Integrating social justice and the Edmund Rice charism across the curriculum at St. Patrick’s College, Shorncliffe.

Jim Gleeson, Selena Fisk, December 2015
General school context

St. Patrick’s College, Shorncliffe, is a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition, catering for boys from years 5-12. The College was opened in 1952 by The Congregation of the Christian Brothers. Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), established in 2007, has subsequently taken over governance of schools owned by the Christian Brothers. As the Program Leader explained, while this is a Catholic school, the reality is that ‘our school is about 60 per cent Catholic, so you can imagine how many would be participating… our staff percentage wouldn’t be high.’

While the College welcomes students of any faith background, 769 out of the student body of 1263 (60.9%) in 2015 identified as being Catholic.

St. Patrick’s College prides itself on community engagement and involvement, and encourages students to live the College motto ‘Fight the Good Fight’. The College aims to actively express its commitment to the four touchstones of the EREA Charter: Liberating Education, Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community and Justice and Solidarity. For example, it is compulsory for students to be involved with Paddies Van, an integral part of the school’s social justice program that serves needy members of the local community. The leader of the social justice program (currently called “Program Leader: Identity”, referred to hereafter as Program Leader) thinks that making Paddies Van compulsory has been the best decision we made. We’ve attached it to the assessment, so that students have to do the work. The College is also focused on community engagement and involvement, and supports students to be involved with Paddies Van.

Similarly, the College is involved in social justice advocacy work through Edmund Rice Advocacy (ERA) for Change where added media exposure has helped build the profile of advocacy at the College. In addition, on the International Day of Peace in September 2012, St. Patrick’s College was accredited as a United Nations/Save the Children Global School, and presented with the United Nations flag to fly at the College. They are the only school in Queensland to receive this recognition.

Social Justice Initiative

In response to the introduction of the Australian National Curriculum and the 2010 publication of the EREA document, A Framework for Educating for Justice and Peace, St. Patrick’s College made a decision to take a formal and structured approach to the teaching of justice and peace in the curriculum. In partnership with EREA and the Global Learning Centre, a proposal was developed by the Assistant Principal - Identity, and presented to the St. Patrick’s College Leadership Team in May 2010. This proposal suggested the initiation and implementation of a multidisciplinary leadership role, entitled ‘Curriculum Leader – Justice and Peace’.

EREA agreed to make an annual contribution of $5000 to the cost of this Position of Added Responsibility (PAR) for the first two years and the post was filled in January 2011.

The decision of the College Leadership Team to retain the role beyond the initial two year period indicates that it has been a success and similar roles have now been introduced in some other schools across EREA nationally. The College produced the first issue of their AUSk magazine during Term 1, 2011, and Issue 14 was published in October 2015.

The original purpose of the social justice initiative was to work with teachers in order to highlight the value, importance and effectiveness of justice and peace themes within the curriculum. This is consistent with the school’s commitment to the Edmund Rice tradition. McLaughlin (2007, 188) sums up that tradition as follows in his biography of Rice:

Edmund Rice offered his students a liberatory education aimed at personal and social transformation, nurtured through a culture respectful of the sacred and mediated by caring, fatherly teachers.

The Program Leader feels that, in order to ‘authentically be a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition, justice and peace themes should permeate all curriculum areas, across all year levels, not only be taught in Religious Education’. She explained that she doesn’t ‘put any additional emphasis on RE… it is one of the subject areas that I work with, out of 10 or 12’.

Leadership

The Program Leader acknowledged the important role of the first School Principal she has worked with. The first Principal was always really supportive and just approved projects, never said no to anything that I went to him with. According to her the current Principal is really good at reminding staff that we are a Catholic school that deals with teenage boys. He said to all the staff recently, ‘you’ve chosen to work in a Catholic school’. While you don’t have to say or talk about Catholic Social Teaching explicitly every week, it’s got to underpin everything you do.

The Justice and Peace initiative has also enjoyed the support of the College Dean and some of the five Assistant Principals (APs). The Program Leader explained that:

The vast majority of our Heads of Curriculum are on board…. The former College Dean was an active supporter. If I ever went to him with ideas and suggestions he would take them. He would look for opportunities to publish in AUSk. He would embed justice and peace themes in the curriculum because that’s who he was. He was a Biology teacher but it was core to what he believed in as well… once he agreed there was little resistance… It’s the same now with two of our Assistant Principals… in my experience nobody has ever said ‘I don’t want us to do this’.

She pointed out that senior leaders increasingly have seen the marketing potential of the program:

Initially they wouldn’t have looked at it as something with which we could promote our school… as the initiative developed they saw the impact it’s having on students and they liked the message that we’re constantly promoting to kids, which makes it marketable in a way. It sets us apart from other schools in the area.

School structures and the approach to curriculum integration

Project structures and strategies have varied somewhat over the course of four years, not least because of the involvement of different Heads of Curriculum in the inception. The current Leader has been in the role since January 2013. The first ‘Curriculum Leader: Justice and Peace’ developed an Operational Plan in 2011 and set about using the Cross-Curricular Priorities and General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum as a starting point to help teachers identify the justice and peace themes prescribed in the Australian Curriculum. Relevant possibilities were highlighted for each curriculum area and delivered to the Curriculum Leader for approval. That Curriculum Leader then delivered a whole staff professional development session in January 2011 and met with each individual Head of Curriculum to get feedback on what justice and peace themes were already present in their teaching area, suggest further possibilities, and offer assistance in developing any other opportunities. He also came up with the idea of the Just Us magazine to highlight the work being done in each subject area.

During her early days as Program leader, the current Leader’s aim was to:

get some quick wins, working with people I already knew were on board, with teachers in units that I knew who could just do with more resources or a slightly different task sheet. I was getting lots of little quick things done.

Being ‘pragmatic and wanting to put things in boxes and categories’, she focused on recent developments around the Australian Curriculum. Her message to teaching staff was that:

There’s a national curriculum that says this… driven by the curriculum requirement of the general capabilities of Inter-cultural Understanding and Ethical Understanding and the cross-curricular competencies of Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI), and Australia’s Engagement with Asia and it doesn’t matter what school you teach in the Australian Curriculum that we all have to do this.

While recognising that ‘some subjects in some year levels are more conducive than others to embedding these themes’ the Program Leader ‘met with all the Heads of Curriculum and talked it through’. She emphasised the importance of a coherent approach to curriculum planning and has come to the realisation that teachers are often ‘focused on content [and] don’t understand those themes [Inter-cultural/Ethical Understanding, Engagement with Asia, sustainability, ATSI] as well as they understand the content… they don’t realise that some of the things that they’re doing link with those themes’. For example, she found that some teachers were blissfully unaware of the relevance of their units of learning to these key themes. In one case the class had been ‘profiling the leadership of Japan a couple of hundred years ago [and the teacher] had not told me that she was doing it’. In another case she happened to find out, when she was trying to source artwork related to Indigenous for Just Us that the Art teacher, as well as having some Aboriginal dot paintings,… had also done big, massive pieces of artwork with Year 12s about rubbish in India and about the slums in India and the transformation of independence of people coming out of the slums. Other students had done Japanese manga cartoons. Another student had done six canvasses, which put together made one beautiful big elephant, but each of the different canvases were a different perspective of how elephants are viewed and treated around the world… this stuff’s brilliant, absolutely fits with what we just didn’t even know.

The Curriculum Leader believes that the profile of justice and peace in the curriculum continues to evolve, and we are more strongly linked to our culture, and to ‘this is who we are’.

From a theoretical perspective the model of integration implemented less some the Australian Curriculum interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary (Drake, 2012).
Catholic Social Teaching aspect

The Catholic Social Teaching (CST) aspect is explicitly addressed in Re. As the Program Leader explained: ‘…that’s where it’s got to come in most frequently, however I don’t think that it’s necessarily restricted to that’. She went on to explain that, whereas Just Us used to be ‘quite independent of RE’, the current Head of Curriculum: Religious Education is ‘social justice driven and trying to make RE units that kids can really relate to and engage with… social justice is an easy way to do that.’

Even from this perspective however, the integration of CST is proving problematic. ‘Taking the example of the refugee unit [see associated Task, Appendix Two] she explained that the school was … going to change the assessment for next term because bringing the Catholic Social Teaching part into the letter to the Minister [for Immigration and Border Protection] was hard… it’s not language that our kids normally use and it’s not necessarily something that the Minister may pay attention to. It’s about a particular issue does a much better job than somebody who doesn’t have the same level of interest or knowledge about that topic’.

Ecology project: In response to an invitation from the Global Learning Centre, St. Patrick’s was paired with an Indian school for Year 9 Science and students in both schools explored their respective ecosytems. The Program Leader approached the Middle Leaders and got: ‘the complete buy-in of the Head of Curriculum, Pedagogy, Science’.

Pedagogy

St. Patrick’s College places a strong emphasis on active learning and global citizenship and this is reflected in its teaching approaches. From the social justice perspective this involved the integration of relevant out-of-school experiences aimed at those who are socially disadvantaged with units of work focused on justice and peace. As the Programme Leader explained:

- ‘the students spend a week on Catholic Social Teaching and how it related to this issue of refugees’.
- ‘taking a lot about refugees and we’re watching videos and documentaries but they have probably never actually met someone seeking asylum and this is their chance to go and work with people. Same with the year nine RE homelessness unit: it’s not just about the here, now and experience’.
- ‘the Program Leader was also very conscious of the importance of teachers’ individual values: ‘somebody who is passionate about a particular issue does a much better job than somebody who doesn’t have the same level of interest or knowledge about that topic’.

Assessment

The Program Leader believes that ‘assessment keeps more kids accountable’. Examples of assessment tasks for Religion, English, SOSTeography, History, HFE, Legal Studies and Science may be seen in Appendix Two. Each example has a justice and peace theme and the criteria are drawn from the Australian Curriculum. The Australian Curriculum. While noting that they had not done professional development about community service is very much about our kids being engaged with the community’ and ‘Our reputation for that attracted them to the school’. The program has also raised the profile of the College within the EREA community. Other schools recognise the work that is being done and have sent staff to the College, and have encouraged their staff to learn from us.

Student outcomes

According to the Program Leader, students’ reactions to the social justice project are ‘improving’. She feels that the most pleasing impact on students is ‘in the quality of tasks, the evidence of critical thinking and the voluntary selection of justice and peace themes in assessment’. She suggests that the success of the project can be seen in the following ways:

- Students are increasingly keen to be published in Just Us and ‘some subject teachers reported that telling students that the best one will be published in the magazine’ has motivated students to work harder because ‘being published in the Just Us magazine is increasingly something to be proud of, as the most creative, compassionate work is showcased in that forum’.
- ‘the number of Just Us magazine has increased to 400 per issue, up from 300 at the start of 2013.
- ‘Many subject teachers have been published in Just Us than ever before including Drama, Mathematics, Music and the Junior School.
- ‘In senior subjects (Year 11 and 12 Art, Year 11 Drama, Year 12 Modern History and Year 12 Legal Studies) there has been evidence of students voluntarily choosing to investigate topics with a strong justice and/or peace connection.’
- ‘the involvement of teachers has improved too: ‘teachers are, more than ever, developing engaging, rigorous and relevant assessment pieces and class activities with these themes present’.
- When his students are published in Just Us one House Dean recognises during his House Assembly time and presents them with an award.
- ‘the number of participating teachers has increased. Some have sought resources from the Programme Leader and others have come to her for advice on assessment pieces. She remarked that ‘the number of staff across year levels and across subject areas who are engaging is pleasing’.

Future plans

The Program Leader’s title will change to “Program Leader Liberating Education” in 2016 to align more closely with EREA Charter language. While the school-based evaluation of this program has been anecdotal up to now, the Program Leader is about to undertake an evaluation of the program.

Personal I need some data just for me for this role, because I want to continue. I’d hate for it to disappear because we would just go backwards from where we are and we got 19 new staff this year so we absolutely need it.’

References


Community awareness, involvement, reactions,

The Program Leader explained that ‘community service is very much about our kids being engaged with the community’ and this involves things like ‘Clean Up Australia Day’ and ‘Paddles Van’ which goes to disadvantaged communities. She described this as ‘a form of outreach’ adding that ‘our focus is always about community. There is also a commitment to refugee students and to a nutrition program in a primary school in the local area.

Parents recognise and see the work of their children and family friends and, as noted above, the publication of Just Us is increasingly being used to promote the school to prospective parents and students as well as other schools. The Program Leader remarked that ‘one family are sending their sons here largely because of the social justice focus and what they’ve seen in Just Us… Our reputation for that attracted them to the school’.

A sample of Just Us issues from a range of different subject backgrounds is presented at Appendix One and the link to the magazine: http://www.stpatricks.qld.edu.au/our-community/magazine/Just Us Magazine

The first part of this unit, conducted with a Year 10 Religious Education class, dealt with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Refugee Convention. The Program Leader explained that she wanted to frame the whole unit around a social justice and human rights focus – ‘it was very research driven, … the students spent a week on Catholic Social Teaching and how it related to this issue of refugees’.

Just Us Magazine

The Just Us magazine highlights the work of students and staff in the areas of justice and peace in the curriculum. The goal of the Program Leader who established Just Us was for each subject area to have one unit based on a justice and peace theme for each year level during the course of the year, and for subject areas to work together to use justice and peace themes as connecting threads that might enhance connectedness and meaning across subject areas, with the possibility of some rich task-like units being created. In retrospect he would say that a more realistic aim in the first place would have been for each subject area to be able to show at least one or two units with a major emphasis on justice and peace themes.

The first three editions of the magazine were published in 2011 and some 400 copies of each issue are produced today. It’s also available on the school website and is sent to a range of local and national organisations, including the Australian Human Rights Commission and Save the Children. The current Program Leader remarked that ‘… the first thing most people say to be is “Wow! I’ve see your Just Us magazine, I love the work that you’re doing, I wish my school could do something similar”’.
## Appendix One

### Just Us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue number</th>
<th>Main theme(s)</th>
<th>Brief outline of contents with particular reference to social justice</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Year levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edition 10, July ‘14</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI)</td>
<td>Racism and inequality in Australia</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
<td>SOSE</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
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<td>National sorry day and reconciliation week</td>
<td>College event</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Whole school</td>
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<td>Indigenous art work</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethical Understanding</td>
<td>House charity update</td>
<td>Service activity</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Film review – “Extremely loud and incredibly close” and “Edward Scissorhands”</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
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<td>Year 10 retreat reflections</td>
<td>College event</td>
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<td>Year 10</td>
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<td>Human Trafficking</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
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<td>Nursing home visit</td>
<td>Service activity + presentation of class assessment</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Paddies Van update</td>
<td>Service activity and connection to Year 9 curriculum</td>
<td>Physical Education and Religious Education</td>
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<td>Preventing single punch attacks</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
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<td>Report on ERA for Change annual day – “How can we be more inclusive?”</td>
<td>Advocacy event</td>
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<td>Students who chose to participate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intercultural Understanding</td>
<td>Work and Welcome program update</td>
<td>Service activity</td>
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<td>Work story – Last Chance at Freedom</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
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<td>Live below the line reflection/report</td>
<td>Advocacy activity</td>
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<td>Peace in the Middle East</td>
<td>Term assessment</td>
<td>Modern History</td>
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<td>Recreation of a Nazi propaganda story</td>
<td>Lesson activity</td>
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<td>Ethnic segregation and the Civil Rights Movement in the USA</td>
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<td>Modern History</td>
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<td>Drama script written from interviews with community members about Australia’s immigration policy</td>
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<td>Design an eco-tourism resort</td>
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<td>Water in the world – investigating water quality</td>
<td>Term assessment + class activities</td>
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<td>Paddies Garden’ update</td>
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<td>Fundraising activity linked to curriculum</td>
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<td>Intercultural Understanding</td>
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<td>Boy Overboard – students writing their own play</td>
<td>Term assessment + class talk</td>
<td>Drama</td>
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<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Building sustainable houses</td>
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<td>Project1600 – science project with links to India</td>
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<td>Australia’s Engagement with Asia</td>
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<td>Students studying construction in Year 11/12</td>
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<td>Bhutanese Football Day</td>
<td>Community day</td>
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*Notes: Year levels refer to the year in which students are expected to participate.*
**Main themes**

- ATSI
- Reconciliation week
- Math assignment with an indigenous context
- NAIDOC week and itinerary
- Didgeridoo pitch vs length soundwave analysis

**Ethical Understanding**

- Social justice and the developing world
- Caging of animals
- Reflection on the poem ‘IF’ about life’s challenges
- Protest poetry - comparison of two songs
- Detention for detention – silent protest about children in detention
- Short story on the life of Nancy Wake
- Detention for detention – silent protest about children in detention

**Intercultural Understanding**

- Reflection on the similarities between Buddhism and Catholicism
- Refugee football festa
- Reflection on the similarities between Islam and Catholicism
- Lantern Parade

**Sustainability**

- Green Heart School status
- Project 1600 – sustainability project paired with Indian schools
- Designing an eco-friendly tourist resort
- Reflection on Australia’s immigration policy

**Context**

- College event
- Term assessment
- Class activity
- External event

**Subject area**

- N/A
- Religious Education
- English and SOSE
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics

**Year levels**

- All students
- Year 11 Math A
- Year 10
- Year 9
- All Year 10
- One Year 10 student
- Year 5-7
- Whole school
- Whole school
- Whole school

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**Edition 12, May 2015**

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<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Apology Ceremony</td>
<td>College Event</td>
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<td>Close the Gap Day</td>
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<td>Letter to Immigration Minister</td>
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<td>Immunisation in Australia compared to foreign countries + the ethical responsibility of vaccinations</td>
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<td>1 week during tutor group – college event</td>
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<td>Delivered during 1 week immersion</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Religious Education</td>
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<td>Term assessment and class activity</td>
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<td>Students who chose to participate</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
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Appendix One
Sample Justice and Peace Assessment Tasks

Subject | Topics and tasks
--- | ---
Religion | Refugees and Asylum Seekers (Year 10)
This term you've been learning about refugees and asylum seekers and about their treatment in Australia. In recent years as a school, we have discussed the movement from service to advocacy, as a way of finding solutions for those people who are marginalised and oppressed in our society. Advocating and talking about these issues in our community is the first step in advocacy. However, contacting those who write and influence Australian policy is the most effective way to bring about real change. Phil Glendenning of the Edmund Rice Centre in Sydney says that politicians in Australia are most afraid of young people, and their power of being able to vote in the near future. He also says that one written letter to a Member of Parliament is treated as though it is representative of the opinion of approximately 500 people, who have not yet chosen to write.

You are required to write a letter that will be posted to your federal Member of Parliament about your views on our treatment of refugees. Your letter must be no more than 2 pages long (typed, normal margins, 12pt font) and be addressed correctly.

Remember – your letter is potentially speaking for 500 people who have the same opinion as you. Ensure your letter is clear, succinct, and based in research and facts. It should present/suggest a potential solution to the current refugee situation in Australia.

English | Advertising: Spoken Product Pitch (Year 8)
You have decided to go into business designing sustainable houses and cabins. Your company prides itself on the fact that your house designs have the smallest eco-footprint possible.

1. Your task is to create an Advertising Sales Pitch to potential customers.
2. You are to convince the customers that your house design is the best for; thermal, space and water catchment properties.
3. You are to use supporting visual or electronic aids to support your advertising campaign.

Poetry: The unequal world: a voice for the voiceless (Year 9)
You are required to present a spoken analysis of the poem you have chosen to study in detail.

1. Choose ONE poem which has a message of “The Unequal World” (minimum 15 lines)
2. Create a pictorial collage of the poem’s message: What does it mean? (minimum three images for PowerPoint presentation)
3. Present your analysis of the poem by responding to the STEP UP analysis.

You are to choose two protest poems/lyrics from those studied in class and reflect upon the social and/or political issue(s) it presents and what we should do about it.

Subject | Topics and tasks
--- | ---
SOSE/Geography | Water in the world (Year 7):
In this unit we have been learning about water in our world. We have explored why water is an important resource, how to measure the water quality of a catchment area and strategies for managing water resources.

Task:
You are to investigate a local catchment area to determine the water quality at 3 different locations along the river, creek or stream. You will then produce a Multi-Modal presentation outlining your findings and recommendations using the headings provided in the report scaffolding document.

Changing Nations (Year 8)
In this unit we have been learning about how the world’s population is both growing and becoming increasingly urbanised. We have explored the economic, social and environmental impacts of these trends and discussed the importance of cities working towards becoming economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

We have also considered the emerging prevalence of megacities.

Task:
You are to deliver a multi-modal presentation that addresses the question: To what extent is the development of __________ sustainable? Your choices are: London, Tokyo and New York. If you would like to investigate a different nation you may be able to negotiate this with your teacher.

Biomes & Food Security (Year 9):
You are to deliver a 4-6 minute speech to inform the United Nations Social and Economic Development Council on whether a nation of your choice has been successful in sustainably safeguarding against extreme hunger. Your speech will address the following question:
Are the nation’s food management processes sustainably safeguarding against extreme hunger? Your choice of nations includes: India (Asia), China (Asia), Brazil (South America) and South Africa (Africa). If you would like to do a different nation you may be able to negotiate this with your teacher.

History | Indigenous Rights and Freedoms (Year 10)
The fundamental rights of Indigenous Australians were secured through many small steps towards freedom, as opposed to one major event. In order to investigate the accuracy of the above hypothesis, you will need to conduct a historical inquiry into the process of the rights and freedoms gained by Indigenous Australians in the 20th Century. Following this, you will develop a PowerPoint and Speech to present to the class at the end of term. Your speech will need to be 4-6 minutes in length.

Studies of Hope (Year 12)
Throughout the ‘Studies of Hope’ unit, you will have learnt about the various examples of non-violent resistance that have taken place since the 20th Century including the Civil Rights Movements in both the US and South Africa.

Task:
Your task is to choose an area for investigation from those outlined below. You will need to conduct a historical inquiry, including the development of your own research question and hypothesis, relating to this topic. From your research you will then need to create a multi-modal presentation.
**Legal Studies Human Rights – Spoken**

HPE Mental Health (Year 9):
Throughout this term you have been learning about mental health and the problems associated with this epidemic. You are required to research mental health issues affecting the young men within the St Patrick’s community. With guidance from your teacher you will make links between unhealthy behaviours, risk factors and raise awareness with your peers about these issues.

Social Media and Implications on Mental Wellbeing (Year 9)
Throughout this year and term we have been exploring the many aspects of health and wellbeing from the physical to the mental. Through the content you have learnt about social media and how it can affect your mental health and the problems associated with this epidemic. You are required to use the information learnt through this unit and additional research you have made to write a 500 word critique on the implications of social media use to the individual through their mental, physical and social health. Then provide recommendations to best utilise media literacy skills to provide understanding.

**Legal Studies**

Human Rights – Spoken

The legal and political provision of individual rights creates responsibilities for individuals and society. Australian law attempts to balance the rights and responsibilities of the individual with the best interests of the greater community.

**TASK:**
You are to select one of the following topics to conduct further research and present your findings in a spoken format. Your response should be suited to the topic and your stated audience.

**Topic 1: Should Australia have a Bill of Rights?**
- You are to assume the role of a member of the Federal House of Representatives and speak either in favour of or against Australia adopting a Bill of Rights.
- In your response consider the following:
  - What, if anything specific, would it cover?
  - The positives and negatives of introducing this
  - Why it is or is not necessary

**Topic 2: Australia’s treatment of refugees is in breach of UN conventions**
- You are to create an address to the Standing Committee of the UNHRC on Australia’s treatment of refugees in mandatory detention centres, you are to assume the role of either
  - A spokesperson for the Immigration Department OR
  - A spokesperson for the Australian Red Cross
- You should consider the following:
  - Any relevant federal legislation
  - Any relevant government policies
  - Any relevant UN policies or conventions.

**Topic 3**

You are required to research mental health issues affecting the young men within the St Patrick’s community. With guidance from your teacher you will make links between unhealthy behaviours, risk factors and raise awareness with your peers about these issues.

**HPE Mental Health (Year 9):**
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**Legislation affecting Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been controversial in the ways it has attempted to redress Australia’s human rights record for Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have been over represented as a group in the penal system. Laws and policies concerning Indigenous Australians have attempted to address human rights.**

**TASK:**
You are required to complete an extended written research assignment on one the topics outlined below.

**Topic 1**
Write a submission to the Queensland Attorney General either in support of, or in opposition to the Government’s cessation of funding the Murri Court in 2012.

In your answer, address the following:
- Identify how the Murri Court takes into account cultural considerations that other courts do not.
- Evaluate whether the recommendations of the RCIADIC had been adequately implemented at the time of Mr. Doomadgee’s death and if not, how could such measures have prevented his death?
- What actions were taken by the Government following the Palm Island riots, in order to resolve the underlying issues?
- Provide an overview of the underlying issues that led to the Palm Island riots;
- Explain the reasons for the RCIADIC and the recommendations made in the report;
- What is the state of the relationship between Aboriginal people and police in the Palm Island community currently?
- What actions were taken by the Government following the Palm Island riots, in order to resolve the underlying issues?
- Evaluate whether the recommendations of the RCIADIC had been adequately implemented at the time of Mr. Doomadgee’s death and if not, how could such measures have prevented his death?

**Topic 2**

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) [RCIADIC] made 399 recommendations for reform, in order to address the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody. However, in November 2004, citizens of Palm Island rioted because of the death of Cameron Doomadgee in police custody. It could be argued that the recommendations of the RCIADIC have not adequately achieved the reforms required to eliminate Aboriginal deaths in custody.

Prepare a briefing note to the Federal Attorney General addressing the actions taken and making recommendations as to whether a further inquiry is required to ensure that such drastic community action does not occur again.

- Find and explain a case study where the Murri Court was successful in obtaining a positive outcome for an Indigenous person i.e. keeping them out of prison
- How is the Murri Court successful/not successful in reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the Criminal Justice System?

In conducting your research, see the following article: http://www.qt.com.au/news/murricourt-is-axed-to-save-35-million-closure/1545357/

**Topic 3**
Prior to the 1967 referendum, the Australian Constitution did not recognise Indigenous Australians as Australia’s first people but it contained sections that explicitly discriminated against Indigenous people. These discriminatory references were removed following the referendum. Indigenous Australians are not currently recognised in the Australian Constitution, which is an ongoing issue. There are, however, specific sections that allow for the Government to discriminate against people on the grounds of race (see sections 25 and 51).

Write a submission to the Australian Attorney General for or against amendment of the preamble to the Australian Constitution to specifically recognise Indigenous Australians and/or removal of sections 25 and 51.

- Outline proposed amendments to both the preamble and the body of the Constitution;
- Clearly differentiate between the legal repercussions of amendment to the preamble of the Constitution and the body of the Constitution;
- Analyse the position of key stakeholders if the amendments take place and if they do not.
### Subject: Legal Studies  
#### Topic 4  
**Cont.** Research the Court's decision in the case of R v Minor and recognition of customary law in Australia since this case. Prepare a research essay, which must:

- Explain the main issues addressed by this case and the findings of the Court;
- The impact of the decision in R v Minor when the judgment was first handed down and its current status (is it the same or different?)
- Identify the key stakeholders and the related social implications of the legal decisions for each
- Evaluate the justice, fairness, proportionality, social relevance and effectiveness of Australia's customary law recognition and whether there is any justification for law reform;
- Outline proposed amendments to both the preamble and the body of the Constitution;
- Clearly differentiate between the legal repercussions of amendment to the preamble of the Constitution and the body of the Constitution;
- Analyse the position of key stakeholders if the amendments take place and if they do not.