



Our Ref: 2023/69302

Mr Dennis J Whitely
Executive Director
Council for the National Interest (CNI)
PO Box 653
BELMONT WA 6984

admin@cniwa.com.au

Dear Mr Whitely

Thank you for your letter dated 10 November 2023 in relation to a range of matters.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA – <https://acara.edu.au/home>) is an independent statutory authority responsible for advice on, and delivery of, national curriculum, assessment and reporting for all Australian education ministers.

In Western Australia, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) is responsible for Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum, assessment, standards and reporting for all Western Australian schools.

The Western Australian curriculum, as published in the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* (<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/>) is the mandated Pre-primary to Year 10 curriculum for Western Australia.

As a result of the review of the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum review undertaken by ACARA in 2021–2022, the Authority is currently working to adopt and adapt the Australian Curriculum Version 9 within the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline*.

Senior secondary schooling in Western Australia covers students in Year 11 and Year 12. The Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement (WASSA) is provided to all Year 12 students at the completion of their senior secondary schooling. The WASSA provides a formal record of what students leaving school at the end of Year 12 have achieved as a result of their school education in Western Australia.

The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) is the certificate that students in Western Australia receive on successful completion of the WACE requirements at the conclusion of their senior secondary education. It is recognised nationally in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and by universities and other tertiary institutions, industry and training providers.

With regards to your enquiry regarding the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) this information is available on the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) website – <https://www.tisc.edu.au/static/home.tisc>. TISC are responsible for administering the ATAR and this does not fall under the remit of the Authority.

In brief, however, an ATAR ranges from 99.95 to zero, and reports a student's rank position relative to all other students. It takes into account the number of students who sit the WACE examinations in any year and also the number of people of Year 12 school leaving age in the total population. The ATAR allows the results of any Western Australian student applying for university admission interstate to be directly compared with results in other states.

In response to your query about the correct answer to the multiple-choice question in the 2023 Chemistry examination, referred to in the West Australian article – *which scenario was likely to occur due to an increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere* – the correct answer as stated in the article is Option B (it will be more difficult for crustaceans to construct their shells).

For your information, the use of the word 'crustation' instead of 'crustacean' in the Chemistry examination is a typographic error despite the rigorous examination development process.

For each examination, the Chief Examiner and Chief Marker convene a ratification meeting to review a sample of students' papers and confirm the marking key and, when necessary, adjust the marking key to ensure that no student is disadvantaged.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and for your interest in relation to the education of young people.

Yours sincerely



PAULINE WHITE
CHAIR
SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY

21 November 2023