststructuralist research the term *discourse* captures the relationship between meaning and power, generally taken to mean systems of values and beliefs which produce particular practices and social relations. For Foucault (1972), discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak... Discourses are not about objects; they constitute them, and in the practice of

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<sup>15</sup> Taubman’s doctoral dissertation (*Gender and Curriculum: Discourse and the politics of sexuality*) was completed in 1979 and published in full by *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* (1982).

doing so conceal their own intervention” (p. 49). Taubman’s scholarship (1982, 1990, 1993, 2007) demonstrates how meanings and subjectivities of gender and sexuality are produced and formed within curriculum, *through discourse*. His poststructural analyses raise questions which would later be addressed by feminists working in the curriculum field (Pinar et al., 1995) and his later work contributed to understandings of curriculum as a racial text (Taubman, 1993).

North American scholar Cleo Cherryholmes (1988) also provided a seminal poststructural critique of curriculum studies that opposed structuralist perspectives. He opposed political neutrality, rejected the notion of fixity regarding the human condition, and dismissed the view that a researcher is able to step outside discourse to survey situations objectively. Cherryholmes (1988) concluded that the work of Tyler, Schwab, and Bloom was embedded with ideology while denying ideological content, promotes educational decision-making separate from ethics, and considers itself as politically neutral – something a poststructural analytic denies possible. Instead, poststructuralism considers broad systems of meaning that construct norms and shape human subjectivities, seeing the individual as socially, politically, and culturally constructed (Harding 1987). As shown through Cherryholmes’ work, one of the foremost poststructural interventions into studies of curriculum was calling attention to the historical, political, and cultural-situatedness of curriculum.

Influenced by the work of Foucault,<sup>16</sup> North American, Jacques Daignault further influenced the field in breaking free of ‘traditional’ ways of thinking about curriculum. Daignault contributed to poststructural perspectives of curriculum that consider not what it is, but what it does;

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<sup>16</sup> Daignault’s work was also heavily influenced by Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze, and Serres.

“curriculum is beyond words, that is what I say; with words, that’s what I do” (quoted in Hwu, 2004, p. 143). In conversation with Diana Masny, Daignault reflected on curriculum theory becoming “a new world” with the opening of the curriculum field to “many horizons”, including poststructuralism (Masny & Daignault, 2011, p. 533). Daignault’s (1992) work illustrates how poststructural perspectives open up room to think in the in-between spaces, or in his words, “thinking happens only between suicide and murder... between nihilism and terrorism” (p. 199). In particular, this thinking in the in-between spaces allows for considering how knowledge is produced in and through curriculum, the power invested in those knowledge cultures, what types of subjectivities are made intelligible, and what broad and everyday modalities of government are produced by curriculum iterations. That is to say that while curriculum can be used to govern, the production and interpretation of curriculum itself is also governed by the broad modalities of the time.

As seen in the work of Daignault, one of the central contributions of poststructuralism to the rethinking of curriculum is to more deeply and critically consider what curriculum *does* as opposed to simply considering the question of what curriculum *is*. Although seemingly subtle, this shift in focus is critical in shaping research questions and analyses. It considers the productive effects of curriculum rather than merely naming and describing its elements and contours. Poststructural perspectives seek to uncover the work of curriculum in producing and shaping knowledge, power, and subjectivities by tracing the truth effects that define norms.

Scholarship which looks broadly at the role of curriculum in producing and normalising bodies of knowledge and particular subject positions has also influenced critical studies of health and physical education. There is an expanding field of research pursuing ‘critical’, social, and/or

political agendas across education, physical education, health, and sport (Leahy et al., 2017). Poststructural perspectives have significantly influenced readings of HPE curriculum and schooling practices, with a number of key contemporary researchers drawing on the work of Foucault and his successors to reinvigorate and reimagine traditional approaches to the field. This scholarly work contributes critical theoretical perspectives to considerations of HPE and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Poststructuralism situates curriculum within a broader field of inquiry that explores the way it is influenced and (re)produced through various discourses. It asks questions of curriculum that examine the work it does in governing through the privileging of certain bodies of knowledges, and the maintenance of social norms that (re)produce power relations and limit the intelligibility of particular subjectivities. Poststructuralism makes visible the work of these ‘norms’ or ‘truths’, exposing them to interrogation which allows for accepted practices and ways of being to be challenged and reconsidered. By identifying effects such as the (re)production of certain types of knowledge and subject positions as powerful, and therefore the positioning of others as subordinated or oppressed, feminist poststructuralism in particular is concerned with movement towards a more just and equitable society (Allan et al., 2009). This move is made by attending to various questions of power and knowledge, subjectivity and intelligibility, and governmentality.

This thesis provides a critical reading of curriculum that draws on the ideas and modes of analysis developed in poststructural thinking. In particular it draws on concepts developed by Foucault and his successors; especially those working in curriculum studies and critical studies of health and physical education. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (2003) point out that Foucault would have been wryly sceptical of simple or direct applications of any theoretical perspectives,

including his own. Likewise, in a now oft-quoted interview, Foucault confers with Gilles Deleuze that “theory has to be used, it has to work” (Deleuze & Foucault, 2004, p. 208). In her reading of this exchange, Kellie Burns (2007) observes Foucault’s “refusal to unwittingly take up pre-existing concepts without thought or concern for how they have arrived in one’s critical ‘toolbox’” (p. 98). Critical poststructural theory, in this sense, intervenes in and through how it contributes the ‘tools’ to render visible everyday practices. Therefore, the work of other scholars is used to demonstrate and elucidate how poststructural approaches to analysing curriculum and HPE have contributed to understandings of these practices. While this short summary focuses on analyses of governmentality in curriculum that primarily uses Foucault, it is worthwhile recognising that there is a rich and expansive body of work drawing on key feminist theorists (such as Kristeva and Butler) as well as a number of other poststructural theorists (including Derrida, Lacan, and Bourdieu).<sup>17</sup>

The subsections that follow outline some of Foucault’s key concepts and ideas, and how these ideas have been taken up in curriculum studies and critical studies of HPE. The works surveyed illustrate the significance of poststructural perspectives in shifting understandings of curriculum, schooling, and the bodies and health of children and young people. The scholarship pertinent to

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<sup>17</sup> Bronwyn Davies, *Judith Butler in conversation: Analysing the text and talk of everyday life* (2007); Christine Winter, *Curriculum knowledge and justice: content, competency, and concept* (2011), *Enframing Geography: subject, curriculum, knowledge, responsibility* (2012); Jane Kenway, *The ghosts of the school curriculum: past, present, and future* (2008); Tony Brown, *Lacan, subjectivity and the task of mathematics education research* (2008), *The Lacanian subject of mathematical learning* (2011).

this analysis can be organised into three broad and overlapping Foucauldian concepts; (1) knowledge/power, (2) subjectification, and (3) governmentality.

### ***Knowledge/Power.***

For Foucault (1982), power is both relational and productive. He pushes back on descriptions of the effects of power in negative terms such as exclusion or repression, instead arguing “power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 194). Analysed alongside knowledge, power can be seen as working to produce bodies of knowledge, which are in turn systemised by sets of ‘truths’. Miguel Morey (1992) suggests that according to Foucault’s power/knowledge dynamic, “knowledge [savoir] tells us what ‘everyone’ thinks, whilst power invites us to put this into practice” (p. 120). Kellie Burns (2013) contends that this dynamic speaks to the constructedness of knowledge, tracing “the mechanisms and modalities that produce and govern knowledge ... in schools and beyond” (p. 89). Foucault (1982) does not suggest institutions or bodies of knowledge possess power because of their acclaimed status as truth-making apparatuses, but instead maintains that knowledge and knowledge structures are upheld because of certain power effects. Power is not viewed as a singular force or structure that reigns or governs over a population, but rather as diffuse power relations which have a productive role (K. Burns, 2007). In this way, power is defined through the various technologies that seek to name, order, and regulate individuals, populations, and spaces in any number of ways (Foucault, 1989). Power is a disparate assemblage of coordinated political effects that order and normalise human beings’ lived experiences (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

As a product of content selection, dissemination, and interpretation, curriculum symbolises the privileging of ‘formal’ or ‘real’ bodies of knowledges, as well as the discursive practices that imbue these knowledges with power. Power relations produce the real, and the real is grounded in networks of norms and truths (Morey, 1992). Recognition of the power/knowledge dynamic within curriculum leads to consideration of curricula as *political texts*. Cherryholmes (1988) approaches curriculum as a political text and acknowledges the productive power and knowledges infused within it. In providing an overview of Cherryholmes work, Pinar et al. (1995) argue that he challenges the political neutrality assumed in structuralism and instead asserts “that all knowledge-producing enterprises are political.” (p. 488). Following Foucault, Cherryholmes (1988) argues that structuralism “shows meanings to be decentered and external to the individual” whereas poststructuralism “shows meanings to be shifting, receding, fractured, incomplete, dispersed and deferred” (p. 61). Applying poststructural perspectives recognises the shifting nature of curriculum and positions it as political, material products, which represent specific political ways of viewing reality, and are informed by the political and economic position of those who support their production. Due to the complex and multifaceted nature of curriculum, this thesis endeavours to analyse a particular curriculum text as an entry point into these discussions. Doing so does not limit an understanding of curriculum to merely a product of content selection, dissemination and interpretation, but provides parameters for analysis that allow for an exploration of the ways that curriculum contributes to political, knowledge-producing enterprises. This recognises curriculum not just a text/document, but a political set of modalities.

Amidst growing recognition of curriculum as political, scholars such as Pinar et al. (1995) look historically at the politics underpinning understandings of schooling and curriculum. Influenced

by feminist writings of the second wave, poststructuralism gained a stronger place in queries of curriculum and schooling, asking questions which recognised the power of race, class, and gender differences, and how that power works to structure inequalities. Schooling was situated within its social, political, and economic contexts, prompting new questions about what types of knowledges are taught in schools, how that knowledge is taught, and how schools come to reflect and embrace certain types of knowledge and values. An example of this kind of work in Australia is Ian Hunter's (1994a) study which drew on a Foucauldian *history of the present* to interrogate the history of literature education and the emergence and embrace of English as a school subject.

Histories of the present identify contemporary practices that are both taken-for-granted and yet, in certain respects, problematic or somehow unintelligible. They then seek to trace the power struggles that produced these practices (Garland, 2014). The aim is to problematise the present by revealing the power relations upon which it depends and the contingent processes that have brought it into being. For example, Annette Patterson (2013) argues that Hunter's work pushed back against traditional accounts of English as knowledge or as ideology. He instead proposes that English is "the name of an instituted means of forming a particular type of person" (Hunter 1991, quote in Patterson, 2013, p. 89). Through his interrogation, Hunter (1994a) finds that "English was (and remains) a product of the merging of governmental and pastoral discipline that took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (p. 153). That is, the body of knowledge that has come to be accepted as 'English', is selected and accepted for the ways it works to constitute particular kinds of students. In his more recent work on the Humanities, Hunter (2014) continues to tie knowledge to the cultivation of particular kinds of intellectual conduct and ways of being.

This kind of approach to knowledge, viewing it as productive, has challenging repercussions for traditional ways of thinking around curriculum. It moves away from an objective perspective that lacks acknowledgement of the positionality and power of certain knowledges. Instead, poststructural perspectives begin to see knowledge within curriculum as subjective; as privileged and (re)produced in particular ways with evident lived effects. Following Foucault, Hunter (1994a) uses a history of the present in order to “make things that are familiar to us strange, and to make things that ‘go without saying’ much harder to say” (p. 142). By adopting a history of the present, Hunter questions underlying assumptions about bodies of knowledges to see what is made sayable and doable, as well as what is excluded. For the purposes of this thesis, Hunter’s work demonstrates how poststructural perspectives open up space for interrogating the taken-for-granted ‘truths’ and assumptions inherent in curriculum. Poststructural analyses of power and knowledges draw attention to the limits of intelligibility around what it is possible to say, do, and be.

North American scholar Thomas Popkewitz (2009) speaks of *systems of reason* that order the practices of curriculum and teaching. Popkewitz (2009) sees these systems as “historically produced, and function[ing] as cultural theses about how the child is, and should live” (p. 303). In doing so, the effects of power are recognised by making visible this ‘reason’ and how it operates to govern both schooling and the children within the schooling system. The study of reason in curriculum studies draws education into a conversation with Foucault’s (1991b) notion of *governmentality* and Jacques Rancière’s (2004) *partitioning of sensibilities* (Popkewitz, 2009). The value in this work lies in “making visible the authority of existing systems of reason [as] a strategy to open to the future the possibilities of alternatives other than those already present” (Popkewitz, 2009, p. 304). Popkewitz (1997) contends that intellectual work which seeks to

make visible the effects of power provides a strategy for destabilising the conventions of ‘reason’ that limit the consideration of alternatives. That is, by exposing the taken-for-granted systems of reason that confine and constrain what is thinkable and knowable, it is possible to open up space for thinking differently. The historicising of the self-evident is a practice of resistance (Lather, 2007) which recognises how words associated with education such as ‘learning’ or ‘community’ appear within historically formed rules and standards that shape reflection and action (Popkewitz, 2009, p. 304). Considering curriculum in this way views it as not merely responding to specific moments in time, but contributing to the production of these moments. Doing so disrupts existing power structures, challenges taken-for-granted norms, and creates space for possible alternatives.

Poststructural approaches to curriculum studies emphasise power as a productive, as opposed to repressive, force, while simultaneously working to destabilise the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning particular educational realities (Allan et al., 2009). As a critical tool often wedded to feminist and/or queer analyses, a poststructural lens demonstrates how knowledge cultures and ‘hidden’ curriculum produce and normalise particular white, masculinist bodies of knowledge and assumptions. Feminist poststructuralism asks how power acts to produce and regulate a patriarchal gender order and to whose benefit. In curriculum studies, feminist poststructuralism specifically interrogates the (re)production of gender norms in and through curriculum as they intersect with sexualities, race, ethnicities, and class. Jackie Marsh (2010) highlights how gender is (re)constructed in and through governing practices, maintaining that curriculum is “predicated on implicit assumptions and hidden values regarding gender” (p. 277). This is because the selection of knowledge that takes place when forming curriculum is shaped by the wider social, historical, cultural, and political context. Marsh (2010) notes “curriculum does not simply mirror

society's values, but also transmits those values and ideologies that are located within the domain of the dominant classes" (p. 277). Like Marsh, feminist poststructural researchers in the area of curriculum studies analyse the relationship between gender, power, and knowledge in the construction of curriculum and explore how subjectivities are shaped by contemporary curricula that privilege normative discourses (Bhog & Ghose, 2014; Francis & Skelton, 2001; Jose, Convery, McLoughlin, & Owen, 2011; A. L. Marshall, 2009; Sabzalian, 2016; Segreto, 2011; Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000).

In critical studies of health and physical education, the work of poststructuralist scholars has contributed to critiques of how particular knowledges have shaped the way HPE is understood and practised within schools. Jan Wright (2000) proposes;

Poststructuralist discourses allow us to recognise that knowledge is always provisional and partial and that even our understanding of the body is constituted in specific cultural and historical circumstances and in the context of particular relations of power. (p. 36)

An example of this contribution of poststructuralism is seen in the work of Deborah Lupton (1995), who draws on Foucault to critique health and bio-medical knowledge. She interrogates how public health discourses and practices work to both constitute and regulate understandings of normality, risk, and health. Lupton (1995) contends; "Public health practitioners make claims of truth and use these claims for strategic purposes just as do members of the medical profession" (p. 4). This way of thinking about public health renders visible the work of particular discourses in producing accepted and acceptable knowledges and understandings.

Lupton's (1995) poststructural thinking about public health has also informed studies of HPE in schools, with scholars drawing on her work to query HPE curriculum and educational practices. For example, Lisette Burrows and Jan Wright (2007) explored the way public health knowledge and discourse contribute to schools being mobilised as a means of regulating the conduct of young people. They examined the prescribing practices operating in schools (and specifically in HPE) that work to shape young people as agentic subjects who take up notions of 'good citizenship' and work towards becoming "the imagined healthful agentic citizen" (Burrows & Wright, 2007, p. 84). Their analysis of the New Zealand HPE curriculum recognised the way health was increasingly portrayed as not only a medical issue, "but also a signifier of an individual's capacity to exercise his/her free will in pursuit of a moral 'good'." (Burrows & Wright, 2004, p. 193). The work of Burrows and Wright (2004, 2007) demonstrates how poststructural perspectives allow for interrogating ways in which HPE curriculum constitutes norms and limits of knowledge, which are underpinned by power effects and work to produce the limits and/or possibilities for human intelligibility.

In a similar way, Ken Cliff (2012) employs Foucauldian discourse analysis to question the introduction of a sociocultural perspective in HPE curriculum. This move towards a sociocultural perspective has been viewed as "a significant departure from the predominantly medicoscientific, biophysical and psychological foundations of HPE" (Cliff, Wright, & Clarke, 2009, p. 165). The shift in thinking influenced a new emphasis on how health was produced; challenging bio-medical constructions of health and considering the social and cultural contexts of health and wellbeing (Cliff, 2012). In his reflections on this new perspective, Cliff (2012) draws on the poststructural work of others (e.g. Kirk, 1998; Lupton, 1999; Tinning & Glasby, 2002) to identify a likely tension emerging in contemporary understandings of the purposes of

HPE. Cliff (2012) struggles to reconcile how a sociocultural perspective fits within a learning area that is still arguably no less concerned with constituting ‘healthy young citizens’ than it was in the corporeal versions of HPE characteristic of the first half of the 20th century. These studies reflect a view of how the knowledges and power imbued within the curriculum constitute particular possibilities and effects. They shift the focus from an analysis of what curriculum is, to what it does in shaping the limits of intelligibility for what it is possible to know and to become.

### ***Subjectification.***

Poststructural perspectives also help us to look more closely at the diverse ways in which individuals take up, resist, and challenge discourses (J. Wright, 2003). Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) use the term subjectification to describe “the production, or making, of provisional ‘subjects’ of particular kinds ... the ‘subject’ in this view is an effect of politics, always in process and a product of power-knowledge relations” (p. 49). Following Foucault, they consider subjects as contingent, both made and becoming, produced or constituted through particular kinds of practices. For Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) this occurs in and through policy practices. A key aim of this thesis is to illustrate how, like policy, curriculum normalises a range of subject positions that come to be taken-for-granted. Curriculum texts therefore tell us what we can, or cannot, be or become as gendered, sexual, racialised subjects, but also as citizens, consumers, teachers, students, children, adolescents, and families.

Foucault describes “the objectification of the subject” (Rabinow, 1984, p. 7) through three movements which work to transform human beings into ‘subjects’. The first of these is *objectification through authoritative knowledges*, delineating how subjects ought to be through

the production of norms. Foucault asks how certain knowledges gain the authority to determine the normal or proper models of humanness, emphasising “the diverse and at times contradictory subject statuses endorsed and promoted in various discourses (knowledges)” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 51). The truth-making mechanisms of knowledges establish what it means to be normal or abnormal through an array of practices.

The second movement described by Foucault is *objectification through dividing practices*. These practices refer to discourses that work to create divisions and distinctions between what is considered acceptable and unacceptable ways of being; “The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 777). Dividing practices are “dynamic practices of differentiation and subordination” which construct opposition between groups, and work “to promote desired behaviours among the general population” so as to produce them as ‘governable’ (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 66). Foucault (1982) offers examples such as mad/sane, sick/healthy, etc. Finally, he describes *objectification through subjectivisation* or the way “a human being turns him – or herself into a subject” (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). This third movement stresses the active role of the individual in the process of becoming a ‘subject’.

Poststructural scholars have drawn on Foucault’s modes of subjectification to consider ways in which particular identities and subject positions have been taken up through particular practices in curriculum and education more broadly. In addition to his work on curriculum as gendered and racialized (Taubman, 1982, 1993), Taubman (1990) later turned to an analysis of the identity of teachers and how identity is produced through discourse in relationship with others. Over the years, his scholarly work has focused on how students’ and teachers’ psycho/social identities are constructed in educational discourses and schools, and the effect of this on teaching and learning.

Taubman (1990) argued the limits of intelligibility for the subject of ‘teacher’ were opened by the discourse itself. Taubman’s (2007, 2010, 2012, 2017) work continues to analyse constructions of ‘teacher’ and subjectivity in the teaching relationship, as well as the corporatisation of public education and alternatives to current education reforms.

Poststructural perspectives highlight the importance of identifying contingent ontological presuppositions that underpin the formation of particular subject positions. That is, the things that are assumed and how these work to govern ‘subjects’. As discussed previously, Hunter (1994) conducted a genealogical study which revealed the primary objective of schooling to be managing the conduct of the citizen. Hunter (1994) uses the notion of a *principled position* to describe a view of schooling’s purpose being the formation of the ideal person and the process through which this ideal can or should be realised. Conceptions of subjectivity are highly relevant due to the fact that assumptions about human nature inevitably underpin the proposals of curricula. Hunter (1994) argues principled positions become most visible in critiques around schooling which treat it as the realisation of particular underlying ideologies that “cohere around the notion of an ideal formation of the person” (p. xv).

Poststructural approaches interrogate normalised practices that constitute young people as political and governable ‘subjects’. However, this does not assume that individuals are entirely passive. While governmental practices may seek to produce particular kinds of subjects, they do not necessarily succeed in doing so as individuals can and do resist and negotiate the processes they are subjected to (Inda, 2005). Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) warn against attributing ‘agency’ to ‘subjects’ in the sense of independent moral capacity, but rather call for subjects “to be thought about in terms of their location within plural and contradictory discourses, which opens

up spaces for challenge” (p. 51). Focusing on the relationship between discourse and subjectivity, poststructuralism provides tools for understanding the way discourse operates to produce varying and divergent subject positions. When applied to curricula, poststructural perspectives interrogate the way identities that perform behaviours deemed to be desirable are promoted.

Cultural theses embedded in curriculum postulate how one should live as a particular kind of modern person (Popkewitz, 2009). In doing so, these cultural norms simultaneously inscribe a child who is ‘other’ and does not fit within these categories. One example Popkewitz (2009) provides is around the statement ‘all children can learn’. He discusses how this impulse for equality embodies inequality through the boundary lines it draws between *all* children and those who do not fit within that category. The children who do not fit within the constructs of cultural norms are recognised and made different, abjected from the liveable spaces occupied by those within the narrative of ‘all children’ (Popkewitz, 2009). The term *abjected* is used here to describe being cast off, exiled, or rejected. The ‘disadvantaged’ child, for example, is positioned in need of rescue and redemption.

Poststructural perspectives have also contributed to a vast volume of work that has explored gendered subjectivities, sexuality, and racialised identities (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005, 2006; B. Davies, 1989, 1993; Fitzpatrick & Allen, 2019; Kubota, 2019; Leonardo, 2015; Magubane, 2001; Namaste, 1994; Phoenix, 2009, 2017; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; Robinson, 2011, 2013; Robinson & Davies, 2008; Sykes, 1996). Bronwyn Davies (1989) explored preschool children’s experiences of becoming gendered, and how gender as a social category is made to matter in the everyday lives of children. In her book *Shards of Glass*, Bronwyn Davies (1993) interrogates the

construction of knowledges in classrooms, considering how to interact with children in ways that disrupt the male/female dualism. This work evidences how poststructural perspectives can be used to challenge taken-for-granted truths and ways of being that are produced within society.

The (re)production of prevailing discourses through curriculum documents works to reinforce and privilege normative ways of being. For example, naturalising heterosexuality as the normative form of sexuality reinforces students' heteronormativity (Robinson & Davies, 2008). Kerry Robinson and Cristyn Davies (2008) use a Foucauldian discourse analysis of curriculum to explore the complex relationship between childhood and sexuality. Robinson and Davies (2008) argue "schooling cultures and official educational documents consistently construct children as heteronormative subjects with heterosexual futures, even when sexual knowledge is absent in the curricula" (p. 222). Similarly, Zsuzsa Millei (2011) applies a lens of governmentality to curriculum texts in order to consider embedded concepts such as 'child' and 'the community'. Positioning curriculum and policy as modalities of government shows how dominant knowledge cultures get written into everyday practices, and how those practices govern. It also reveals how individuals take up norms and practices as a means of governing themselves.

A number of scholars have also extended a view of the political character of curriculum to argue for it to also be understood as a racialised text (Pinar et al., 1995). Ann Phoenix (2009) argues schools are a key site for racialised subjectification through processes that "interpellate people as subjects into gendered and racialised relations of power that include state technologies" (p. 103). Much of Phoenix's work focuses on *intersectionality*, considering it "a handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it" (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006, p. 187). This contends with the

interrelated and interacting discourses that produce ‘norms’ and ‘truths’ which constitute particular, and nuanced, subject positions. Exploring the intersection of race/social-class/gender and ability has also become recognised as a powerful framework for understanding the complexity of engagement in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005). Laura Azzarito and Melinda Solmon (2005) locate schools as sites that produce racialised discourses and subject positions through physical education and sports. Poststructural perspectives make visible multiple, fluctuating, and negotiated racialised identities. In recognising that these subject positions can be negotiated, poststructural theory is useful for developing strategies to resist and subvert dominant discourses.

Contemporary researchers have also drawn on Foucault to consider subjectification within HPE. Burrows and Wright (2007) looked at motivations to perform self-surveillant and monitoring practices being “derived from a core ‘ideal’ set against an abject subject, a subject that current discourse suggests few would want to emulate – that is, the person who is ‘fat’.” (p. 89). The government of particular types of ‘bodies’ has been considered, attentive to the modern ‘obesity epidemic’ and the elicited response across a variety of research fields (Cliff & Wright, 2010; McCuaig & Tinning, 2010; Tinning & Glasby, 2002). Beyond her work on p/leisurable bodies with Richard Tinning (2010), Australian Louise McCuaig has also used Foucauldian analysis in a number of studies exploring the role of teachers and the concept of the caring teacher in HPE (McCuaig, 2007, 2012; McCuaig, Öhmans, & Wright, 2011). Following this, more recent work with Peter Hay has explored the approach of educating students for ‘good citizenship’ through a genealogical analysis of curriculum reform (McCuaig & Hay, 2013). Drawing on feminist and poststructural theory, researchers have engaged with issues associated with the body, health, and physical activity, with attention to the body as central to subjectivity and necessary to

understanding the self. Jan Wright has also done extensive work drawing on Foucault to analyse obesity discourse (Cliff & Wright, 2010) as well as working with Malin Osterlind to consider the use of Sport in Sweden to govern ‘good’ and ‘healthy’ citizens (Österlind & Wright, 2012). These kinds of poststructural analyses consider the practices which work to constitute or produce particular subjectivities, both abject and acceptable. In doing so, poststructural perspectives in critical health and physical education studies render intelligible particular subject positions that are normalised and privileged.

In shaping the parameters of intelligibility for ‘good’ citizens, curriculum texts work to produce particular kinds of subjects. French philosopher Etienne Balibar’s (1991) figuration of the citizen–subject is also useful for considering this subjectivity through the ways it emphasises how subjectivity is always at the heart of notions of citizenship. In her use of Balibar, Kellie Burns (2007) contends that how an individual defines themselves as a subject depends on how he or she is defined and framed as a citizen. Likewise, citizens are afforded certain rights and freedoms in exchange for taking up certain responsibilities such as voting, obeying laws, orderly conduct, etc. By linking citizenship to subjectivity, Balibar (1991) acknowledges that one is often excluded from the status of full citizen when one fails to register as an acceptable type of subject. Equally, the denial of full citizenship rights can result in someone becoming unintelligible as a human subject and thus relegated to the status of ‘non-human other’.

### ***Governmentality.***

According to Kellie Burns (2008), “Foucault’s considerations of government are about tracing the uneven operations of power relations that ‘conduct the conduct’ of individuals and normalise

the practices of everyday living” (p. 345). Colin Gordon (1991) refers to particular “system[s] of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed)” (p. 3) and argues a functional “art of government” is one “capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced” (p. 3). That is, for Foucault, an *art of government* is one that functions logically, for both those administering order and those upon whom practices of order are being enacted (K. Burns, 2008). Following Foucault, Rose (1999) illustrates one of the key ways modern government achieves this is by harnessing themselves to practices of truth. He argues an analytics of government is concerned with regimes of truth, rather than language or authorial intentions, because, in order to govern, one must seek an authority to do so. As such, government “continually seeks to give itself a form of truth” (Rose, 1999, p. 27).

Studies of government “seek to interrogate the problems and problematizations through which ‘being’ has been shaped in a thinkable and manageable form” (Rose, 1999, p. 22). As such, they offer a way into interrogating how schools, and specifically curricula, operate to ‘conduct the conduct’ of young people. Government territorialises itself in different ways; “marking out a territory in thought and inscribing it in the real, topographizing it, investing it with powers, bounding it by exclusions, defining who or what can rightfully enter” (Rose, 1999, p. 34). This occurs through discursive apparatuses, which represent young people (the domain to be governed) as an intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics. Schools operate as one such space, providing a particular topography and structure to confine and constrain a population, thereby normalising this as a space and population to be governed. Young people who attend school are imputed with, and take up, the role of ‘governable subjects’. Government of young people thus becomes possible through defining boundaries that render

visible what is within them. Within this governable space, the conduct of young people can be governed and managed.

Introducing questions of government to curriculum inquiry allows for a focus on the mentalities of curriculum; how it shapes, produces, and elides particular kinds of schooling subjectivities. Popkewitz (2009) argues that curriculum actively constructs young people and teachers in particular ways through establishing parameters for what young people need to know at particular ages/developmental levels, and subsequently what teachers need to teach. Curriculum works to shape and transform individuals into idealised citizens through positioning the knowledge of particular things as fundamental to producing ‘good’ citizenship (Popkewitz, 2009). In this way, curriculum works to produce and shape the parameters of what constitutes an intelligible student and good (future) citizen. In viewing curriculum as a technology of government, discourses, narratives, and regimes of representation are not reduced to pure semiotic propositions. Instead, they are regarded as performative practices which shape, produce, and elide intelligible ways of thinking, knowing, doing, and being. Curriculum is understood as an instrument through which authorities seek to guide and shape the conduct and decisions of others and to legitimise the relationship between the learning of certain bodies of knowledge and skills encoded with a particular model of idealised citizenship.

Scholars in HPE have also drawn on governmental theorists to consider the discursive practices of curriculum. Leahy and Harrison (2004) draw on data collected as part of a larger study which “sought to explore the dominant and contesting discourses that operate within school-based health education” (p.130). Drawing on governmental theorists, they explore ‘risk discourses’ operating within curriculum and the ways in which, through such discourses, HPE curriculum

attempts to shape and produce particular kinds of people (Leahy & Harrison, 2004). In her more recent work with Gabrielle O’Flynn and Jan Wright, Leahy uses a socio-critical perspective to examine curriculum documents. Their analysis draws on governmentality to discuss the way ‘critical’ operates within HPE rhetoric and discourse, and what forms of critique are privileged or silenced within these documents (Leahy, O’Flynn, & Wright, 2013). Borrowing from Foucault (1985) they understand curriculum as a “set of practical texts that are intended to frame the everyday conduct in school subjects, and beyond” (Leahy et al., 2013, p. 177). This position allows for an interrogation of curriculum documents as political, both in the context of curriculum making and within the documents themselves. The researchers then turn to the concept of curriculum assemblages (Leahy, 2012) to consider the “discursive messiness inherent within curriculum texts” (Leahy et al., 2013, p. 178). These kinds of studies demonstrate the usefulness of poststructural approaches to curriculum in that they offer a more nuanced approach to considering the limitations and possibilities presented in and through curriculum.

Poststructural approaches that draw on governmentality allow for a critical lens which looks not only at what curriculum is and does, but also how and why curriculum becomes what it is, as well as the potential possibilities and limitations for what it can do. According to Sandlin (2008), “curriculum can be seen as all of those experiences that help shape one’s identity/(ies) and subjectivities, that help people become who they are and who they might someday be” (p. 66). From a poststructural perspective, curriculum is viewed as a technology of government in the way it operates to regulate population processes.

## **Applying poststructural perspectives**

This chapter has laid out the theoretical underpinnings of a poststructural approach to curriculum studies which have provided space for the interventions of this thesis. The above section has drawn on the work of a great many others, bringing together that which is useful for informing an innovative approach to curriculum study. It has traced the contributions of poststructuralism to both curriculum and the field of HPE, looking to the way considerations of knowledge/power, subjectification, and governmentality provide ways of understanding what curriculum and HPE do.

Situated in a poststructural sensibility, this thesis then undertakes to consider curriculum-as-discourse. Following Foucault, it recognises (a) discourses are multiple and unstable, (b) power is not uniform and therefore can always be challenged and discourses transformed, and (c) when curriculum becomes 'practice' even official structures are used in ways that challenge dominant discourse. In considering curriculum-as-discourse, this thesis examines how curriculum operates as a tool of government to produce certain technologies that order and manage the national population and schooling. The analytic work of this thesis understands curriculum as acting to sanction knowledge, and as operating as a function of government which regulates practices of the population in the same way other policy documents do. Adopting a view of curriculum as productive, this thesis is concerned with how subjectivity is produced and shaped in and through curriculum practices which work to govern the limits of intelligibility for being/becoming 'good' citizens/subjects. Therefore, curriculum is not merely viewed as discursive, but as part of a broad set of mentalities that govern.

In order to begin interrogating the ways curriculum operates as a modality of government, the analytic work of this thesis turns to a poststructural tool developed by Carol Bacchi called *What's the 'problem' represented to be?* (WPR) In using WPR, the analysis considers curriculum to be *problem representing* and calls into question the ways in which curriculum works to reproduce and sanction particular bodies of knowledge, normalise certain teaching practices, and produce certain kinds of subjectivities (e.g., student, teacher, child, boy/girl, young people). This kind of poststructural analysis asks questions about how certain ways of thinking are intelligible at particular points in time. In doing so, it considers the previously discussed Foucauldian notions of knowledge/power, subjectification, and governmentality through interrogating the problematisations embedded within curriculum and how these work to govern in particular ways, to particular ends. The chapter that follows will provide the method of applying WPR that has been used in the poststructural analysis of HPE, starting with the AC: HPE.

## Chapter 3. Analysing Problem Representations

One of Foucault's (1991a) interventions in *Discipline and Punish*, is his call to 'unlearn' the assumptions that frame reality. In this work, Foucault (1991a) calls into question incarceration as a taken-for-granted penalty or punishment. He locates incarceration as historically contingent by comparing it to previous iterations of punishment that involved public torture and execution (Foucault, 1991a). Highlighted in his analysis are the systems of reason and mechanisms of power which work to make certain forms of discipline and punishment imaginable and acceptable at a particular time, and in a particular context. A poststructural perspective positions everything as contingent, and using *What's the problem represented to be* (WPR) (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) as an analytic tool follows Foucault's example in disrupting the familiar in order to reimagine alternative possibilities and ways of being. WPR extends existing poststructural and governmental analyses to ask how 'problems' govern – how they produce and normalise policy problems to be solved, and how in doing so they constitute or elide subjectivities. This chapter will describe WPR and explain how and why it has been used in the analytic work of this thesis.

### **A case for using WPR in curriculum analysis**

As established in Chapter 2, poststructural perspectives in curriculum studies create space for exploring how curriculum works to govern. The work of interrogating curriculum has shifted from traditional approaches questioning what curriculum is, to poststructural perspectives that

ask what curriculum does. The questions asked of curriculum shift again through the new way of understanding curriculum offered by WPR. Considering the Australian context, R. J. Braithwaite (1994) muses curriculum is “offered as the resolution of some very intense debates over the nature and purpose of schooling and the allocation of increasingly scarce resources” (p. 541). Using WPR not only considers curriculum-as-discourse, but specifically questions how curriculum is positioned as responding to particular ‘problems’.

WPR is premised on Bacchi’s (2012) distinction between rational policy-making and a view of policy-as-discourse. Rather than assuming that there are pre-existing problems that we can identify and solve, WPR critically considers the ways that problems are represented in policies in particular ways and with particular effects. This way of thinking intervenes in traditional approaches to policy-analysis and provides a new framework for considering the discursive and productive (i.e. governmental) impact of policy proposals. The aim of using WPR in this thesis is to extend analyses about HPE and curriculum in similar ways. In particular, the analytic work of this thesis uses WPR to interrogate the taken-for-granted assumption that curriculum merely prescribes what is to be taught, to instead consider how the proposals of curriculum can also be seen as working to govern. As a poststructural analytic tool applied to curriculum, WPR considers the questions; what ‘problem’ is curriculum proposed to respond to; and how does this way of thinking about the ‘problem’ work to govern in particular ways?

Viewing curriculum as problem representing sees it as giving shape to the particular ‘problems’ it is offered as a resolution to. WPR provides the appropriate tools to critically evaluate how these ‘problems’ are produced and represented within a curriculum text. Specifically applied to HPE curriculum, using WPR interrogates the way notions of citizenship, health, and physical

activity are conceived of as ‘problems’ able to be addressed through education. As a political tool, curriculum mandates what is doable, knowable, and sayable, thereby constructing the parameters and possibilities for who we are and who we can be. It is a powerful political tool which shapes and forms citizens in particular ways. A WPR analysis makes visible the role curriculum plays in producing knowledges, regulating educational norms and practices, and producing particular types of citizens/subjects in and through school-based learning.

Significantly, using WPR also translates theoretically-complex analytical strategies into a form whose “straight-forwardness [...] has rendered it accessible and widely applicable” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 26). In particular, a WPR analysis utilises Foucauldian conceptions of archaeology, genealogy, discourse, governmentality, and subjectification (Bacchi, 2009a). While these kinds of analytic strategies are often associated with quite complex theory there is a directness and simplicity to WPR meaning that it can be taken up by those less familiar with or willing to be Foucault scholars, but who recognise the usefulness of many of his ideas. There are certain limitations to the simplicity of WPR, and it is not set forward as a replacement for the specific and sustained application of Foucauldian methodologies that provide a rich depth and complexity of analysis.<sup>18</sup> However, WPR does bring the aforementioned poststructural analytic tools together in an accessible and structured way through the use of guiding questions.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, see McCuaig and Tinning’s (2010) genealogical analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> century programs of Queensland HPE in *HPE and the moral governance of p/leisurable bodies*.

## **Disrupting the taken-for-granted: Understanding WPR**

Bacchi (1999) brings together policy studies and sociology of social problems literature to explicate an approach to policy analysis characterised by its focus on *problem representations*. This approach works from the premise that policy does not necessarily solve problems, but actually *gives shape* to problems. That is, policies construct particular kinds of problems through the proposals for change they offer. These proposals necessarily contain interpretations and hence *representations* of ‘problems’. Critical of interpretive approaches, Bacchi (1999) recognises that “we need to shift our analysis from policies as attempted ‘solutions’ to ‘problems’, to policies as constituting competing interpretations or representations of political issues” (p. 2). This kind of policy analysis operates from the premise;

it is inappropriate to see governments as responding to ‘problems’ that exist ‘out there’ in the community. Rather, ‘problems’ are ‘created’ or ‘given shape’ in the very policy proposals that are offered as ‘responses’. (Bacchi, 2000, p. 48)

From this perspective, Bacchi (1999, p. 21) argues it is these problem representations and their implications that we need to focus on in our analyses of policy. This initial premise was foundational to the formation of WPR and was upheld and elaborated on in subsequent developments of the WPR approach.

WPR has evolved over time, with the first incarnation initially referred to via the shorthand – “What’s the problem?” (Bacchi, 1999). In 2009, Bacchi published a revised version of the

approach in the book *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* In this iteration, she amends the shorthand reference to “WPR”, adjusts the questions slightly, and includes two additional questions (Question 3 and Question 6) (Bacchi, 2009a). The inclusion of these questions expands the utility of the tool to incorporate deeper genealogical work and promotes a greater awareness of the forms of power involved in shaping problem representations (Bacchi, 2012). The 2009 version also includes a more specific directive, termed Step 7, which explicitly encourages reflexivity as a key part of analysis (see pp. 57–58 for the list of steps). A further-revised iteration of WPR was published in *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice* (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). The continual refinement of WPR offers an evolving way of (re)thinking policy; “These elaborations signal that the ‘WPR’ approach ought to be conceived as an open-ended mode of critical engagement, rather than as a formula” (Bacchi, 2012, p. 23). Each of the various iterations of WPR contributed to understanding the approach, but the questions of the most recent version were used in the WPR analysis of this thesis.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Bacchi’s epistemological parameters and interventions.***

WPR is not offered as a strict methodological approach. Rather, it organises *a way of thinking* into a set of questions and strategies that allow analysts to interrogate policy proposals and how they constitute particular ‘problems’. As suggested by Goodwin (2011):

The WPR approach is perhaps better described as an analytic strategy than a research method: it is not concerned with rules and procedures in order to produce

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<sup>19</sup> The WPR analysis initially commenced using the 2009 version of WPR but was updated to incorporate the minor revisions the 2016 version encompassed.

scientific knowledge, but rather with strategies that enable the analyst to obtain knowledge that is critically different from the existing system of meaning... in the WPR approach, Bacchi organises what is, in effect, an epistemology into a set of questions and associated strategies that she (and others) have found useful in de-familiarising policy. (p. 172)

In order to understand the usefulness of WPR as both epistemology and analytic strategy it is relevant to set out a broad overview of this ‘way of thinking’.

Bacchi (2009a) outlines three key premises upon which WPR operates; (1) we are governed through problematisations, (2) we need to study problematisations, rather than ‘problems’, and (3) we need to interrogate the problematisations on offer by scrutinising the assumptions and effects of the problem representations they contain. The concept of problematisation grounds a WPR analysis, with the term being understood as “conceptualizations of problems” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 48), or “how something is put forward (or represented) as a ‘problem’” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. xii). That is, how a problem is thought about, conceived of, and communicated. Problematisations are not merely produced, they are productive – governing the limits of intelligibility for what is possible to know, say, do, or be(come):

A WPR approach takes this basic insight – that problematisations provide an entry point into how rule is thought – but introduces a methodology that encourages a wider application of this argument. It makes the case that *every policy*, by its nature, constitutes a problematisation... Because *every policy* constitutes a problematisation, it is fair to say that, in effect, we are governed through

problematizations rather than through policies. This shift in focus produces a broad field for analysing how rule takes place. (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 31)

Bacchi (2009a) encourages a broad understanding of problematisation, suggesting that every proposal for change potentially functions as a modality of government. Doing so shifts the emphasis from the conditions that provoke responses to supposing all proposals for change constitute a ‘problem’ of some sort.

Bacchi (2009a) argues for a rethinking of traditional policy analysis approaches which see governments as “*reacting* to fixed and identifiable ‘problems’ that are exogenous (outside) the policy process” (p. 1). Instead, she advocates for studying policy not in terms of its success in solving problems, but in relation to how policies represent problems as particular kinds of problems – problematisations:

Critical attention therefore is directed to analysing governmental problematisations – how ‘problems’ are represented or constituted *within policies*, and how they have come to be represented in this fashion. In other words, the task becomes analysing how ‘problems’ are *made*. This form of analysis puts in question the common portrayal of policy as a ‘problem-solving’ activity and an evidence-based practice. If the very nature of a ‘problem’ is in dispute, any suggestion that all that is required is evidence about how to solve ‘it’ seems to be sadly inadequate. (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 39, emphasis in original)

Using WPR recognises the productive power of discourse by shifting from a focus on problems to considering problematisations, or more specifically – the problem representations they

contain. This is done through analysing text and interrogating the way problem representations work to constitute particular ‘problems’ (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). WPR is a critical form of analysis which involves identifying problem representations in policy and working to question and disrupt the presuppositions that underpin these.

The identification of problem representations is done through reflecting on the particular proposals contained within a policy text. For Bacchi (2012), a *proposal* is what you suggest doing about a problem; “what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic (needs to change)” (p. 21). Applying WPR begins with the identification of a concrete proposal and works backwards from this to identify what the ‘problem’ is represented to be within this proposal. Identifying problem representations as implicit within proposals ensures they are not seen as simply interpretations or problems, but rather that they form part of how we are governed (Bacchi, 2017). Because problem representations are contained *in* the proposal, they therefore form part of the governing practice.

To illustrate, Bacchi (2009a, p. 3) gives a useful example of identifying the problem representation in a proposal for placing water-timers on showers in a gymnasium. The concrete proposal in this example is putting water-timers on the showers as a response to the stated problem of expensive water bills. Working backwards, it is possible to read off the proposal of water-timers to ascertain an implicit (or unstated) ‘problem’ of water consumers’ *behaviour*. That is, by proposing to actively restrict the amount of time possible for a shower, the suggestion is made that whoever is using the showers is unable, or refuses, to take shorter showers. An alternative proposal, such as posting notices encouraging users to save water, would give the ‘problem’ a different shape. In this case – a *lack of awareness* on the part of consumers. Another

example of conceptualising a ‘problem’ differently is offered by Rainbow Murray (2014) who suggests a rethinking of the ‘problem’ of *women’s underrepresentation* as a ‘problem’ of *men’s overrepresentation*. Such a shift in thinking would change the focus of policies and programs in response to gender inequality from targeting women to considering the unique role of men. In each case, the ‘problem’ takes a particular shape dependent on the proposals offered to address it. What is significant here is the working backwards to name a problem, and also those who are implicated and/or impacted in/by the ‘problem’. This is not to suggest there are not ‘real’ problems (expensive water bills, gender inequality etc.), but rather how a proposal posits a certain ‘solution’ is implicated in constituting what the ‘problem’ is represented to be.

The development of a new national curriculum can also be considered as a proposal for change, and subsequently, curriculum can be viewed as constituting a ‘problem’ of some sort. Viewing curriculum in this way suggests that curriculum governs not simply through the production and repetition of certain knowledges, but through the production and normalisation of curriculum ‘problems’ – the construction of problems in and of education that teachers and learners are set to respond to. Focusing on the proposals that underpin curriculum reveal the ‘problems’ that curriculum is positioned to respond to. This examination interrogates what curriculum is intended to do, which then elucidates the apparent ‘problems’ it is intended to address. How a ‘problem’ is represented matters because it “carries all sorts of implications for how the issue is thought about and for how the people involved are treated, and are evoked to think about themselves” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 1). The framework for thinking offered by Bacchi (2009a) “gives a whole new meaning to policy ‘evaluation’” (p. 43). This thesis picks up this sentiment and offers an innovative way of evaluating curriculum. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) invite analysts into a conversation, prompting them to engage with particular problem representations to

consider where they have led and are likely to lead, and consequently rethinking those that may produce potentially harmful consequences.

WPR is an analytic strategy that informs a way of thinking, but also provides a set of tools for working critically with *prescriptive texts*. In order to interrogate problem representations contained in a specific field we need to be able to identify these. Bacchi (2009a) contends these can be found in prescriptive texts, asserting that a WPR approach “picks up and systemises Foucault’s suggestion that we focus attention on ‘prescriptive texts’ or ‘practical texts’” (p. 34). For Foucault (1985) these texts are “written for the purpose of offering rules, opinions, and advice on how to behave as one should” (p. 12). Practical or prescriptive texts are considered to be;

objects of a ‘practice’ in that they were designed to be read, learned, reflected upon, and tested out, and they were intended to constitute the eventual framework of everyday conduct. These texts thus served as functional devices that would enable individuals to question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it, and to shape themselves as ethical subjects. (Foucault, 1985, pp. 12-13)

Important for Bacchi (2009a) is the dual focus of Foucault, taken up by WPR in interrogating both the practices that are the basis for forming problematisations and the thinking which guides or justifies those practices. WPR provides an analytic tool to facilitate analysts in “identifying, reconstructing, and interrogating problematizations” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 19). A WPR analysis interrogates texts that offer a proposal for change and encourages the analyst to scrutinise this ‘proposal’ (a proposed solution) in order to ‘read off’ the implicit or unstated

‘problem’ it means to address. This thesis argues that curricula can also be viewed as ‘prescriptive texts’ as they offer a proposal for change in prescribing what is to be taught in schools. In doing so, the focus of analysis is not on the proposal for developing a new national curriculum, but on the new Australian Curriculum as a ‘prescriptive text’. there was an intention to not evaluate the AC:HPE and provide proposals for future directions’

### ***The steps of WPR.***

The basis of WPR is the provision of a number of steps to guide the analyst in their analytic work. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) assert that “since the seven modes of analysis necessarily involve overlap and some repetition, their listing as separate ‘steps’ serves a heuristic function and ought to be treated accordingly” (p. 19). WPR’s ‘seven modes of analysis’ include six questions, along with a final reflexive undertaking to apply these questions to one’s own proposals. The steps of WPR are;

Question 1: What’s the problem (e.g., of ‘gender inequality’, ‘drug use/abuse’, ‘economic development’, ‘global warming’, ‘childhood obesity’, ‘irregular migration’, etc.) represented to be in a specific policy or policies?

Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’ (problem representation)?

Question 3: How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?

Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be conceptualized differently?

Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?

Question 6: How and where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?

Step 7: Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations.

(Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20)

As an analytic tool, WPR invites the analyst to apply these steps to their selected ‘prescriptive text’. In doing so, it is possible to apply a way of thinking that makes visible the invisible and allows for new insights to be interrogated as part of a larger project of understanding “how governing takes place, and with what implications for those so governed” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. ix). For the purpose of this thesis, these steps provide an analytic framework for examining the assumptions underpinning the apparent ‘problems’ of schooling in the areas of health and physical education.

*Systematic vs integrated application.*

WPR can be applied systematically, following the methodological steps separately and in order, or as part of an integrated analysis, with specific questions applied when the analysis occasions their use (Bacchi, 2009a). A systematic application of WPR involves a step-by-step process of analysis, answering each question, in order, before moving on to the next (see Pedersen, 2016). Bacchi (2009a) describes this kind of application as subjecting a specific policy “to the battery of

questions in a WPR approach” (p. 78). In *Analysing Policy*, Bacchi (2009a, Chapters 3–4) uses a systematic approach in the first two chapters where she provides examples of WPR application. In the latter half of the book, she adopts an integrated approach in order to minimise the repetition that often results from systematic approaches. An integrated approach also allows for the purpose of the analysis to determine which questions are foregrounded (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 101). Other applications of WPR may involve limiting the analysis to a selection of questions (see Alexander & Coveney, 2013; Goodwin & Voola, 2013; Pereira, 2014; Petersson, 2017; Seear & Fraser, 2014) or adapting the questions to suit the intentions of a particular focus (see Bastian & Coveney, 2013; Begley & Coveney, 2010). Frequently, WPR is applied as a generalised integrated approach that uses the underlying premises of WPR to provide a framework for thinking (see Barsoum, 2015; Lohmeyer, 2017; Loutzenheiser, 2015; McLeod & Wright, 2016; Molla, 2013; Seear & Fraser, 2014; Whitburn, Moss, & O’Mara, 2017).

An integrated approach can vary dependent on the purposes of analysis. For example, Rachel Patrick and Nikki Moodie (2016) apply the questions in an integrated discussion throughout their consideration of Indigenous education policy discourses. This serves the purposes of their analysis which was to “explicate the problematic, dominant, enduring representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and education in policy over the past 50 plus years; identify the effects of these policy discourses; and present a case for a shift in thinking.” (Patrick & Moodie, 2016, p. 170). Julie McLeod and Katie Wright (2016) on the other hand use the logic and language of Bacchi’s questions, as opposed to the questions themselves, to transition their thinking from what the problem is represented to be, to what is left unproblematic and how the ‘problem’ of wellbeing could be thought about differently. Bacchi (2009a, Chapter 6) provides a clear example of an integrated approach in her analysis of health policy due to the underlying

objective being “to draw attention to the ways in which different and competing understandings of ‘health’ and, indeed, of ‘health policy’ play important roles in how we are governed” (p. 128). Goodwin (2011) contends, “Bacchi’s approach is not concerned with providing a series of pre-defined steps through ‘the research process’, but instead provides a conceptual ‘checklist’ that guides the analytic process.” (p. 171). While there is a certain freedom in how WPR can be applied, Bacchi does still provide a numbered list of six questions and a final directive. A grasp of each of the methodological steps is useful in understanding a WPR approach as a way of thinking, even if the analyst applies an integrated rather than systematic approach. As such, the following subsections explain each step individually.

*Question 1: What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policies?*

The first question Bacchi proposes for examining the proposals within a prescriptive text is – What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be? This step involves a simple clarification exercise that looks at explicit and implicit problem representation(s), anticipating the likelihood there will be more than one occurring within a given text. Bacchi (2009a) recognises that this process may be complicated by inconsistencies or combinations of problem representations within a particular proposal and uses the term *nesting* to describe a phenomenon of problem representations often being embedded within one another (p. 21). She gives an example from her own work where competing approaches to reform in the area of girls education are based on differing views of both the ‘problem’ of women’s inequality and the ‘problem’ of education more broadly (Bacchi, 1999). In this case, consideration of the first question prompts the analyst to consider the interplay between these different problem representations and how they interact with one another.

Bacchi (2009a) further suggests that when first identifying a problem representation, “it is important to check if there are key terms or topics within that problem representation that themselves need to be subjected to a WPR analysis” (p. 21). Asking this WPR question is therefore not intended as a one-off exercise, but rather requires repeated application to probe different levels of problem representations.

*Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’ (problem representation)?*

The second question of WPR directs attention to the task of identifying the norms and presuppositions that underpin a particular problem representation. *Presuppositions* refer to “background ‘knowledge’ that is taken-for-granted” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 5). This question involves an exercise in Foucauldian archaeology in order to ascertain the conceptual logics that render intelligible the particular problem representation under scrutiny. The term *conceptual logic* denotes “the meanings that must be in place for a particular problem representation to cohere or to make sense” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 5). To assist in identifying presuppositions or conceptual logics, Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) suggest particular attention be paid to the discursive (re)construction of binaries, dividing practices, key concepts, and categories. This is done to both identify these discourses, and to critically interrogate how they shape understanding. As outlined in Chapter 2, dividing practices are those that divide the ‘normal’ from the ‘abnormal’. For Foucault (1982), these are “the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the ‘good boys’” (p. 208).

In line with Foucauldian archaeology which seeks to trace the history of thought, the goal of

Question 2 “is to uncover the (assumed) thought that lies behind specific problem representations” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 5). It is distinct from surmising the biases or beliefs held by the policy maker, and instead accesses the presuppositions *within* specific problem representations. It reveals the meanings that need to be in place in order for a particular problem representation to be intelligible.

*Question 3: How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?*

Question 3 shifts the analysis from a Foucauldian archaeology to a genealogy. Genealogy seeks to ascertain the power relations operating in particular events and historical developments – identifying and analysing these, as well as the ideas they give rise to (Drolet, 2016). A genealogy is an investigative method and historical perspective that offers an intrinsic critique of the present. In Bacchi’s (2009a) terms, “it provides the critical skills for analysing and uncovering the relationship between knowledge, power and the human subject in modern society, and the conceptual tools to understand how their being has been shaped by historical forces” (p. 7). While WPR does not necessarily involve a genealogy in the true Foucauldian sense of the word, Question 3 does prompt the analyst to engage in genealogical work.

Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) suggest it is possible to resist the tendency to view policy as evolving in linear and ‘natural’ ways by paying attention to the twists and turns in the ‘history’ of the problem representation. This works to destabilise the taken-for-granted nature of policy development and draws attention to the processes through which a particular representation, and not others, has come to dominate. Question 3 seeks to explore the knowledge practices, cultures,

and bodies of knowledge that inform a particular problem representation. As Bacchi (2009a) explains;

Genealogy has a destabilising effect on problem representations that are often taken-for-granted. It also provides insights into the power relations that affect the success of some problem representation and the defeat of others. (pp. 10–11)

An example of this can be seen in the work of Patrick and Moodie (2016) who utilise WPR to explore “the particular social conditions under which discourses arise”, in order to “explicate the problematic, dominant, enduring representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and education in policy over the past 50 plus years” (p. 170). A genealogical tracing of particular forms of emergent problematisation highlights the potential spaces for challenge and change.

*Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be conceptualised differently?*

Question 4 shifts the focus from what has been represented as the ‘problem’, to what has not been considered in the prescriptive text or problem representation. That is, it considers what silences and gaps are produced and maintained within and through the problem representation which impose limits on what is ‘knowable’ or ‘doable’ in response to a problem. One of the key interventions of this question is to ask; “what fails to be problematised?” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 12). It prompts a rethinking of taken-for-granted constructions of problems as particular kinds of problems, challenging the analyst to reimagine alternative ways of thinking about, and approaching, the ‘problem’. It also asks – *Can the ‘problem’ be conceptualised differently?* – opening up space for new possibilities to be imagined.

This question is utilised in a study by Sharron FitzGerald and Kathryn McGarry's (2016) which argues "campaigners present as truth a particular way of knowing prostitution, namely as always exploitative" and as such "accept categorically sex workers are always vulnerable... dismiss[ing] notions of choice and autonomy" (p. 305). They instead argue for an alternative way of thinking about the 'problem' of prostitution, which allows space for, and even prioritises, the voices of sex workers (FitzGerald & McGarry, 2016). This is demonstrative of how using WPR opens up space for questioning taken-for-granted representations of the 'problem' and offering alternative discursive constructions – in this case, notions of voice, choice, and autonomy.

*Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the problem?*

Question 5 directs attention to the effects of problem representations. It does this by focusing on three interrelated sets of effects, termed by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) as discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects. *Discursive effects* are the limits imposed on what can be said or thought through the way assumptions and presuppositions within a problem representation close off particular ways of thinking. According to Bacchi & Goodwin (2016), studying discursive effects "shows how the terms of reference established by a particular problem representation set limits on what can be thought and said" (p. 27). *Subjectification effects* are those related to how subjects are implicated in problem representations and consider "how they are produced as specific kinds of subjects" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 27). Finally, *lived effects* are "the material impact of problem representations on bodies and lives" (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 40). That is, lived effects are the way problem representations directly impact upon lives. While this material impact could be captured in analysis of discursive and subjectification

effects, a specific focus on lived effects ensures recognition of the ways discursive and subjectification effects translate into people's lives (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

Andrea Begley and John Coveney (2010) use WPR to examine representations of the 'problem' of folate fortification as policy strategy to reduce neural tube defects (NTDs). They compared alternative representations of the issue – fortifying foods versus dietary behaviour changes. Concerned with *the effects* of differing representations, Begley and Coveney (2010) argue a consequence of government policy focus on fortification is the continuation of economic and social inequalities impacting women's ability to gain sufficient folate. They observe that media advocacy for dietary changes positively impacted women meeting the recommended high-folate diet within childbearing years, without perpetuating social inequality in the same way as fortification (Begley & Coveney, 2010). While insufficient folate causing NTDs is a problem, representing it as a particular 'problem' of dietary behaviours was found to be less detrimental than representing it as a 'problem' of fortification. Seen in this example, applications of WPR invite consideration of the likely varied effects of particular problem representations, encouraging the rethinking of those held to produce deleterious consequences.

*Question 6: How and where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated, and defended? How has it been, and/or can it be disrupted, and replaced?*

The sixth question explores the means through which problem representations are legitimated, disseminated, and contested. It considers the possibilities for challenging the problem representation produced in and through the text by unsettling and destabilising the 'problem' to allow alternative possibilities to be imagined, considered, and put forth. In doing so, it provides

space for exploring what Foucault called *subjugated knowledges*. Subjugated knowledges are those less likely to be sanctioned and more likely to be silenced or marginalised – “for Foucault, these knowledges provide points of rupture to challenge conventional knowledges” (Bacchi, 2009a, p. 36).

Bacchi’s (2015) own analysis of ‘alcohol problems’ attempts to shift the focus from ‘the alcoholic’ to more social understandings of health through the role of sociology and social work. Bacchi (2015) argues that the problematising of alcohol through World Health Organisation reports emphasise both regulatory practices and ‘risk’ interventions which produce citizens as simultaneously self-regulating and lacking in self-discipline. Bacchi (2015) queries the implications of public health discourses that frame alcohol policy in this way and argues against a tendency in research on alcohol to downplay environmental conditions. This lack of recognition around broader social and political determinants of ‘alcohol problems’ results in “the preoccupation with nonconforming individuals” (Bacchi, 2015, p. 141). Interrogating public health frameworks that give rise to the construction of ‘alcohol problems’ provides a means for disrupting this problem representation by naming and critiquing the broader knowledge cultures from which problem representations arise and gain social and economic currency.

*Step 7: Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations.*

A final step in WPR directs the analyst to subject their own problem representations to the same critical interrogation as the policy they have analysed. A WPR approach demands a form of self-scrutiny about one’s role in shaping research and critique – what Bacchi (2012) calls “self-problematisation (‘reflexivity’)” (p. 22). This call to be reflexive is an important element of

poststructural perspectives. Reflexivity acknowledges there is no place outside discourse, and as such, recognises the analyst is also active in producing and normalising particular ways of seeing and knowing. For this reason, WPR includes an undertaking of self-problematization by encouraging analysts in “seeking out possible forms of domination in *their own* proposals and problematizations” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 51, emphasis in original). The analyst must consider what they assume should be done, and how their own proposals about what they think the ‘problem’ is also contribute to the normalising of particular ‘truths’.<sup>20</sup>

Bacchi’s final directive highlights a key tenet of a WPR approach – that research itself does not lay outside the discourses it is purporting to analyse: “In poststructuralism, both theorists and practitioners are treated as ‘subjects’ in process, and as immersed in taken-for-granted knowledges that require critical scrutiny” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 8). Using WPR allows for simultaneously critiquing the assumptions of the object of analysis, as well as the analysts own underlying assumptions. Step 7 encourages the analyst “to ask novel and challenging questions about the roles they play in policy development and how they do their work” (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 2). Detailed introspection is required political practice if, as Bronwyn Davies (1994) contends, we are to catch ourselves in the act of seeing in a particular way.

Bacchi recognises the multiple meanings of reflexivity. Clarifying her usage as a Foucauldian conceptualisation she explains: “For Foucault reflexivity refers to the need to put in question our

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<sup>20</sup> This is one of the most difficult elements of the process, and is often not clearly evident in scholarship that uses WPR. While this form of self-problematization may underpin much of the research conducted using WPR, it is rarely explicitly referred to in publications. See Chapter 8, pp. 216–218 for the self-problematization undertaken in this study.

categories of analysis. In fact for Foucault reflexivity requires a *conscious* interrogation of taken-for-granted presuppositions and beliefs” (Bacchi, 2009b, p. 27, emphasis in original). Using WPR provides a means for such conscious interrogation which reflects poststructural sensibilities that undermine rationalist approaches as well as claims to knowledges and their alleged value neutrality (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). True to its poststructural premise, the use of WPR considers no concept to be value-free or unable to be contested.

### **Disrupting the taken-for-granted in HPE: Starting with the AC: HPE**

The subsection that follows describes how WPR was used as an analytic strategy to shape the analytic work of this thesis. It details the steps taken in analysing the AC: HPE as a prescriptive text and in asking what the ‘problems’ of education, health, and physical activity are represented to be through this text, and within the broader field of HPE. In doing so, the aim here, but more significantly throughout the broader thesis, is to make a case for using WPR as an analytic tool that extends existing poststructural readings of curriculum by specifically focusing on problem representations. HPE is a particularly useful case study, because it is located at a nexus of highly-contested disciplinary and policy issues.

Employing WPR in poststructural perspectives of curriculum interrogates how knowledges and practices of schools are positioned to respond to particular ‘problems’ – problems that are reliant on a range of taken-for-granted ‘truths’ and are constructed and represented in particular ways. Application of WPR recognises that we are governed through problematisations in curricula, specifically, by the ‘problems’ that curricula are intended to respond to as they seek to anticipate

the world of practice. In this thesis, the analysis focuses attention on a curriculum text to disrupt its taken-for-granted status and provide ways of thinking differently about commonly accepted categories and governing practices. Using WPR reflects a wariness of the tendency to treat curriculum as axiomatic or a self-evident good, and instead seeks to scrutinise the norms that render intelligible curriculum as ‘truth’. The focus of the analysis was not on the articulated intentions of curriculum writers or the supporting documents such as curriculum shape papers or drafts. Instead, the analysis interrogated a selected curriculum text, calling into question how this particular curriculum is rendered intelligible at this specific moment in time. The curriculum text provided the initial object of analysis; however, familiarity with other texts on similar or related circumstances or topics is an important part of a WPR analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). The curriculum text provided a lever for considering problematisations in HPE, with the field of inquiry then being broadened to incorporate scholarship and academic literature which renders intelligible the particular ‘problems’ of HPE that are represented within the curriculum.

### ***Object of analysis.***

The initial object of the WPR analysis was the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE) (ACARA, 2017c). The AC: HPE forms one part of the Australian Curriculum which has been developed and produced by ACARA. The Australian Curriculum is government-sanctioned, with ACARA funded by, and ultimately answering to, the Federal Government of Australia. The curriculum has been published and made publicly available through the Australian Curriculum website.<sup>21</sup> Using internet-based material as a source of

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

primary data may be a somewhat recent approach, but is well recognised as legitimate and worthwhile given the proliferation of online materials and engagements (Crowley, 2009, p. 341). As William Gibson and Andrew Brown (2009) point out, not only is the internet a portal to access texts of many different kinds, but is itself, a documentary source; “web pages constitute perhaps the most ubiquitous form of documentary evidence in contemporary society” (p.74).

The Australian Curriculum website is the assembly point for ACARA’s articulations in relation to curriculum, both through documents and reports linked to from within its pages, and also in the material presented directly on the site itself. The website presents the public face of ACARA’s enunciations on curriculum, packaged for, and distributed to, diverse audiences. The main content of the website is primarily intended for schools and teachers. However, use by parents is also implied by a navigation link to ‘Parent information’ pages on the main website homepage.<sup>22</sup> The content of each webpage is sandwiched between the Australian Curriculum logo at the top and the ACARA logo and its copyright at the bottom. In this sense, each and every page within the site is accorded the same status and authority in relation to ACARA. The multiplicity of authorship is recognised within an accessibility statement relating to the website, declaring; “This website is the work of many authors and is a dynamic environment” (ACARA, 2017a). However, the fact individual authorship is not differentiated between the webpages highlights ACARA is willing to ‘own’ the contents of the website. Acknowledgement of the website as a ‘dynamic environment’ pertains to the way the content of the website is able to be regularly changed and updated.

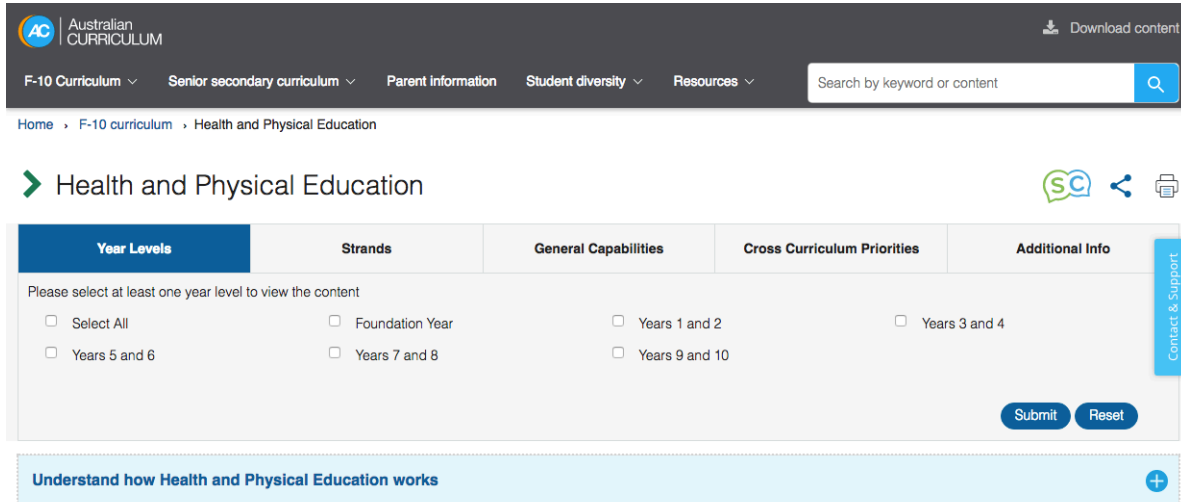
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<sup>22</sup> The link is one of five headings across the top section of the website’s homepage, with ACARA announcing a “greater prominence of parent information” (ACARA, 2017f), as part of their relaunching of the new-look Australian Curriculum website on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

The website states the Australian Curriculum has three dimensions; Learning Areas, Cross-curriculum Priorities, and General Capabilities. HPE is one of the eight Learning Areas which contain disciplinary specific knowledge. English, Mathematics, Science, and Health and Physical Education comprise four single subjects, whereas Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, and Languages each comprise multiple subjects. The Learning Areas have many common structural and organisational features including the division of each into content strands, sub-strands, and/or threads. These divisions are presented as learning sequences across schooling years. The website is organised such that there are multiple hyperlinks to guide educators through an array of elements to be considered when developing programs of work in schools: knowledge, skills, scope and sequence; general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities; assessment standards and models of student work for each year level. The responsibility for navigating these requirements lies with state curriculum authorities and it is expected that teachers will use state sites and support materials in implementing the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2017e).

The AC: HPE can be accessed via the URL <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/health-and-physical-education/>. On this webpage are navigation links that provide access to the various sections of the AC: HPE. Across a bar at the top are the headings; Year Levels, Strands, General Capabilities, Cross Curriculum Priorities, and Additional Info. Clicking on each of these provides an array of checkboxes that allow the user to pre-select the specific content they would like to access. For example, while the curriculum encompasses year levels

Foundation through Years 9 and 10, a user can opt to view only the content related to a specific year level.<sup>23</sup>

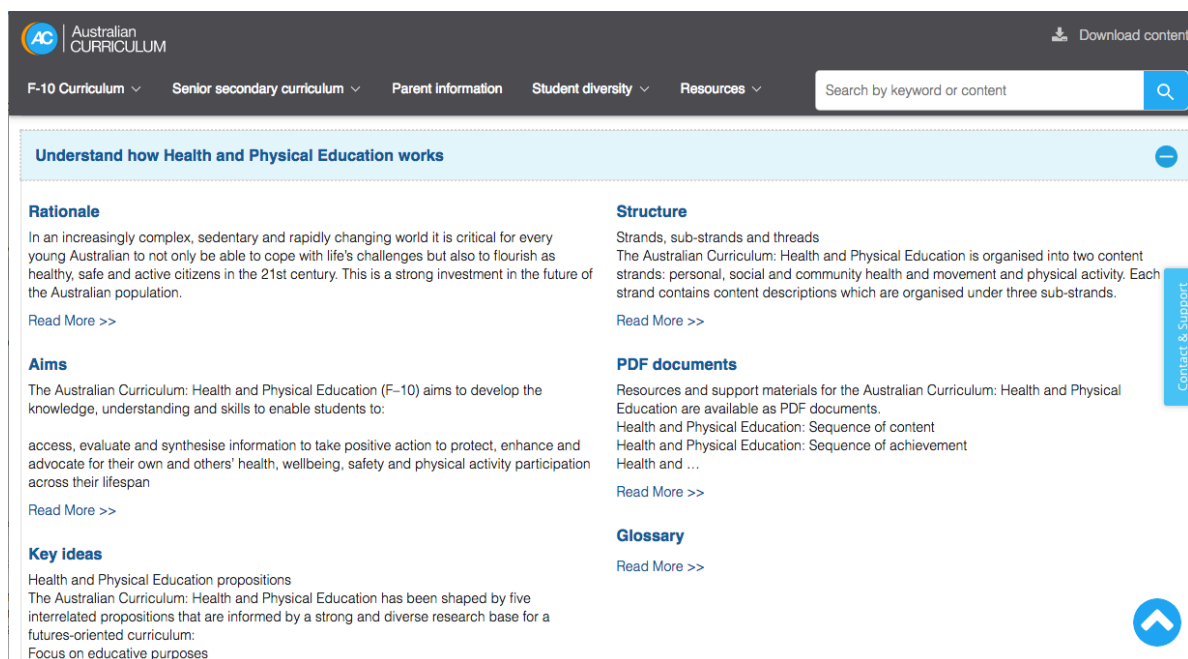


*Figure 3.1 Screenshot of AC: HPE webpage*

Below the section that allows for specific content selection, is a heading “Understand how Health and Physical Education works”. Clicking on this reveals a further drop-down section with the headings; Rationale, Aims, Key Ideas, Structure, PDF Documents, and Glossary, all with the option of clicking to ‘Read More >>’.

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<sup>23</sup> The content is divided into ‘Stages’ which generally correlate to two year-levels (e.g. Years 1-2, 3-4, etc.), apart from Foundation (kindergarten), which is considered a stage of its own.



*Figure 3.2 Screenshot of AC: HPE webpage drop-down menu*

It is this content contained within these sections of the curriculum that has provided the initial focus of the analytic work of this thesis.

The decision was made to take up the AC: HPE Rationale statement as the specific text that WPR was applied to. This was backed by the assertion of Alan Reid (2009) that: “The design of any curriculum is always strongly influenced by its rationale” (p. 12). Further, Penney (2010) argues, that a curriculum’s rationale will impact how particular discourses are reflected within the curriculum design. However, as Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) contend “if a text is selected for analysis, it provides only a starting point” with WPR deploying “texts as ‘levers’ to open up reflections on the forms of governing” (p. 17). The broader statements of the Aims, Key Ideas, and Structure were drawn on in the archaeological work of further unpacking the problem representations within the Rationale. Glossary definitions were also drawn on occasionally to

understand how particular key words were defined. The process of setting out the scope and parameters of analysis and the justification for doing so are further elaborated on under Stage 1 in the methods of analysis subheading.

The curriculum was analysed both in the form it appears on the website,<sup>24</sup> and through the content available for download/print.<sup>25</sup> The analysis was conducted using the online website in order to engage with the interactivity of the text through the various links, selections, and audits it offers. Screen shots were taken (Appendix 2), however not every element of the website was captured in this way. To ensure consistency, the text from the website that contributed to the analysis was downloaded and saved on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, by clicking on the ‘print page’ logo in the top right-hand corner of the AC: HPE webpages for the Rationale, Aims, Key Ideas, Structure, and some sections of the Glossary. These were saved as PDF documents and are available in Appendix 1.

Care was taken to set clear parameters around the object of analysis due to the particular challenges of analysing a curriculum text that has been provided primarily in an online form. Nina Marshall’s (2012) analysis of the World Bank website recognises that reading websites and webpages as texts can bring particular challenges in relation to their hypertextuality,<sup>26</sup>

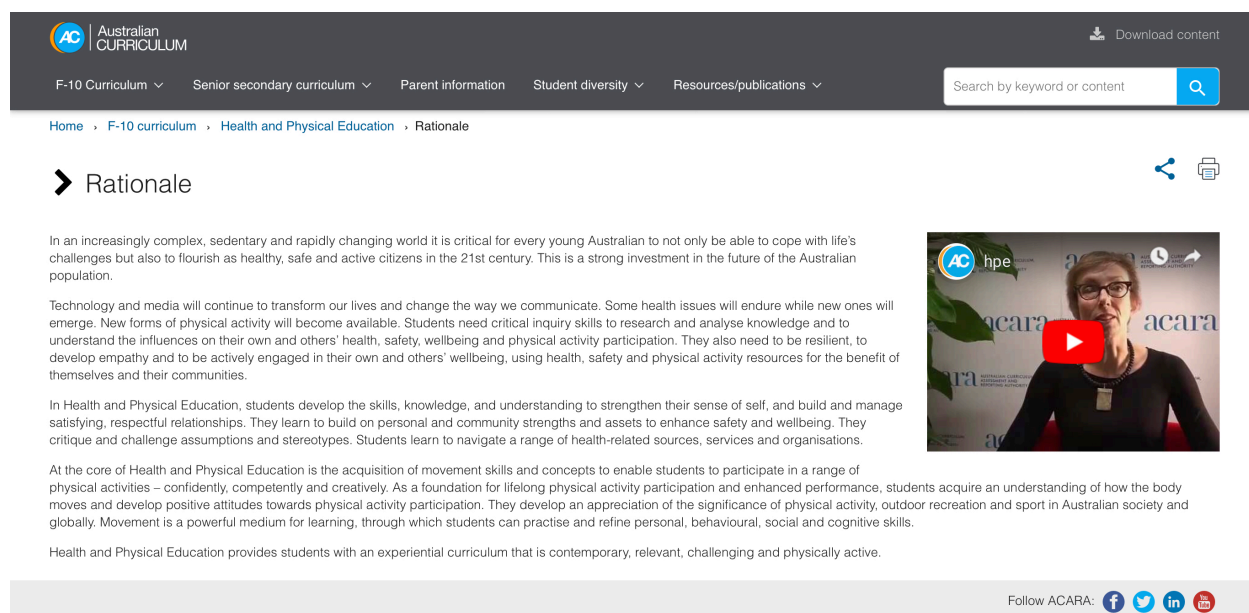
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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> The website has undergone a number of changes throughout the duration of my analysis. I have included a date of access where applicable to make explicit the particular iteration used for particular moments of analysis.

<sup>25</sup> The downloaded PDF version, available in Appendix 1, was accessed and downloaded on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Hypertextuality is the linking of texts such as that provided by the networking function of new media that allows for links between fields of information.

multimodality,<sup>27</sup> and transitory existence. The online formation of text creates new dimensions of meaning-making, as readings are not necessarily linear but traverse connections and links such that there is no single, default reading sequence of the text. The content of the Australian Curriculum website is also not restricted to written text, or even to the design and arrangement of that text. The content is also significantly visual (with prominent use of photographs and logos) and audio (in the form of audio and video clips) as can be seen in the embedded video link of the Rationale page.



*Figure 3. 3 Screenshot of AC: HPE Rationale with embedded video*

The website contains links within text, on images, on design elements such as navigation bars, and so on, which carry the reader to other webpages, both within and outside the site, and to

<sup>27</sup> Multimodality is the use of different modes – textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual – in conjunction to convey messages.

resources including electronic versions of documents, audio and video files, email links etc. These links can be accessed in different orders, as well as changed or broken, either by those editing the Australian Curriculum website or others editing linked-to external sites. This last point hints at a key aspect of the website's form; that it is editable and thus subject to revision by unknown author(s) on a potentially minute-by-minute basis. It is able to be updated and amended without there necessarily being clear evidence or articulation of this from the website's authors.

Throughout the writing of this thesis the Australian Curriculum website was repeatedly updated and amended. On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017, ACARA released a 'revamped' Australian Curriculum website.<sup>28</sup> The content of the AC: HPE accessed (30<sup>th</sup> June 2017) and analysed in the study did not change across the period of analysis, however the form of the website and pathways for accessing the information did undergo transformation. This raises questions about whether the *mediation* of problem representations within the AC: HPE matters, and what these variances and differences may do. While, for the purposes of this thesis, a close examination of this issue lay outside the scope of the study, it raises important questions for future studies of online curriculum formats of this kind.

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<sup>28</sup> ACARA (2017f) provided a release statement, offering; "The new website features: an updated look and feel, content that is easier to find through a new 'filter' option on the homepage, and greater prominence of parent information and student diversity information on the home page. There is no change to the actual curriculum, just how it is presented. The website will retain its current address and all links to curriculum and resources will be maintained through automatic redirects."

### ***Method of analysis.***

The analytic work of the study comprised five stages; (1) setting out the parameters of analysis, (2) identifying problem representations, (3) an integrated WPR analysis, (4) a focus on alternative ways of thinking about ‘problems’, and (5) a reflexive examination of the analysts own problem representations.

#### *Stage 1 – parameters of analysis.*

The first stage in the analytic work of the study involved making decisions about the parameters for analysis. Marking off and marking out territory for analysis is an interpretive process wherein the choices of the researcher are already inherently involved in the analysis (Goodwin, 2011). The process involved making decisions about which text, or selections of text, would provide the initial object of the WPR analysis. Bacchi (2009a) recommends narrowing the focus of analysis to concrete policy proposals, or ‘prescriptive texts’, “designed to be read, learned, reflected upon, and tested out” (p. 12). As the opening statement, the proposals of the Rationale set out the broadest standards of the AC: HPE and provide a framework for reading and using the text. The Rationale was selected as the main focus of the study as it prescribes what is to be done in and through the AC: HPE. After reading through the entirety of the AC: HPE, it was decided this notion of ‘proposal’ was also encompassed in a further three areas of the AC: HPE, titled; Aims, Key Ideas, Structure. Together with the Rationale, these come under the heading *Understand how health and physical education works*. The Rationale, Aims, Key Ideas, and Structure provide an overview of the principles guiding the formation and implementation of HPE as a Learning Area, along with the bodies of knowledge and core ideas/concepts that have

underpinned its construction in this particular moment of curriculum development. Collectively, they provide a justification for HPE, the key proposals of what the curriculum will/should do, and why HPE is a pertinent and necessary part of Australian education. As such, while the AC: HPE Rationale constitutes the primary ‘object of analysis’, the Aims, Key Ideas and Structure provide the key texts for the archaeological work of unpacking the identified problem representations. A number of terms listed in the Glossary were also included in the analysis.

*Stage 2 – identifying problem representations in the Rationale.*

The next stage of the analytic work involved identifying the key problem representations within the Rationale. This comprised a close textual reading to determine key words, phrases, and assertions within the Rationale. Question 1, which impels the analyst to ask what the ‘problem’ is represented to be within the text, offered a useful exercise in clarification. A simple content analysis was undertaken, with attention given to the concepts, categories, binaries, and distinctions deployed in the text. Such a rigorous and close reading of the text provided a starting point for careful consideration of what is said in the Rationale and how it is possible for it to say so at this particular moment in time. The initial identification of key ‘problems’ represented in the Rationale then allowed for further interrogation of these.

*Stage 3 – integrated WPR analysis of problem representations.*

The third stage in the analytic work of the study consisted of a more in-depth interrogation of the identified ‘problems’. The archaeological and genealogical work began once the key problem representations were identified and enabled interrogation of the specific ways of thinking lodged within and firmed up by the curriculum. The archaeological work involved analysing statements

made across the AC: HPE Aims, Key Ideas, and Structure. It also involved looking at other parts of the Australian Curriculum website, such as the embedded video introduction to the AC: HPE given by lead curriculum writer, Doune Macdonald (ACARA, 2016).

Each ‘problem’ was interrogated using WPR as a frame for thinking that guided a discussion of what the ‘problem’ is (the shape of the problem), where it came from, and the potential effects of this problem representation. After reading off the initial proposals to identify particular ‘problems’, the analysis considered the conditions of possibility that enabled this particular representation of the problem to be intelligible, before considering the potential effects of both the explicit and implicit problem representations. To do so, the analysis extended to consider the problem representations that emerge from the Rationale and also occur across a broad range of scholarship in the field of HPE. This led to the genealogical work of the analysis.

The genealogical work explored the intelligibility of each of the key problem representations through the surrounding body of HPE literature. Throughout the analysis, texts such as the *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), *A statement on health and physical education for Australian schools* (AEC, 1994), and *The ACHPER national statement on the curriculum future of health and physical education in Australia* (The Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), 2009), were drawn upon to locate the AC: HPE within discourse around the historic goals and shape of education and HPE within Australia. Further, the *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (ACARA, 2012a) and publications from lead curriculum writer Macdonald were analysed as part of accessing some of the thinking behind the production of this particular curriculum. Education and HPE scholarship provided a framework

for understanding the thinking that presupposed and underpinned the field when the AC: HPE was developed. Scholarship on governing through education (Lingard, 2018; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), and governmentality more broadly (Rose, 2000, 2001), also contributed to understanding the proposals of the AC: HPE.

Building upon a vast body of work that already exists within the field of health and physical education assisted in forming a comprehensive picture of the landscape the new HPE curriculum had entered. This body of literature also aided in contemplating potential effects of the AC: HPE. Of particular interest was considering subjectification and how problem representations within the AC: HPE, and HPE more broadly, make ‘subjects’ – producing and constructing young people to be(come) particular kinds of citizen–subjects. Wider reading of literature in the field also allowed for reflection on what is *not* included in the HPE curriculum and the way these silences leave unproblematic some aspects of citizenship, young people, health, and physical education. The work of curriculum was interrogated from the premise that both what is privileged and what is excluded work to govern in particular ways

*Stage 4 – focus on alternative ways of thinking.*

Inherent to poststructural perspectives is the destabilising of taken-for-granted ‘truths’ or norms. This stage of the WPR analysis consisted of thinking about how representations of the ‘problems’ produced and disseminated by the AC: HPE could be questioned, disrupted, or replaced. Alternative approaches and ways of thinking were collectively considered and are discussed in the recommendations offered in the final discussion (Chapter 8). This provided an

opportunity to engage with contemporary conversation in the field of HPE surrounding the adoption and implementation of the new Australian Curriculum, and in particular the AC: HPE.

*Stage 5 – reflexivity / self-problematism.*

The final stage of the WPR analysis involved applying Step 7 of WPR to self-problematise the conclusions and assumptions of the analyst. This was an important step in the research process, particularly as there was an intention to evaluate the AC: HPE and provide proposals for future directions. The application of this final step acknowledges the role played by the analyst in shaping the research and critique that is offered. A primary means for this reflexivity was considering the analysts own individual context, and how past experiences, individual partialities, and personal opinions and beliefs would have impacted upon the analytic work. Further, this self-problematism involved thinking about ways the WPR analysis was active in (re)producing particular norms or ‘truths’ based on the analysts own experiences, investments, and assumptions.

*How the analysis will be presented.*

WPR provides both a tool for analysis, and a model of thinking that allows for an innovative approach to poststructural considerations of curriculum. The integrated application of the questions of WPR provided a comprehensive analysis of the text and incited a more robust and considered discussion around governing through curriculum. Because an integrated, rather than systematic, application of WPR was used, the discussion of the analysis is also presented in an integrated manner. Stages 1–3 of the analysis are presented within the discussion chapters that follow, according to the key identified problem representations in HPE (Chapters 4–7). Chapter

8 then offers a summary of findings and incorporates stages 4–5 of the analysis through a discussion that provides self-problematisations and then offers a number of proposals for alternative approaches to HPE.

## **Chapter 4. What's the 'problem' represented to be in the AC: HPE**

### **Rationale?**

This chapter examines what the 'problem' is represented to be in the Rationale of the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE). The discussion interrogates the statements of the Rationale to consider the proposals for change offered by the curriculum. By reading off these proposals, it is possible to ascertain the particular shape of the 'problems' the curriculum purports to address – the *problem representations*. This chapter focuses on the Rationale as it sets out the key problem representation within which this thesis argues the other problem representations rest. Three successive chapters (Chapters 5–7) then unpack the 'problems' of HPE nested within this key problem representation.

#### **The Rationale of the AC: HPE**

The Rationale of the AC: HPE (Appendix 1.1) consists of five short paragraphs that constitute the broadest statement of purpose in the AC: HPE and 'rationalise' the need for a new national HPE curriculum. It sets out a picture of contemporary society (para. 1–2), and then outlines how the AC: HPE proposes suitable and beneficial interventions to respond to the present and future 'problems' faced by society (para. 3–5). The following excerpt is from the opening paragraph:

In an increasingly complex, sedentary and rapidly changing world it is critical for every young Australian to not only be able to cope with life's challenges but also

to flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century. This is a strong investment in the future of the Australian population. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1)

The Rationale commences by setting out *as problematic* the broad context into which the AC: HPE enters, foregrounding an “increasingly complex, sedentary, and rapidly changing world” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). It then contributes further to this problem setting by identifying a “critical” need for young people to be “able to cope with life’s challenges” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). This is qualified by this not being the only ‘need’ of young people, who are also expected to “flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1).

Paragraph two of the Rationale continues to outline a ‘problem’ to be solved by the AC: HPE, elaborating further on the ‘needs’ of students:

*Students need* critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge and to understand the influences on their own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation. *They also need* to be resilient, to develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing, using health, safety and physical activity resources for the benefit of themselves and their communities. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2, emphasis added)

These proposed needs relate to specific knowledges, skills, or attributes of students, which the curriculum is charged with producing. By framing them as needs there is a suggestion of urgency or necessity, but also that these are universal requirements for young, well, citizens.

Paragraph three then shifts the focus from *needs*, to making proposals about what students will *learn* and *develop* through the AC: HPE:

In Health and Physical Education, students *develop* the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. They *learn to* build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Students *learn to* navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3, emphasis added)

Here the curriculum proposes that student learning and development are the requisite ‘solutions’ to the apparent ‘problems’ and ‘needs’ offered in the previous two paragraphs. By proposing to facilitate young people developing and learning particular knowledges, skills, and abilities, the Rationale represents a particular ‘problem’ of young people. This third paragraph begins to unpack the requirements of the aforementioned “healthy, safe and active citizens” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The fourth paragraph then shifts attention to focus on movement and physical activity. It does so while continuing to articulate particular attributes to be *acquired* and ways that young people are expected to *develop*:

At the core of Health and Physical Education is the *acquisition of movement skills* and concepts to enable students to participate in a range of physical activities – confidently, competently and creatively. As a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation and enhanced performance, students *acquire an*

*understanding* of how the body moves and *develop positive attitudes* towards physical activity participation. They *develop an appreciation* of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in Australian society and globally. Movement is a powerful medium for learning, through which students can practise and refine personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4, emphasis added)

The paragraph articulates that through the AC: HPE young people will acquire and develop particular capabilities and dispositions towards physical activity and movement, again indicative that young people are positioned as the proposed ‘solution’ to the aforementioned problems. The AC: HPE is positioned to provide life-long skills and attitudes to address problems of an increasingly complex, sedentary, and rapidly changing world and the need for young people to cope with the challenges of life. Focused on movement and physical activity, there is repeated reference to young people needing positive attitudes and developing a lifelong appreciation for physical activity. Movement and physical activity are portrayed as educational experiences that provide young people with particular skills and attributes that are positioned to help meet particular ‘needs’ and ‘problems’. The future Australian population mentioned in the first paragraph of the Rationale is made up of citizens who acquire positive attitudes towards, and appreciation for, movement and physical activity.

The fifth and final paragraph of the Rationale consists of a one-sentence statement; “Health and Physical Education provides students with an experiential curriculum that is contemporary, relevant, challenging and physically active” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 5). This final statement provides a summary that highlights the supposedly positive contributions of the AC:

HPE. In light of the problematic setting outlined in the opening two paragraphs, here the proposals of the AC: HPE are contextualised as being “contemporary, relevant, challenging and physically active” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 5). Reading off the proposals of the Rationale, there is a ‘problem’ that requires the interventions of the AC: HPE and involves young people’s learning, acquisition, and development of particular knowledges, capabilities, and ways of being. It is a ‘problem’ of the future Australian population that is proposed to be addressed by producing young people as particular kinds of citizens. Touted as “a strong investment” in the future population, the curriculum is represented by the Rationale as a particular mode of government. By targeting young people’s attitudes, actions, and behaviours, the curriculum locates the ‘problem’ in what young people think, what they do, who they are, and who they will become. In the initial opening statement of the Rationale, who it is hoped young people will become is stated to be “healthy, safe, and active citizens of the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The production of such citizens is part of the proposed response to a perceived ‘problem’ of the future Australian population.

The problem representations of the Rationale centre on health, safety and risk, and physical inactivity and sedentariness, which are nested within an overarching ‘problem’ of the future Australian population. The discussion in Chapters 5–7, offers in-depth analysis of these nested ‘problems’ and the proposed need to produce ‘healthy’, ‘safe’, and ‘active’ citizens, while this chapter attends to the broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population. As outlined above, the Rationale represents a problem that is not merely one of young people’s knowledge or lack thereof, but is instead couched in terms of who young people should be and/or become, extending the ‘problem’ to one of citizenship, government, and changing national and global societies. By locating students or young people as both the problem and solution by which the

issues of a complex world will be addressed, the statements of the Rationale produce a young citizenry who will form a responsible, future, national population. This is not particularly unique in the context of schooling more broadly, but the unique and specific ways the Rationale represents this problem has particular kinds of repercussions that this chapter, and indeed the broader thesis, will interrogate.

### **The future of the Australian population**

By describing life as full of challenges and the world as complex, sedentary, and rapidly changing, the Rationale positions modern Australian society – the context into which this curriculum enters – as problematic. The final statement of the Rationale represents the AC: HPE as a “contemporary” and “relevant” response to this ‘problem’ (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 5). By producing a particular problem setting, the statements of the Rationale propose a need to adequately respond to, and prepare for, the contemporary context by producing a particular kind of population, consisting of citizens who not only cope with challenges, but who also “flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). These proposals announce an intent to govern the formation of a particular kind of future Australian population, made up of particular kinds of citizens.

The Rationale represents the idealised citizen as not only avoiding being or becoming a ‘burden’ on society, but as contributing positively. This sentiment is reiterated in the offering of the curriculum as an investment in the future, national population: “This is a strong investment in the future of the Australian population” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The language of

investment hints towards economic benefit, and the notion of a ‘strong’ investment implies an expected high return rate and significant level of reform. The production of neutral citizens is not the goal, but rather an ambitious program is proposed in order to produce citizens who flourish. While this may seemingly locate the AC: HPE outside a problem-solving discourse, the WPR analysis invites one to consider that any proposal for change carries within it an inherent problem representation. An intent to produce young people who “flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st<sup>st</sup> century” is underpinned by a concern that without the interventions of the curriculum, this desired population would fail to be realised.

The notion of education as an investment in the production of ‘good’ citizenship has a long and considered history in Australia. McCuaig and Hay (2013) argue that “the various principled positions underpinning twentieth-century Australian HPE curriculum reforms have been grounded in the general order education sector principled position of good citizenship” (p. 284). That is, throughout the past century, HPE has been mobilised as a means for producing ‘good’ citizens. This principled position of good citizenship aligns with Hunter’s (1994b) assertion that the primary objective of governmental strategies of schooling is the conduct of the citizen. It is well-argued that education acts as a key discursive power in the construction and government of citizens (see for example, T. Burns & Köster, 2016; Curtis, 2012; Kirk & there was an intention to not evaluate the AC:HPE and provide proposals for future directions’, 1990; Popkewitz, 1997; there was an intention to not evaluate the AC:HPE and provide proposals for future directions’ there was an intention to not evaluate the AC:HPE and provide proposals for future directions’ & Glasby, 2002). Bacchi (2009a) contends, “education is seen as the ‘solution’ to a swathe of social ‘problems’” (p. 206), predominantly centred around managing the behaviours, choices, and practices of those to be educated. As far back as 1930, Mildred Muscio suggested there were two

overall aims of education: “[1] the happy development of the child and [2] his or her usefulness to the community” (p. 73). Muscio (1930) argued that “a child must be kept strong and well if he is to become a happy and useful citizen” (p. 74).

Popkewitz, Olsson, and Petersson (2007) describe a *cosmopolitan ideal* that is taken up and used to mobilise reform across a variety of sectors such as health and education. They argue the characteristics and capabilities of the cosmopolitan ideal are “assembled and connected to form the principles governing who the child and citizen are and should be” (Popkewitz et al., 2007). Similarly, Kellie Burns (2012) argues that cosmopolitanism has led to an increased emphasis on futures-focused, global education. In their historical account of Australian schooling Campbell and Proctor (2014) argue that early accounts of schooling were characterised by anxiety for the moral future of a rising generation in a colony founded in part as a prison. Throughout the years that followed, to the present day, the school curriculum has played a crucial part in not only the ordering and evaluation of knowledge, but also as a government intervention for addressing social problems, managing the population, and producing certain kinds of citizens. The proposals of the Rationale seemingly align with this general, historical approach to using education as a means for governing the population through their framing within the broader ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population.

The production of a particular kind of citizenship through the intervention of curriculum is also evident in a number of documents that have underpinned and informed the production of the Australian Curriculum. The Melbourne Declaration is one such text, and although it is now over a decade old, it remains one of the key documents currently guiding Australian education (MCEETYA, 2008). It follows the 1989 Hobart Declaration, and the 1999 Adelaide Declaration,

which were both committed to ensuring high-quality schooling for all young Australians. The Melbourne Declaration locates schools as sites of intervention for ameliorating future national problems, suggesting that there are “major changes in the world that are placing new demands on Australian education” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4). In doing so, it specifically establishes education as a key influence in the production of citizens and government of the Australian population. One of the Melbourne Declaration’s two main goals is the production of students who become “successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and *active and informed citizens*” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8, emphasis added). Echoes of these statements are seen in the new national curriculum, and explicitly in the ways the Rationale of the AC: HPE mobilises similar discourses of a changing world and the need to prepare students to become particular kinds of citizens. Linking citizenship with the work of the school, the Melbourne Declaration positions schools as key sites for the (re)production and management of ‘good’ citizens.

The Rationale, as the broadest standard of the AC:HPE, functions as a governmental tool that “mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge” (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph, 2005, p. 367). It does so by positing a changing world as a ‘problem’ of/for young people and education via HPE as a response. Recognising power as productive frames the problem representations and stated intentions of the Rationale as productive, producing particular kinds of ‘good’ citizens in the context of a broader educational discourse focused on making citizens. Discourses of citizenship throughout the AC: HPE are varied, contested, and susceptible to resistance and challenge. By analysing more closely the statements of the Rationale, it is possible to consider the proposals it makes about citizenship, and how these are informed by broader historical and contemporaneous discourses. Broadly speaking, the proposals of the Rationale address the ‘problem’ of the future

Australian population by producing a youth citizenship that is responsabilised, futures-oriented, and nationalised.

### ***Children and young people.***

A focus on children and young people is arguably inherent to a curriculum text to be administered to those ranging in age from approximately 4–16 years old, but the opening paragraph of the Rationale places children and young people at the centre of a ‘problem’ the curriculum purportedly addresses. The Rationale states: “it is critical for *every young Australian* to not only be able to cope with life’s challenges but also to flourish as healthy safe and active citizens in the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1, emphasis added). This statement identifies “every young Australian” as the key recipients of the curriculum. It is intended to work on all young Australians, and sets out two critical needs for them: 1) to be able to cope; and 2) to flourish as particular kinds of citizens. The Rationale assures that life will be challenging for young people and sets out parameters for an intervention that specifically targets *young* Australians.

The Rationale represents particular discourses around the kinds of citizens that ‘young Australians’ are expected to become through the intervention offered in HPE. When discussing citizenship in the context of schooling;

powerful social, historical, cultural and educational discourses are engaged...  
[which] produce and reproduce discourses of who adults think children are, what adults think children are capable of and how adults think children should be socialised into the culture of dominant society. (Ailwood et al., 2011, p. 642)

The complexity of this is that discourses related to children's citizenship "have the potential to empower children, yet they also deliver a normalising framework that structures a field of possibilities for children's (and adults') conduct." (Millei & Imre, 2009, p. 280). Ailwood et al. (2011) argue that often when discussing citizenship in relation to young people various nomenclature are used to describe children's citizenship such as 'child citizens' or 'future citizens'. The use of such qualifiers for citizenship can represent 'child citizens' or 'future citizens' as, to some extent, non-citizens or citizens in the making. It is common to frame children and young people as not yet having skills being in the process of becoming citizens (Robinson, 2012). In the Rationale, the qualification of citizenship is related to 'every young Australian' becoming particular kinds of citizens, which explicitly ties the future Australian population to young people's citizenship.

While the Rationale proposes a need for young people to be particular kinds of citizens, the ensuing statement of the AC: HPE as an investment in the *future* of the Australian population reflects a discourse of young people as citizens-in-the-making. The concept of investing in the future population represents children as future adult-citizens, rather than as young citizens in their own right. Balen et al. (2006) discuss the tension that exists between "a clear trend within literature, service provision, legislation and international conventions [that] recognizes children as 'active beings' in all aspects of their lives" and alternative discourse that "construct(s) children as dependent, in need of protection and as 'human becomings'" (p.29). Intrinsic to childhood research and knowledges are the notions of 'being' and 'becoming' (James & Prout, 2015; Prout & James, 1997). The discourse of the 'becoming' child is explicitly futures-orientated, placing the onus of importance on who the child will be rather than who the child is. It overlooks the complexity of some childhoods and erases the non-linearity of growth,

development and socio-cultural experiences.

The same focus on who young people *will be*, rather than who they *are*, is represented in the statement that young Australians need to be able to cope and to flourish *in the 21st century* – a term that currently encapsulates both the present and the future. Proposals underpinned by discourses of ‘becoming’ can result in a development focus that may neglect or dismiss the present knowledges or experiences that come with being a child. Constructions of children as future adults not only overlook the diverse experiences of children in the present, but can influence or direct who they will become. Even within acceptance that the future matters, the possibility that future anticipations may be wrong makes it problematic to base representations of who a child is primarily on who that child will be (Uprichard, 2008).

Similar constructions of childhood can be seen in the broader context from which the national curriculum was mandated. In his aforementioned address pronouncing a need for an ‘education revolution’, Kevin Rudd (2007) claims; “It is time to invest in our future – and there is no better place to start than by investing in the education of our children.” The Rationale picks up similar language with reference to both “citizens in the 21st century” and the curriculum being “an investment in the future of the Australian population” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). Statements of this kind represent young people as not-yet part of the *Australian population*. In this regard, the Rationale takes up dominant tropes that depict children as a precious resource, as “human capital in formation”, or our “next generation” (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 632). Such discourse represent young people as unfinished, raw material, to be shaped and moulded by adults into the next generation.

In juxtaposition to young people as becoming-citizens, the Rationale repeatedly uses the present tense to depict a need for young people to ‘be’ a certain way. The ‘being’ child is understood as a social actor in their own right, actively constructing their own ‘childhood’, with individual views and experiences about being a child (James & Prout, 2015). The only use of an iteration of the term *become* in the AC: HPE Rationale is in reference to new forms of physical activity becoming available. However, there is the assertion that HPE is a space in which students *develop, learn and acquire* a variety of different things (knowledge, skills, empathy etc.) suggesting that students will undergo change (implied improvement) by learning as part of HPE. There is no clear statement as to whether this improvement is focused on the current, or future, lives and experiences of young people. Emma Uprichard (2008) argues that when *both* being and becoming discourses are mobilised together they support and reinforce the notion of the child as an adult in the making. This is because “the construction of the ‘being’ child acts as a ‘mirror picture’ of the ‘becoming’ child, reinforcing and sustaining the hierarchical adult/child dualism and, in turn, the importance and viability of the ‘becoming’ child perspective” (Uprichard, 2008, p. 305). The consummation of discourses of both ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ evident within the Rationale reflects the complexity and multiplicity of knowledges of childhood that underpin the curriculum. The idea of young people as citizens is held together in tension with representations of the curriculum as an investment in future citizenship – both who young people are, and who they will become, representing young people as adults in the making who will form the future of the Australian population.

Minimal reference to individual views or experiences of young people throughout the Rationale provides a discursive sense of the curriculum working *on* young people rather than working *with* them. The Rationale speaks collectively of students’ needs and posits a number of generalised

skills and abilities to be developed and learned by “every young Australian”. This kind of universal approach does not recognise how the individual circumstances and experiences of young people can vary substantially (Wyn, 2009). Burns, Proctor, and Sriprakash (2018) argue that notions of the child-citizen often rest on ideas of white, western childhoods being universally experienced. A focus on “every young Australian” and the key ‘problem’ of the Rationale – the future of the Australian population – combine to represent children and young people as a homogenous subset of the population upon whom the curriculum is able to act and intervene.<sup>29</sup>

The statement that students “learn to build on personal and community strengths and assets” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3) offers a small moment of counter discourse within this dominant narrative. The inclusion or recognition of differing individual views and experiences of young people provides space for broader conceptions of childhood and demonstrates a more collaborative intent to work with, rather than solely upon, young people. Reference to personal and community strengths suggests some recognition of the varied experiences of young people and reflects the strengths-based approach said to underpin the curriculum (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas). A strengths-based approach explicitly recognises the different individual strengths of young people and provides a point of counter-discourse to the dominant problem representations of the Rationale. This approach forms one of the Key Ideas said to underpin the AC: HPE and is further interrogated in the succeeding chapters.

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<sup>29</sup> For a detailed discussion of the particular kinds of youth/child citizenship that teaching and learning demands, see the discussion of findings and proposals for rethinking HPE in Chapter 8.

### *Responsibilised citizens.*

The problem representations of the Rationale depend on the acceptance of a range of taken-for-granted ideas around citizenship, including the contemporary focus of citizenship responsibilities rather than rights. The Rationale represents a ‘good’ citizen as one who is “actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2), and works through this representation to produce responsibilised citizens. This responsibilisation of young people aligns with recent scholarship that recognises the significance of producing ‘responsibilised’ citizens to neoliberal forms of governing (Bottrell & Goodwin, 2011). A discourse of responsibilisation works to produce self-governing citizens who are both encouraged and obliged to take up certain ways of being and knowing as their own. ‘Responsible’ young people then adhere to dominant discourses such that they become self-managing. This both recognises young people as agential, and also produces compliant citizens. Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez (1997) contend the inscribing of agency that constitutes people as moral subjects of their own actions was central to the international spread of mass education at the turn of the 19th century. Within the statements of the Rationale, self-government operates as a rationalising principle and underpins the ‘need’ for schooling that works on the morals and agency of individuals.

Citizenship discourses of responsibility are taken up through the Rationale to inextricably link the actions of the individual (asserting their rights and autonomously fulfilling their responsibilities), to their own flourishing, and commitment to the common good. For example; “They also need to be resilient, to develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing, using health, safety and physical activity resources for the benefit of themselves and their communities.” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). This statement holds

that young people are required to be certain things – resilient, empathetic, actively engaged – in order to benefit themselves and their communities. Through these representations, the governing of young people as future citizens becomes tied to the active participation of individuals in governing themselves. Freebody and Goodwin (2017) note;

programmes and policies seek to produce self-actualized and self-managing individuals (or even communities) by ‘making’ people responsible for governing their own behaviour and the behaviour of those around them (p. 30)

They argue that this form of governing is problematic in that it ascribes individual responsibility to people, instead of to those designing and facilitating these programs and policies (Freebody and Goodwin 2017). The same phenomenon is observed in the AC: HPE, where the proposals of the curriculum implicitly locate the responsibility for the ‘problem’ of the future Australian population not with those in charge of educational policy and curriculum, but with young people.

Citizens as active, productive, and self-managing is reflective of Foucault’s (2008) observations that neoliberal governmentalities position the subject as “an entrepreneur of himself” (p. 226). When young people are envisaged as individuals “active in making choices in order to further their own interests and those of their family” (B. Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 249), citizenship then becomes active and bound to personal choices and responsibilities, rather than reflective of the socio-political conditions in which individuals live. Rose and Miller (1992) contest that binaries of state/society, public/private, government/market etc., do not adequately describe the diverse ways rule is exercised in advanced (neo)liberal democracies. Instead, political power today is exercised through “shifting alliances between diverse authorities in projects to govern a

multitude of facets of economic activity, social life and individual conduct” (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 174). This form of governing is less about imposing constraints upon citizens, and more about constructing citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom. Personal autonomy is not in opposition to political power but becomes a way in which power is exercised as individuals come to play a part in the operations of power as opposed to merely being subjects of it (Rose & Miller, 1992). Citizenship then becomes active, manifested not in the powers derived from membership of a collective body, but in the pursuit of personal fulfilment and flourishing. This positions individuals to be(come) responsabilised citizens who are actively engaged in working towards particular ideals.

Responsibilising young people in and through HPE is also evident in the move from *we* to *they* within the Rationale: “Technology and media will continue to transform *our* lives and change the way *we* communicate... *Students* need... *They* also need...” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2, emphasis added). A collective, social ‘problem’ of technological and media change is proposed to be addressed by a specific and targeted solution – providing young people with a specific set of attributes, skills, and by building resilience. It may be recognised as *our* problem, but *they* – young people – are represented as the solution. Considering that what we propose to do about something says what we think the ‘problem’ is, this proposal positions young people at the centre of what is seen to be problematic. They are the ones who ‘need’ particular characteristics, attributes, and abilities as the ‘problem’ proposed by the AC: HPE is a particular ‘problem’ of and for young people. This representation perpetuates a privileging of ‘active citizens’ with more responsibilities than rights, as young people are required to upskill and develop in response to a shifting global landscape. The proposals of the Rationale aim to produce young people as responsible, not only for their own health and wellbeing, but for that of their communities and

the future population. This responsabilising of young people also extends beyond the Rationale and carries throughout other statements within the AC: HPE, which will be discussed further throughout the analyses of Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

A discourse of responsabilising young people also gains traction in health policy and practice. It is evident, for example, in health related texts such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) (2016) report on Australia's health. The biennial national report suggests; "Addressing health concerns and choices early can improve the immediate quality of life for young people and is socially and economically more effective than dealing with enduring problems in adulthood." (AIHW, 2016, p. 208). A focus on the choices of young people locates them as a key site for health and government interventions. The AIHW (2016) contends that during the time of adolescence "many modifiable behavioural risk factors that can affect current and future health and wellbeing either emerge or accelerate" (p. 208). This represents adolescence as a key moment for intervention due to increasing and emerging risk factors. Animosity over changing risk factors is paralleled in the language of the Rationale which represents the problem of a rapidly changing and unstable world as a particular 'problem' of and for young people.

Implicit within this problem representations of the Rationale is the issue of young people who fail to measure up, or take up normative ways of being. Those who do not embody their citizenship with agency or responsibility are subsequently positioned as problematic. As suggested by Burns et al. (2018) "a central 'risk' associated with 'being young' is not gaining the skills and attributes to be a productive and financially independent future citizen" (p. 31). This produces a 'bad' young citizen who becomes a burden to society, due to ill-health, unsafe

practices, and failing to participate as a productive, active member of society. Young people who fail to embody the required, responsabilised citizenship proposed by the Rationale are thus further constructed as problematic

### ***Future citizens.***

In the Rationale, the inscription of the future works to justify the need for regulating the production of particular kinds of citizens; “This is a strong investment in the *future* of the Australian population” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1, emphasis added). This reference to the future portrays a ‘ubiquitous’ uncertainty that becoming appropriately educated is positioned to address. Repeated reference to students ‘developing’<sup>30</sup> throughout the Rationale further reiterates an investment in both young people’s futures, and in producing future citizens. Popkewitz et al. (2007) argue the future can be used as a regulating principle of the present: “It is a future mobilized to design people in the present” (p. 436). In other words, it is possible for ‘the future’ to function as a governing practice. In this way, the future is inscribed as a reason and means for working *on* young people in the present, through the AC: HPE.

Young people are considered to be on the frontline of new developments and ideas because they represent the potential for a fresh start and the infusion of new ideas or approaches. As Dan Woodman and Johanna Wyn (2015) contend, “young people tend to be in the vanguard of the cultural and subjective expressions of new economic and political developments” (p. 165). This view of young people underpins the Rationale and targets youth as the point of interference for

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<sup>30</sup> The term *develop* occurs once in paragraph two, once in paragraph three, and twice in paragraph four.

producing the desired future population. The reference to the curriculum as a “strong investment” in the population situates citizenship within the language of the market and configures individual citizens as productive, economic entrepreneurs who are responsible for making sound choices in relation to their lifestyle, work, education, and health. The language of *investment* can also be seen in the ACHPER (2009) Statement, which offered HPE as part of “the best investment we can make for the future” (p. 2) and “a critical investment in the health, wellbeing and life prospects for young Australians, and in the future of Australia” (p. 7). Similar language within the Rationale demonstrates how the AC: HPE has been formed within a neoliberal political climate and aligns with the broader intent of both ACHPER, and of Rudd’s ‘education revolution’, as an investment in Australia’s future population.

After articulating in the first paragraph an intent to invest in the future population, the second paragraph of the Rationale states:

Technology and media will *continue to transform* our lives and change the way we communicate. Some health *issues will endure* while *new ones will emerge*. *New forms* of physical activity *will become* available. Students need critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge and to understand the influences on their own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2, emphasis added)

Here, skills, knowledge, and understanding are presented as the solution to future uncertainty – as lives are transformed, health issues emerge, and new forms of physical activity become available. This sets out a need for students to appropriately respond to a shifting future social and

economic landscapes. In the third paragraph, the Rationale again positions HPE as a context in which young people develop skills, knowledge, and understanding (ACARA, 2017c). Particular ways of being, and particular knowledges set forth in the latter paragraphs of the Rationale, represent a critical response to the context set out in the first and second paragraphs.

The Rationale foregrounds a complex and rapidly changing world and represents knowledge as a key part of the ongoing program that will prepare young people for this future uncertainty. While a curriculum invested in the reproduction and dissemination of knowledge is to be expected, applying WPR solicits the probing of presuppositions lodged within this problem representation (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Referring to the work of Scandinavian educator, Per Dalin, Popkewitz et al. (2007) explain how an emphasis on knowledge signals the future:

We are entering a knowledge society since the speed of the changing process is increasing and since the new society demands new, increasing and greater qualifications of each of us. Education will no longer be something linked to a certain range but will be a necessity and a self-evident part of everyday life to all ranges, social classes and occupational groups. We are already there. We know that 'life-long education' has become a reality. (p. 438)

Within the discourse of a 'futures-oriented' curriculum, knowledge is considered fundamental. Kellie Burns (2008) has argued that becoming globally-minded lifelong learners was imagined to involve young people identifying strengths, and using this knowledge to capitalise on themselves in order to "forge socially and economically successful futures" (p. 353). Similarly, Peter Bansel (2007) observed that education and lifelong learning had become a "means for securing identity

and investing in oneself and one's future" (p. 289). Increased knowledge is a future-focused attribute, with the Rationale representing knowledge as part of a critical response to anticipated future changes.

Anna-Katharina Hornidge (2010) provides a useful case study here, researching the Singaporean government's efforts to construct a *knowledge society* in an endeavour to "assure economic and political stability, as well as to counterbalance feelings of uncertainty" (p. 786). A knowledge society is "offered as a visionary guide for collective action and a focal point of collective identity, reducing feelings of insecurity and uncertainty" (Hornidge, 2010, p. 785). Similar language is used within the Rationale, with the offering of knowledge as a means for shoring up the ability for young people to "cope" and "flourish" in the future. Investing in knowledge is investing in the future productivity and prosperity of society by constituting particular kinds of citizens, equipped to face the rapidly changing world. In this way, investing in knowledge is equated with investing in "the future of the Australian population" (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The concept of a *knowledge society* reveals a growing importance of knowledge in the modern world. Sverker Sörlin & Hebe Vessuri (2007) contend: "Knowledge is almost universally considered to be a public good, and something that must be supported" (p. 1). While the Rationale does not purport to be constructing a knowledge society per se, it does reflect knowledge becoming increasingly relevant to social and economic development.

The statements of the Rationale reiterate a perceived relationship between knowledge and preparation of people for the future. Learning and knowledge are represented as characteristics of good citizenship, being "significant for the health of the population and the future conduct of the individual" (Popkewitz et al., 2007, p. 437). Learning and knowledge are intricately linked to

producing future citizens who are prepared for unpredictable futures in a global world and the Rationale represents the AC: HPE as a specific investment in the production and proliferation of knowledge. Ensuring that young people acquire or learn the requisite knowledge is represented as a way of further contributing to the production of ‘good’ future citizens in response to the ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population.

### *Australian citizens.*

The ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population is also a specifically *national* ‘problem’. The Rationale represents the AC: HPE as an investment in the nation and national culture, with the term *Australian* repeated twice in the opening paragraph, and once in paragraph four (ACARA, 2017c). The phrase “every young Australian” represents not only a youth-citizenship, but also a singular, national citizenship – a citizenship that is part of belonging to the future “Australian population” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The statements of the Rationale set out an intention to produce a unique national citizenry, underpinned by particular geographic and cultural assumptions about what it means to be ‘Australian’.

Geographically, the citizenship assumed by the Rationale is located on Australian soil, within domestic boundaries. Setting out a need to respond to a rapidly changing *world*, the Rationale posits a uniquely *Australian* intervention in an increasingly globalised context. Although popular discourse suggests living in a global world means we are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, globalisation has in fact had an homogenising effect, creating a desire for sameness instead of diversity (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The fear of porous national borders has resulted in a shoring up of national cultures and a defence of territories and borders (Lingard & Sellar, 2013). This

results in producing specifically ‘Australian’ citizens within a global context. Rizvi and Lingard (1998) provide an account of globalisation which suggests various ways the local and the national are the most significant sites of cultural production and political struggle. In their recent work on globalisation in education, they note that national curriculum reform “has been linked to the reconstitution of education as a central arm of national economic policy, as well as being central to the imagined community the nation wishes to construct through schooling” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 96). Both this reconstitution of education and the imagined community are considered to be responses to perceived pressures of globalisation. The AC: HPE governs through the production and reinforcement of a unique national culture by contributing to the construction of an imagined ‘Australian’ community and an investment in a specifically ‘Australian’ population.

The development of a uniquely Australian curriculum was precipitated from a history of discussion around the need for a national approach to curriculum. Imbedded with a sense that disunity across the states and territories was responsible for unsatisfactory schooling outcomes, appeals for a national curriculum focused on a perceived need to respond to emerging national priorities and challenges (Summerville, Adkins, & Kendall, 2008). The differences and disparities between the states and territories were framed as problematic, with the 1989 Hobart Declaration and the 1994 National Statements and Profiles, both making specific recommendations for the states and territories to adopt a consistent model for curriculum (Lynch, 2014). In the early 2000s, John Howard’s government commissioned a report<sup>31</sup> into establishing

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<sup>31</sup> *Australian Certificate of Education: Exploring a Way Forward* (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006).

a new senior certificate, citing the wastefulness of state-based curriculum arrangements, and “arguing strongly for a national approach as the preferred solution” (Savage, 2016, p. 4). It was claimed that state-based curricula were not responsive to national priorities and limited students from being competitive in a globalised economic environment (Savage & O’Connor, 2015). An ‘Australian’ curriculum was seen as the way to equip the nation to respond to a shifting global landscape. The underlying assumption then is that ‘Australia’ would benefit from a unified, national approach to curriculum.

The focus on a shared or singular national identity (re)produces taken-for-granted assumptions of what it means to be ‘Australian’ and what constitutes Australian culture. Nations are relatively new ways of organising people, and more recently the terms *nation* and *state* have seemingly become interchangeable in terms of use (Elder, 2007). With the term emerging in the 19th century, a *nation* is a socially-constructed cultural entity and refers to a group of people with shared language, culture and ethnicity (Anderson, 2006). By contrast, a *state* is an independent, sovereign political entity that is tied to territory (Flint, 2006). The now-common term *nation–state* refers to both a shared culture and a territorially bounded entity (Elder, 2007, p. 23). The repetition of the term ‘Australian’ in the Rationale, reflects the notion of a nation-state, where it is hoped that a homogenous nation is governed by a sovereign state in such a way that the two are aligned. Doing so extends the role of government by intrinsically linking a cultural identity with a political entity as nations often define their membership through the sharing of civic values. Although Australia is recognisably a state, within the Rationale, ‘Australianness’ is represented as involvement in and contribution to a specific set of values.

The phrase *every young Australian* generates a cultural thesis about who this young Australian is and simultaneously generates comparative cultural theses about who they are not. Catriona Elder (2007) argues that dominant ideas of being Australian are invented, and ideas about a shared identity and inventions of ‘being Australian’ impact upon stories of Australia as a nation. Narratives that work to secure a strong story of non-Indigenous white belonging work to “privilege elements of non-Indigeneity, whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality” (Elder, 2007, p. 6). This kind of narrative is not explicit within the Rationale, however, one of the issues with Australian-ness being produced or ‘invented’ through the curriculum is that the creation of an in-common community also excludes others from this so-called ‘Australian’ community or population (Secomb, 2003). Contrast between the world and Australia further reiterates a desire for an in-common community and reflects the perceived need for shoring up borders and a shared national identity. In the absence of specific mention or focus on Indigeneity, the normative understanding of Australianness is assumed.

The representation of a particularly ‘Australian’ citizen within the Rationale can also be linked to a white-Australian sporting identity: “They [students] develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in Australian society” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). The role of sport in the social and cultural identity of colonial Australians has been well documented (Georgakis & Russell, 2011). British colonisation brought with it the prominence of sport as a cultural practice such that sport has played a major role in the development of an Australian identity (Georgakis, 2011). Daryl Adair (2011) asserts: “Efforts to establish race tracks, cricket fields and rugby pitches were part of the colonial drive to recreate – even if in the imagination – some of the cultural trappings of a distant ‘homeland’” (p. 1–2). Subsequently, it is unsurprising that sport was endorsed by schools and educational institutions

as a central feature of the (particularly white) ‘Australian’ identity (Sherington & Georgakis, 2008). McCuaig and Hay (2013) contend that the focus on producing sports performers through HPE is evident within practice, even if not often expressed in formal syllabus documents. These underlying assumptions appear to underpin the Rationale as the ‘good’ citizenship to be produced through HPE, and is linked with a collective cultural and sporting identity of what it means to be ‘Australian’ (McCuaig & Hay, 2013).

One of the main issues with this investment in the production of idealised Australian citizenship is that it assumes a normative subject. The AC: HPE predominantly draws on white, western knowledges to produce the ideals that it is ‘invested’ in, which subsequently leads to the erasure of Indigenous Australian knowledges and approaches. While the curriculum does call for the inclusion of Indigenous histories and cultures as part of the cross-curriculum priorities, the imposing of colonised, western understandings of health and the body pushes Indigenous knowledges to the margins. As Emma Rich, Lee Monaghan, and Andrea Bombak (2019) argue, constructions of citizenship and health are “just as much a product of what is not said, or silenced, within taken-for-granted ideologies and representations of virtuous, morally credited citizenship” (p. 13). Though the curriculum is imbued with various discourses, the centrality of an ideal “future Australian population” narrows the definition of ‘good’ citizenship. In doing so, through what is not said, Indigenous understandings and ways of being ‘Australian’ are positioned at the periphery.

It is important to recognise that even the interrogation of presuppositions around the ‘Australian’ identity of the Rationale will have contributed to reifying privileged discourses. There are further questions to be asked around the unique ‘Australian’ identity privileged and upheld in the AC:

HPE, particularly in relation to the reproduction of predominantly white, colonising, and masculine discourses. A thorough examination of this lies outside the scope of this thesis but entreats further consideration.

### **A particular kind of population: healthy, safe, and active citizens**

The Rationale offers a valuable point of commencement for considering what the ‘problem’ is represented to be in the AC: HPE. The statements of the Rationale are underpinned by a view of young people as a point of government interference in the production of the future Australian population. Further, they demonstrate a conviction that young people engaging in schooling will embrace and adopt the responsibilities and duties of this future Australian population. These responsibilities and duties are expounded on by the curriculum as being/becoming healthy, safe, and active – “to flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). These three concepts – healthy, safe, active – are used repeatedly throughout the Rationale<sup>32</sup> and have become entwined through repeated association, not only within the curriculum, but more broadly in society. This has resulted in a natural consideration of health within the parameters of safety and physical activity and is illustrative of a discourse of our time; a miscellany of different discourses, enmeshed together and being taken up as dominant tropes underlying the rationalising of HPE in Australian schools. The investment in

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<sup>32</sup> Health occurs once in para. 1, three times in para. 2, twice in para. 3, once in para. 4, and once in para. 5. Safe occurs once in para. 1, twice in para. 2, and once in para. 3. Iterations of active occur once in para. 1, four times in para. 2, four times in para. 4, and once in para. 5.

producing active, healthy, and safe citizens assumes problems of health, safety and risk, and sedentariness and inactivity. These ‘problems’ are nested within the broad problem the Rationale sets out the AC: HPE to respond to – as an investment in a responsible, future, Australian population.

The next step of this thesis is the archaeological work of considering how these nested problem representations of the Rationale are reproduced or contested through the broader statements of the AC: HPE. Collectively, the Rationale, Aims, Key Ideas, and Structure (see Appendix 1) provide the logic and reasoning behind teaching Health and Physical Education in particular ways within Australian schools. Both discourse and counter-discourse can be evident within texts, and at times these differing statements both reinforce and oppose the proposals of the Rationale. It is therefore useful to explore how the problem representations of the Rationale are rearticulated, contested, and (re)constructed in and through these additional curriculum texts. Competing proposals within the AC: HPE may be grounded in differing representations of the context, historical narratives of what has and has not worked, and contemporary problems which need to be solved (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The broader landscape of support documents, reports, and scholarly literature are then also considered to contribute to understandings and interpretations of HPE. This literature is drawn on throughout the following chapters to further illuminate the analysis and discussion.

The succeeding three chapters consider in more detail the nested problem representations of (1) health, (2) safety and risk, and (3) physical inactivity, which have been identified within the broader ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population. Each of these three problem representations constitute discourses and discursive practices, intersecting with one another, yet

unable to be considered the same as each other. Discourses are not homogenous, and as Bacchi (2009a) suggests, “calling something a ‘discourse’ means putting its truth status into question” (p. 35). Concentrating on each problem representation individually interrogates the tensions and contradictions that leave them susceptible to dispute and questioning. The decision was made to present the findings according to these nested ‘problems’ after recognising that while each discourse is intricately linked to the others, each also occurs within a unique realm of knowledges and ways of thinking. There was some overlap, such as the notions of risk and responsibility being mobilised across the different discourses, but each ‘problem’ had particular bodies of knowledges that rendered them intelligible. Different areas of literature aligned with each ‘problem’, and so using ‘problems’ to define the parameters of the discussion also proved useful in incorporating the broader field of HPE scholarship.

The analytic work of this thesis draws together the ways of thinking offered by WPR, ACARA’s broader statements around the curriculum and HPE, and a breadth of academic literature to interrogate the work of the AC: HPE as a tool of government. By its very nature, “poststructuralism raises questions about how selves are constituted, how power-knowledge relations change across times, places, and in the context of different social, political, and cultural contexts” (J. Wright, 2003, p. 36). Particularly interested in the governing effects of curriculum, the following analysis chapters work to foreground this in their articulation of how the curriculum sets about ‘making’ healthy, safe, and active citizens.

## Chapter 5. Making ‘healthy’ citizens

Chapter 4 has shown how the proposals in the Rationale of the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE) represent a key ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population. As part of the proposed ‘solution’ to this problem, the Rationale purports a need for producing ‘healthy’ citizens. This chapter interrogates the representation of health as a ‘problem’ in HPE, extending the discussion to identify how the statements of the AC: HPE set about problematising the territory of youth health. To provide insight into the thinking behind the proposals of the AC: HPE, the analysis incorporates the broader statements of the AC: HPE (Key Ideas, Aims, Structure) and the cross-curricular General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum to consider how these give further shape to the ‘problem’ of health set out in the Rationale. The analysis and discussion also draws on a range of health, sociology, and education literature in order to understand the thinking behind the representation of health as a ‘problem’ in HPE.

### The ‘problem’ of health

The Rationale foregrounds being or becoming ‘healthy’ citizens as an inarguable right *and* responsibility of young Australians. This aligns with scholarship which has found HPE to be mobilised as part of a set of mentalities that align with broader citizenship ideals and encourage and enable young people to be(come) healthy (K. Burns & Davies, 2015; Burrows & Wright, 2007; Gard & Leahy, 2009; Gard & Wright, 2001, 2005, 2014; Leahy, 2014; Leahy, Burrows,

McCuaig, Wright, & Penney, 2016; Quennerstedt, Burrows, & Maivorsdotter, 2010; Tinning, 2004; J. Wright, Burrows, & Rich, 2012). Janowitz (1994) recognises education as an obligation that prepares individuals for citizenship by preparing them for productive employment and enabling them to become a “good citizen” (p. 49). In the same way, Petersen and Lupton (2000) argue that good health has similarly become a requisite for “good citizenship” (p. 65), due to a view of health as enabling positive participation in social life and limiting the economic burden on others. The Rationale is underpinned by this continuing narrative of the pursuit of good health as intrinsically tied to the notion of the ‘good citizen’. Thus, the proposals of the Rationale provide particular parameters for what ‘healthy’ citizenship looks like.

The statements of the Rationale make strong links between health and wellbeing, with a concern for health as *more than* physical, articulated through an emphasis on producing relational, emotionally-regulated, healthy, and well subjects. Within this representation, health is intricately connected with our bodies and their physical abilities, but also linked with psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. There is an investment in producing happy, well, and sociable citizens who flourish in relation with one another. For example, the following excerpt demonstrates the positioning of HPE as necessary for improving the social, emotional, and relational lives of young people:

They also need to be resilient, to develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing, using health, safety and physical activity resources for the benefit of themselves and their communities. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2)

Similarly, in the third paragraph of the Rationale, there is a strong emphasis on the need for young people to form positive relationships and social skills in order to enhance wellbeing:

In Health and Physical Education, students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. They learn to build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3)

Following the problem setting of the first paragraph, the Rationale proposes a need for developing students' personal and emotional capabilities – resilience, empathy, sense of self – as well as their relational abilities through engagement with others, positive relationships, and critique of stereotypes. This view of health is further seen in the Glossary of the AC: HPE where health is described as:

A state of complete physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life. (ACARA, 2018b)

The development of 'healthy' attributes are represented by the AC: HPE as part of the required response to the 'problem' of the future Australian population, and specifically so, of the need to produce 'healthy' citizens.

It is not just HPE, but the Australian Curriculum as a whole, that is represented to be broadly invested in the social, emotional, and relational lives of young people, and the development of

particular skills to improve capabilities across these realms. The investment in social/emotional development in the Rationale is also seen in the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, which refer to the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions young people are expected to develop (ACARA, 2017d). The Australian Curriculum website lists seven General Capabilities that are intended to be embedded across Learning Areas, and “play a significant role in the Australian Curriculum in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century” (ACARA, 2017d). The description of the fifth of seven capabilities, *Personal and Social Capability*, contends that a focus on the social and emotional lives of young people emerges from a wider body of educational institutions and literature, and encompasses personal, social, emotional, and relational dimensions;

encompasses students’ personal/emotional and social/relational dispositions, intelligences, sensibilities and learning. It develops effective life skills for students, including understanding and handling themselves, their relationships, learning and work.

Although it is named ‘Personal and Social capability’, the words ‘personal/emotional’ and ‘social/relational’ are used interchangeably throughout the literature and within educational organisations. The term ‘social and emotional learning’ is also often used, as is the SEL acronym. (ACARA, 2017d)

In-line with the General Capabilities, the statements of the Rationale propose that HPE as a focused learning area works to produce particular kinds of young people who can handle themselves across social and relational domains. As an investment in the future of the Australian

population, mobilising HPE to produce ‘healthy’ citizens means ensuring that they have “the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life” (ACARA, 2018b).<sup>33</sup> This representation of health occurs alongside repeated representations that relate health to moving, participating, and performing physical activity (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). Such a multifaceted understanding of health is reminiscent of Gard and Leahy’s (2009) suggestion that health education “is comprised of (sic) a ‘piling up’ of past and present knowledges and practices related to health, health promotion, health behaviour, health education and education more generally” (p. 184). Discourses are not homogenous, and throughout the Rationale there is an apparent piling up of knowledges, resulting in tension between multiple, and often competing, discourses of health.

As established in Chapter 1, there are two paradigms or discourses of health that have greatly informed approaches to HPE in Australia, and underpin the Rationale of the AC: HPE. In her work on health policy, Bacchi (2009a) identifies the competing theoretical paradigms of biomedical and social views of health. These are similar to the biomedical and socio-ecological discourses of health and physical education suggested by Primdahl, et al. (2018). Jostling for priority, the broader statements of the AC: HPE reflect both these discourses in different ways.

Within HPE, a biomedical discourse is primarily concerned with physical health and the absence of disease such that it produces science-based health knowledge as taken-for-granted ‘regimes of truth’ among educators (Evans & Davies, 2004, p. 4). Alternatively, the social paradigm views health as a social construct, produced by complex social and environmental factors. HPE

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<sup>33</sup> See Glossary definition of *health*, Appendix 1, Figure 1.5.2

curricula underpinned by a sociocultural perspective<sup>34</sup> began to emerge approximately two decades ago (Cliff, 2012) and was a key part of the 1994 *HPE National Statement and Profile* (Curriculum Corporation, 1994; Lynch, 2014). However, David Johns and Richard Tinning (2006) argue that “even within HPE curricula that are supposedly underpinned by a social view of health... the power of the recontextualised biomedical conception of health is still significant” (p. 397). A biomedical discourse that transforms human physical inactivity into a risk factor has also been integral in schools being considered the appropriate site for intervention to produce healthy citizens for the future (Tinning & Glasby, 2002). Within the AC: HPE, the privileging of science-based knowledges is used to shore up the authority of the curriculum text. For example, notions of scientific knowledge as valid and valuable are reiterated through the statements that the AC: HPE “draws on a multidisciplinary evidence base” (para. 3) and is informed by a “broad and established scientific, social, cultural and historical knowledge base” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 7).

In the video embedded on the Rationale page, lead author Doune Macdonald seemingly attempts to move away from a biomedical discourse, saying the second big idea behind the curriculum is a shift towards a strengths-based approach, away from a focus on risk factors, disease, ill-health, or physical inactivity (ACARA, 2016). However, the emphasis on building personal capabilities in individuals seemingly contradicts a sociocultural discourse that understands health as a broader socio-cultural construction. Before the formation of the national curriculum Macdonald and Penney (2009) anticipated that neoliberalism would infiltrate and affect the production of a

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<sup>34</sup> Such as the NSW 7-10 PDHPE Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2003).

national HPE curriculum that is seemingly at odds with previous directions of HPE within Australia. This appears to be the case, with a focus on producing citizens with desirable personal capabilities in order to “flourish” taking up neoliberal ideals of citizens with more responsibilities than rights.

The ‘problem’ of health represented by the AC: HPE is evidently complex and multifaceted. While this chapter will focus primarily on the social/emotional/relational representations of health, Chapter 7 will look at the ‘problem’ of physical inactivity and the underpinning biomedical knowledges and discourses of health. The following sections interrogate the particularities of how health is represented and produced in HPE, in terms of: (1) mental and emotional health; (2) social and relational health; and (3) responsabilising individuals for health. The chapter concludes by considering the particular kinds of citizens that the problematisation of health in the AC: HPE produces.

### ***Health as mental and emotional.***

The statements of the Rationale represent an investment in producing ‘health’ not only in relation to physical health, but also with regard to young people’s mental and emotional health. Language such as *resilience*, *being able to cope*, *satisfaction*, *flourishing*, and *sense of self*, is used throughout the Rationale and indicates a broad understanding of what ‘healthy’ citizenship entails. Further, throughout the broader statements of the AC: HPE are assertions of the value of resilience, empathy, confidence, positive attitudes, and personal, behavioural, and social skills. Health is extended beyond a physical, external state of being to encompass mental,

social/emotional, and relational dispositions. These notions of health are often synonymous with *wellbeing*, a term also used throughout the Rationale.

Considerations of schooling as an investment in the emotional wellbeing of young people have emerged within a broader social perspective and increasing acceptance of mental health and associated problems (K. Wright, 2014). Within the Rationale, mental and emotional health are represented as a direct response to external complexities and the challenges of life and the world. In response to the complexities and challenges of life set out in the first paragraph, the second and third paragraphs of the Rationale propose a need for young people to develop particular skills and abilities around managing their mental and emotional responses; “need to be resilient, to develop empathy... to strengthen their sense of self” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para 2–3). In what is seen to be a world of ‘challenges’, schools become a site for intervening and managing the ability of young people to respond positively to these challenges through resilience, empathy, and a strong sense of self. This positive response is represented as being and becoming emotionally regulated and capable individuals, positioning schools as sites for managing the emotional life of the student.

The Rationale of the AC: HPE can be read as offering insight into surrounding discourse of HPE and education more broadly. As Katie Wright (2014) helpfully articulates:

While education policy and formal educational aims cannot be interpreted as mirroring what actually happens in schools, they do offer important insights into aspirational, organisational and practical dimensions of schooling, including the ways in which therapeutic notions of the self and education have been

institutionalised into official discourse. (p. 149)

In the same way, while the statements of the Rationale do not fully reflect what happens in schools, they can offer insight into how discourses of emotional wellbeing and therapeutic education have become officially sanctioned. Kathryn Ecclestone (2011) deems a focus on emotion to be “the latest manifestation of a long-running tendency to psychologise intractable educational and social problems” (p. 91). Ecclestone (2011) considers this to be rooted in “a deeper philosophical and political disenchantment with an externally-seeking, autonomous human subject and forms of curriculum knowledge that support it” (p. 91). The statements of the Rationale articulate a need for skills, knowledge and understanding to enhance students sense-of-self, reminiscent of learning initiatives dominated by objectives of “personal and social skills, emotional intelligence and building self-esteem” (Hyland, 2006, p. 299). Indeed, fostering wellbeing, cultivating social and emotional skills, and building resilient students, have become key educational priorities (K. Wright, 2011). The proposals of the AC: HPE align with the rise of the therapeutic state, and in particular, the concepts of flourishing, happiness, and wellbeing. All three of these concepts operate as discursive practices, which represent mental and emotional health as key features of good ‘healthy’ citizenship.

The AC: HPE proposes a need, “for every young Australian ...to *flourish* as healthy, safe, and active citizens” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1, emphasis added). The term *flourish* only occurs once within the analysed data, however its position in the opening statement of the Rationale positions it as a framework for understanding and reading the proposals that follow from this. The intent to produce citizens that ‘flourish’ is then extrapolated throughout the Rationale and broader rationalising statements as they unpack how the curriculum proposes to

produce such citizens. The realisation of idealised citizenship is thus connected with the concept of flourishing – a term concerned with prospering, happiness, and success. This idea of citizens who ‘flourish’ constitutes the human subject as both economic and emotional.

Flourishing is a term that is used extensively within the field of positive psychology and positive education. Positive psychology/education encompasses an ideology of flourishing as a by-product of life going well – when we are feeling good and functioning effectively (Seligman, 2011). As suggested in the Institute of Positive Education’s (2017) model from the Geelong Grammar School, flourishing is “a healthy consequence of living a life in such a way that nurtures one’s individual wellbeing and contributes to the wellbeing of others” (para. 1), summarised as “feeling good and doing good” (para. 2). Flourishing also carries biblical connotations, suggestive of not just ‘the good life’ but something even further – a notion of the way life was meant to be (Jantzen, 1995) and is embedded with concepts of vigorous growth, thriving, and holistic understandings of humans as interpersonal, relational, spiritual, physical and emotional.

The Rationale represents an imperative for young people to maintain positive mental and emotional health through proposing a need for young people to “not only be able to cope with life’s challenges but to flourish” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). However, this kind of representation places the onus on the individual to be responsible for their happiness and self-satisfaction regardless of circumstance or events beyond their control – young people are expected to ‘flourish’ in all circumstances. Through such rhetoric, ‘good’ citizenship becomes reliant upon the individual to learn, or become equipped with, the requisite skills for feeling good and doing well. McLeod and Wright (2016) argue the growing influence of positive psychology

in schools shifts the focus away from providing remedial services for young people experiencing social or emotional problems, towards playing a role in promoting flourishing, happiness, and therefore wellbeing. Underpinned by these assumptions, the proposals of the Rationale represent a narrative of ‘flourishing’ that links it to concepts of health, wellbeing, and productivity. This situates positive mental and emotional experiences at the fore of what entails good citizenship and as a key means for ensuring a productive and viable future population.

In the context of an educational endeavour to produce citizens who flourish, there is a certain logic to the Rationale also representing an investment in those citizens’ happiness. While the term happiness is not used within the Rationale, the Glossary definition of wellbeing includes a sense of “satisfaction” and “happiness” (ACARA, 2018b).<sup>35</sup> In addition to this, language such as “satisfying” (Rationale), “feel positive about themselves” (Personal and Social Capability) and “enjoy” (Aims) all contribute to the notion that the ‘flourishing’ citizen produced by the AC: HPE is one who is happy. Happiness is another tenet of positive psychology which seeks to promote wellbeing and the creation of a meaningful and satisfying life rather than focusing on clinical issues. As Sam Binkley (2014) contends, happiness has emerged in institutional settings as the object of a new technology of ‘emotional self-optimisation’. Aligning with the expanding influence of positive psychology, the proliferation of ‘happiness’ evident in talk-shows, self-help books, and the like, has raised the profile of happiness, and marketed happiness as a tool for unlocking a ‘better’ life (Binkley, 2014). In the language of the curriculum, ‘happiness’ may be seen as a key element of wellbeing or flourishing. Through mentalities that link ‘being happy’ to

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<sup>35</sup> See Glossary definition of *wellbeing*, Appendix 1, Figure 1.5.5

wellbeing, happiness becomes a modality of government in curriculum reform and schooling interventions that are intended to produce ‘healthy’ citizens.

Because notions of ‘happiness’ are socially constructed, some discourses of happiness are more readily taken up by individuals than others (J. Wright, 2003). Sara Ahmed (2010b) argues that there is a certain internal, moral logic that equates happiness with ‘good’ and unhappiness with ‘bad’. Ahmed (2010a) contends that when happiness is attached to shared experiences and requisite ways of being, those who do not experience happiness in these ways can become alienated within a community. Happiness is “attributed to certain objects that circulate as social goods” and consequently when we feel pleasure from such objects, we are oriented in the same direction as others (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 37). In a curriculum invested in the production of idealised citizenship as a response to a ‘problem’ of the population, it follows that happiness is represented as a tenet of health and wellbeing

Happiness is privileged in western culture, and accordingly when we are told to do something to be happy, we adopt those particular ways of being in pursuit of happiness. Ahmed (2010b) points out that when we attach the idea of happiness to particular life choices, we create a happiness script that can regulate behaviour. Promising happiness as an ideal constructs some lives as more valuable, worthwhile, and productive than other lives (Ahmed, 2010b). This happiness script creates a template for how to live, simultaneously invalidating other forms and ways of living life. Subsequently, happiness has come to define a new mentality of self-government. This requirement to self-govern one’s own happiness binds citizenship to both personal choice and an emotional state, regardless of circumstances that may contribute to individuals being unhappy (K. Burns et al., 2018; B. Davies & Bansel, 2007; Foucault, 2008). In the curriculum, happiness

is linked to good health and wellbeing as the ‘problem’ of health is counterbalanced with a moral and psychological call to be happy. ‘Good’ citizenship thus becomes tied to self-realised happiness.

### ***Health as being well.***

Investment in the emotional lives of young people is also evident through a focus on wellbeing throughout the AC: HPE. The term *wellbeing* occurs three times in the Rationale, twice in Aims, and six times within Key Ideas (ACARA, 2017c). Wellbeing serves as a key frame or articulation of the ‘problem’ of health and its requisite solutions. Frequently it is used in conjunction with the terms health, safety, and physical activity. Four out of the six times wellbeing is used within the Key Ideas of the AC: HPE it occurs in the phrase “health and wellbeing”, and each time it is qualified by a verb such as promote, improve, or enhance. Wellbeing is further connected to health within the AC: HPE Structure where it is mentioned throughout various descriptive statements, and forms part of a Focus Area (*Mental health and wellbeing*) (ACARA, 2017c). Closely linked with what it means to be ‘healthy’, the curriculum proposals represent ‘being well’ as a key tenet of ‘good’ citizenship. The promotion of wellbeing through the Rationale reflects Wyn’s (2007, p. 35) suggestion that learning to ‘become somebody well’ is arguably a core educational aim that has been taken up as critically important during a period of uncertain future and rapid social change.

Wellbeing is an encompassing term, “often imbued with ideals of the good life and encompassing subjective experiences of happiness and satisfaction, economic prosperity, and basic human needs for security” (McLeod & Wright, 2016, p. 1). In the Glossary for the AC: HPE, wellbeing is defined as: “A sense of satisfaction, happiness, effective social functioning

and *spiritual health*, and *dispositions* of optimism, openness, curiosity and *resilience*” (ACARA, 2018b, emphasis in original). This definition particularly encapsulates previously discussed discourses of happiness and flourishing, however, the broader statements of the AC: HPE also form strong links between wellbeing and mental health.

Linking mental health with wellbeing contributes to the taken-for-granted idea that ‘being well’ is an antidote to mental health problems. The Focus Area considers “how mental health and wellbeing can be enhanced and strengthened at an individual and community level” and proposes a need for students to develop “knowledge, understanding and skills to manage their own mental health and wellbeing” or (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, *Mental health and wellbeing*). This rhetoric of enhancing, strengthening, and managing mental health and wellbeing reflects contemporary notions that conceptualise happiness as a shared, unfulfilled potential, rather than merely as a cure for the depressed or anxious (Binkley, 2014). Similarly, McLeod and Wright (2016) argue the embrace of wellbeing has seen a shift away from targeted mental health interventions, towards a universal approach, “potentially applicable to everyone, and as such casting us all as equally vulnerable” (p. 3). Combined with the universal language of “every young Australian” and “their own and others” within the Rationale, wellbeing is put on the agenda for all.

Wellbeing is not a new concept, unique to this specific iteration of curriculum, but can be understood in light of shifting ideology surrounding the role of schools in supporting mental and emotional health. Katie Wright (2014) locates the wide acceptance and endorsement of schools attending to psychological and emotional health within “accounts of ‘therapeutic education’ within broader theorisation of therapeutic culture” (p. 141). McLeod and Wright (2016) situate a rise of wellbeing in youth and education policy inside “broader cultural moves pertaining to the

increasing importance of emotions in the public sphere and more therapeutic modes of population management” (p. 14). Further, they correlate the accelerated use of the term wellbeing; “with attending to young people’s wellbeing increasingly perceived as a do-able solution for fix-able problems” (McLeod & Wright, 2016, p. 5).

The wellbeing of young people is a core focus of social policy, and there is “a growing imperative to locate it within the sphere of education” (Graham, Powell, Thomas, & Anderson, 2017, p. 439). Under the strengths-based approach of the AC: HPE, there is an emphasis on promoting wellbeing through nurturing and developing young people’s knowledge and abilities:

Rather than focusing only on potential health risks or a deficit-based model of health, the curriculum has a *stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing.*

This approach affirms that all students and their communities have particular *strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others’ health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity.*

(ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 4–5, emphasis added).

Representing wellbeing as needing to be enhanced or improved produces ‘being well’ as a desirable attribute of young people. Wellbeing is thereby articulated as something in danger of being lost, pronouncing a need for it to be both “promoted” and “maintained” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 9).

The statements of the AC: HPE are presupposed by a taken-for-granted idea that wellbeing is something to be strived for, or that is ‘needed’. The ‘need’ for wellbeing articulated in the curriculum is collective and social, rather than just individual. Across the AC: HPE the idea of wellbeing is frequently used to reference communities, as observed in the sub-strands entitled *Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing*, and *Contributing to healthy and active communities*. These sub-strands refer to “the health and wellbeing of communities” and young people taking action “to promote the health and wellbeing of their communities” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). The Rationale proposes that young people ‘need’ to understand and be engaged in “their own and others” wellbeing (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). These representations align with McLeod and Wright’s (2016) contention that wellbeing is frequently attached to positive notions of both collective and individual experiences. The particular way this is done throughout the AC: HPE has the subsequent effect of responsabilising young people for others’ wellbeing as well as their own. Young people are expected to communicate, interact, contribute, promote, and be engaged in both being well themselves, and in the wellbeing of other people. This representation works to constitute young people as answerable for the health and wellbeing of themselves and those around them. An extended discussion on a responsabilised ‘problem’ of health is included in a latter section of this chapter.

As established, wellbeing is represented throughout the AC: HPE as a desired state or attribute for both individuals and communities. However, what ‘being well’ looks like or consists of is less clear than the assumption that ‘being well’ is a good thing. As such, critical engagement and problematisation of the concept of wellbeing is needed. If left untroubled, the idea of wellbeing is at best muddy:

Wellbeing functions as a shorthand for a range of positive and measurable attributes, including health, happiness and prosperity. Yet it also signifies a cluster of less tangible dimensions, including personal orientations, moods and outlooks that are seen to be beneficial for everyone, but are difficult to actually pin down.

(McLeod & Wright, 2016, p. 2)

Ereaut and Whiting (2008) suggest wellbeing is a mere “cultural mirage” (p. 2), disappearing under close examination. While wellbeing is clearly proposed to be enhanced throughout the curriculum, even the aforementioned glossary definition gives a somewhat vague and elusive picture of how wellbeing will be promoted in and through the AC: HPE and how exactly it facilitates good health.

The work of “defamiliarizing the epistemic authority of wellbeing” has already been initiated by McLeod and Wright (2016, p. 2). Their work notes the multiplicity of ways in which wellbeing is used, particularly within youth discourse, and identifies how it operates in the construction and production of particular subjectivities (McLeod & Wright, 2016). Following Bacchi, they too were concerned not only with what wellbeing *is*, but more so with what wellbeing *does*. As such, they provide a sophisticated analysis of wellbeing as mobilised in and through various policies and programs that aim to improve wellbeing. The analysis of this thesis has only provided a brief interrogation of the way wellbeing has been taken up as part of the proposed solution to a ‘problem’ of health represented in the AC: HPE. An in-depth analysis of ‘wellbeing’, as proposed through the AC: HPE, would provide further insights in this area and build on the work here, and the research commenced by McLeod and Wright (2016).

### ***Health as social and relational.***

In addition to attending to the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of young people, the Rationale also proposes that the AC: HPE will positively impact on young people's relational lives and abilities:

In Health and Physical Education, *students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding* to strengthen their sense of self, and *build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships*. They learn to *build on personal and community strengths* and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They *critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes*. Students learn to navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3, emphasis added)

The statements of the Rationale represent a need for young people to play an active and positive role in their relationships with others, and in their communities. A view of education as a means for influencing healthy relationships can be seen in suggestions such as that of Wyn (2007), who contends; “education is increasingly important for its role in assisting young people to develop the capacities and skills that will enable them to live well and that will enhance social cohesion” (p. 35). The notion of ‘social cohesion’ parallels a call to advocacy in the AC: HPE, observed in the need for students to “develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing” (para. 2) and the anticipation that they will “critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3). An empathetic and advocative disposition is represented as part of a program enabling young people to have satisfying relational lives. The

repeated emphasis on relationships being “respectful” also represents the intention to positively contribute to social cohesion. The AC: HPE proposes a need for young people to have positive relationships and be involved in advocating for social cohesion as part of a response to the ‘problem’ of health.

The statements of the Rationale propose a need for young people to be equipped with appropriate relational tools such as empathy, active engagement, appropriate relational skills, and the ability to build “satisfying, respectful relationships” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3). These proposals imply a relational ‘problem’, particularly faced by young people. An investment in the relational lives of young people works to position positive relationships as a key marker of good health. Further, the statements of the AC: HPE represent managing the relational lives of young people as a way of ensuring they become “healthy, safe, and active citizens in the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). Thus, the relational ‘health’ of young people becomes part of the project of addressing a ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population.

Within the Rationale, HPE is presented as a means for providing students with the requisite tools for good relationships; “students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). The obligation for students to build, establish, and manage these relationships is further repeated throughout the broader statements of the AC: HPE. The content Focus Area, entitled *Relationships and Sexuality*;

addresses physical, social and emotional changes that occur over time and the significant role relationships and sexuality play in these changes. The content

supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills that will help them to *establish and manage respectful relationships*. (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, emphasis added)

Clear links are established within the AC: HPE between “respectful” relationships, social cohesion, and good health, with the contention that relationships play a “significant role” during the physical, social, and emotional changes experienced by young people. Alongside content around physical elements of puberty, reproduction, and sexual health, *Relationships and Sexuality* includes the topics of;

- people who are important to them
- strategies for relating to and interacting with others
- assertive behaviour and standing up for themselves
- establishing and managing changing relationships (offline and online)
- bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence (including discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality)
- strategies for dealing with relationships when there is an imbalance of power (including seeking help or leaving the relationship)
- celebrating and respecting difference and diversity in individuals and communities. (ACARA, 2017c, Structure)

This content highlights the potentially problematic or harmful nature of some relationships, reiterating a need for young people to have particular strategies and behaviours for “managing” these. Although the Focus Area begins by articulating a desire for young people to establish and

manage respectful relationships, the content descriptors (apart from the first and last listed above) have a strong focus on ‘problems’ within relationships (e.g. the need for strategies and standing up for themselves, changing relationships, bullying, discrimination, violence, and power imbalances).

The final paragraph of the Structure section of the AC: HPE includes a specific subsection titled; *Same-sex attracted and gender-diverse students*.<sup>36</sup> While the section acknowledges and affirms “diversity in relation to sexuality and gender” (ACARA, 2017b, Structure), the fact it is buried as a separate addendum at the end of an extensive Structure section has the appearance of separating this from the general teaching of the Focus Area *Relationships and sexuality*. The statements place the onus on individual school communities “to ensure that teaching is inclusive and relevant to the lived experiences of all students” (ACARA, 2017b, Structure). In regard to relationships and sexualities, the statements of the AC: HPE are relatively ambiguous about whom young people are expected to have relationships with, but does recognise “changing identities and factors that influence them (including personal, cultural, gender and sexual identities)” (ACARA, 2017b, Structure, *Relationships and sexuality*). Within the Rationale statements, and indeed the general content areas of the curriculum, the focus is upon young people having positive and fulfilling relationships that contribute towards good health. However, with the known research gender and sexualities as they relate to positive risk, health, and citizenship, the general erasure of non-normative sexualities and gender identities as key

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 1, Figure 1.4, on page 269.

teaching points, and apportioning of this content to the discretion of individual schools and teachers, could contribute to such content being absent or minimised.

Caution over the impact of technology upon the relational lives of young people can be seen through how students are expected to learn about “establishing and managing changing relationships (offline and online)” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, Relationships and Sexuality). Within the Rationale, reference to how technology and media continue to “change the way we communicate” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2) also represents technology as impacting on young people’s ability to relate to one another. Gill Valentine (2004) observes that 20th century parents were both afraid of, and afraid for, youth. Jenkins, Itō, and Boyd (2015) argue this fear of and for young people can now be seen through society’s attitude towards the media practices of young people. Michael Wyness (2012) identifies a contemporary anxiety “that children were being sucked into a technological vortex, which compromised their ability to develop friendship networks” (p. 190). Neither statement about technology (Rationale) or online relationships (Structure) is explicitly negative, yet the inclusion of technology and media within the problem-setting paragraphs of the Rationale positions them in a way that aligns with broader discourses of fear related to young people, their use of technology, and the impact of this on their relationships.

Ito et al. (2009) argue that there is a common societal fear of young people and their online, technological identity:

Our values and norms in education, literacy, and public participation are being challenged by a shifting landscape of media and communications in which youth

are central actors. Although complaints about “kids these days” have a familiar ring to them, the contemporary version is somewhat unusual in how strongly it equates generational identity with technology identity, an equation that is reinforced by telecommunications and digital media corporations that hope to capitalize on this close identification. (p. 4)

However, claims to technology having a negative impact on young people’s relational lives do not seem to stand up. Ito et al.'s (2009) sentiment above is from a summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project (DYP),<sup>37</sup> which pushed back on equating young people with a technology identity. Instead, the study found that young people inhabit resilient social and cultural structures in diverse ways (Ito et al., 2009). Ito et al. (2009) note that youth predominantly use online networks to extend already existing friendships, with only a small number using technology to explore interests and access information beyond what is available at school or in their local community. While technology and media may be implicated in the relational lives of young people, the DYP’s findings suggest a positive picture of youth and new media. These findings align with those of Suss et al. (2001) who note that technology and media are not replacing friendships, but are often used as a common source of play and interaction. Technology and media may be transforming our lives and the way we communicate, but the research suggests this could prove beneficial to young people in building and managing satisfying relationships.

Along with the impact of technology and the media, the statements of the Rationale represent a need for particular skills, knowledge and understanding to build and manage relationships. This

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<sup>37</sup> Funded by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

‘need’ indicates a complex view of relationships and that relationships are central to young people’s health and wellbeing. Being good at relationships is represented as critical to good citizenship, and it would seem that young people are not expected to be able to engage in positive relationships without the interventions offered by the AC: HPE. The relational lives of young people are represented as problematic without the particular ‘work’ the curriculum does in equipping young people with the skills and abilities required for producing and enhancing their relationships.

Concerning the relational lives of young people, the curriculum also proposes a need for “respectful” relationships. Within the Rationale, an interest in young people advocating for others and promoting social cohesion is seen through reference to “their own and others” (para. 2), “personal and community” (para. 3), and the statement: “They [students] critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3). These statements represent a collective focus on relationships and propose a need for young people to be considerate of and towards other people. Assumptions and stereotypes are positioned as problematic and in need of disruption through notions of ‘critique’ and ‘challenge’. Together, these represent a ‘need’ for young people to promote social cohesion and be engaged in advocacy for others.

The statements of the AC: HPE represent social harmony as a key element of ‘health’, with the first of the five aims of the curriculum referencing a need for students to “take positive action to protect, enhance and *advocate* for their own and others’ health” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims, emphasis added). This reiterates a privileging of positive relationships and relational factors as key to ‘good health’, yet also articulates a need for young people to be engaged in advocacy for

others. Within the Focus Area – *Relationships and Sexuality*, it is expected all students learn about “bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence (including discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality)” and “strategies for dealing with relationships when there is an imbalance of power (including seeking help or leaving the relationship)” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). These statements represent a lack of social cohesion and harmony within society and position young people as needing to respond to these issues.

Reflective of how curriculum is mobilised as a means of government, the responsibility for harmony or social cohesion is located with the individual young person. The statements of the AC: HPE call for young people to be advocates for others, working to create good health through the adoption of particular values and attitudes that benefit others. The imperative to promote social cohesion and advocate for others is reinforced by the call for young people to “develop empathy” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). Empathy is also listed as an attribute of *social health*, defined in the Glossary of the AC: HPE as:

An ability to form satisfying interpersonal relationships with others. It also relates to an ability to adapt comfortably to different social situations, social institutions, social values and norms, and act appropriately in a variety of settings. This requires strong communication skills, empathy for others and a sense of accountability. (ACARA, 2018b)

Empathy is positioned as a pillar of social cohesion and a requirement for acting “appropriately” in various social settings. The statements of the AC: HPE represent an investment in producing young people who relate peaceably with others, proposing that positive relationships are key to

good health, and entreating young people to take up particular ways of being that are personable, compassionate, and socially progressive.

As a country of migration, it is unsurprising that an Australian curriculum would provide some level of response to issues such as racial stereotypes and discrimination.<sup>38</sup> Anthony Welch (2018) argues that due to a history replete with racism, each new generation in Australia “must renew the commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, including in education” (p. 140). However, although there is an acknowledgement of stereotypes and assumptions, the AC: HPE does not explicitly recognise the institutionalised forms of these problems. Even within the HPE-specific discussion of the cross-curriculum priority, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* (ACARA, 2018a),<sup>39</sup> no mention is made of the historical and ongoing institutional racism that has had a significant impact upon the health experiences of Indigenous peoples in Australia (Genat & Cripps, 2009). The statements of the AC: HPE represent social cohesion and advocacy as a concern of the individual, rather than as something to be addressed and attended to at an institutional level.

### ***Responsibilising individuals.***

Within the AC: HPE, health is represented as the responsibility of young people through statements such as, “students need critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge and to understand the influences on their own health and others” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para.

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<sup>38</sup> As seen earlier in the *Relationships and Sexuality* Focus Area (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). The content of this Focus Area can be seen in full in Appendix 1, Figure 1.4

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 3.

2). *Responsibilisation* has been identified as a feature of contemporary neoliberal rationality, and refers to the making of subjects who are held to be responsible for their own health and welfare (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 73). Articulating a need for young people to be “actively engaged in their own and others’ wellbeing” reiterates the expectation that young people are to be responsible for not only themselves, but also for others (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). This perspective is also seen in the statement that the new HPE curriculum provides;

a stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing. (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 4)

Throughout the AC: HPE, the skills and abilities of young people are represented as a means for producing healthy citizens. These proposals work as discursive practices of *responsibilisation*.

The statements of the Rationale represent a multi-dimensional view of health while maintaining ‘health’ as attainable through a specific set of attributes and capabilities that can be learned and acquired. This requirement for young people to take up particular ways of being in order to be ‘healthy’ *responsibilises* individuals for addressing a ‘problem’ of health. *Responsibilised* citizenship has become a prevalent discourse in the modern world with Miller and Rose (1990) describing a form of citizenship in which individuals are active and autonomous, rather than passive and dependent. The concept of the citizen is transformed with the ‘passive’ citizen of the welfare state becoming the autonomous ‘active’ citizen with rights, duties, obligations, and expectations (B. Davies & Bansel, 2007). This formation of citizenship reflects modern democratic discourse and sees the political subject “henceforth to be an individual whose

citizenship is manifested through the free exercise of personal choice amongst a variety of options” (Miller & Rose, 1990, p. 24). Within the AC: HPE, a focus on individuals making positive choices to enhance health is rooted in the curriculum’s salutogenic, strengths-based approach (McCuaig, Quennerstedt, & Macdonald, 2013).

Salutogenesis is a term coined by Aaron Antonovsky, which describes a focus on factors that support human health and well-being, rather than a focus on factors that cause disease (pathogenesis) (Lindström & Eriksson, 2010). A salutogenic approach is evident in the curriculum through the emphasis on “what creates health rather than only what are the limitations and the causes of disease” (Antonovsky, 1979, p. 12). The ‘positive approach’ characteristic of salutogenesis is also apparent in the positive psychology movement.<sup>40</sup> A focus on ‘what creates health’ is seen through an intent to produce citizens who are actively engaged and work to improve and enhance not only their health, but that of others. This emphasis on creating health further contributes to responsabilising young people as either contributing to the ‘problem’ of health, or as forming part of the proposed solutions. The notion is picked up by Burns et al. (2018) who argue that within an increased onus on schools to improve health through the provision of health education, “the logic follows that if children and young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills to lead active, healthy and productive lives, they become self-responsibilising future citizens” (p. 22). Central to an understanding of such citizenship is a requirement of citizens to be(come) responsible, rational, and self-controlled individuals. This understanding of citizenship has been readily adopted, but the linking of

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<sup>40</sup> Established in the previous discussion of discourses of flourishing and wellbeing in the AC: HPE.

modern citizenship to responsibility raises moral questions about who can be considered a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ citizen (Petersen & Lupton, 2000).

A proposed need to develop health literacy is another discursive practice of responsabilisation within the AC: HPE. Health literacy is described as “consistent with a strengths-based approach” and “a personal and community asset to be developed, evaluated, enriched and communicated” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 11). The curriculum draws on the critical health literacy work of Nutbeam (2000), and the World Health Organisation’s conceptualisation of health literacy: “Health literacy can be understood as an individual’s ability to gain access to, understand and use health information and services in ways that promote and maintain health and wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 9). Louisa Peralta and Louise Rowling (2018) argue that this view of health literacy “implies that knowledge empowers young people to take responsibility for their health and supports their ability to seek help” (p. 366). Health literacy and a strengths-based approach are brought together in the first Aim of the AC: HPE, for students to; “access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others’ health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims). This statement stresses ‘positive action’ and proposes a specific need for students to be able to ‘evaluate’ information in order to protect, enhance, and advocate for themselves and others. Again, the onus is on an individual’s abilities, representing a need for improved abilities to ensure people are healthy and well.

The mobilisation of health literacy through the curriculum works in two ways. Firstly, it produces a need for young people to bear the responsibility of ‘evaluating’ information to take positive steps to ensure good health, and secondly, situates the curriculum as an assumed source

of good, correct, and beneficial knowledges and ways of thinking. Kickbusch, Wait, and Maag (2006) argue that health literacy “is a critical empowerment strategy to increase people’s control over their health, their ability to seek out information and their ability to take responsibility” (p. 8). The need for young people to assess and evaluate information – suggesting that not all knowledge is good knowledge – simultaneously implies the knowledge contained within the AC: HPE is good. Acquiring ‘good’ knowledge is represented as productive for taking ‘positive action’ for health. Health, as represented in the curriculum, is a product of particular knowledges and literacies, which are the responsibility of the individual to access and evaluate. Even within a broad understanding of social, emotional, and relational dimensions of health throughout the AC: HPE, health and wellbeing are linked to notions of young people’s individual responsibility. The statements of the Rationale express concerns around enduring and emerging ‘issues’ of health, before proposing young people as the means for addressing these issues. This same responsabilising is seen in various statements about wellbeing. Burns and Davies (2015) point out how conceptualisation of the wellbeing of citizens has moved from being produced through institutionalised strategies of national government, towards a greater emphasis on the active and choosing consumer-citizen who is responsible for their own achievement of wellbeing. Self-responsibility, they argue, has not only become a norm, “but a means of governing individuals who would come to see themselves as autonomous and free-choosing in their wellness pursuits” (K. Burns & Davies, 2015, p. 74).

The responsabilising of individuals for health and wellbeing is foundational to the ideology of *healthism*, which views health as a self-evident good and a controllable certainty that is the assumed responsibility of the individual (Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989). Healthism commonly underpins approaches to HPE, with Johns and Tinning (2006) arguing that biomedical

knowledge in PE is often reconceptualised into an ideology of healthism. That is, quantifiable knowledges around health are often translated into behaviours and lifestyle choices which individuals are positioned as being solely responsible for. A discourse of healthism is medicalised and can be somewhat fanatical, viewing health as the responsibility of the individual through controllable, personal behaviours (Crawford, 1980). Brendan Hokowhitu (2013) contends, that one of the key issues with a discourse of healthism is that it dismisses Indigenous perspectives of health as unscientific, viewing, for example, Indigenous healing practices as unfounded, inferior, and worthy of suspicion. Fitzpatrick and Allen (2019) argue similarly, suggesting that “histories of colonisation and western imperialism have positioned Indigenous ontologies of health and wellbeing at the margins” (p. 198). As Azzarito (2010) asserts, “monocultural” ideals of health “erase difference” (p. 262). In the AC: HPE, the erasure of Indigenous knowledges or approaches to health occurs, not merely through a lack of content, but through discourses, such as healthism, that contribute to Indigenous ontologies being marginalised.

Galstaldo (1997) argues that when the goal of health education is to produce changes in behaviour, it becomes normative – presenting conforming ‘healthy behaviour’ as normal, and all other behaviours as deviant. Within the AC: HPE, the norm becomes young people being responsible for health. Young people are expected to take up particular knowledges, attitudes, behaviours, and actions to achieve ‘good health’, both for themselves and to contribute to their communities. Subjectification effects such as this have also been observed in other proposals around health, such as the production of citizens as *consumers of health* (Petersen, 2003, p. 193). Bacchi (2009a) observes;

the accompanying emphasis on individual behaviours and individual responsibility for health produces citizens who, to an extent, accept and live this narrative. Hence, they can come to judge both their own behaviours and those of others against expectations set by policy makers and allied professionals. (p. 183)

In the same way, HPE produces particular forms of ‘health’ that young people can judge their behaviours against. As a ‘problem’ of health is nested within a broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population, these judgements become a measure of what is, and what is not, ‘good’ and ‘healthy’ citizenship.

### **Particular kinds of citizens: happy, sociable, and responsible**

As established in Chapter 4, the AC: HPE is invested in the production of particular kinds of citizens who will make up the future Australian population. The curriculum produces a particular, normative view of ‘health’ which sees the healthy subject as having a positive sense of self, as well as rich and satisfying relationships. In response to the ‘problem’ of health, the AC: HPE proposes the need for young people who are responsible for themselves, and others, who are literate and critical advocates that engage well relationally. The effect of this representation is that individuals who fail to achieve this standard of emotional, social and relational wellbeing do so at the expense of their status of full citizen. In this way, the proposals of the AC: HPE can be read as discursive practices that govern citizens who register as an ‘acceptable’ type of subject – in this case, citizens who are happy, sociable, and responsible.

Foucault (2008), in *Biopolitics*, observes how attending to the health of the population allows contemporary western governments to maintain order and economic security. Using the work of Turner (1997), Bacchi (2009a) “makes the case that this concern with population produces a *functional* understanding of health – that is, health becomes what is required to make governing possible and successful” (p. 129). In the proposals of the AC: HPE, ‘health’ takes on a particular form and shape, it is multidimensional, social, and something in the making. The statements of the curriculum represent a concern with producing young people who take up required social, emotional, and relational ways of being healthy as part of their enactment of ‘good’ citizenship. This aligns with a wealth of research that considers how HPE contributes to discursive constructions of what it means to be healthy and active and how these ideals have become imbued with notions of ‘good’ citizenship (Cliff & Wright, 2010; Gard, 2008; Gard & Leahy, 2009; McCuaig & Hay, 2013; Tinning & Glasby, 2002; K. Wright & McLeod, 2015).

The investment in wellbeing and social/emotional health by the AC: HPE reflects broader HPE discourse, which has shifted from primarily biomedical models of health, to encompass the physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of health.<sup>41</sup> Researching Swedish and New Zealand HPE contexts, Quennerstedt et al. (2010) mapped a shift “from moral to medical health education” (first wave), “from biomedical health education to healthy lifestyles” (second wave), and finally “towards physical, psychological and social well-being” (third wave). Across these shifts is a movement towards a more holistic, encompassing view of health, however, Quennerstedt et al. (2010) lament how the challenge offered by the third wave has been

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<sup>41</sup> See Glossary definition of *health*, Appendix 1, Figure 1.5.2

disrupted, with obesity concerns “prompting a return to the notion of health as a matter of eating the ‘right’ foods and exercising regularly” (p. 103). Similar discourses have been observed as pervasive within Australian curriculum contexts (see for example, Cliff & Wright, 2010; Leahy et al., 2017; Tinning, 1991; Tinning & Glasby, 2002; J. Wright, 1996; K. Wright, 2014). A third-wave focus on a more holistic view of health that encapsulates psychological and social wellbeing in addition to physical health is evident in the new curriculum, even though remnants of biomedical approaches still remain. The responsabilising of young people reflects Quennerstedt et al.’s (2010) concerns that social-determinant understandings of health have been displaced by a return to focusing on individual choices and behaviours.

The healthy citizenship of the curriculum has been shaped by Western political rationalities insisting on citizenship as not only a right but a responsibility. Citizenship, as produced through the Rationale takes on an active form, where young people must take up particular ways of being that align with their obligation to understand their civic duties and use their rights not just to the benefit of themselves, but also for others. As Davies and Burns (2014) attest, healthy citizenship is mediated by individual citizens being “positioned to take responsibility for managing their health and minimising future risks” (p. 711). Ayo (2012) discusses how health promotion policies reflect and reinforce the dominant political ideologies of the west in such a way as to construct and produce ‘good’ and ‘healthy’ citizens;

the enormous amount of personal resources invested into healthy living, be it in time, money, physical effort or a range of aesthetic regimes, is not seen as a narcissistic obsession with the self (Rose 1990), nor is it considered to be frivolous. Rather such personal investment is deemed as a wilful obedience to the

duties and obligations imposed by citizenship. (p. 101)

This notion of ‘wilful obedience’ to civic duties is also seen in Lupton’s (1999) assertion that the citizen idealised in educational discourses is “an individual who is able to engage in self-discipline and ethical self-examination and reflection. ... achiev[ing] the objectives that the state envisages for developing and maximising the potential of its population.” (p. 289). Petersen and Lupton (2000) argue that good health becomes a requisite for becoming a ‘good citizen’ as it enables positive participation in social life. In the AC: HPE Rationale, citizenship is inextricably linked with health, and the critical need for young people to be and become “healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1).

The ‘problem’ of health that has been examined in this chapter is specifically an emotional and relational ‘problem’, which has been represented by the AC: HPE and throughout the field of HPE scholarship. Tracing the emergence of wellbeing and the rise of the therapeutic state, as well as the mobilisation of happiness as a modality of government, the ‘problem’ of health represented by the AC: HPE becomes conceivable. Sarah Ahmed’s (2010a, 2010b) writings on happiness also contribute to understanding how and why the AC: HPE has come to be considered a means of producing an emotionally ‘healthy’ population. Through the proposed means of producing ‘good health’, the AC: HPE locates responsibility for health with the individual young person, yet simultaneously links this to their relationships with others. As an investment in the future population, the proposals of the AC: HPE construct the notion of citizens who flourish as those who are happy, sociable, and responsible.

## Chapter 6. Making ‘safe’ citizens

Chapter 5 explored how producing ‘healthy’ citizens was offered as part of the solution to the broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population proposed by the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE). Another part of the proposed ‘solution’ to this ‘problem’ is the production of ‘safe’ citizens. As with the ‘problem’ of health, the ‘problem’ of safety and risk is represented as a particular kind of problem in HPE. This chapter interrogates this ‘problem’ as one that links risk to safety, triangulating the need to be safe with an increasing set of risks for young people in uncertain times and ideas about protective strategies that can be learned in and through schooling. Within the contexts of a risk-society, discourses of security, and an ‘at-risk’ young population, the statements of the Rationale represent the production of ‘safe’ young citizens as part of the proposed ‘solution’ offered by HPE.

### The ‘problems’ of safety and risk

As established in Chapter 4, a core stated aim of the AC: HPE is producing healthy, *safe*, and active citizens. The use of the term ‘safe’ within the curriculum carries inherently problem-focused connotations and lies outside the traditional domains of health and physical education. ‘Healthy’ and ‘active’ are words commonly associated with the learning area HPE, yet the term ‘safe’ is not as naturally at home. To a certain extent, safety relates to common areas of focus in HPE such as drug safety, road safety, and safe sex. However, the representation of safeness as a key tenet of ‘good’ citizenship reflects particular assumptions about the changing world in which

the new national curriculum emerges. As Wyness (2012) attests: “One of the dominant themes in contemporary Western society is the idea that childhood is in crisis.” (p. 107). Fears around children and young people often manifest in the need to put systems in place to protect them and ‘keep them safe’. This represents contemporary concerns over the ‘safety’ of young people, connected with their construction as innocent or vulnerable. Increasing security discourses (Bigo, 2002; Walters, 2004) and the concept of a contemporary, western ‘risk society’ (U. Beck, 1992a, 1992b; Giddens, 1999), have further perpetuated the need for a broader societal focus on safety.

*Safety* is a key term in the AC: HPE Rationale, and is one of 12 content Focus Areas. Within the statements of the Rationale, being safe is represented as an imperative for young people and a key tenet of ‘good’ citizenship. Safety is offered in response to the perception of increased ‘risk’, and reflects particular assumptions about the world. In the context of uncertain futures, safety becomes both a required commodity, and a key responsibility of citizens in response to the potential dangers of the future.

***Safety, risk, and security.***

The Rationale posits a need for young people to “build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3). A proposed need to “enhance safety” is representative of underlying assumptions about the risks or dangers posed by the modern world. The first statement of the Rationale portrays a concern with the risks of a modern world by representing “an increasingly complex, sedentary, and rapidly changing world” as the principle justification for why HPE is needed (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The statements of the Rationale foreground the challenges of life and propose a situation in which

young people are exposed to potential danger and harm. This is followed by a number of proposals for addressing this danger by enhancing safety. Through these proposals a discursive practice of risk is mobilised throughout the AC: HPE.

A societal preoccupation with ‘risk’ arguably became prevalent at the turn of the century (Kelly, 2001). Reflective of this, the statements of the AC: HPE represent developing young people’s safety skills and knowledge as a way of dealing with the problem of living in increasingly ‘risky’ times. In positing risk as a problem, and the safe practices of young people as a proposed solution, the statements of the AC: HPE represent young people as lacking the adequate knowledge or ability to safely navigate the world and their relationships. The content of the AC: HPE is proposed to fill this gap. Young people are represented as ‘at risk’ of danger, uncertainty, and being or becoming unsafe, with the curriculum represented as an intervention that provides safe skills, practices, and knowledge.

Terms such as “critical”, “challenges”, and “increasingly complex world” reflect an underlying discourse of risk in the curriculum (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The targeting of young people in response to these ‘risks’ aligns with broader discourses and implicitly constructs young people as particularly ‘at-risk’. There is no explicit reference to youth as *at-risk* within the AC: HPE, however the term risk is used twice within the analysed data: firstly, under the *Take a strengths-based approach* section of Key Ideas where it mentions potential health risks; secondly, within the *Challenge and adventure activities* Focus Area, about assessing hazards and managing risks. While youth subjectivities are not framed as explicitly ‘at-risk’, the environments in which they must grow, and “flourish” are framed as risky. Peter Kelly (2001) argues that since the start of the new millennium the crisis of youth, or youth-at-risk, has been a

key marker in debates about young people. There is often an acceptance of risk as a category for defining youth, with discussion then focused on which youth are 'at-risk', in what particular ways, and what can be done. Douglas Gross and David Capuzzi (2014) recognise that defining youth 'at-risk' can be contentious regarding what elements are to be considered and measured, yet they fail to problematise the labelling of youth as 'at-risk' in the first place.

Over roughly the past three decades, the 'truth' of youth 'at-risk' has not enjoyed an entirely unproblematic acceptance throughout educational literature, rhetoric, and policy (R. White & Wyn, 2004). Gordon Tait (1995) expresses some concerns, noting risk as an important indicator in a grid of governmental intelligibility across a multiplicity of terrains, including schooling. 'At-risk' youth replace older characterisations (delinquent, deviant, disadvantaged) used in the policing of the young. However, preventative policies associated with 'risk' are constituted in terms of factors rather than individuals. These policies focus on gathering statistical knowledge which identifies 'risks' within given populations (Tait, 1995). This 'risk' is employed as a medium through which youth are governed, permitting a greater number of young people to be brought into the field of regulatory strategies (Tait, 1995). Kelly (2001) expresses concern with an unproblematised notion of youth as 'at-risk' in that "potentially, every behaviour, every practice, every group of young people can be constructed in terms of risk" (p. 23). The construction of youth in at-risk discourses represents young people as potentially jeopardising desired futures through their present behaviours (Kelly, 2014). More recently, scholars such as Reidun Follesø (2015) are challenging prominent understandings of youth at risk, and asking questions of how the two terms, youth, and risk, are connected to one another.

The context of ‘risk’ can be seen as underpinning the formation of the national curriculum from inception. As part of his call for an education revolution, Rudd mobilises risk as a key rationale for his proposed ‘education revolution’ which would go on to be the basis for the development of the Australian Curriculum:

If the 19th century was driven by an industrial revolution, and the 20th century by a technological revolution, what is needed for the 21st century is an education revolution. For Australia, it is needed because our *long-term prosperity is at risk*. Already *the warning signs are here*. (Kevin Rudd, 23rd January 2007, emphasis added)

Rudd (2007) draws on historic contexts to present a troubled and *at-risk* Australia, going on to offer educational reforms as a means for responding to this risk. In doing so, he not only adopts a neoliberal rationality<sup>42</sup> but (re)produces Australia as a *risk society*. Contemporary theories of western risk societies are helpful to consider in unpacking the broader context within which the focus on ‘safety’ in the AC: HPE becomes intelligible.

Ulrich Beck (1992a) proposes that society is organised around a social distribution of risks, given rise to by the proliferation of techno-scientifically produced risks. Modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks which have been produced by society itself. A risk society is one that organises itself in response to risk and this organisation is evident in the AC: HPE being positioned as a

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<sup>42</sup> Reflective of Ericson, Barry, and Doyle (2000) argument that risk is one of five tenets of neoliberal rationality.

response to inherent and imminent risks to societal and young people's safety. Risk is a modern concept that presupposes human decisions and humanly made futures, differing somewhat to the concept of threats, which are the "endangerment and insecurity belonging to the human existence from its beginnings" (U. Beck, 2009, p. 293). For Ulrich Beck (2014) the consequences of industrial and scientific development are a set of risks and hazards that are no longer limited by time and space, are crossing national boundaries, and will impact upon future generations; de-localised, incalculable, and non-compensable.

The concept of risk calls for careful engagement with the future and a political commitment to accountability and responsibility. Ideas of 'global risk' open up "a moral and political space that can give rise to a civil culture of responsibility that transcends borders and conflicts" (U. Beck, 2014, p. 87). This culture of responsibility occurs through de-localising risk – the trauma of everyone being vulnerable results in a responsibility for others, for the sake of one's own survival. In this way, 'risk' works as a discursive practice of self-government. Giddens (1998) considers a risk society to be "a society... which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past" (p. 94). As a result, a risk society is one that is not more perilous, but is instead a society that is increasingly preoccupied with safety and the future, in turn generating notions of risk.

With the curriculum posited as "a strong investment in the future of the Australian population", there is evidently a concern around what the future holds (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). This same preoccupation with the future underpins the *New Public Health Approach*, where considerations of public health have shifted from the control of infectious disease and sanitation to a focus on social and personal risk factors as a consequence of varying lifestyles (Petersen &

Lupton, 2000). Johns and Tinning (2006) comment that this perspective on health coincides with Ulrich Beck's (1992a, 1992b) characterisation of modern societies in relation to global concerns and the management of potential hazards. A focus on risk factors demonstrates a concern with the future, and the need for these risks to be managed to ameliorate potential or anticipated ill-health and disease. Chapter 7 provides further discussion of the New Public Health Approach and how it has shaped considerations of physical activity, the risks of 'sedentary' lifestyles, and the underlying discourse of the 'obesity crisis'.

The particular effectiveness of deploying risks as a technology of government is the implied imminent harm which consequently invokes a sense of panic and urgency and infers an immediate need for action to be taken (Ayo, 2012). It is expected that responsible young people will not only embrace the safe behaviours and ways of being articulated by the AC: HPE as part of reasonable service to themselves, but also as part of their duty of citizenship in 21st century Australia. In terms of HPE, concern for the future has long permeated iterations of curriculum, yet the particular context of a risk society has elevated these concerns and closely intertwined the management of risk with citizenship. As Proctor and Burns (2017) argue in their discussion of 19th and early 20th century health education discourses, the idea of equipping young people for the future has been instrumental to health and physical education since its inception, addressing different types of change, but nevertheless always addressing changes and new problems facing young people. For example, early health education, post-World War 1, was about ensuring young people, especially young women, did not engage in risky sex or alcohol consumption, given the new freedoms presented to women post war (Proctor & Burns, 2017). As established in Chapter 4, education has long been concerned with the management of civic obedience, however this iteration of curriculum, in its new national form, elevates concern with the future and

mobilises the curriculum as a key governing technology in the making of particular kinds of citizens. The turn to such a large undertaking of rewriting curriculum on a national scale is about changing the course of education's future. The forging of a new set of educational standards and priorities to cope with the future suggest that old bodies of knowledge and priorities are outmoded. The Rationale's proposal to be "an investment in the future Australian population" positions HPE as a key means of addressing the associated risks of the future.

A 'problem' of risk also indicates an increasingly prevalent security discourse. William Walters (2004) identifies security as a dominant motif in national and international government, evident through attention to food security, water security, and energy security, together with more conventional foreign policy security concerns. Along similar lines, Didier Bigo (2002) talks about a current "governmentality of unease" occurring as a result of "the creation of a continuum of threats and general unease in which many different actors exchange their fears and beliefs in the process of making a risky and dangerous society" (p. 63). Securitization of particular issues helps to rationalise and shore up roles and practices of government through the construction of a needed response to particular problems. In the curriculum, contexts such as home, school, parties, road or transport environments, the outdoors, water environments, and physical activity are all included in the prospectus of the *Safety* Focus Area (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). This expansive list of contexts positions the majority of environments which young people find themselves in as risky, further requiring young people to develop specific skills and abilities in order to safely navigate them.

As an individualised concept, security is unclear and resultantly ends up meaning everything that is good, with insecurity being all that is bad (Waeber, 1996). Consequently, labelling a particular

issue as a security or safety ‘issue’ produces a perceived ‘right’ for it to be dealt with by extraordinary means. In this way, ‘security’ is self-referential; through the practice of labelling something as a security issue it becomes such (Waever, 1996). The AC: HPE expects students to learn “strategies for dealing with unsafe or uncomfortable situations”, which indicates a discourse of human security, and the individual management of risky contexts (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, Safety). Ole Waever (1996) argues that security is a practice or specific way of framing an issue. Within the AC: HPE specific issues such as relationships, sexuality, drugs/medicine, and technology are all represented as requiring particular knowledge, skills, and understanding to secure students safety. Walters (2004) asks the question; What implications do emerging spaces, concepts and identities of security have for the practice of citizenship? Although the word security is not explicitly mentioned, this discourse contributes to the territorialisation of safety as a particular field in HPE curriculum.

***The ‘risk’ of uncertain futures.***

Articulated in the opening concerns around an “increasingly complex... and rapidly changing world”, the statements of the Rationale position learning in HPE as a response to a set of national and global changes (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). This sets out an understanding of the world as an increasingly dangerous and unsafe place, full of challenges that young people will have to face. However, the particularities of these changes are never clearly articulated. This lack of clarity constructs an overarching climate of national and global uncertainty and suggests new challenges that previous generations did not face. A focus on producing ‘safe’ young citizens in response to perceptions of risk in the curriculum reveals an underlying discourse of uncertain futures.

As established in Chapter 4, the AC: HPE is represented as a “futures-oriented curriculum” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 1). This futures orientation is constructed around perceptions of potentially risky futures and is responsive to discourses of chaotic complexity and change which construct a ‘problem’ of uncertainty about the future. As Hodgson (2016) claims; “educational responses to social problems are often triggered by a sense of crisis” (p. 1). Unpredictability and confusion work to unsettle feelings of safety and security through the fear of the future unknown. Popkewitz et al. (2007) explore the “inscription of the future as a regulating principle of the present” (p. 436) arguing the uncertainty of the future functions as a governing practice, designed to construct particular kinds of people in the present. Through the inscription of the future and a sense of rapid change, the AC: HPE constructs a particular ‘problem’ around producing ‘safe’ citizens with the requisite knowledge and capabilities to adapt and respond to an uncertain future.

Analysing Singaporean government, Anna-Katharina Hornidge (2010) paints a picture similar to that of the increasingly complex... and *rapidly changing* world represented by the Rationale:

Notions such as ‘world risk society’, ‘fragility of society’ and ‘second modernity’ are used to capture degrees and qualities of *uncertainty, insecurity and unsafety induced by constant, unpredictable change*. This uncertainty, insecurity, and unsafety can turn in to collective feelings of discomfort, the loss of confidence, anxiety and even fear. (Hornidge, 2010, pp. 786, emphasis added)

Rapid change incites feelings of what Hornidge (2010) refers to as uncertainty, insecurity, and unsafety. Elicited by discourses of risk and rapid change, a sense of unsafeness constructs a

problem or crisis requiring a response. By setting out an uncertain, insecure, and unsafe future, the proposals of the Rationale establish a need for responding to this future ‘problem’. This ‘problem’ of future uncertainty is further iterated through reference to the 21st century. Terri Seddon (2015) notes “the motif of ‘21st century contexts’ is often used to capture the transition from solid twentieth century education towards more uncertain social and educational conditions” (p. 529). She argues the 21st century is mobilised as a context for action, eliciting notions of uncertainty without clear explanation about *how* and *why* this particular representation of time requires particular response and change (Seddon, 2015). Within the opening statement of the Rationale, the reference to the 21st century represents a context of uncertainty, which requires a resultant change in governing processes and practices. The sense of a world in rapid change and the uncertain future of the 21st century combine to question the capability for schooling to respond appropriately to this shifting context.

A narrative of future uncertainty is beginning to take effect on the experiences of Australia’s young people, with new research finding that a concern with the future is being taken up by young people. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s, *Behind the News*, conducted a survey of 47,000 children, aged between 6 and 18 across Australia. This report found that for children over the age of 10, the primary worry was *their future*, over and above concerns of bullying, body image, and being different (Doman, Ting, Liu, & Palmer, 2017). Lisa Gibbs, one of the researchers analysing the data, said that this being the top worry among students could reflect shifting concerns of the adults in their lives; “Generally we do know that children are tuned into what’s happening in their home and what the adults around them are responding to” (Doman et al., 2017, para. 13). In a self-stated futures-oriented curriculum, concern for the future reflects broader socio-cultural discourses around uncertainty and the need to equip young people to be

able to adequately and safely navigate the “increasingly complex” and “rapidly changing” world (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1).

In the modern context, education is often offered as a governmental response to increasing fears around risk and uncertainty. As Hargreaves (2003) contends, schooling is offered as a means of preparing young people for the future, developing their “capacity to initiate and cope with change” (p. xviii). Due to an unstable, constantly changing, and uncertain future, a societal focus on learning or knowledge arises from notions of information as the primary source of human flourishing and economic development. As such, being a lifelong learner is considered of utmost importance for the future conduct of individuals and society, as well as the health and safety of the population (Popkewitz et al., 2007). Education subdues the ‘ubiquitous’ uncertainty of the future through the production of “autonomous learners who are continuously involved in self-improvement and ready for the uncertainties” (Popkewitz et al., 2007, p. 437). In the face of uncertainty, the ‘solution’ proposed in the AC: HPE is centred on the developing and imparting of particular skills, knowledge, and understanding.

### ***Knowledge and skills as protective.***

Knowledge is positioned in the AC: HPE as both a primary outcome and a means through which the curriculum works. Repeatedly linked with the terms *understanding* and *skills*, knowledge forms just one part of a triad of requisite capabilities young people ‘need’ to become healthy, safe, and active citizens. The structure of a F–10 curriculum framework suggests that these three attributes can be organised and developed progressively and sequentially. Further, the term

knowledge is often preceded by iterations of developing,<sup>43</sup> with the implication that knowledge is something that students need to attain, grow, and continually enhance. The development of knowledge works alongside skills and understanding to continually equip and prepare young people for the life-challenges they will face – an implied, albeit not stated, need for lifelong learners. As Macdonald (2013) argues, “a futures-oriented HPE would provide opportunities for young people to improve their health literacy and to become lifelong, critical consumers of health-related information with the skills to access, appraise and apply health-related knowledge” (p. 97). The AC: HPE represents the accumulation of knowledge as a necessary tool for managing the uncertainty of the 21st century and of the future, with students needing to be able to evaluate and apply knowledge in accordance with future change. Within this framework, knowledge and skills become protective factors that equip young people to safely navigate uncertain futures.

Ascribing knowledge with ‘safe’ decisions and behaviours, the AC: HPE; “supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make safe decisions and behave in ways that protect their own safety and that of others” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, *Safety*). Reference to safe decisions and behaviours represents safety as both a way of thinking, and a way of acting. Within the Key Ideas, it is argued that “the curriculum has a stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 4). This statement works to construct ‘safe’ young citizens as responsive

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<sup>43</sup> For repeated examples of this, see the Structure section Figure 1.4 of the curriculum in Appendix 1, under the subtitle ‘Relationships between the strands’, and the sub-strand descriptions for numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5.

to perceptions of ‘risk’ through the proposed knowledge and abilities. It presupposes that healthy, safe, and active choices will be made provided that young people are given the requisite knowledge, understanding, and skills required to protect them. Offering knowledge as a strategy for safety indicates the underlying assumption that by knowing about risk we necessarily reduce risk. However, Robinson (2013) shows that risk is not reduced simply because something is labelled as risky, but rather by talking to young people about what informs their ideas of risk, and how they balance these things with desire, pleasure, power, etc. The proposal that safety education reduces risk overlooks the complexities of power, and how sometimes risks are pleasurable, desirable, or positive. This also simplifies notions of risk, failing to take into account that not everybody experiences the same level of risk.

Inherent to curriculum design is the differentiation of knowledge. Curricula sanction a particular set of privileged or valued knowledges, which have been through a rigorous process of deliberation and selection for inclusion. This differentiation reflects a premise that not all knowledge is equal:

We differentiate knowledge because in important ways not all knowledge is the same. ... We intuitively feel that some knowledges are ‘better’ – epistemically, morally or aesthetically—than others, and that they represent criteria about what is true, what is beautiful and how we should treat our fellow human beings and the non-human world, that are more universal than others. (Young & Muller, 2013, pp. 230–231)

The selection of ‘good’ or ‘better’ knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum works to

simultaneously apportion other knowledges as ‘bad’ or ‘less’ valuable. In offering particular sets of knowledge in response to the uncertainty of the complex and rapidly-changing world, the AC: HPE constructs a lack of knowledge, or possession of the ‘wrong’ knowledge, as potentially problematic for the future – a ‘problem’ of knowledge.

A problem of knowledge has been discussed within education scholarship more broadly, for example, with the new sociology of education bringing knowledge to the fore through positing “a causal relationship between the organisation of knowledge and broader relationships of inequality and power” (Moore, 2013, p. 335). Thus, while knowledge is seen as protecting against future uncertainty and change, it carries with it a certain level of complexity and contestation. The idea of powerful-knowledge, for example, has been a cause for continuous debate between scholars (see for example J. Beck, 2013; J. White, 2012; Young, 2013; Young & Muller, 2013). Wariness of the complexity of knowledge is shown in the Rationale through reference to students needing “critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge” (ACARA, 2017c, para. 2). Alongside the key idea of ‘Focus on educative purposes’, the inclusion of a critical inquiry approach reflects an acknowledgement of both contextual factors impacting upon health, as well as a need for appraising and evaluating knowledge in a way that allows for disruption or questioning of taken-for-granted knowledge and ‘truth’. These discourses may operate as points of disruption and contestation to the idea that the curriculum provides only a narrow, immovable view of citizenship and the purposes of HPE. However, it appears that the inclusion of critical inquiry is still co-opted as a means of governing young people in particular ways through its focus on “inclusiveness, power inequalities, assumptions, diversity, and social justice” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, *Include a critical inquiry approach*). These areas of focus reiterate that knowledge and skills, including critical inquiry skills, are still

viewed as protective factors which will keep students, and the broader community ‘safe’.

Even though students are expected to critically analyse knowledge, internally, the statements of the AC: HPE already do the bulk of the work in determining what content and knowledge is valuable. Scott (2014) suggests that while curriculum is “in essence a knowledge transforming activity” (p. 14) it also acts to determine what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate forms of knowledge:

Axiomatically then, a school curriculum is always a selection from a range of cognitions, skills or dispositions that are available within a society; that is, these are being, or have been, manifested in human practices of a discursive, institutional, agential or embodied kind. (Scott, 2014, p. 15)

This selection of knowledge then begs the question of whose knowledge counts, with the issue being that, historically, most knowledge taught in schools draws on white, western, male understandings. The focus for the analysis of this thesis has been more so on the framing of curriculum content, rather than a close reading of the content itself, however it is worth recognising the evident lack of Indigenous knowledge or understandings in the framing statements of the AC: HPE. While *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* is listed as one of the three cross-curriculum priority areas of the broader Australian Curriculum,<sup>44</sup> there remains a notable lack of meaningful reference to Indigenous knowledges across the AC: HPE, or clear reference to how these are to be integrated across the curriculum.

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 3.

### *Technology as risky.*

The Rationale states that: “Technology and media will continue to transform our lives and change the way we communicate” (ACARA, 2017c, para. 2). As established in Chapter 4, the first two paragraphs of the Rationale roughly work to set-up the explicit problems that the curriculum proposes to address and as such, the location of this statement within these first two paragraphs produces technology as risky. The term *transform* is sufficiently vague to not automatically impose an assertion of harm, but technology and media are offered within the presentation of anticipated future-problems the AC: HPE proposes to address. Yates (2012) finds that most curriculum texts hold the relevance of aspects of the past in tension with “what needs to be done differently to prepare for a world of such rapid technological, communications, and social change” (p. 266). The reference to technology and media continuing to change how we live and communicate seemingly speaks to Yates’ (2012) claim. Michael Apple (1986, p. 115) observes the importance of slogans in curriculum reform, identifying three key attributes required for effectiveness; (1) a penumbra of vagueness so that those who would otherwise disagree can fit under their umbrella, (2) sound sufficiently practical for teachers to perceive immediate gains and recognition of their needs, and (3) the ability to charm. The idea of technology and media as transformative adopts similar tenets of effectiveness – being sufficiently vague to be unarguable, and yet providing a practical target for intervention that is well situated within contemporary rhetoric and taken-for-granted moral suspicion.

Technology could be seen as positive and enabling advancements in the future society, however, the statements of the AC: HPE represent a degree of caution in signalling technology’s potentially problematic influence and application. Woodman and Wyn (2015) contend that the

proliferation of technology and media supports diverse relationships, enabling a new awareness in young people as to how others are living. This awareness creates new imaginaries where young people can challenge normative youth transitions. There are similar considerations of technology in the Focus Area of *Safety*, which calls for students to learn about “safe practices when using information and communication technologies (ICT) and online services, including dealing with cyberbullying” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). Online services are positioned as a site of risk through articulating a need for ‘safe practices’ when using technology. The specific inclusion of dealing with cyberbullying positions technology as contributing to the youth problem of bullying.

Up to one in five young Australians report being cyberbullied (Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, 2011). The impacts of cyberbullying include adverse effects on self-confidence, relationships, school grades and attendance, extreme sadness and anger, self-harm, and suicidal ideation (Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Recent research, however, suggests that approaches to addressing issues of cyberbullying typically fail to engage with how young people use technology and why (Albury, Crawford, Byron, & Mathews, 2013). Kath Albury and Paul Byron (2014), for example, contend that Australian research into sexting and cyberbullying “has observed that formal legal and educational discourses have failed to fully account for young people’s understandings and experiences” (p. 138). The proposals of the AC: HPE position the problem of cyberbullying as a ‘problem’ for young people, yet do not explicitly account for young people’s experiences.

Technology as a threat, as opposed to an enabling factor, also aligns with contemporary notions connecting technology with physical inactivity/obesity discourses. A moral suspicion of children

and the evils of technology underpins rhetoric linking screen-time and technologies with adverse health outcomes. These discourses construct children as being lured into sedentary activities by the pleasures offered by technology, however, as discussed in Chapter 5, the research around technology use in young people often contradicts popular anxieties (Ito et al., 2009). Findings from Ito et al. (2009) showed that technology use did not always equate with reduced play, and Fakhouri, Hughes, Brody, Kit, and Ogden (2013) found “low levels of screen-time viewing may not necessarily predict higher levels of physical activity” (p. 223). These complexities are elaborated upon in Chapter 7, where discourses of obesity and the negative positioning of technology are discussed further. Overall, technology in the AC: HPE is represented as potentially risky, and the curriculum positions young people as needing to adopt ‘safe practices’ to avoid harm.

### ***Responsibility and risk.***

As discussed in Chapter 5, the strengths-based approach embedded in the AC: HPE is presented as a move away from deficit-based models of health (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas). This focus is somewhat at odds with the notion of ‘safe’ citizenry, which relies on the idea that there are distinct risks or problems that young people should be kept safe from. This production of ‘safe’ young people reflects contemporary anxieties around the need to protect childhood and youth. A strengths-based approach is intended as a shift away from notions of ‘risk’. However, Burns et al. (2018) argue that responsibility and personal management, which are inherent to a strengths-based approach, are bound to notions of risk aversion. Focusing on individual strengths does not replace discourses of risk and safety, but locates ‘problems’ with individuals and increasingly invisibilises the impact of social structures and processes (Wyn, 2009).

Rose (2000, p. 12) observes a mode of governing that emphasises individual responsibility and which he terms *advanced liberalism*. He connects this to a discourse of responsabilisation, whereby citizens are expected to become enterprising individuals who can manage and empower themselves, thus producing individual well-being and independence (Rose, 1996, 2000). Miller and Rose (2013) further examine this way of governing subjects with an emphasis on “active, choosing, responsible and autonomous individuals obliged to be free, and to live life as if it were an outcome of choice” (p. 18). The notion of ‘choice’ is seen in the strengths-based approach in which students are required to “make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 4). This choice is construed as possible through the affirmation that “all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 5). Further to this, one of the 18 threads of the HPE content is entitled; *Making healthy and safe choices* (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). This thread is listed under the sub-strand – Being healthy, safe and active – with the description:

The content focuses on supporting students to make decisions about their own health, safety and wellbeing. It develops the knowledge, understanding and skills to support students to be resilient. It enables them to access and understand health information and empowers them to make healthy, safe and active choices. In addition, the content explores personal identities and emotions, and the contextual factors that influence students’ health, safety and wellbeing. Students also learn about the behavioural aspects related to regular physical activity and develop the dispositions needed to be active individuals. (ACARA, 2017c, Structure)

Again, there are repeated references to safety being a result of students' own decisions, choices, contexts, identities, and emotions. The 'problem' is represented to be a lack of the knowledge, understanding, and skills that are required for students to be able to make these safe decisions and choices. The focus on providing this knowledge and skills is the production of young people who are responsible for making 'safe' decisions and choices.

Managing personal safety is the sixth dot-point under the *Safety* Focus Area and references the need for individual safety to be 'managed', with the term *personal* suggesting a specific role for the individual. The concept of managing the personal reflects an art of government that seeks to regulate individual behaviours by devolving autonomy and responsibility from the state to an active citizenry that takes up the role of governing themselves (Miller & Rose, 2013). There is a sense in which young people are being responsabilised to take up the role of caring for themselves and their own safety. The government is no less invested in individual safety, but governs in such a way that individuals take-up this objective as their own and are active in regulating their behaviours and actions accordingly – they become self-governing. As noted by Aradhana Sharma, (2006), in the context of state-led empowerment programs in India, the role of the state is not being made redundant, but instead reconfigured:

Instead of being tied to its capacity to directly care for its citizens through redistributive programs, the state's commitment to national development is expressed through its ability to empower marginalized subjects to care for themselves. (p. 69)

This elucidates what Foucault (1982) labels the *governmentalization of the state*, which captures how the ‘art of governing’ has increasingly become encapsulated within the state apparatus. The state may have loosened its claims to have all the answers to society’s problems, but it remains a pivotal actor in shaping both the conceptualisation of the ‘problem’ and the proposed solution (McKee, 2008). In contemporary, liberal democracies the role of the state is being reconfigured through technologies of power that seek to promote active agency and responsible self-government, with the state as an enabler as opposed to a provider of services.

### **Particular kinds of citizens: at risk and responsive**

The proposals of the Rationale couch safety in terms of required knowledge and personal responsibility in response to the ‘risks’ of a rapidly changing world. Safeness is represented as a requirement of a 21st century citizen, particularly the youthful citizen, who faces a variety of challenges in life. Through the representation of a plethora of ‘risky’ contexts, the AC: HPE constructs young people as simultaneously ‘at-risk’ and yet responsible for ensuring their own safety. The persistence of ‘risk’ discourses underpinning the AC: HPE is unsurprising when considering the additive and layering effect of policies. As Elmore (1996) contends;

reform policies don’t take precedence over prior policies; the result is rather more additive in character. Rather than displacing prior policies, reforms are simply added to the already complex policy environment of schools, where they interact, often in odd and contradictory ways. (p. 500)

The interaction between a positive, strengths-based approach to the curriculum, and the lingering discourses of risk reflect the impact of previous curriculum texts. Previous iterations of PDHPE syllabus in NSW<sup>45</sup> have specifically drawn on notions of risk through their positioning of particular population groups as ‘at-risk’. These curricula responded to public policy in relation to priority (at-risk) population groups, which are considered to be groups “with worse health than the general population due to a range of environmental and socio-economic factors” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017, para. 1). Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000) argue that maps such as these which target populations for rescue, also act as boundaries, which differentiate, divide, and cast out particular individuals into unliveable spaces. Somewhat counter-intuitively, such recognition of particular population groups as ‘at-risk’ or ‘risky’ in turn denotes a sense of particular people residing within this classification as being dangerous and unsafe. In the same way, the discursive production of young people as ‘at-risk’ throughout the AC: HPE contributes to a sense of young people as unsafe. In this way, both the contexts within which they live and operate, and young people themselves are implicated in the proposed ‘problems’ of safety and risk. Further to this, the language of “every young Australian” in the curriculum produces some young Australians as particularly dangerous or unsafe.

There is a strong impetus in education for inclusion, and it has become commonplace to inject phrases such as *all* or *every* into educational policy to reflect this. However, social inclusion and exclusion are parts of the same phenomenon, embedded within one another rather than being dichotomous (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000). In the context of a curriculum that is about giving

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<sup>45</sup> The 2003 NSW PDHPE Syllabus 7-10 has a prominent focus on the concept of ‘risk behaviours’, and the 1999 NSW PDHPE Syllabus Stage 6 prompts students to consider ‘risk factors’ and ‘groups at risk’ when considering priority areas of Australia’s health.

young people the skills and knowledge to be safe, there is a risk that the onus will fall to *all* young Australians regardless of their circumstances and their relative experiences of inequality. The AC: HPE constructs those who fail to gain the requisite knowledge and skills as having nobody to blame but themselves, given that education has escorted them into the unsafe world with a toolkit of supposed skills, knowledges and abilities. In doing so, the curriculum produces some young people as ‘riskier’ than others through their failure to be responsive in the ways required by the representations of the AC: HPE.

It is not however, only individuals whom the AC: HPE ascribes as ‘at-risk’, but also their communities. Rose (2001) observes that community has become a site of state-citizen interaction, emerging as a new *territory of governance*. Giddens (1998) recognises community being mobilised as a vehicle of government, being actively promoted to renew local democracy through more direct contact between state and its citizens, while simultaneously addressing declining trust in the machinery of politics. This shift in the spatial scale of government is underpinned by *technologies of agency* (Dean, 1999), which enhance the capability of individuals to act in their own self-interest. Within the AC: HPE communities are represented as sites for potential risk and danger, yet also places within which young people are mobilised to be active agents in the production of safety. There is an implicit assumption that ‘the local’ offers a unique set of knowledges and degree of latent citizenship that can be nurtured towards particular ends (McKee, 2008, p. 186). This elevates the role of citizens from those upon whom government acts, to partners in the actions of government, both in identifying and solving policy problems.

Notions of ‘local’ knowledge and citizenry are recognised in the AC: HPE, which states “all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be *nurtured* to improve their own and others’ health” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 5, emphasis added). Students are expected to “learn to build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 3). These proposals around personal and community strengths or resources work to represent young people as partners, with their communities, in the government of local safety. By positioning young people, and their various communities and contexts as ‘risky’, the proposals of the AC: HPE work to responsabilise young people to be responsive to these dangers. By locating youth at the centre of ‘problems’ of risk and safety, the curriculum represents them as both problem and solution to the broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population.

## Chapter 7. Making ‘active’ citizens

Chapter 5 and 6 explored how the production of both ‘healthy’ and ‘safe’ citizens are represented as part of the solution to a broader ‘problem’ of the future Australian population. The final portion of the triad ‘solution’ proposed by the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (AC: HPE) is the production of ‘active’ citizens. As with the ‘problems’ of health and safety, the ‘problem’ of inactivity is represented as a particular kind of nested problem in HPE. This chapter will critically analyse the ‘problems’ of inactivity or sedentariness, and then explore representations of life-long participation, physical activity resources, and movement as they give shape to the production of ‘active’ young citizens as part of the intervention offered by HPE.

### The ‘problem’ of physical inactivity

The Rationale states; “At the core of Health and Physical Education is the acquisition of movement skills and concepts to enable students to participate in a range of physical activities” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). The use of lexis – *at the core* – locates movement skills and participation in physical activity as central to HPE. The Rationale further sets out the pre-eminence of physical activity and the PE sections of the curriculum through evocative language:

*As a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation and enhanced performance, students acquire an understanding of how the body moves and develop positive attitudes towards physical activity participation. They develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport*

in Australian society and globally. Movement is *a powerful medium for learning*, through which students can practise and refine personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills. (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4, emphasis added).

Here, physical activity and movement are represented as powerful, significant, and beneficial. Students are expected to have positive attitudes towards movement, and take up a willing, lifelong participation in physical activity. The Rationale states “new forms of physical activity” (para. 2) are becoming available which are represented to support the potential for “active citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). The foregrounding of an increasingly ‘sedentary’ world in the first paragraph of the Rationale sets up this latter paragraph to be read as part of a proposed response.

The statements about physical activity in the AC: HPE construct a problem of sedentariness, and propose physical activity as a taken-for-granted solution. The application of WPR ‘reads off’ this proposed ‘solution’ in order to consider the problem of physical activity as a particular kind of ‘problem’. The subsections that follow delve into what kind of ‘problem’ inactivity is presented as, exploring the concepts of sedentariness, choices, participation, resources and contexts, and movement.

### ***Problematizing sedentariness.***

The notion that the world is *increasingly* sedentary constructs a need for an urgent, intentional, and collective response, which situates the intervention of the curriculum as timely and pertinent. Sedentariness is located within the broader statements of the AC: HPE as a behaviour that can be minimised through particular strategies. Throughout the Focus Area, *Health benefits of physical*

*activity*, physical activity is repeatedly referenced in connection with benefits in the first, second, and third dot-points. Sedentary behaviours are represented as problematic in their impacting on health and wellbeing. Sedentariness is positioned in binary opposition to physical activity through the idea that minimising sedentary behaviour equates to including physical activity in daily routines:

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- physical benefits of participating in physical activities (including impact on health-related and skill-related components of fitness)
- benefits of physical activities based on intensity, nature and frequency
- social, emotional and cognitive benefits of regular physical activity
- social, cultural and environmental influences on physical activity participation
- sedentary behaviours and their impact on health and wellbeing
- strategies for minimising sedentary behaviour and including physical activity in daily routines. (ACARA, 2017c, Structure)

The concept of sedentariness as both a behaviour and a choice is produced through the introductory assertion that this Focus Area content “supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make active choices” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). The focus on choice provides an overall picture that privileges physical activity participation and students who actively make the choice to participate and to reap the assumed benefits of doing so. These kinds

of representations further perpetuate a presupposition that physical activity must always be increased to combat the problematic phenomenon of an “increasingly sedentary world”.

Discourses of prevalent and harmful sedentariness have the effect of constructing the ‘problematic’ sedentary-citizen. This (re)production within HPE curriculum and discourse is not new, and has been used as a way to legitimise the place of HPE in schools dating back to the mid-20th century; “In the 1950s research on cardiovascular disease (CVD) which linked heart attacks to a sedentary lifestyle provided physical educators with a source of legitimation which has since been thoroughly mined” (Gard & Wright, 2001, p. 535). Gard and Wright (2001) note the way in which a ‘sedentary’ lifestyle being established as a risk factor has provided the platform for many physical educators to argue for an approach to PE focused on addressing the ‘problem’ of inactivity and subsequently, ill-health. The complexity of this is “what constitutes a ‘sedentary’ lifestyle, or ‘adequate’ activity has changed over time and is still far from clear” (Gard & Wright, 2001, p. 536). Typically, sedentariness is placed in binary opposition to physical activity, as can be seen in both the curriculum and the Australian Medical Association (2014) estimate that “between 60 and 70 per cent of the Australian population is sedentary, or has low levels of physical activity” (para. 4). The AMA argues some of the most significant health gains are made by those individuals who transition from being physically inactive (sedentary) to participating in moderate amounts of physical activity (Australian Medical Association, 2014). However, while the modern environment may promote sedentary behaviour, levels of physical activity in Australia appear to be growing (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). It seems anxiety around increasing sedentariness resulting in limited physical activity may be overstated and bound to moral panic.

In their extensive study of young people and physical activity, Simon Marshall, Biddle, Sallis, McKenzie, and Conway (2002) found, for both boys and girls, there was little relationship between sedentary and physically active behaviours. They found activities such as TV viewing and video-game playing to be largely uncorrelated with physical activity, suggesting that reducing what is considered to be sedentary behaviours does not necessarily correlate to increased levels of physical activity (S. J. Marshall et al., 2002). An exhaustive meta-analysis of literature in this field, further concludes there is little evidence supporting the commonplace claim that there is a clear relationship between sedentary behaviours, physical inactivity, and increasing levels of body fatness (S. J. Marshall, Biddle, Gorely, Cameron, & Murdey, 2004). Biddle, Gorely, Marshall, Murdey, and Cameron (2004) contend that it is both possible, and commonplace, for individuals to engage in both active and sedentary behaviour:

We have always had sedentary pastimes, including board games, reading, and listening to music. The fact that the youth of today might find computer games or satellite TV more appealing is only a problem for physical activity if they are replacing previously active pursuits. (p. 33)

Regardless of these findings, the notion of a sedentary lifestyle generates a powerful and pervasive cultural symbolism of degeneration. This symbolism can be seen through the advocacy for health-related fitness and health-based physical education as a solution to the problem of increasingly sedentary lifestyles as far back as the 1980s (Tinning, 1991).

The statements of the Rationale show concern with increasing sedentariness and the transformation caused by technology and media. This concern reflects the suspicion and

wariness often felt due to increasing uncertainty brought on by modernising processes. For example, childhood obesity is readily positioned as an epidemic and is often linked with the rise in technology and increasingly sedentary lifestyles (Biddle et al., 2004). While obesity is not directly mentioned in the AC: HPE, terms such as sedentary reflect language and discourse that are firmly rooted in obesity discourses. Gard and Wright (2001) discuss the way such discourse has become embedded in the policies and practices around HPE, particularly through a link between physical activity and overweight/obesity. Following Ulrich Beck, (1992a, 1992b) they argue that HPE academics become the recontextualising agents in transforming biomedical knowledge into a set of assumptions, which are, in turn, used to justify education practice. As a result, there is an uncritically inferred certainty of a detrimental relationship between weight, health, and physical activity. The result of this is the reproduction of biomedical knowledges and obesity discourse in HPE (Gard & Wright, 2001).

Ongoing critiques have been offered by a number of scholars concerning the biomedical model seen to underpin PE. Johns and Tinning (2006) contend that biomedical knowledge has been recontextualised into a pedagogical construction to provide a basis for transforming school physical education such that it increases children's levels of physical activity. John Evans and Brian Davies (2004) argue biomedical knowledge in PE is derived from "biological, behavioural and health sciences . . . which now constitute largely taken-for-granted 'regimes of truth' among teachers" (p. 4). Tinning (1985) argues a link between health, fitness, and fatness in western culture is often perpetuated through both the actions and inactions of physical education. He implicates physical education in what he terms the 'cult of slenderness', arguing that objectification of the body and cultural value attributed to slimness could lead to damaging outcomes such as disordered eating and obsessive exercise regimes (Tinning, 1985). Petersen

(1997) contributes; “In a culture in which physical appearance is seen as an important means of claiming status, health promotion feeds into and reinforces the ‘cult of the body’” (p. 200). Evans and Davies (2004) add that the development of the global economy into a culture of risk has led to the adoption of new, regulatory systems of control that work on ‘the body’ and the self.

As established, obesity has been a targeted ‘problem’ of HPE, couched in narratives of sedentary lifestyles and physical inactivity leading to excessive weight gain and subsequent lifestyle diseases. Kirk (2006) notes that ‘crisis’ discourse around obesity and children has been especially prolific in the field of PE. Drawing on Thorpe’s (2003) argument that crisis discourse provides the means for ‘experts’ to intervene and (re)define the central purposes and aims of a field, Kirk (2006) suggests PE is “in the process of being redefined in terms of what can and cannot be said, the ‘truth’ and the central tasks of the field” (p. 122). As Jan Wright (2003) recognises, “some discourses have more power to persuade than others and are reiterated more often across a wide range of sites and/or by those who are believable and understood to be expert” (p. 37). It seems that discourses of an obesity ‘crisis’ have a particular ‘power to persuade’. Burrows (2016) contends with this issue in the context of being a tertiary educator working with undergraduate teachers who display a tendency to envision themselves as “obesity warriors”. She argues that fostering critical engagement with obesity literature is an ongoing task, as many teachers-in-training regard schools as sites for fighting obesity through fostering physical activity (Burrows, 2016). The problematising of sedentariness by the AC: HPE may further contribute to constructing teachers who view themselves at the forefront of a battle against obesity.

While there has been a seemingly widespread acceptance of obesity discourses within physical education, Gard (2004) suggests the idea of tackling obesity through PE is “at least controversial and probably mistaken” (p.69). Although the evidence suggests individuals’ dietary and physical activity habits are not a decisive factor in predicting obesity, for some reason the only solutions on offer are dietary change and increased physical activity (Gard, 2004). In a context where healthism is taken-for-granted, a link between weight and physical activity translates research designed to understand population health into an individualist discourse placing the onus of responsibility upon the individual. In response, HPE thus focuses on individual behaviours and attitudes operating on the assumption that each individual is at risk of overweight/obesity (Gard & Wright, 2001).

Although they have been repeatedly critiqued and challenged by critical health scholars, discourses of obesity continue to contribute significantly to broad understandings of health. Fitzpatrick and Tinning (2014) recognise this kind of influence, arguing that school health education is a reflection of wider politics and societal notions of health. When children are mentioned in the obesity crisis discourse, school PE is immediately implicated, both as a source of, and possible solution to, the problem (Johns, 2005). Repeated reference to sedentariness and a need to increase physical activity, combined with the extensive literature and research in the area, positions HPE as responsive to addressing the ‘problem’ of sedentariness and its purported outcome of obesity.

The AC: HPE couples sedentariness as an *individual* choice with the earlier assertion that the *world* is increasingly sedentary. This reflects the idea that society is in the grip of a generalised obesity crisis that impacts and affects all. This representation contributes to a framing of the

‘problem’ of sedentariness within a broader, global-scape. However, reading backwards from the proposed solution of young people being less sedentary and more physically active, the statements of the AC: HPE represent this particular problem as one of young people’s failure to be active. Some of the issues with this approach are a focus on individual behaviour which restricts personal autonomy, and a lack of recognition of structural causes of sedentariness resulting in a reduced opportunity to challenge these causes.

### ***Individualisation and choice.***

While the term *choice* does not appear in the Rationale, young people are represented as capable of making choices about physical activity through the stated need for them to develop “positive attitudes towards physical activity participation” and “an appreciation of the significance of physical activity” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). Further, these statements represent an ambition of ensuring young people will choose to be physically active. That is to say, the ‘choice’ young people are represented to have really is no choice at all. Young people are *supposed* to have a positive, appreciative disposition towards physical activity which is anticipated to result in individuals *choosing* to be physically active. By dictating the kinds of thoughts or attitudes young people are expected to have, the Rationale represents the choice to partake in physical activity as a personal and societal good. In this way, choice is bound to a higher moral order, with the ‘right’ choices forming part of the proposed solution to a ‘problem’ of physical inactivity. In this paradigm, the ‘wrong’ choices are positioned as inherently problematic.

The underlying presupposition within the title of the Focus Area – *Health benefits of physical activity* – further contributes to the notion that being physically active equates with being healthy. This reiterates an intent to ensure that young people choose to be physically active, and purportedly supports “students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills *to make active choices* and to explore the range of influences on physical activity participation and choices” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, emphasis added). This represents an expectation that students are to understand the various factors that influence physical activity choices, and then learn to make active choices regardless of these various influences. In this way, choice is a modality of government that operates by making individuals feel empowered to choose and invisibilising the norms that narrow options and punish the non-conforming.

Within the AC: HPE there is a conviction of the positive impact of physical activity on young people’s health and wellbeing, with minimal recognition of the different experiences, capabilities, understandings, and beliefs of individual students. For example, the preamble of *Health benefits of physical activity* includes reference to exploring the range of influences on physical activity, but this is quickly linked back to participation and choice (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). The emphasis is more so on “making active choices” rather than an acknowledgement of these choices being limited for some individuals. By representing physical activity as a choice, the AC: HPE responsabilises young people to be physically active, and thus, for being what the curriculum represents as ‘healthy’. Represented in the curriculum is an assertion that through HPE young people will develop the required knowledge, skills, and understanding to take up their individual responsibility to choose to be physically active.

A discourse of healthism also underpins the notion of young people choosing to be physically active, and thus choosing to benefit their own health. As established in Chapter 5, *healthism* is a dominant discourse in the realm of health and physical education, with Robert Crawford (1980) coining the term to describe “new health consciousness and movements – holistic health and self-care – for the definition of and solution to problems related to health” (p. 365). Healthism focuses on offering solutions to problems of health and is an ideology where personal good health is conceived as a controllable entity which individuals are able to possess, and are responsible for possessing (Crawford, 1980; Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989). As a regulative discourse underpinning the pedagogical practice of school PE, healthism embodies a number of assumptions: that health is a self-evident good; that individuals are responsible for their own health; that the body is considered as analogous to a machine; that exercise equates with fitness, which in turn equates with health. In the context of HPE, a discourse of healthism assumes that students possess the capacity to make the necessary lifestyle choices that would reduce the risk of ill health and that they are solely responsible for their own physical and mental wellbeing (Evans & Davies, 2004).

The AC: HPE represents increased physical activity as ‘good’ and takes for granted the presumption that young people should therefore “choose” to be physically active. Representing physical activity as a choice, albeit one that may be subject to a range of influences requires young people to make the ‘right choice’ by choosing to be physically active. Underpinned by discourses of healthism and responsabilisation, the statements of the curriculum equate ‘good’ citizenship with making ‘good’ choices, and represent these good choices as choices to be physically active. This representation constructs the inactive individual as failing to take up the required ways of being a ‘good’ citizen.

### ***Idealising participation.***

The Rationale states students need “to understand the influences on their own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and *physical activity participation*” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2, emphasis added). Here, physical activity *participation* is represented as a solution to the first paragraph’s ‘problem’ of global sedentariness and subsequent ill-health. Participation is an active word, meaning the action of taking part, or having a part or share in something. Thus, the focus on physical activity participation requires action from young people to take part in being physically active. The ‘need’ for understanding influences on physical activity participation represents an intention to help students achieve idealised levels of participation. The ‘right’ levels are represented within the Aims of the AC: HPE as being high levels of physical activity participation; students are to “take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others’... physical activity participation across their lifespan” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims). Participation in physical activity is represented as something that needs protecting and enhancing through the actions of students. It is also something that needs to extend “across their lifespan”, making participation in physical activity something that needs to be enhanced both now, and into the future. Physical activity participation is represented as part of the ongoing program for improving the health and wellbeing of the population. The allocation of “positive action” to increased participation in physical activity, represents failing to participate, or not participating enough, as inherently negative.

The Key Ideas of the AC: HPE focus on participation by an intent to provide young people with the skills required to “*participate* in physical activities with competence and confidence” and encourage “ongoing *participation* across their lifespan” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 6,

emphasis added). Participation denotes repeated themes of young people as expected to be active and responsible, managing their behaviours, actions, and health. The statements of the curriculum require young people to choose to be physically active and take positive action towards participation. The idealising of participation produces young people who accede to a civic responsibility to take part in physical activity and reflects the broader call of the AC: HPE for young people to become ‘good’ citizens in response to the ‘problem’ of the future Australian population.

Issues with participation have arisen regularly in recent inquiries into sport and physical activity for young people. For example, research into women and girls in sport found participation was one of the key themes emerging through their consultation process (O’Neal, 2015). Peggy O’Neal (2015) found gender-based differences, with male participation higher than female participation in active recreation and sport. In NSW, the *Girls in Sport* intervention was part of an initiative called the Premier’s Sporting Challenge.<sup>46</sup> The Challenge began in 2008 and sought to “encourage students in Years 7–12 to increase their participation in moderate to vigorous activity through sport, recreation and leisure activities, encouraging them to lead healthy, active lifestyles” (NSW Government, 2016, p. 5). One particular article published by the Girls in Sport intervention identified slowing the decline in physical activity participation among girls as a public health priority (Okely et al., 2017). This research, and the promotion of physical activity participation through the Premier’s Sporting Challenge, make it foreseeable that the AC: HPE would represent physical activity participation as integral to the lives of young people. The

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<sup>46</sup> There are a number of different ‘Premier’s Challenges’ across NSW and Victoria, including the well-known Premier’s Reading Challenge, as well as Sport, Debating, and Spelling. These ‘challenges’ are offered as part of a government program to promote particular areas of interest in government schools.

language of participation used by the AC: HPE parallels broader discourse which similarly represent schools as a key site for increasing young people's participation in physical activity.

Wayne Usher et al. (2016) argue that the focus and structure of the AC: HPE work to enhance and increase the physical activity participation of girls. Their analysis draws on a popular discourse of “growing concern about childhood physical inactivity and poor sports involvement levels, coupled with growing rates of obesity” that have helped create greater interest in physical activity and its “contribution to children's health” (Usher et al., 2016, p. 933). Their positive appraisal of the curriculum stems from a standpoint that increasing levels of physical activity participation are a key goal of government, education, and PE:

The adoption and implementation of the contemporary ACARA HPE structure, aims and design offer a positive starting point in this respect, with many stakeholders optimistic as to its future positive impact in improving poor PA and sports participation rates by adolescent girls. (Usher et al., 2016, p. 936)

The analysis of Usher et al. (2016) does not question the taken-for-granted assumption that increasing physical activity participation *should* be the goal of PE, and echoes other normative discourses surrounding physical activity participation today. What's more, it tends to overlook the complex inequalities that organise and guide participation and learning in HPE.

The AC: HPE represents a need for young people to take action to increase their physical activity participation. This representation perpetuates links between idealised notions of citizenship and ‘good health’, attributing privilege to those who take up these favoured ways of being and continuing to marginalise those who resist or fail to do so. Those who do not participate in

physical activity in the manner and frequency required are equated with refusing to take up the necessary active 21st century citizenship espoused in the AC: HPE.

***Resources and contexts as solutions.***

The statements of the AC: HPE represent physical activity resources and contexts as another means for increasing physical activity participation and addressing ‘increasingly sedentary’ lifestyles. The Rationale says students need to use “physical activity resources for the benefits of themselves and their communities” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). Such statements do not question the availability of physical activity resources, but instead assume and imply they *are* available through the imperative to use them. What these resources are or could be is not elaborated upon even within the broader statements of how HPE works. Yet, both resources and contexts are offered as part of the requisite solution for physical inactivity.

The word *resources* is scarcely used elsewhere in the AC: HPE. It is mentioned under the Focus Area of *Mental health and wellbeing* in reference to “help seeking strategies and community support resources” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure). No mention of resources is made in the Aims, although it appears twice under the first of the five Key Ideas, which states:

This approach affirms that *all students* and their communities *have particular strengths and resources* that can be nurtured to improve their own and others’ health, wellbeing, movement competence and *participation in physical activity*.

The curriculum recognises that students have *varying levels of access* to personal and community *resources* depending on a *variety of contextual factors* that will

impact on their decisions and behaviours. (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, Take a strengths-based approach, emphasis added)

Here the concept of resources is related to both individual students and their communities having resources that may be utilised to improve participation in physical activity. The assertion that *all students* have resources reflects a strengths-based approach, yet simultaneously responsabilises young people by suggesting that each has available to them the tools required to ‘improve’ their health. This discourse of individualism positions the well-resourced individual to make good choices and yield appropriate outcomes. The recognition that young people have varying levels of access to resources represents a counter-discourse to this responsabilisation, seemingly adopting a health determinants framework that recognises that differing circumstances impact young people’s levels of physical activity. A health determinants framework is “built upon broad notions of health that recognise the range of social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to health” (Keleher & MacDougall, 2009, p. 6). While the curriculum explicitly recognises that young people will have differing access to resources, it still represents all young people as having “particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas). As such, young people are positioned as personally responsible for ensuring they are physically active.

The term *contexts* is repeated throughout the curriculum, with reference made to physical activity contexts and settings (Aims), movement contexts (Key Ideas, Focus on educative purposes), and diverse contexts and environments for physical activity (Structure, *Challenge and adventure activities*). The kinds of contexts are unspecified, but the term *physical activity contexts* is often used in research informed by a biomedical paradigm (see for example; Burke, Carron, & Eys,

2006; Burton, Khan, & Brown, 2012; Peeters, Brown, & Burton, 2014; Smith, 2003). In their research, Burton et al. (2012) consider physical activity context preferences in relation to “format (how), location (where) and social setting (with whom)” (p. 1126). In the AC: HPE, these contexts could be the various types of physical activities available or the different environments in which people can participate in physical activity.

Contexts is an all-encompassing word, that relates to the interrelated circumstances and settings in which something occurs or exists. The term provides a broad scope for considerations of physical activity, representing the curriculum as responsive to this variance and complexity. In the same vein, the Rationale asserts “new forms of physical activity will become available” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 2). This assertion proposes a need for responding to these new forms of physical activity and represents HPE as a means for equipping young people to be able to participate. Reference to young people needing to “develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in Australian society and globally” also reiterates differing contexts for physical activity, both in form (outdoor recreation and sport) and locality (Australian society and globally) (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). The articulation of contexts, and an implied variety of contexts, further works to justify the curriculum and rationalise why it is required; so that young people will be equipped with the requisite skills, knowledge, and ability to “enable students to participate in a range of physical activities – confidently, competently and creatively” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). The AC: HPE does not explicitly address a shortage of resources or beneficial contexts for some individuals or communities, and this iteration of HPE curriculum appears to have lost the social justice focus of NSW’s previous curriculum texts (Board of Studies NSW, 2003, 2007). Resources and contexts

are thus positioned as a ‘problem’ by their association with the proposed need to respond to increasing sedentariness and lower levels of physical activity.

### ***Valorising movement.***

Alongside physical activity, the statements of the AC: HPE represent *movement* as a route to improved health outcomes and an essential asset for young people and their communities:

The knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions students develop through movement in Health and Physical Education encourage ongoing participation across their lifespan and in turn lead to positive health outcomes. Movement competence and confidence is seen as an important personal and community asset. (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, Value movement)

Underpinning this representation is a discourse that considers movement as a path to positive health, and subsequently, as an essential asset and key marker of valuable citizenship.

Peter Arnold’s (1979, 1985) dimensions of movement, commonly known as education “in, through, and about” movement, was one of five propositions initially drafted for the development of the AC: HPE.<sup>47</sup> The draft Shape Paper states that a curriculum focus on movement was founded on the premise that “Learning to move and enjoying the freedom of movement is a human right” (UNESCO (1999) cited in ACARA, 2012a, p. 4). However, the

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<sup>47</sup> Arnold’s dimensions of movement appeared in the draft shape paper under the heading *Value learning in, about and through movement* (ACARA, 2012a).

Shape Paper then goes on to directly link learning movement skills with participation in physical activity, arguing; “the movement knowledge, skills and dispositions students develop in Health and Physical Education will encourage them to become lifelong participants in physical activity” (ACARA, 2012a, p. 4). This statement justifies the inclusion of movement within the AC: HPE on the basis of physical activity participation and health outcomes, rather than the preceding notion of movement as a human right. For Arnold (1985), learning ‘in’ movement considers activities of movement as worthwhile in and of themselves from the perspective of the individual who is moving. This conception of movement as having inherent value reflects the UNESCO statement, but has seemingly dissipated under the weight of a curriculum focus on physical activity participation.

Within this iteration of the AC: HPE a focus on movement remains, but the Arnoldian emphasis of in, through, and about movement appears to have been lost. While the latter two dimensions of learning about and through movement have been somewhat retained, a view of the first which considers movement as having inherent value and worth is far less evident. The valuing of movement is instead justified by the following: “The study of movement has a broad and established scientific, social, cultural and historical knowledge base, informing our understanding of how and why we move and *how we can improve physical performance*” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 7, emphasis added). The statements of the AC: HPE represent movement as “central to daily life – from meeting functional requirements and providing opportunities for active living to acknowledging participation in physical activity and sport as significant cultural and social practices” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 7). Here again we see a functional valuing of movement based on outcomes, yet a lack of recognition of an inherent value of movement.

Throughout the AC: HPE, the acquisition of movement skills and abilities are linked with both educative outcomes and physical activity participation. The third of five Aims in the AC: HPE is “acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts and settings” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims). Movement here is considered in terms of skills, concepts, and strategies that students need to respond in physical activity contexts and settings. Learning about movement and acquiring movement skills is understood to be a way to increase levels of physical activity participation in young people. The fourth of the five Aims is; “engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practices and outcomes” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims). The link between movement and learning is rearticulated, although it does connect back to a health promotion approach, regarding these experiences as significant to “health practices and outcomes”. This outcomes focus is further seen under the Key Idea of Value movement: “The study of movement also provides challenges and opportunities for students to enhance a range of personal and social skills and behaviours that contribute to health and wellbeing” (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, para. 8).

Trent Brown (2013), in his analysis of the draft form of the AC: HPE, notes “within the draft curriculum document there appears to be uncertainty about how Arnold’s dimensions and his language underpin and should be translated into the key ideas of the movement and physical activity strand” (p. 143). Seemingly, this uncertainty has been overcome by the exclusion of the reference to Arnold’s dimensions, with only the language of ‘movement’ remaining, and the terms in, about, and through being lost. The types of movement that are valued in the AC: HPE are those that contribute towards enabling young people to be physically active, as well as those

that enable young people to “develop other important personal and social skills” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, *Learning through movement*). Movement in the context of the AC: HPE is represented as a key modality in becoming productive and flourishing. The statements of the curriculum produce ‘good citizens’ as those who move, with a suggestion that movement needs to be collectively adopted in combat of our increasing physical inactivity and population-wide sedentariness, as well as young people’s personal and social health.

### **Particular kinds of citizens: actively engaged and physically active**

The Rationale represents HPE as not only a site of governing ‘healthy’ and ‘safe’ citizenship, but also ‘active’ citizenship, with students being called to be both *actively engaged*, and *physically active*. Being ‘active’ is thus twofold; literally being active to ensure lifelong health, and also taking personal responsibility as part of society, i.e. through contributing to society. The Rationale proposes that students need to be actively engaged in their own and others wellbeing, and also reflects a strong assumed relationship between notions of active citizenship and the action of moving and being physical active; “At the core of Health and Physical education is the acquisition of movement skills... an understanding of how the body moves and ...positive attitudes towards physical activity participation” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 4). The statements of the Rationale represent active citizens as those who move – active in their citizenship, and also in and through their bodies.

The taken-for-granted ‘truths’ in the AC: HPE have consequences for how we approach physical education, and the subsequent lived, subjective, and discursive effects. The ‘active’ citizen

produced by the AC: HPE is one who is embodied, and therefore required to take responsibility regarding what they do with their bodies (as well as with their labour or with their minds). Critiques of these ‘truths’ are important as they work to make visible the way discourses “work to govern bodies and to provide the social meanings by which individuals come to know themselves and others” (Leahy et al., 2016, p. 4). As such, this chapter has critically interrogated the problem representations of the AC: HPE and how these work to construct particular kinds of actively engaged and physically active citizens in response to the broader perceived ‘problem’ of the future, Australian population.

Tinning and Glasby (2002) argue that HPE has long been used as a form of health promotion, which attempts to ‘make’ healthy citizens through the reproduction of the ‘cult body’. Within the PE area of the AC: HPE, physical activity may enjoy pre-eminence as an effect of a supposed ‘obesity crisis’ and the narrative of increased physical activity as the prime solution. Kirk and Spiller (1994) point out the espoused health goals of PE have played a principal role in providing the means to closely monitor and regulate children’s bodies within schools. Lindley and Youdell (2016) claim;

there is a significant history of government reaching into the lives and bodies of children and young people, in particular through public institutions such as schools..., with a concern for maximizing health and productivity and minimizing behaviours deemed to be unhealthy or deviant.... The embodied subject is governed and made recognizable as a particular sort of subject (healthy, unhealthy, obese, malnourished). (p. 14)

The proposals of the AC: HPE work to privilege and produce particular kinds of bodies, an impact referred to by David Kirk (2001) as *schooling bodies*; “schooling bodies refers to the social regulation and normalisation of bodies through educational practices” (p. 477). Kirk (2001) delineates two particular periods of ‘schooling bodies’ in the late 19th century. The first being a period of regulative approaches where racial hygiene and population reproduction were the main concerns. Drill exercises and calisthenics as forms of physical training were expressly designed to restrict and delegitimise public social interaction involving bodily contact (Kirk, 2001, p. 481). The second approach was the move towards games, which was seen as freeing children’s bodies from highly regulated, restrictive or oppressive forms of movements (Kirk, 2001). Unconvinced such an approach was indeed liberating, Kirk (2001) goes on to suggest “within this liberating moment is retained a form of corporeal regulation that may be looser than it once was, but that nevertheless enmeshes bodies in matrices of power” (p. 477). Although the regulation of physical activity took on a different form, it still worked to produce particular kinds of bodies through schooling and PE. The strengths-based approach of the current curriculum arguably has a similar impact on young people. The privileging of physical activity participation and movement regulates and normalises bodies that move. In this way, the proposals of the AC: HPE position education as a means of producing particular kinds of bodies through the production of active young people who move, use available resources and contexts, and choose to be physically active.

The problem representation of increased sedentariness and physical inactivity in the AC: HPE marginalise and ‘other’ bodies that are sedentary, inactive, or obese. The proposals of the AC: HPE tout individual behaviours of physical activity and movement as valuable interventions to a problem of sedentariness and subsequent ill-health. There are some hints of counter-discourse

that acknowledge external factors may contribute to sedentariness or low levels of physical activity participation, yet these are overshadowed by a discourse of responsabilisation. The way the AC: HPE portrays the ‘problem’ of physical activity views individuals as responsible for ensuring they access available resources and readily choose to participate in physical activity. This narrative problematically contributes to a victim-blaming discourse that attracts attention away from structural, economic, and political causes of ill health, and instead focuses on governing the individual behaviours and lifestyles of young people. As Quennerstedt et al. (2010) attest:

Fuelled by the political and public concerns of the declining health status of children and adolescents, a scientifically normative health education primarily concerned with addressing inactivity and obesity concerns goes hand in hand with a market-driven society where young people are urged to choose healthy lifestyles over any other in the marketplace. (p. 107)

Links between increased physical activity participation and improved health urge young people to take up a physically active lifestyle. This gives rise to particular beliefs about what the rights and responsibilities of the young citizen should be.

Elizabeth Grosz (1990, 1994) theorises that the mind/body relationship is traditionally conceptualised in oppositional terms, as dichotomous characteristics making up the human subject. This binary is often considered in-line with other dichotomies such as autonomy/protection, active/passive, objectivity/subjectivity and, within feminist theory, mapped to the dichotomy of man/woman (Bacchi & Beasley, 2002; Seymour, 2006). Significantly, the

hierarchical positioning of the terms sees the body subordinated to the primary and privileged mind. In Bacchi and Beasley's (2002) analyses of health policies in Australia, they identified a demarcation between "those presumed to have control over their bodies and those presumed to be controlled by their bodies" (p. 324). Those deemed in-control of their bodies are equated as 'citizen-subjects', operating with political autonomy. Those controlled by their bodies, on the other hand, are constituted as lesser citizens in need of regulation and constraint with limitations on autonomy becoming justifiable (Bacchi & Beasley, 2002). The proposals of the AC: HPE represent the obese body as an out-of-control body, with the obese individual in need of regulation. Made recognisable as a particular sort of subject – an obese subject – the individual is then governed through limitations on autonomy, with the effect of a reduced or lesser citizenship status.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Etienne Balibar (1991) suggests citizens are granted rights and freedoms in exchange for certain responsibilities: orderly conduct, obeying laws, voting. In this case, good citizenship, and the rights and liberties associated with it, is entwined with taking up responsibility for the learning and ways of being intended within the AC: HPE. Citizenship thus takes on an active form, where individuals must take up particular ways of being that align with an obligation to understand their civic duties and use their rights to prepare themselves for productive employment and contribution to society (K. Burns et al., 2018). Understandings of 'active citizenship' see the citizen focused on what they *do* and how they participate in taking up dominant tropes of moral standards required of them to be 'good' citizens. Through the articulated 'need' to reduce sedentariness through physical activity, the AC: HPE governs the production of particular kinds of 'active' citizens. Young people are subsequently positioned as 'responsible' for avoiding ill-health in the form of a 'lifestyle disease'. The subjective effect of

this is to construct young people who experience obesity or diseases attributed to sedentary lifestyles as ‘bad’ citizens. Again, the rights and freedoms of citizenship are connected with individual responsibilities for good health.

In light of research that shows determinants of obesity are far more likely to be socio-economic status or geographic location, the repeated push to address lifestyle diseases through campaigns to increase physical activity is potentially misguided. Evans (2003) critically examined ‘obesity research’ and suggests many of its claims are “at best over-exaggerated, at worst unfounded and, ironically, if translated uncritically in schools could damage the educational interests and health of children and young people” (p. 87). The way the ‘problems’ of sedentariness and physical activity participation are represented in the AC: HPE may have further ongoing subjective effects on young people, determining behaviours and beliefs about themselves, as well as their positioning and acceptance in broader social life. As HPE relates to notions of the body, it needs to be carefully considered regarding the potentially harmful effects it may have on young people’s experiences of their own, and others’, bodies. It may also contribute to wider societal acceptance, oppression, and marginalisation of particular bodies. The (re)production of notions of the ‘sedentary’ or ‘inactive’ body works to position those who do not conform to these (often indistinct) ideals as unacceptable subjects.

The binarising of sedentariness versus physical activity perpetuated by the curriculum also has certain negative lived effects, particularly for young people who may enjoy recreational activities such as watching TV or playing computer games. The construction that such activities are ‘bad’ for health due to them being sedentary has flow-on effects that construct young people who engage in such pursuits as ‘bad’. The (re)production of sedentary behaviours as harmful

generally follows the argument they limit the opportunity for physical activity, yet the research on this has indeed suggested the opposite. A study of approximately 2,300 young people found children who participated more frequently in sedentary behaviours, were also the ones who participated in more physical activity (S. J. Marshall et al., 2002). Such findings challenge the construction of sedentariness as the ‘problem’ and encourage alternative ways of thinking and approaches to be considered in HPE.

Deborah Lupton (1999) writes of a shift from a biomedical and individualistic slant towards one that “embraces the preventive and more socially oriented approach that characterizes the policies of health promotion and the new public health” (p. 288). Through the adoption and implementation of health promotion and public health strategies, “the state is seen as acting in its citizens’ best interests” (Lupton, 1995, p. 2). Physical activity is often the focus of new public health promotion approaches, with Louisa Peralta (2011) noting the promotion of physical activity has been an essential public health promotion strategy with schools often postulated as key environments for intervention. There is evidence of a multiplicity of discourses underpinning the AC: HPE. Redolent of Elmore’s (1996) observations of educational policy reforms, the complexity of competing demands within the curriculum leaves teachers to somehow make sense of them.

This Chapter has interrogated the ‘problem’ of physical inactivity in the context of an ‘increasingly sedentary’ society. Within the broader ‘problem’ of the future, Australian population, the AC: HPE represents this potentially problematic population as being made up of citizens who are sedentary or physically inactive. Further contributed to by discourses of obesity, an increased emphasis on physical activity participation and movement positions young people

as 'solutions' to a 'problem' of a physically inactive and sedentary population. HPE is proposed as a means for constructing activated citizens, ensuring that young people participate in physical activity, make use of available resources and contexts, and choose to move and be physically active. This particular representation of young people positions them, and their bodies, as 'solutions' to the 'problems' of physical inactivity and sedentariness.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusion: Problematisations, ‘Problems’, and Proposals**

This thesis was guided by the questions of how curriculum, specifically a national curriculum within the learning area of HPE, govern through problematisations. Reading curriculum as a technology of government, my analysis has considered how the articulation of ‘problems’ become modalities through which curriculum can govern in particular ways to particular ends. In this final chapter, I summarise my findings in relation to the effects of particular ‘problems’ produced in and through the AC: HPE, offer a number of proposals for rethinking approaches to HPE, and reflexively problematise my own positionality and assumptions within the research process.

### **Summary of findings**

The broad question guiding this thesis was how curriculum governs and why and how a national Australian curriculum is produced and mobilised as a technology of government. As I established in Chapter 1, it appears that the positing of education as a ‘solution’ to a number of perceived ‘problems’ results in varied and influential effects, not the least being the confluence of curriculum under a Federal government remit. A national curriculum governs by its positioning as the ‘solution’ to the rapid change, and uncertainty of the future. However, as articulated by Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) in their review of the Australian curriculum; “If the definition of a national curriculum includes that it must be implemented comprehensively, with

certainty, and consistently, then Australia does not currently have a national school curriculum” (p. 105). While interrogating the possible effects of the AC: HPE is insightful and valuable work, there is further research to be done in analysing the material and lived effects of the curriculum as they are produced and responded to in schools across varied state and territory contexts. It is my hope that the analytic work of this thesis provides a useful starting point for such investigations, and prompts discussion around how problems, not unproblematically, underpin constructions of health and citizenship in curriculum, especially when its set to unify national educational outcomes and goals.

My analysis used WPR to consider how the articulation of ‘problems’ in education, curriculum, and HPE, contributes to practices of governing. The opening sentence of the Rationale is framed by the articulation of a problematic context – a critical need in an increasingly complex, sedentary, and rapidly changing world. The AC: HPE is then offered as a “strong investment in the future of the Australian population” (ACARA, 2017c, Rationale, para. 1). From this origination, the limits of intelligibility for the AC: HPE are set as required in response to these issues. The power of the ‘problem’ setting has an entrenched impact on what it is possible for the curriculum to say and do. It profoundly affects the way the curriculum is used to govern.

This thesis also interrogated the unique ways the learning area of HPE, as a curriculum area and as it connects with broader discursive fields (biomedical, educational, obesity, risk etc.), operates to govern in particular ways and to particular ends. Chapters 4–7 provided detailed discussions of how the AC: HPE governs through problematisations, and particularly through problem representations which were nested in the broader ‘problem’ of the future of the Australian population. These nested problem representations proposed a need for producing citizens who

are 'healthy, safe, and active'. I found that in and through these problem representations the AC: HPE draws on particular discourses to operate as a governmental site that legitimates the learning area of HPE and defines what it does.

My analysis has also argued that the particular 'problems' that are represented and produced in and through the AC: HPE have particular effects. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) contend that these effects ought to be considered across three specific domains; discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects. These were discussed throughout the analysis chapters, but are collated here to provide an overview of the governing effects of identified problematisations.

Throughout the AC: HPE being and becoming 'ideal' citizens is part of a project of governing that positions young people as the 'solution' to the perceived problem of an uncertainty of the future of the Australian population. Particular discursive effects were identified throughout the proposals of the curriculum, and these included; 1) discourses of citizenship that were tied to particular knowledges, skills, attitudes, and abilities, 2) a discourse of the need to work on young people to develop them into particular kinds of citizens 3) a discourse of risk and uncertain futures, 4) discourses around obesity, 5) various discourses of health; tying 'health' to good citizenship, happiness, strong relationships, moving, and participating in physical activity, and 6) discourses of responsabilisation.

Inherent to poststructural perspectives is questioning how subjects are constituted, and the cumulative impact of the discursive practices in HPE is the production of privileged subject positions. For example, the responsabilisation of young people was seen across the linking of 'good' citizenship with a responsabilised discourse of health, an ideology of healthism,

discourses of risk and security, personal management and responsibility for safety and relationships, the need for young people to be involved in advocacy, a strengths-based approach, discourses of participation, and the need to be ‘active’ citizens. These work to produce citizens with more responsibilities than rights, reconfiguring understandings of citizenship to be individually active; no longer manifested in the powers derived from membership of a collective body, but in the pursuit of personal fulfilment and flourishing. However, also inherent to the responsabilisation of young people is the allocation of power, agency, and choice, which provides a means for resistance or disruption. Students are positioned as able to ‘critique’ and ‘challenge’, suggestive of some level of agency in choosing and resisting, yet this individual choice simultaneously constitutes part of the responsabilising governing practice evident in the AC: HPE.

A subjectification effect of particular ‘norms’ throughout the AC: HPE is the abjection or ‘othering’ of young people who fail (or choose not) to take up requisite ideals of citizenship. For example, simultaneously inscribed within the assertion that every young Australian should cope and flourish, is the child who fails to do so. Young people who do not fit within the constructs of cultural norms are produced as problematic and made abject from the liveable spaces occupied by those within the narrative (Popkewitz, 2009). They are cast out in a way that is degrading to the individual and may have potentially deleterious consequences. In particular, the inscribing of particular ways of knowing and being can impact upon individual’s own personal understanding of themselves. The AC: HPE constitutes those who fail to gain the requisite knowledge and skills as having nobody to blame but themselves, given that education has escorted them into the unsafe world with a toolkit of supposed skills, knowledges, and abilities. These varied subjectification effects will directly impact upon and affect people’s lives and through the

various discourses and problem representations of the AC: HPE there is the potential for a broad spectrum of lived effects.

The reason for delineating lived effects from discursive or subjectification effects is to direct attention to the practical, lived realities, and ensure that the material impact of problem representations are not forgotten or ignored. For example, the abjecting or ‘othering’ of bodies that do not meet the required ideals of being ‘physically active’ could result in young people taking extreme measures to participate ‘adequately’ in moving and being physically active. This could potentially result in dangerous levels of physical activity or lifestyle choices that are created from limited or partial knowledges and expertise. Further, young people whose activity levels are strongly dictated by broader social determinants such as socioeconomic status, access to safe environments, and parental support, may experience bullying or shaming from peers or others.

Various dimensions of health and wellbeing are often overlooked through curriculum proposals that position young people in ways that make them responsible for reducing their own risk of being ‘unhealthy’ citizens. The internalisation of discourses of responsabilisation has the potential to feed the anxieties of young people and contribute to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, or a sense of unworthiness. By privileging particular behaviours or choices, the proposals of the AC: HPE may also work in such a way as to unsettle or disrupt family dynamics where young people are learning and challenging the decisions of other members of their family and community networks.

The reiteration throughout the AC: HPE that young people are to positively impact their own, and their communities, health and wellbeing could result in improved health and wellbeing outcomes. However, such discourses may also mean that young people learn to relate to ‘unhealthy’ individuals in negative or harmful ways. The allocation of a label of ‘unhealthy’, ‘unsafe’, or ‘inactive’ equates to an individual being perceived as problematic or a ‘bad’ citizen. This could be highly problematic whether the bodies or behaviours that prompt these labels lay outside of the control of the young person, or are taken up by their own volition as desired ways of being. Whether the choice of young people or not, being perceived as problematic can have a detrimental impact on the way individuals are treated as well as how they perceive themselves, with Bayer et al. (2018) reporting that when young people are harassed, teased or made to feel inadequate they are likely to internalise this negative perception. In response to these potential negative effects, I offer a number of proposals for rethinking the ‘problems’ of HPE.

### **Six proposals for rethinking the ‘problems’ of HPE.**

Amidst the many varied effects or problem representations there is the potential for negative effects. As such, it is pertinent to take up the imperative WPR’s sixth question and consider ways of disrupting or replacing the ‘problems’ of the AC: HPE, and the particularities of how the learning area of HPE practices of governing in and through curriculum. Foucault’s (1994) notion of critique is one that “does not consist of saying that things aren’t good the way they are” but rather seeks to consider “what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based” (cited in Bacchi, 2009a, p. 39).

Foucault considers critique as the interrogation of taken-for-granted ways of thinking and presuppositions that allow certain practices to be accepted. Lingard and Gale (2007) recognise that “critique tends to come easier than proposals for change”, and as such, call for purposeful analysis that attempts to be “*generative of alternatives*” (p. 2, emphasis in original). This thesis takes up similar modes of critique in that it has not sought to criticise the AC: HPE, nor merely to identify particular problem representations, but it has sought to evaluate the political rationalities underpinning these representations of ‘problems’ and subsequently propose alternative ways of thinking about and approaching HPE.

The curriculum is a product of contemporary thought around HPE, and this thinking entails power and productive effects. Throughout the analysis, I have attempted to disrupt the assumptions embedded in the problem representations of the AC: HPE, building on existing scholarship and thought to open new ways of thinking about and imagining HPE. I recognise that many of the alternative ways of thinking and resistance in the area are already captured within the AC: HPE, albeit often pushed to the periphery. In concluding this thesis, I have considered these alternative ways of thinking and how these could be brought in to further considerations of HPE in a way that addresses or alleviates potential negative effects. The aim has been to allow space for reinvigorated discussion around what should/should not inform HPE in Australian schools by drawing competing and contested discourses into discussion. Thus, based on my analysis, I suggest how research and practice might shape the curriculum and learning area of HPE by cautiously<sup>48</sup> proposing six counter-discourses for redirecting and even critiquing the

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<sup>48</sup> When considering alternative ways of thinking in HPE, these too, albeit well intentioned, will potentially have lived, subjective, and discursive effects that may be equally damaging and disadvantageous.

apparent ‘problems’ identified in this thesis. These are;

- (1) reorient curriculum rationale to focus on educative purposes (as specified in Key Ideas),
- (2) de-responsibilise young people by focusing on a curriculum about health, rather than one for health, by adopting Quennerstedt, Burrows, and Maivorsdotter’s (2010) proposal for *learning health*,
- (3) de-responsibilise young people by incorporating a social determinants of health (SDH) lens in considering ill-health (particularly obesity) in a broader conception of ‘population health’ as opposed to ‘individual health’,
- (4) ‘handle norms with care’ in such a way that limits the abjecting of those who do not take up or embody normative modes of being,
- (5) shift a focus from bodies being physically active to questioning whether or not young people’s bodies are able to do what young people want them to do, and
- (6) take up WPR not only as a means of analysing curriculum, but as a pedagogical lens for teaching and learning practices in HPE.

*Focus on educative purposes.*

Leahy, Burrows, McCuaig, Wright and Penney (2016) have pushed back against a curriculum focused on ‘health promises’, calling for a shift towards considerations of educative purposes of health education as opposed to the contemporary health promotion approach. Following from St Leger’s (2006) questions on what is reasonable to expect from schools, they question “what is reasonable to expect from health education” (Leahy et al., 2016, p. 1). Katie Fitzpatrick and

Richard Tinning (2014) suggest HPE is notoriously mobilised as a means of addressing problems of health and that HPE curricula and practice “represent a particular response to societal health concerns” (p. 134). This way of thinking about HPE has been debated at length within academic literature, with many scholars querying the focus on health-based outcomes over and above the educational purposes of the learning area (see for example, Coll, O’Sullivan, & Enright, 2017; DinanThompson, 2013; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Gard & Wright, 2001; Kirk, 2006; Leahy & Harrison, 2004; Leahy et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2013; McCuaig, Enright, Rossi, Macdonald, & Hansen, 2016; McCuaig & Tinning, 2010; Tinning, 1985; Tinning & Glasby, 2002).

In the video that appears embedded on the Rationale page of the AC: HPE, lead author Doune Macdonald states that “Health and Physical Education makes a unique contribution to the Australian Curriculum” as it is “a learning area that educates students to adopt lifelong healthy, active living” (ACARA, 2016). The next thing Macdonald discusses are the big ideas that underpin the curriculum, stating the first of these is a focus on educative outcomes. In the video, a focus on education *outcomes* is said to be important as “sometimes health and PE gets distracted by trying to meet outcomes or solve societal problems that are not achievable within the remit of the learning area” (ACARA, 2016). Yet, earlier in the video, Macdonald makes the assertion that HPE “makes a unique contribution... as a learning area that educates students to adopt lifelong healthy, active living” (ACARA, 2016). The statement that the AC: HPE is underpinned by a focus on educative outcomes supposedly aligns with the Key Idea of a *Focus on educative purposes* (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas). However, in the video, the term *outcomes* is used, whereas in the text of the AC: HPE the Key Idea is said to be a focus on *educative purposes*. A focus on outcomes directs attention to the way things turn out, the consequences or end result of the learning. A focus on purposes, however, is concentrated on the reasoning for

which something is done with some emphasis on the intention or objective. One is concerned with results or what the students can do, the other concerned with process and outcomes. Perhaps this is merely indicative of the terms outcomes and purposes being able to be used interchangeably, but it is worth noting that the language of the video could also imply a slide back to the taken-for-granted assumption that it is the outcomes of the curriculum that are of greatest importance. It is these contradictions that suggest to me that there is space for resistance and change.

A consistent focus on the educative purposes of HPE has potential to minimise the harm of a health promotion approach, which proffers school PE and young people's success within the subject as a solution to ill-health. Gorely, Holroyd, and Kirk (2003) argue it is the *educational mission* of PE which provides a morally defensible rationale for engagement with health discourses. Kirk (2006) further suggests "critical pedagogy is required in the face of the enormous symbolic power of the obese child and the apparent moral authority of those researchers, policy-makers, politicians and journalists who are determined to argue, contrary to the available evidence, that there is indeed an obesity crisis" (p. 129). Rethinking the purposes of HPE in this way calls for more fully taking up the assertion made within the AC: HPE that:

Although the curriculum may contribute to a range of goals that sit beyond its educative purposes, *the priority* for the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to provide ongoing, developmentally appropriate and explicit *learning about health and movement*. (ACARA, 2017c, Key Ideas, Focus on educative purposes, emphasis added)

In line with this articulation of the curriculum, I call for a focus on the educative purposes of HPE rather than the potential health and wellbeing outcomes. Drawing on Evans (2004) notion of ‘dislocation’, Penney (2008) reflects on a “tendency for HPE to be associated more with government and public aspirations for health and/or sport than with educational agendas” (p. 34). Evans (2004) recognises this and instead proposes that physical *education* needs to be the priority, rather than sport and health. This shift would change what curriculum does by locating its intervention in the sphere of thinking and knowledge, rather than the production of particular kinds of healthy, safe, and physically active young citizens.

### *Learning health.*

The statements of the AC: HPE place an emphasis on education *for* health, which reflects the way the Melbourne Declaration places an educational responsibility for young people’s health and wellbeing in the realm of HPE (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 13). HPE teachers are expected to teach *for* health outcomes, rather than simply teaching *about* health as an interesting area of study, or *in* health as a personal, embodied or situated practice. Quennerstedt et al. (2010) suggest that one way of overcoming problems of individually focused health education is to adopt a critical approach which they term *learning health*. This provides a useful frame for thinking about meaningful ways the ‘problems’ of health education can be reconsidered;

an alternative to conceiving good health as something that can be defined by politicians, researchers, public health policies, sport federations and the media, set up as an aim for young people to achieve, is instead to conceive of health as a learning process. (Quennerstedt et al., 2010, pp. 107–108)

Quennerstedt et al. (2010) suggest this shift in perspective positions learning and health not as external things to be acquired, but a process of participation where one becomes a participant. In this way, learning health is done continuously – a life practice, rather than a health outcome. It shifts the focus away from teaching young people how to be healthy, towards discussions of health and learning as processes, which are located in the lives of young people, and in the broader political, cultural, and social contexts (Quennerstedt et al., 2010). They also remark that health “needs to be regarded as a societal responsibility whereby it is acknowledged that sociocultural and economic contexts afford diverse opportunities to *be* healthy and to *learn* healthy lives, however these are construed” (Quennerstedt et al., 2010, p. 108).

These arguments do reflect some of the ways in which dominant discourses and problem representations of health could be disrupted within the AC: HPE. For example, the fifth and final aim of the curriculum is to; “analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally” (ACARA, 2017c, Aims). This recognises how different individual contexts can impact upon the opportunities young people have for health and physical activity (Primdahl et al., 2018). Through highlighting contextual factors, there is an emphasis on teaching *about* health, rather than primarily *for* health.

Quennerstedt et al.’s (2010) suggestion of a move towards learning health is significant as it also attends to the ways young people learn to *not* be involved. Using the example of physical activity, Quennerstedt et al. (2010) argue that learning health involves understanding why participating or engaging with deliberate physical activity may *not* be in the interests of a young person’s health, seeing this as equally important to understanding why someone would take up

requisite ways of being active as prescribed by mainstream ideas of healthy living. Such an approach opens up space for alternative ways of thinking about, and engaging with, discourses of health, obesity, and physical activity.

*Refocusing on the determinants of health.*

Another counter-discourse to a curriculum strongly focused on individual responsibility and the ‘problems’ of health, is a social determinants of health approach. Remnants of a socio-critical approach are shown through language of contextual factors and opportunities within the Aims of the AC: HPE. This is gestured towards in the Rationale with a single mention of influences on health. Here this focus is shrouded in a more prominent discourse of personal responsibility and health as a direct result of individual choices, behaviours, and actions. A refocusing on the determinants of health goes some way to recognising that health is not merely an individual choice, and that many socio-political factors contribute to limiting available ‘choices’.

Gard (2008) argues that an emphasis on personal responsibility and individual choices makes it easier to blame individuals for their own health status, with a “failure to achieve prescribed levels of health then becom[ing] a matter of moral censure and a case of letting the country down” (p. 490). Reference to young people having choice in the AC: HPE is ultimately qualified by the need for these choices to be healthy, safe, and active ones. The choice of whether or not to be healthy, safe, and active, is in reality no choice at all. Gard (2008) observes this phenomenon of specificity around the ‘choices’ and ‘decisions’ young people are allowed to make, referring to it as a “mixing of freedom and constraint” (p. 492). In his view, the words ‘choices’ and ‘decisions’ are seemingly unnecessary if they are going to be qualified in such a way as to make

them redundant; “if an identifiable set of ‘appropriate’ and ‘positive’ health behaviours exist, why would we ask children to ‘choose’ them, rather than just instruct children in how they should, or even must, behave?” (Gard, 2008, p. 492). While posited as a ‘choice’, and a need for young people to make ‘decisions’ about their own (and others’) health, it is apparent the AC: HPE is highly invested in the production of young people who behave in particular ways, and who choose to become particular kinds of young citizens/subjects – healthy, safe, and active ones. An increased focus on socio-political determinants which can impact upon these behaviours, choices, and outcomes, challenges this particular discursive construct.

Predominantly, the statements of the Rationale locate the problem of health at an individual level, placing the onus upon each young person to properly equip themselves to take up a productive citizenship and be responsible for their health as well as those around them. Even though there is some recognition of contextual factors that influence health and wellbeing, the statements of the AC: HPE often readily responsabilises young people by placing the onus on them to acquire certain skills, knowledge and understanding required for ‘health’. Alternatively, a health determinants approach recognises the plethora of factors which impact on people’s health and lay outside individual and personal control. It identifies ‘up-stream’ factors, such as government policy having a prominent impact upon the health of individuals, communities and population groups, locating the ‘problem’ at this level (Keleher & MacDougall, 2009). The critical inquiry approach of the curriculum is empathetic to a socio-critical perspective, acknowledging contextual factors as determinants of health. Yet, the statements of the AC: HPE still reiterate a strong link between individual behaviours and actions with health outcomes.

Notions of increasing levels of physical activity as the ‘cure for ill-health’ are also short-sighted and unlikely to achieve the desired outcomes. The idea that all individuals would benefit from increasing the amount of physical activity they partake in both fails to recognise the differing needs of individuals, and (somewhat ironically) positions participation in physical activity as a direct result of individual personal choice. Placing a stronger emphasis on counter discourses already embedded within the curriculum, such as the “social, cultural and environmental influences on physical activity” (Structure, Health benefits of physical activity), would allow for a more nuanced view of the role of physical activity in diverse lives. Returning to a determinants of health approach diffuses the responsabilising of young people for their own and others health, and works to disconnect notions of being less sedentary and more physically active from concepts of what entails ‘good’ citizenship. A determinants of health discourse could counter some of the individual responsabilising effects of the curriculum by acknowledging that health outcomes re shaped by a range of socio-political factors.

*Handling ‘norms’ with care.*

Following McCuaig et al. (2011), I propose a need to “handle with care” (p. 803) the “strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others” in order to enact our “games of power with as little domination as possible” (Foucault, 1994, cited in McCuaig et al. 2011, p. 802). In other words, to consider the way curriculum is, or can be, used to govern, and contemplate ways this can occur with the least deleterious effects. Speaking specifically in relation to teachers, McCuaig et al. (2011) recognise how individualising techniques can exacerbate young people’s sense of responsibility and moral obligation, simultaneously excluding opportunities to explore alternative understandings of ‘health’ that may better serve

them. One of the effects of narrowing 'health' norms is the apportioning of 'bad' citizenship to those who fail to adopt normative practices and ways of being. Drawing on the insights offered by Lupton (1995), Gard (2008) argues that emphasis on individual responsibility sanctions government action and surveillance, with it then being "a short step to seeing nonconforming individuals as irresponsible and morally lacking" (p. 490).

Using the example of gathering health statistics as a means of government, McCuaig et al. (2011) explain how these not only measure population health, "but facilitate(s) the creation of discriminating health norms that detect those members of the population who are failing to adopt healthy living practices and in need of intervention" (p. 801). They then quote Ewald (1990) for further explanation of this:

The reality of normative equality is that we are all comparable; the norm is most effective in its affirmation of differences, discrepancies, and disparities. The norm is not totalitarian but individualizing; it allows individuals to make claims on the basis of their individuality and permits them to lead their own particular lives. However, despite the strength of various individuals' claims, no one of them can escape the common standard. (p. 154)

Regardless of whether an individual chooses to adopt or resist practices considered to constitute normal 'healthy' living, they still discover what these 'norms' are. Embedded within these 'norms' is the notion of individual choice. Individuals are allowed choice in their actions, behaviours, and how they want to live (Ewald, 1990). Yet, knowledge of 'norms' is inescapable, and young people are still privy to what comprises normal 'healthy' behaviours, "despite their

own deviance or exclusion” (McCuaig et al., 2011, p. 802).

Recognising individual agency to choose/resist, we must ‘handle with care’ the normalising discourses of ‘health’ that exist within the AC: HPE in order to allow young people to assert their individual agency in questioning, evaluating, and potentially disrupting these discourses. While there are narratives of young people having a positive sense of agency and resistance (Rich & Evans, 2009), an absence of socio-critical appraisal of the determinants of health can result in young people’s vulnerability to a moralising discourse positioning them as lazy, risky, or ‘bad’ (Gard & Wright, 2001). By expanding notions of ‘health’ and creating space for alternative ways of thinking (such as in the previous suggestion regarding determinants of health), the prominent discourses of ‘health’ within curriculum can be handled in such a way as to minimise harmful effects produced by ‘norms’ that discriminate and isolate ‘deviant’ young people. Expanding the possibilities for thinking about health simultaneously expands the possible subject positions that individuals may occupy.

*Rethinking how we think about ‘bodies’.*

Through the curriculum, ways of thinking that place an overt emphasis on bodies being required to ‘move’, be less sedentary, and be more physically active, work to privilege conforming bodies (those that look to be) and marginalise those which do not conform (those that do not look to be). Research from Burrows and De Pian (2017) shows that young people seem to be embodying health policy aspirations. However, in considering knowledge and ways of thinking about bodies, Jan Wright (2000) argues;

knowledge is always provisional and partial... even our understanding of the

body is constituted in specific cultural and historical circumstances and in the context of particular relations of power. (p. 36)

An alternative is a curriculum which more fully exhorts the “social, emotional and cognitive benefits of physical activity” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, Health benefits of physical activity), valuing physical activity for the broader impacts it may have on young people’s personal experiences and quality of life. In the right hands, the AC: HPE would allow for this, however I propose a clearer focus and privileging of this counter-discourse that is evident in small ways throughout the broader statements of the curriculum.

Tinning (2009) argues that scientific ways of thinking (biomedical approach) about bodies has contributed to embodied, kinaesthetic, pleasures of movement experiences being marginalised. He draws on the work of Douglas Booth (2009) who describes the history of physical activity in modernity “as a process of de-pleasuring” (p. 133). Booth’s (2009) call for consideration of pleasure within PE is echoed by Tinning (2009) in his appeal for PE to “play to its uniqueness” (p. 11) by “foregrounding the connection with the embodied pleasure of movement” (p. 12). By expanding thinking around bodies and PE to encompass notions of pleasure and enjoyment, physical activity may be relocated from an individualised responsibility for health, to allow young people to *choose* to participate in physical activity for its own sake, rather than for attributed health benefits. This would work to shift an understanding from “how participation in physical activity can enhance health-related fitness and wellbeing across the lifespan” (ACARA, 2017c, Structure, Lifelong physical activities) towards a focus on the enjoyment and pleasure young people may gain from being physically active.

This shift elicits a need for the curriculum to incorporate ways of thinking about the body in terms of whether or not young people's bodies are able to do what young people want them to do. While there would no doubt be teachers doing this kind of work in schools, inserting pleasure into curriculum is critical in ensuring young people are empowered to consider their own body and how they wish to use it within individual terms of reference. That is, to value their bodies not for conforming to external understandings of what a 'good' body is or does, but for their *own* body being able to do what *they* want it to do. Such an approach simultaneously limits the possible deleterious consequences of relating young peoples' value as citizens to how physically active they are.

*Adopting a WPR pedagogy in curriculum and HPE.*

My final proposition is that WPR can and should be taken up as both a research tool and a pedagogical lens. In policy, WPR has been used not just as a means of analysing policy, but as a process of making policy and social programs. WPR has provided a tool for policy writers to consider their own role in actively creating 'problems' as particular kinds of problems, and to question and interrogate these. Recently, in a key note address at a conference in Helsinki, Bacchi (2017) discussed a variety of applications of WPR, giving examples such as symposia, social marketing texts, modes of measurement and inscription (funding models), signs, maps, interviews, diagnostic instruments, opinion polling, and even phenomena not strictly textual such as ceremonies, organisational culture, and even buildings. She goes on to provide an example of WPR being used to critically analyse buildings "because, in effect, such artefacts can be seen as proposals that contain certain problem representations" (Bacchi, 2018, para. 2). Bottrell and Goodwin (2011) apply similar thinking to modern schools with their "uni-purpose facilities

located on enclosed land, fenced and gated” (p. 4). They contend that these facilities reflect a hidden curriculum which problematises the moral and cognitive training of young people (Bottrell & Goodwin, 2011). If WPR can be critically applied to buildings and curriculum, it follows that it could also be used in considering teaching and learning practices.

In their recent ethnographic action research project to re-imagine HPE, Kirsten Petrie, Lisette Burrows and Marg Cosgriff (2014) direct their attention toward “the importance of identifying teachers’ and students’ preconceptions of HPE”, and “the need for ongoing critical dialogue and questioning about current orthodoxies and classroom practices” (p. 159). They conclude that there is a need for teachers and researchers to work collaboratively in order to improve programs and practices in HPE (Petrie et al., 2014). In an attempt to bring together both research and practice, and to critique preconceptions and orthodoxies, I propose that WPR could be written into the language of curriculum, and also applied to the implementation and application of HPE in schools. WPR could be applied in analysing pedagogical practices themselves, and also in becoming part of these practices as they involve particular forms of thinking. Embedding WPR as a way of thinking in the process of teaching HPE would encourage both teachers and students to critique assumptions and presuppositions that underpin representations of ‘problems’ within the learning area.

Poststructural perspectives allow for the invisible to be rendered visible. As such, when included as part of a broader pedagogy, poststructural perspectives may open up space for challenge and contestation not only by those who form, analyse, and assess curriculum, but also by those who are subject to it. A WPR pedagogy would be a useful tool for teaching students to think critically and encourage them to test and disrupt the taken-for-granted ‘truths’ and ‘norms’ which they are

involved with daily.

### **Self-problematisations**

The final step of WPR involves the analyst applying the questions of WPR to their own assumptions. Bacchi (2009a) argues that reflexivity of this kind is necessary “because we are immersed in the conceptual logics of our era and because who we are ...is at least in part shaped through the very problem representations we are trying to analyse” (p. 19). It needs to be acknowledged that I am as much a part of the systems and government that this thesis has sought to critique. As such, my own transformation into a neoliberal subject has impacted the considerations and conclusions of this thesis. The tenets of a neoliberal imaginary necessarily affect “how we value ourselves and value others, how we think about what we do, and why we do it” (Ball, 2016, p. 1046). My own ‘thinking’ about the AC: HPE and how it is used to govern has been influenced by my own subject position and my awareness of neoliberal rationalities has also influenced my resistance to these. For example, I personally value the educative purposes of HPE more so than the outcomes of producing particular kinds of citizens. This is due to my wariness of any approach or strategy that attempts to direct and control the conduct of others.

As I sought insights through this research, a key analytical manoeuvre has been recognising and embracing a perspective that understands myself as immersed in the governing of knowledges and the ‘taken-for-granted’. Poststructural perspectives recognise the current field of HPE as historically emergent, yet it is not given to us outside our own construction. Although it may be

contingent on our actions and thoughts, it still imposes itself upon us. Stephen Thorpe (2003) argues;

recognising this, we need to commit ourselves to practices which seek to change this field, while at the same time understanding that our change-oriented practices, too, will be dense with effects we may not comprehend until they have betrayed us. This attitude was called by Michel de Certeau ‘the laugh of Michel Foucault’. (p. 131).

As such, I have considered the particular ways that my own understanding has been imposed upon by the broader experiences, knowledges, and discourses of which I am, and have been, a part. I also attempted to subject my own recommendations and proposals to a similar scrutiny to that of the initial object of analysis.

My background is having come through a pre-service teacher-training program that was immersed in the tensions between a biomedical and sociocultural approach. As such, I am highly attuned to the contestation between these two ways of knowing and understanding HPE. Throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, I have predominantly found myself aligned with the sociocultural approach, and the majority of other academics in the field with whom I have had personal contact also generally adopt, and work within this paradigm. This subsequently impacts both my reading of the curriculum, and the proposals that I offer.

Coming through a pre-service HPE teacher-training program also means that I am highly invested in HPE curriculum. My personal enjoyment and experiences of HPE programs throughout my own schooling in Australia positioned me to consider HPE as an important

educational subject, and one that functioned to do something good for students. Because of the HPE teaching which I was exposed to, I believe in the intrinsic worth of health education and physical activity knowledges, even though I am also cautious of their discursive effects. Combined with a sociocultural understanding of health and the various factors which impact upon it, I have often been frustrated by the frequent justifying of HPE in terms of health outcomes, rather than the value of health and PE knowledges in and of themselves. I am wary of how and why it has become so conceivable to manage the conduct of individuals through HPE, specifically through determining what their bodies should look like and how they should behave, and feel reticent to encourage this form of government.

I recognise I had an explicitly normative agenda in using WPR, presuming that the AC: HPE would benefit some people at the expense of others, and wanting to side with those who may be harmed. This meant that the focus of my research centred on the effects of the AC: HPE, specifically those which could prove to be harmful to young people. It has also meant that I undertook this analysis in order to assess the way that HPE curriculum works to govern and to offer suggestions about how the learning area may be conceived of differently in order to possibly avoid some of these negative effects. Adopting a poststructural perspective has meant that I was already located in knowledges that work to ‘challenge’, however, by proposing alternative ways of thinking about and approaching HPE, I am still shoring up the notion that HPE as a learning area should exist. I have not problematised my own position so far as to question the place of HPE in Australian schooling, but rather to imagine ways it can improve.

## **Conclusion**

The intention of this thesis was to interrogate the concept of governing through curriculum. Curriculum is both contested and changing, always in a state of ‘becoming’, of ‘was’ and ‘never was’ and ‘not quite’: “for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings” (Codd, 2007, p. 172). There is not only a contested authorial intent in the production of such a document, but also a vast multiplicity of readings which have subsequent effects. Throughout this research, WPR provided the means for interrogating curriculum through the poststructural premise that we are governed through problematisations. Using WPR as a poststructural frame, the key problem representations of the curriculum were interrogated with specific attention to the shape these ‘problems’ took, the socio-political and historical conditions which make them possible, and how these particular representations of the ‘problems’ have particular effects. This kind of analytic work is such that it needs to be continuous and ongoing as the landscape of curriculum, education, and HPE continues to shift and change in a modern context. As Sperka and Enright (2019) contend, “the progressively global, neoliberal, privatised, and digital education environment poses new methodological challenge for educational researchers, prompting a need to innovate” (p. 168). I believe that using WPR to analyse curriculum is one such form of innovation and it is my hope that through the work of this thesis I might demonstrate the value in taking up WPR as a tool for analysing curriculum texts and their attendant discursive effects.

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# **Appendix 1 – PDFs of AC: HPE, Understand how Health and Physical Education works**

Version 8.3 downloaded from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/health-and-physical-education> on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2017.

## Figure 3.1 Rationale

# Health and Physical Education

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## Learning area

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### Rationale

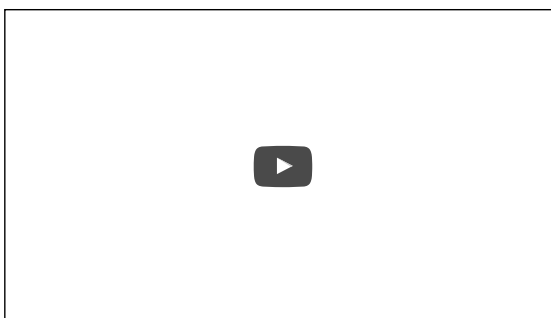
In an increasingly complex, sedentary and rapidly changing world it is critical for every young Australian to not only be able to cope with life's challenges but also to flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century. This is a strong investment in the future of the Australian population.

Technology and media will continue to transform our lives and change the way we communicate. Some health issues will endure while new ones will emerge. New forms of physical activity will become available. Students need critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge and to understand the influences on their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation. They also need to be resilient, to develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others' wellbeing, using health, safety and physical activity resources for the benefit of themselves and their communities.

In Health and Physical Education, students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. They learn to build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Students learn to navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations.

At the core of Health and Physical Education is the acquisition of movement skills and concepts to enable students to participate in a range of physical activities – confidently, competently and creatively. As a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation and enhanced performance, students acquire an understanding of how the body moves and develop positive attitudes towards physical activity participation. They develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in Australian society and globally. Movement is a powerful medium for learning, through which students can practise and refine personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills.

Health and Physical Education provides students with an experiential curriculum that is contemporary, relevant, challenging and physically active.



ACARA Health & Physical Education

## Figure 1.2 Aims

# Health and Physical Education

[Home](#) / [F-10 Curriculum](#) / [Health and Physical Education](#) / **Aims**

## Learning area

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### Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to:

- access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan
- develop and use personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and wellbeing and to build and manage respectful relationships
- acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts and settings
- engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practices and outcomes
- analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally.

## Figure 1.3 Key Ideas

# Health and Physical Education

[Home](#) / [F-10 Curriculum](#) / [Health and Physical Education](#) / **Key ideas**

## Learning area

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### Key ideas

#### **Health and Physical Education propositions**

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education has been shaped by five interrelated propositions that are informed by a strong and diverse research base for a futures-oriented curriculum:

#### ***Focus on educative purposes***

The prime responsibility of the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to describe the progression and development of the disciplinary knowledge, understanding and skills underpinning health and physical education and how students will make meaning of and apply them in contemporary health and movement contexts.

Although the curriculum may contribute to a range of goals that sit beyond its educative purposes, the priority for the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to provide ongoing, developmentally appropriate and explicit learning about health and movement. The Health and Physical Education curriculum draws on its multidisciplinary evidence base to ensure that students are provided with learning opportunities to practise, create, apply and evaluate the knowledge, understanding and skills of the learning area.

#### ***Take a strengths-based approach***

The Health and Physical Education curriculum is informed by a strengths-based approach. Rather than focusing only on potential health risks or a deficit-based model of health, the curriculum has a stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing.

This approach affirms that all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others' health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity. The curriculum recognises that students have varying levels of access to personal and community resources depending on a variety of contextual factors that will impact on their decisions and behaviours.

#### ***Value movement***

Health and Physical Education is the key learning area in the curriculum that focuses explicitly on developing movement skills and concepts students need to participate in physical activities with competence and confidence. The knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions students develop through movement in Health and Physical Education encourage ongoing participation across their lifespan and in turn lead to positive health outcomes. Movement competence and confidence is seen as an important personal and community asset to be developed, refined and valued.

Health and Physical Education promotes an appreciation of how movement in all its forms is central to daily life – from meeting functional requirements and providing opportunities for active living to acknowledging participation in physical activity and sport as significant cultural and social practices. The study of movement has a broad and established scientific, social, cultural and historical knowledge base, informing our understanding of how and why we move and how we can improve physical performance.

The study of movement also provides challenges and opportunities for students to enhance a range of personal and social skills and behaviours that contribute to health and wellbeing.

#### ***Develop health literacy***

Health literacy can be understood as an individual's ability to gain access to, understand and use health information and services in ways that promote and maintain health and wellbeing. The Health and Physical Education curriculum focuses on developing knowledge, understanding and skills related to the three dimensions of health literacy:

- functional dimension – researching and applying information relating to knowledge and services to respond to a health-related question
- interactive dimension – requires more advanced knowledge, understanding and skills to actively and independently engage with a health issue and to apply new information to changing circumstances
- critical dimension – the ability to selectively access and critically analyse health information from a variety of sources (which might include scientific information, health brochures or messages in the media) to take action to promote personal health and wellbeing or that of others.

Consistent with a strengths-based approach, health literacy is a personal and community asset to be developed, evaluated, enriched and communicated.

#### ***Include a critical inquiry approach***

The Health and Physical Education curriculum engages students in critical inquiry processes that assist students in researching, analysing, applying and appraising knowledge in health and movement fields. In doing so, students will critically analyse and critically evaluate contextual factors that influence decision-making, behaviours and actions, and explore inclusiveness, power inequalities, assumptions, diversity and social justice.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum recognises that values, behaviours, priorities and actions related to health and physical activity reflect varying contextual factors which influence the ways people live. The curriculum develops an understanding that the meanings and interests individuals and social groups have in relation to health practices and physical activity participation are diverse and therefore require different approaches and strategies.

#### **Importance of a healthy school environment**

It has long been recognised that the broader school environment can enhance the delivery of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Learning in Health and Physical Education supports students to make decisions about their health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation. If consistent messages are evident across the school and wider school community, this learning is validated and reinforced. Students are also better able to practise and reinforce their learning in Health and Physical Education if teaching and learning in all curriculum areas and the whole school environment reflect the knowledge, understanding and skills delivered in the Health and Physical Education curriculum. A healthy and supportive school environment may be enriched through health-promoting school policies and processes, and partnerships with parents, community organisations and specialist services.

# Figure 1.4 Structure



## > Structure

Strands, sub-strands and threads

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education is organised into two content strands: personal, social and community health and movement and physical activity. Each strand contains content descriptions which are organised under three sub-strands.

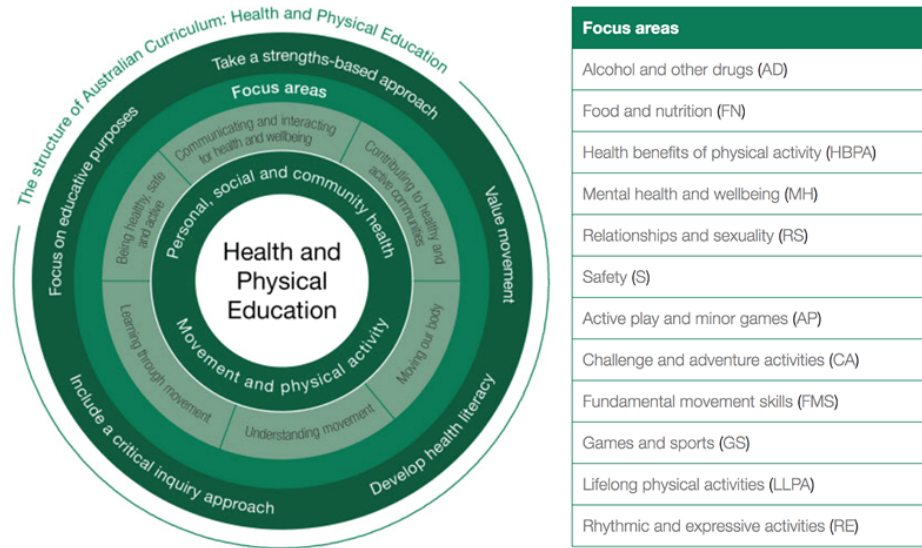


Figure 1: The structure of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education [Click here to learn more about focus areas](#)

**Table 1: Overview of sub-strands and threads in the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education**

		<b>Strands</b>	
		<b>Personal, social and community health</b>	<b>Movement and physical activity</b>
<b>Sub-strands and threads</b>	Being healthy, safe and active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identities</li> <li>• Changes and transitions</li> <li>• Help-seeking</li> <li>• Making healthy and safe choices</li> </ul>	Moving our body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining movement skills</li> <li>• Developing movement concepts and strategies</li> </ul>	
	Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interacting with others</li> <li>• Understanding emotions</li> <li>• Health literacy</li> </ul>	Understanding movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness and physical activity</li> <li>• Elements of movement</li> <li>• Cultural significance of physical activity</li> </ul>	
	Contributing to healthy and active communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community health promotion</li> <li>• Connecting to the environment</li> <li>• Valuing diversity</li> </ul>	Learning through movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and leadership</li> <li>• Critical and creative thinking in movement</li> <li>• Ethical behaviour in movement settings</li> </ul>	

## Relationship between the strands

In the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10), the two strands, personal, social and community health and movement and physical activity, are interrelated and inform and support each other. Both strands must be taught in each year from Foundation to Year 10. Creating opportunities for practical application will enhance the development of knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of relevant and meaningful health and movement focus areas. Students should be provided with the opportunity to participate in physical activity on a weekly basis as a minimum as part of the HPE curriculum.

### Sub-strands

#### 1. Being healthy, safe and active

The content focuses on supporting students to make decisions about their own health, safety and wellbeing. It develops the knowledge, understanding and skills to support students to be resilient. It enables them to access and understand health information and empowers them to make healthy, safe and active choices. In addition, the content explores personal identities and emotions, and the contextual factors that influence students' health, safety and wellbeing. Students also learn about the behavioural aspects related to regular physical activity and develop the dispositions needed to be active individuals.

#### 2. Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

The content develops knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to critically engage with a range of health focus areas and issues. It also helps them apply new information to changing circumstances and environments that influence their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing.

#### 3. Contributing to healthy and active communities

The content develops knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to critically analyse contextual factors that influence the health and wellbeing of communities. The content supports students to selectively access information, products, services and environments to take action to promote the health and wellbeing of their communities.

#### 4. Moving our body

The content lays the important early foundations of play and fundamental movement skills. It focuses on the acquisition and refinement of a broad range of movement skills. Students apply movement concepts and strategies to enhance performance and move with competence and confidence. Students develop skills and dispositions necessary for lifelong participation in physical activities.

#### 5. Understanding movement

The content focuses on developing knowledge and understanding about how and why our body moves and what happens to our body when it moves. While participating in physical activities, students analyse and evaluate theories, techniques and strategies that can be used to understand and enhance the quality of movement and physical activity performance. They explore the place and meaning of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in their own lives, and across time and cultures.

#### 6. Learning through movement

The content focuses on personal and social skills that can be developed through participation in movement and physical activities. These skills include communication, decision-making, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, and cooperation. The skills can be developed as students work individually and in small groups or teams to perform movement tasks or solve movement challenges. Through movement experiences, students develop other important personal and social skills such as self-awareness, self-management, persisting with challenges and striving for enhanced performance. They also experience the varied roles within organised sport and recreation.

## Focus areas

The 12 focus areas provide the breadth of learning across Foundation to Year 10 that must be taught for students to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills described in the achievement standard for each band of learning. The focus areas have been mapped to each content description and elaboration (annotations included in brackets) to assist teachers in their planning. Descriptions of each of the focus areas and the learning expected in each can be accessed through hyperlinks from the focus area annotations after each elaboration.

### Alcohol and other drugs

addresses a range of drugs, including prescription drugs, bush and alternative medicines, energy drinks, caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and performance-enhancing drugs. The content supports students to explore the impact drugs can have on individuals, families and communities.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- safe use of medicines
- alternatives to taking medicines
- the effect of drugs on the body (including energy drinks and caffeine)
- factors that influence the use of different types of drugs
- impact of drug use on individuals and communities
- making informed decisions about drugs (assertive behaviour, peer influence, harm minimisation, awareness of blood-borne viruses)
- performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

### Food and nutrition

addresses the role of food and nutrition in enhancing health and wellbeing. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make healthy, informed food choices and to explore the contextual factors that influence eating habits and food choices.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- food groups and recommendations for healthy eating (including The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating)
- nutritional requirements and dietary needs (including The Australian Dietary Guidelines)
- food labelling and packaging
- food advertising
- personal, social, economic and cultural influences on food choices and eating habits
- strategies for planning and maintaining a healthy, balanced diet
- healthy options for snacks, meals and drinks
- sustainable food choices.

### Health benefits of physical activity

addresses the influence and impact regular physical activity participation has on individual and community health and wellbeing. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make active choices and to explore the range of influences on physical activity participation and choices.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- physical benefits of participating in physical activities (including impact on health-related and skill-related components of fitness)
- benefits of physical activities based on intensity, nature and frequency
- social, emotional and cognitive benefits of regular physical activity
- social, cultural and environmental influences on physical activity participation
- sedentary behaviours and their impact on health and wellbeing
- strategies for minimising sedentary behaviour and including physical activity in daily routines.

### Mental health and wellbeing

addresses how mental health and wellbeing can be enhanced and strengthened at an individual and community level. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to manage their own mental health and wellbeing and to support that of others.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- mental health and wellbeing, and mental health promotion
- destigmatising mental illness in the community
- the impact of physical, social, spiritual and emotional health on wellbeing
- body image and self-worth and their impact on mental health and wellbeing
- resilience, and skills that support resilient behaviour
- coping skills, help-seeking strategies and community support resources
- networks of support for promoting mental health and wellbeing.

## Relationships and sexuality

addresses physical, social and emotional changes that occur over time and the significant role relationships and sexuality play in these changes. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills that will help them to establish and manage respectful relationships. It also supports them to develop positive practices in relation to their reproductive and sexual health and the development of their identities. In doing so, students will gain an understanding of the factors that influence gender and sexual identities.

During Foundation to Year 2, students will learn about:

- parts of the body and how the body changes as they grow
- people who are important to them
- strategies for relating to and interacting with others
- assertive behaviour and standing up for themselves.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Year 3 to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- people who are important to them
- strategies for relating to and interacting with others
- assertive behaviour and standing up for themselves
- establishing and managing changing relationships (offline and online)
- bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence (including discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality)
- strategies for dealing with relationships when there is an imbalance of power (including seeking help or leaving the relationship)
- puberty and how the body changes over time
- managing the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty
- reproduction and sexual health
- practices that support reproductive and sexual health (contraception, negotiating consent, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne viruses)
- changing identities and the factors that influence them (including personal, cultural, gender and sexual identities)
- celebrating and respecting difference and diversity in individuals and communities.

## Safety

addresses safety issues that students may encounter in their daily lives. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make safe decisions and behave in ways that protect their own safety and that of others.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 10 will learn about the following:

- safety at school
- safe practices at home, in road or transport environments, in the outdoors and when near water
- safe and unsafe situations at home, school and parties and in the community
- strategies for dealing with unsafe or uncomfortable situations
- safe practices when using information and communication technologies (ICT) and online services, including dealing with cyberbullying
- managing personal safety
- first aid and emergency care, including safe blood practices
- safety when participating in physical activity, including sports safety, sun safety, use of protective equipment and modifying rules

- relationship and dating safety.

### Active play and minor games

focuses on learning through which students actively engage in play with people, objects and representations; indoors, outdoors, alone, with a partner or in a group. The content supports students to be physically active and develop skills such as persistence, negotiation, problem solving, planning and cooperation.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 4 will participate in the following:

- imaginative play
- small group games
- minor games
- lead-up games.

### Challenge and adventure activities

focuses on how individuals participate in a variety of physical activities designed to challenge individuals physiologically, behaviourally and socially in diverse contexts and environments. The content supports students to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to assess hazards and manage risks.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Year 5 to Year 10 will participate in the following:

- initiative games
- movement challenges (as individuals and in teams or groups)
- recreational activities in natural and outdoor settings
- navigational challenges.

Schools could also offer the following activities within this focus area if they have access to specialised facilities and equipment and relevant teacher expertise:

- bushwalking
- camping
- biathlon and triathlon
- martial arts
- rock climbing
- canoeing and kayaking
- cycling (mountain biking, BMX, road and track cycling)
- surfing
- skiing (snow or water)
- swimming for performance (with a focus on technique).

### Fundamental movement skills

focuses on the development of fundamental movement skills that provide the foundation for competent and confident participation in a range of physical activities such as games, sports, dance, gymnastics and physical recreation.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Foundation to Year 6 will have opportunities to practise and develop the following skills:

Locomotor and non-locomotor skills:

- rolling
- balancing
- sliding
- jogging
- running
- leaping
- jumping
- hopping
- dodging
- galloping
- skipping
- floating and moving the body through water to safety.

Object control skills:

- bouncing
- throwing
- catching
- kicking
- striking.

## Games and sports

focuses on the development of movement skills, concepts and strategies through a variety of games and sports. This content builds on learning in active play and minor games and fundamental movement skills. Most games and sports can be classified into: invasion games, net and wall games, striking and fielding games and target games.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Year 3 to Year 10 will participate in the following:

- modified games
- traditional games or sports
- culturally significant games and sports (such as traditional Indigenous games and games of significance from the Asia region)
- non-traditional games and sports (including student-designed games).

## Lifelong physical activities

focuses on how participation in physical activity can enhance health-related fitness and wellbeing across the lifespan.

It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from Year 3 to Year 10 will participate in the following:

- individual and group fitness activities
- active recreation activities.

Schools could also offer the following activities if they have access to specialised facilities and equipment and relevant teacher expertise:

- swimming
- tai chi, yoga, Pilates
- bushwalking
- recreational cycling
- resistance training.

### Rhythmic and expressive movement activities

Advice on appropriate timing for addressing each focus area is provided in Table 2 below and the band descriptions. It is expected that the focus areas identified in each band description will contribute substantially to the Health and Physical Education teaching and learning program for the relevant band of learning. Decisions about the specific timing of when each focus area will be taught within the two-year band (for example, whether to teach about safety in Year 3 or Year 4 or in both years) are the responsibility of schools and teachers. Planning decisions should take into account local needs, available resources, students' readiness and community priorities.

Across the Health and Physical Education curriculum from Foundation to Year 10, the focus areas that must be addressed in each band of learning are those indicated with a tick in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Focus areas across the learning continuum**

Focus area	Foundation – Year 2	Years 3–6	Years 7–10
Alcohol and other drugs (AD)	✓ Medicines only	✓	✓
Food and nutrition (FN)	✓	✓	✓
Health benefits of physical activity (HBPA)	✓	✓	✓
Mental health and wellbeing (MH)	✓	✓	✓
Relationships and sexuality (RS)	✓ Relationships only	✓	✓
Safety (S)	✓	✓	✓
Active play and minor games (AP)	✓	✓	N/A
Challenge and adventure activities (CA)	N/A	✓	✓
Fundamental movement skills (FMS)	✓	✓	N/A
Games and sports (GS)	N/A	✓	✓
Lifelong physical activities (LLPA)	N/A	✓	✓
Rhythmic and expressive activities (RE)	✓	✓	✓

## Same-sex attracted and gender-diverse students

As with other areas of student diversity, it is crucial to acknowledge and affirm diversity in relation to sexuality and gender in Health and Physical Education. Inclusive Health and Physical Education programs which affirm sexuality and gender diversity acknowledge the impact of diversity on students' social worlds, acknowledge and respond to the needs of all students, and provide more meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for all students.

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) is designed to allow schools flexibility to meet the learning needs of all young people, particularly in the health focus area of relationships and sexuality. All school communities have a responsibility when implementing the Health and Physical Education curriculum to ensure that teaching is inclusive and relevant to the lived experiences of all students. This is particularly important when teaching about reproduction and sexual health, to ensure that the needs of all students are met, including students who may be same-sex attracted, gender diverse or intersex.

### Contact details

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Figure 1.5.1 Glossary E



## > Glossary

**elaborate**

**elements of movement**

**emotional health**

An ability to *recognise, understand* and effectively manage emotions and use this knowledge when thinking, feeling and acting.

**enhance**

**evaluate**

**examine**

**explain**

### Contact details

---

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza,  
280 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: 1300 895 563 | Fax: 1800 982 118

### Other links

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## Figure 1.5.2 Glossary H



### > Glossary

**harm minimisation**

**health**

A state of complete physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life.

**health benefits of physical activity**

**health literacy**

**health messages**

**health-related fitness**

#### Contact details

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280 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

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Figure 1.5.3 Glossary M



## > Glossary

**manipulate**

**manipulative skills**

**mental health**

A state of *wellbeing* in which an individual thrives and can manage normal stresses of life, work and *recreation*. Social, emotional and spiritual resilience, which enables people to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It is a positive sense of *wellbeing* and an underlying belief in our own and others' dignity and worth.

**minor games**

**modified games**

**movement challenges**

**movement concepts and strategies**

**movement elements**

**movement exploration**

**movement sequence**

**movement situation**

Figure 1.5. 4 Glossary S



## > Glossary

### **safety**

Relates to *safety* issues that students may encounter in their daily lives, assessing risk, making safe decisions and behaving in ways that protect their own *safety* and that of others. It includes making safe decisions that keep people healthy in situations and places such as school, home, on roads, outdoors, near and in water, parties, online, *first aid*, relationships and dating, and personal *safety*.

Children and young people will seek out risks elsewhere, in environments that are not controlled or designed for them, if a *play* and *physical activity* provision is not challenging enough. Important learning can take place when children are exposed to, and have to learn to deal with, environmental hazards.

### **same-sex attracted**

### **sedentary behaviour**

### **select**

### **self-efficacy**

### **sense of place**

### **sense of self**

### **sexual health**

### **sexuality**

### **skilled play**

### **skill-related fitness**

## Figure 1.5.5 Glossary W



### > Glossary

#### **wellbeing**

A sense of satisfaction, happiness, effective social functioning and *spiritual health*, and *dispositions* of optimism, openness, curiosity and *resilience*.

#### **Contact details**

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Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza,  
280 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: 1300 895 563 | Fax: 1800 982 118

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#### **Feedback / Enquiries**

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We welcome your feedback and queries.

Please [click here](#) to contact us by email.

## **Appendix 2 – Screenshots of AC: HPE, Understand how Health and Physical Education works**

Version 8.3, taken June 30<sup>th</sup> 2017 from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/health-and-physical-education>.

Figure 2.1 Screenshot of Rationale

The screenshot shows the Australian Curriculum website. The top navigation bar includes the Australian Curriculum logo, a search bar, and links for 'F-10 Curriculum', 'Senior secondary curriculum', 'Parent information', 'Student diversity', and 'Resources'. A 'Download content' link is also present. The main content area is titled 'Rationale' and contains the following text:

In an increasingly complex, sedentary and rapidly changing world it is critical for every young Australian to not only be able to cope with life's challenges but also to flourish as healthy, safe and active citizens in the 21st century. This is a strong investment in the future of the Australian population.

Technology and media will continue to transform our lives and change the way we communicate. Some health issues will endure while new ones will emerge. New forms of physical activity will become available. Students need critical inquiry skills to research and analyse knowledge and to understand the influences on their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation. They also need to be resilient, to develop empathy and to be actively engaged in their own and others' wellbeing, using health, safety and physical activity resources for the benefit of themselves and their communities.

In Health and Physical Education, students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. They learn to build on personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Students learn to navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations.

At the core of Health and Physical Education is the acquisition of movement skills and concepts to enable students to participate in a range of physical activities – confidently, competently and creatively. As a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation and enhanced performance, students acquire an understanding of how the body moves and develop positive attitudes towards physical activity participation. They develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport in Australian society and globally. Movement is a powerful medium for learning, through which students can practise and refine personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills.

Health and Physical Education provides students with an experiential curriculum that is contemporary, relevant, challenging and physically active.

On the right side of the page, there is a video player showing a woman speaking. The video has a play button and a 'Contact & Support' link. Below the video, there are social media icons for YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, and a 'Download content' link.

Figure 2.2 Screenshot of Aims

The screenshot shows the Australian Curriculum website. The top navigation bar includes the Australian Curriculum logo and a search bar with the text "Search by keyword or content". Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: Home > F-10 curriculum > Health and Physical Education > Aims. The main content area features a large blue arrow icon pointing to the word "Aims". Below this, the text states: "The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to:". A bulleted list of aims follows:

- access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan
- develop and use personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and wellbeing and to build and manage respectful relationships
- acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts and settings
- engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practices and outcomes
- analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally.

At the bottom of the page, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, with the text "Follow ACARA:" next to them. A "Download content" link is also visible in the top right corner.

Figure 2.3.1 Screenshot of Key Ideas

The screenshot shows the Australian Curriculum website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Australian Curriculum logo and several menu items: 'F-10 Curriculum', 'Senior secondary curriculum', 'Parent Information', 'Student diversity', 'Resources/publications', and 'Download content'. A search bar is also present with the text 'Search by keyword or content'. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled 'Key ideas' and features a large heading for 'Health and Physical Education propositions'. The text below this heading explains that the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education is shaped by five interrelated propositions. It then highlights two key ideas: 'Focus on educative purposes' and 'Take a strengths-based approach'. The 'Focus on educative purposes' section states that the prime responsibility of the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to describe the progression and development of disciplinary knowledge, understanding, and skills underpinning health and physical education, and how students will make meaning of and apply them in contemporary health and movement contexts. The 'Take a strengths-based approach' section explains that the curriculum draws on its multidisciplinary evidence base to ensure that students are provided with learning opportunities to practise, create, apply and evaluate the knowledge, understanding and skills of the learning area. The 'Take a strengths-based approach' section further states that the Health and Physical Education curriculum is informed by a strengths-based approach, rather than focusing only on potential health risks or a deficit-based model of health, and has a stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing. The 'Take a strengths-based approach' section concludes by affirming that all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others' health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity, and that the curriculum recognises that students have varying levels of access to personal and community resources depending on a variety of contextual factors that will impact on their decisions and behaviours.

Download content

Search by keyword or content

Resources/publications

Student diversity

Parent Information

Senior secondary curriculum

F-10 Curriculum

Key ideas

## Health and Physical Education propositions

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education has been shaped by five interrelated propositions that are informed by a strong and diverse research base for a futures-oriented curriculum:

### Focus on educative purposes

The prime responsibility of the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to describe the progression and development of the disciplinary knowledge, understanding and skills underpinning health and physical education and how students will make meaning of and apply them in contemporary health and movement contexts.

Although the curriculum may contribute to a range of goals that sit beyond its educative purposes, the priority for the Health and Physical Education curriculum is to provide ongoing, developmentally appropriate and explicit learning about health and movement. The Health and Physical Education curriculum draws on its multidisciplinary evidence base to ensure that students are provided with learning opportunities to practise, create, apply and evaluate the knowledge, understanding and skills of the learning area.

### Take a strengths-based approach

The Health and Physical Education curriculum is informed by a strengths-based approach. Rather than focusing only on potential health risks or a deficit-based model of health, the curriculum has a stronger focus on supporting students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they require to make healthy, safe and active choices that will enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing.

This approach affirms that all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others' health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity. The curriculum recognises that students have varying levels of access to personal and community resources depending on a variety of contextual factors that will impact on their decisions and behaviours.

Figure 2.3.2 Screenshot of Key Ideas

The screenshot shows the Australian Curriculum website interface. At the top left is the AC | Australian CURRICULUM logo. Below it are navigation links: F-10 Curriculum, Senior secondary curriculum, Parent information, Student diversity, and Resources/publications. A search bar with a magnifying glass icon is on the right, with the text 'Search by keyword or content'. A 'Download content' link is also visible. The main content area is titled 'Value movement' and contains two paragraphs of text. Below this is a section titled 'Develop health literacy' with a bulleted list of three dimensions: functional, interactive, and critical. The text concludes with a statement about health literacy as a personal and community asset.

**Value movement**

Health and Physical Education is the key learning area in the curriculum that focuses explicitly on developing movement skills and concepts students need to participate in physical activities with competence and confidence. The knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions students develop through movement in Health and Physical Education encourage ongoing participation across their lifespan and in turn lead to positive health outcomes. Movement competence and confidence is seen as an important personal and community asset to be developed, refined and valued.

Health and Physical Education promotes an appreciation of how movement in all its forms is central to daily life – from meeting functional requirements and providing opportunities for active living to acknowledging participation in physical activity and sport as significant cultural and social practices. The study of movement has a broad and established scientific, social, cultural and historical knowledge base, informing our understanding of how and why we move and how we can improve physical performance.

The study of movement also provides challenges and opportunities for students to enhance a range of personal and social skills and behaviours that contribute to health and wellbeing.

**Develop health literacy**

Health literacy can be understood as an individual's ability to gain access to, understand and use health information and services in ways that promote and maintain health and wellbeing. The Health and Physical Education curriculum focuses on developing knowledge, understanding and skills related to the three dimensions of health literacy:

- functional dimension – researching and applying information relating to knowledge and services to respond to a health-related question
- interactive dimension – requires more advanced knowledge, understanding and skills to actively and independently engage with a health issue and to apply new information to changing circumstances
- critical dimension – the ability to selectively access and critically analyse health information from a variety of sources (which might include scientific information, health brochures or messages in the media) to take action to promote personal health and wellbeing or that of others.

Consistent with a strengths-based approach, health literacy is a personal and community asset to be developed, evaluated, enriched and communicated.

Figure 2.3.3 Screenshot of Key Ideas

The screenshot shows a navigation menu at the top with the following items: Australian CURRICULUM, F-10 Curriculum, Senior secondary curriculum, Parent Information, Student diversity, Resources/publications, and Download content. A search bar is located on the right side of the menu.

***Include a critical inquiry approach***

The Health and Physical Education curriculum engages students in critical inquiry processes that assist students in researching, analysing, applying and appraising knowledge in health and movement fields. In doing so, students will critically analyse and critically evaluate contextual factors that influence decision-making, behaviours and actions, and explore inclusiveness, power inequalities, assumptions, diversity and social justice.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum recognises that values, behaviours, priorities and actions related to health and physical activity reflect varying contextual factors which influence the ways people live. The curriculum develops an understanding that the meanings and interests individuals and social groups have in relation to health practices and physical activity participation are diverse and therefore require different approaches and strategies.

**Importance of a healthy school environment**

It has long been recognised that the broader school environment can enhance the delivery of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Learning in Health and Physical Education supports students to make decisions about their health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation. If consistent messages are evident across the school and wider school community, this learning is validated and reinforced. Students are also better able to practise and reinforce their learning in Health and Physical Education if teaching and learning in all curriculum areas and the whole school environment reflect the knowledge, understanding and skills delivered in the Health and Physical Education curriculum. A healthy and supportive school environment may be enriched through health-promoting school policies and processes, and partnerships with parents, community organisations and specialist services.

Figure 2.4 Screenshot of Structure

**Structure**

Strands, sub-threads and threads

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education is organised into two content strands: personal, social and community health and movement and physical activity. Each strand contains content descriptions which are organised under three sub-threads.

Focus areas
Alcohol and other drugs (AD)
Food and nutrition (FN)
Health benefits of physical activity (HBPA)
Mental health and wellbeing (MH)
Relationships and sexuality (RS)
Safety (S)
Active play and minor games (AP)
Challenge and adventure activities (CA)
Fundamental movement skills (FMS)
Games and sports (GS)

## **Appendix 3 – PDF of Cross-Curriculum Priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**

Downloaded from <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures/> on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018.



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

## Overview

The Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. ACARA acknowledges the gap in learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Indigenous peers. It recognises the need for the Australian Curriculum to provide every opportunity possible to 'close the gap'.

Therefore, the Australian Curriculum is working towards addressing two distinct needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education:

- that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem
- that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

### **New Science elaborations addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**

In response to feedback from community and educators, ACARA has developed 95 new elaborations to help teachers to incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum: Science.

These elaborations were developed with the assistance of ACARA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group and Taskforce, and Science and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum specialists, and provide practical examples across all three strands of the science curriculum and all year levels.

The elaborations acknowledge that Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have worked scientifically for millennia and continue to contribute to contemporary science. They are scientifically rigorous, demonstrating how Indigenous history, culture, knowledge and understanding can be incorporated into teaching core scientific concepts.

In Years 5 to 10, each elaboration is accompanied by teacher background information that explains in detail the cultural and historical significance of the chosen topic and how it connects to the core science curriculum content. It also includes a list of consulted works, provided as evidence of the research undertaken to inform the development of the teacher background information. The teacher background information is accessible through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures icon appearing next to the elaboration. Teacher background information for Foundation to Year 4 will be progressively developed over the coming months.

The elaborations and accompanying teacher background information support teachers in providing a more culturally responsive curriculum experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students resulting in increased engagement and better educational outcomes. They also provide an opportunity for teachers to engage all students in respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

## How to access Science elaborations



STRAND Sub-strand	CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS	CROSS-CURRICULAR PRIORITY ELABORATION (NEW) Elaboration (New to ACARA)
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures</b>		
1. (a) Biological sciences	Living things have been made, including food and water (ACSSU004)	Recognising how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples care for living things
1. (b) Physical sciences	The way things move depends on a variety of factors, including their size and shape (ACSSU005)	Exploring how the size and shape of traditional tools used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples influence their movement
1. (c) Earth and space sciences	Daily and seasonal changes in the environment affect activities (ACSSU006)	Learning how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' complex and varied practices explain how things happen in the world around them
1. (d) Matter and development of systems	Science involves observing, asking questions about, and identifying changes in, objects and materials (ACSSU007)	Recognising how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples gain knowledge about the world and the sky, seasons, wind, air, water, and food through observation
<b>Year 1</b>		
1. (a) Biological sciences	Living things have a variety of external features (ACSSU007)	Recognising how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' observations of animal features of living things are recorded and available in traditional stories
1. (b) Chemical sciences	Materials' reactions can be physically changed in a variety of ways (ACSSU008)	Recognising how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' simple physical changes to natural materials to create their tools for production purposes
1. (c) Earth and space sciences	Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape (ACSSU009)	Recognising the extensive knowledge of daily and seasonal changes of natural phenomena and landscape used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
1. (d) Physical sciences	Light and sound are transmitted by a range of sources and can be absorbed (ACSSU005)	Recognising how traditional musical instruments used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples produce their characteristic sounds
1. (e) Matter and development of systems	Science involves observing, asking questions about, and identifying changes in, objects and materials (ACSSU007)	Recognising how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can change a few materials and their uses to create questions about what a lighter object is made of
1. (f) Use and influence of science	People use science in their daily lives, including when being in their environment and using things (ACSSU010)	Recognising that technologies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples require an understanding of how materials can be traditionally sourced in their lands and regions, natural relationships, safety, conservation and ethics

Table of new elaborations



Australian Curriculum: Science

### ACCESSING THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SCIENCE ELABORATIONS

ACARA has published over ninety new Science Elaborations to help teachers incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures into the teaching and learning of the F-10 Australian Curriculum: Science.

To provide further support, teacher background information is being developed and published for each of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Science Elaborations.

As you browse the Australian Curriculum: Science content descriptions, you will find the Science Elaborations. Click on the «Elaborations» box to open it.

Click here to open

Download Science Elaborations (using a form) via address: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

Accessing new elaborations

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures in Science

Elaborations examples that can be used by teachers to incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross-curriculum priority across the Australian Curriculum: Science

SCIENCE CURRICULUM	LEARNING IDEA
<p><b>Year 3</b></p> <p>Students learn a range of skills, including: using and testing a model to explain an event, and using a model to explain an event (ACSSU005)</p>	<p>Students can use a range of skills, including: using and testing a model to explain an event, and using a model to explain an event (ACSSU005)</p>
<p><b>Year 4</b></p> <p>Students learn how to: identify and explain the different parts of a system, and explain the different parts of a system (ACSSU007)</p>	<p>Students can design Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge and engineering of skills, health and games for survival, protection of what they want</p>

Examples of elaborations

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority provides opportunities for all students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Through the Australian Curriculum, students will understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority uses a conceptual framework to provide a context for learning. The framework comprises the underlying elements of Identity and Living Communities and the key concepts of Country/Place, Culture and People. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identities are represented as central to the priority and are approached through knowledge and understanding of the interconnected elements of Country/Place, Culture and People. The development of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Peoples' law, languages, dialects and literacies is approached through the exploration of Cultures. These relationships are linked to the deep knowledge traditions and holistic world views of Aboriginal communities and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.

Students will understand that Identities and Cultures have been, and are, a source of strength and resilience for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples against the historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation.



Figure1: Conceptual framework for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority

## Key ideas

### Key concepts

The first key concept of the organising ideas highlights the special connection to Country/Place by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and celebrates the unique belief systems that connect people physically and spiritually to Country/Place.

The second concept examines the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' culture through language, ways of life and experiences as expressed through historical, social and political lenses. It gives students opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.

The third concept addresses the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. It examines kinship structures and the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on a local, national and global scale.

### Organising ideas

For each cross-curriculum priority, a set of organising ideas reflects the essential knowledge, understandings and skills for the priority. The organising ideas are embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area as appropriate.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Organising ideas</b>
<b>Country/Place</b>	
OI.1	Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups: Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and within those groups there is significant diversity.
OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
<b>Culture</b>	
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.
OI.6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live in Australia as first peoples of Country or Place and demonstrate resilience in responding to historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation.
<b>People</b>	
OI.7	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies encompass a diversity of nations across Australia.
OI.8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' family and kinship structures are strong and sophisticated.
OI.9	The significant contributions of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the present and past are acknowledged locally, nationally and globally.

## Learning Areas

### Learning areas statements

All Australian Curriculum learning areas can contribute to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority. Taken collectively, Australian Curriculum learning areas deepen students' knowledge and understanding of Australia and the First Australians. This knowledge and understanding enriches all students' ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are included in each learning area in ways that are consistent with its content and purpose. They also make it possible to link content across learning areas, which can lead to integrated units of work.

Each learning area contributes differently to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority and its key concepts of Country/Place, Culture and People. Australian Curriculum content descriptions and elaborations relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are tagged with the priority symbol. In other content descriptions and elaborations, the cross-curriculum priority can be inferred from the use of the terms 'Identity', 'Country/Place', 'Culture', and 'Peoples'.

Learning areas value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. Each one articulates appropriate and relevant aspects of the priority and how it can be incorporated in the curriculum.

### English

In the Australian Curriculum: English, students begin to engage with the priority as they develop an awareness and appreciation of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature. This includes storytelling traditions (oral narrative) and contemporary literature. Students will learn to develop respectful, critical understandings of the social, historical and cultural contexts associated with different uses of language features and text structures including images and visual language.

### **Mathematics**

Students can explore connections between representations of number and pattern and how they relate to aspects of counting and relationships of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Students can investigate time, place, relationships and measurement concepts within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. Through the application and evaluation of statistical data, students can deepen their understanding of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

### **Science**

Students will have opportunities to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have longstanding scientific knowledge traditions and developed knowledge about the world by:

- observation, using all the senses
- prediction and hypothesis
- testing (trial and error)
- making generalisations within specific contexts such as the use of food, natural materials, navigation and sustainability of the environment.

### **Humanities and Social Sciences**

The diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are explored through their:

- long and continuous strong connections with Country/Place and their economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of place, including the idea of custodial responsibility. Students examine the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the environmental characteristics of Australian places, and the different ways in which places are represented.
- experiences before, during and after European colonisation including the nature of contact with other peoples, and their progress towards recognition and equality. In particular, students investigate the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, past and present, including civic movements for change, the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australian society, and contemporary issues.
- exploration of how groups express their particular identities, and come to understand how group belonging influences perceptions of others.

The use of primary and secondary sources, including oral histories, gives students opportunities to see events through multiple perspectives, and to empathise and ethically consider the investigation, preservation and conservation of sites of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

### **The Arts**

Students' exploration of traditional and contemporary artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides insight into the way the relationships between People, Culture and Country/Place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be conveyed through the arts, their expression in living communities, and the way these build Identity.

### **Technologies**

Students will identify the interconnectedness between technologies and Identity, People, Culture and Country/Place. They will explore, understand and analyse how this intrinsic link guides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in sustaining environments, histories, cultures and identities through / by creating appropriate and sustainable solutions.

### **Health and Physical Education**

This learning area allows students to appreciate and celebrate the beauty of the world's oldest continuous living cultures. Students will be able to explore personal, community and group identities and so build understanding of the differences and commonalities in systems of knowledge and beliefs about Health and Physical Education. There is the capacity for making strong connections between cultures and identities and to engage with and appreciate the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Students can learn about the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander modes of communication and ways of living and being, and develop appreciation and understanding of uniquely Australian connections between People and Country/Place. They can explore the importance of family and kinship structures for maintaining and promoting health, safety and wellbeing within their community and the wider community. Students can also be given the opportunity to participate in physical activities and cultural practices such as traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander games.

### Languages

The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages provides a direct way of learning about and engaging with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are an integral part of learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages as there is an inseparable connection between the languages and land, sea, sky and waterways. Through learning a framework language, all students gain access to knowledge and understanding of Australia that can only come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own language can have a significant influence on their overall learning and achievements. It can foster a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem and enables students to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their culture, Country/Place and People. This then contributes to their wellbeing.

In all other language learning, there is scope for making interlinguistic and intercultural comparisons across languages to develop understanding of concepts related to the linguistic landscape of Australia and to the concepts of language and culture in general.

### Work Studies

The exploration of concepts of self-identity provide opportunities to develop understanding of the distinctive sense of identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This can lead to an understanding of how identity is strongly linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique belief systems and their spiritual connection to the land, sea, sky and waterways. The curriculum can demonstrate the influence these have on relationships within the world of work through the Australian Curriculum: Work Studies.

View illustrations  
for Aboriginal and  
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Histories and Cultures

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### Contact details

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### Other links

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<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures/>

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