



The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC,  
Minister for Education and Early Learning  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister Mitchell

We write to you on behalf of our more than 500 members in ACHPER NSW and the PDHPE Teachers Association to raise our concerns about the ongoing delays and lack of consultation and active involvement of peak subject associations in the development of the Stage 6 Health and Movement Science syllabus.

ACHPER NSW and the NSW PDHPE Teachers Association are the professional associations representing teachers of PDHPE learning area subjects in NSW schools. For many years we have had active membership on Board Curriculum Committees and have provided expert advice to writing teams on the latest research that drives our work in the health and movement fields.

### **Ongoing delays in release of the Stage 6 Health and Movement Science syllabus**

The draft consultation period for the Stage 6 Health and Movement Science syllabus took place from the 5 August – 15 September 2019. At the time of this consultation, it was recognised by both Associations that the update to this syllabus was long overdue and represented a significant improvement on the current Stage 6 PDHPE syllabus. The current syllabus is outdated and given the dynamic nature of the content addressed through the Health and Movement modules is not preparing our students for future study or work beyond school.

Three years on, and the release of the latest NSW Curriculum Reform timelines left our members frustrated to see that the syllabus was once again delayed in its release. To add to our frustrations, at a recent professional associations meeting hosted by the Professional Teachers Council, Paul Cahill, Director of Curriculum at NESA, when asked about the reason for the delay stated “They’re contingent on the initial release of PDHPE K–10 to ensure alignment. There were concerns about this, particularly in terms of the representation of consent and other similar issues.” (quoted from Meeting minutes)

The argument for the further delay to align content related to consent in Years 11 and 12 is redundant and shows a lack of understanding of the Health and Movement Science course, as “consent and other similar issues” would not be covered in the Health and Movement Science course. It would be more appropriately included in a course similar to the Life Ready Course that is mandatory in Department schools for Years 11 and/or 12 students.





The lack of transparency and constantly changing messages around release and implementation timelines is causing huge anxiety amongst our members, who are already under great stress with teacher shortages and managing an increased workload as a result.

We ask you as Minister to re-consider the timelines for release to ensure the Health and Movement Science syllabus is released prior to the start of Term 1, 2023 to give teachers the four terms in 2023 (as previously legislated for Senior course familiarisation) to plan for implementation beginning in 2024.

### **Consultation and active involvement in K-10 PDHPE syllabus development**

Our Associations would also like to raise our serious concerns about the lack of consultation and active involvement of our associations in the K-10 PDHPE syllabus development process. The regular association meetings hosted by the Professional Teachers Council and attended by NESA officers do not involve consultation and certainly don't involve any active involvement in providing feedback on curriculum revisions.

The meetings involve NESA telling us what they are doing and providing an opportunity to ask questions about the process. When challenged on the process and timelines our concerns are dismissed and never thoroughly addressed.

The syllabus development process is a closed process with no transparency about who is involved in the writing, what evidence is informing the work, and reasons for changes being considered as part of the revisions. Our members include some of the most experienced and knowledgeable practitioners in the PDHPE field and none have been "consulted" as part of the process.

We have offered to provide feedback on the concept paper developed to inform the writing process, and draft content and outcomes to no avail. In our opinion, this process falls well short of the Guiding Principles published by NESA for the K-12 syllabus development process in that the process lacks:

- transparency
- quality assurance
- research and/or evidence
- use of experts and consideration of multiple perspectives.





NESA claims to “value feedback” and states they will “consult widely with education stakeholders and the community”. However, the only time teacher associations will be asked for feedback is in the public consultation phase when the draft syllabus and support materials are already finalised.

Our Associations have fought hard in recent decades to build the rigour, challenge, and academic respect for our learning area. By shutting our members out of the initial development process, we fear that the new syllabus will take our progress back substantially.

As we’ve outlined, our Associations hold a number of concerns regarding curriculum reform. We seek a response from you on:

1. **the timeframe** for the release of the Stage 6 Health and Movement Science syllabus and implementation period.
2. **access to the Concept paper** that is informing the development of the syllabus to build confidence amongst our membership that the revisions being made are informed by the latest evidence in the health and movement fields.
3. **more active involvement in Association consultation meetings** that aligns with NESA’s guiding principles of transparency and use of experts, where we are actively engaged in providing feedback on draft structure and content.

As Minister, we know you’d expect that the curriculum has had wide-ranging and genuine input from stakeholders. This has not been the case with the K-10 syllabus development phase. Without this rigour, there is a great risk of backlash during the public consultation if the draft syllabus does not meet the quality and expectations of teachers.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss our concerns and formulate solutions that we can share with our members to alleviate the fear, anxiety and stress currently being felt because of the lack of transparency about the curriculum reform.

Yours sincerely

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ACHPER NSW

Pam Finlay

President

NSW PDHPE Teachers’ Association

