

## Notes from Asia Pacific, November 20122

### Australia:

ACARA has recently published the results of its 2010 sample tests in civics and citizenship for Year 6 (age 10-12, depending on state) and Year 10 (14-16) pupils.

The assessment framework is at

<http://www.nap.edu.au/Documents/MCEECDYA/NAP%20CC%20assessment%20framework.pdf>

It is interesting because it goes further than testing knowledge of Australian history, constitution, etc. and bravely attempts to venture into the realm of assessing attitudes and dispositions which many, ranging from Andreas Schleicher at OECD to Prof Lee at the recent Singapore launch of their "character and citizenship" agenda, have assumed are "untestable". It also ventures into testing moral reasoning (e.g. giving reasons why particular activities are good or bad). The press report of the positive test outcomes begs lots of questions; for example, most students might be expected to agree with the proposition that community service is very important but that does not necessarily mean that they reflect that in their lives. However, the initiative is interesting and reflects the centrality of these issues in ACARA's thinking about the curriculum.

### Hong Kong:

The media is again featuring stories of excess demand for places in international schools and schools run by the English Schools Foundation which reports 2,300 applications for 1,020 places. The reasons for this seem to be threefold: (a) an increase in foreign residents from English-speaking countries, with inflow from the UK rising by a startling 20% between 2010 and 2011, although the bigger numbers are still from the USA, India and Australia; (b) demand for teaching in English; (c) reported worries by "well-off families" about the new HK Diploma (although it is early days for that qualification).