
Media release

24 March 2020

2020 HSC IS GOING AHEAD

At its meeting today, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Board confirmed that the Higher School Certificate (HSC) is going ahead in 2020, along with a commitment to providing clear and regular advice to the community about the HSC as the COVID-19 outbreak continues.

To this end, the NESA Board established a COVID-19 Response Committee to address developing issues as a matter of urgency.

Following the meeting, Chair of the NESA Board Professor Peter Shergold said he had three important messages for HSC students:

1. We know you are worried. While we recognise we are facing an unprecedented situation, we want to assure you that you will be able to get a HSC certificate this year, and that the certificate will facilitate access to university, further education and employment, as it has for students over the past 50 years.
2. Keep learning, do your assessments as advised by your school, make progress on your major projects where you can and, most importantly, look after yourself, whether you are at school or at home. Reach out to family, friends and your teachers if you need to.
3. If you get sick, your school and NESA have provisions to ensure you are not disadvantaged.

Effective immediately the Board is giving principals or system authorities the power to make decisions about the number and weighting of HSC formal assessment tasks for their school in 2020. The Board affirms its complete trust in principals and teachers.

“This action provides schools with the flexibility they need to support their students in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak,” Professor Shergold said.

NESA will provide specific advice to principals about this delegation of authority later this week.

The NESA COVID-19 Response Committee is aware of and will urgently provide advice on the following issues:

- work placements for VET students
- students working on a group drama, dance or music performance
- students completing projects and major works.

Professor Shergold said the situation faced by schools was unprecedented and that in this situation the Board recognises above all else that the health, safety and welfare of students and teachers is paramount.

“The Board discussed at length issues of disadvantage, dislocation and social isolation.

“Decisions and advice will be based on the principles of fairness and equity that have always underpinned the internationally recognised HSC credential,” Professor Shergold said.

The COVID-19 Response Committee includes representation from each of the three school sectors who are committed to working together. It will meet at least weekly, but more frequently if needed, to address issues as they arise and provide clear communication to schools and principals. The committee members include:

- Professor Peter Shergold, Chair of NESA Board
- Mark Scott, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education
- Dallas McInerney, CEO Catholic Schools NSW
- Dr Geoff Newcombe, CEO Association of Independent Schools
- Jenny Allum, Chair of NESA Assessment Committee
- Denis Fitzgerald, Chair of NESA Curriculum Committee
- Paul Martin CEO of NESA.

For up to date advice about the 2020 HSC visit the NESA COVID-19 advice page:

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/about/news/novel-coronavirus>