

No way for students to avoid Gallipoli, historians confirm

Anna Patty Education Editor
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THERE was never any suggestion that a national history curriculum should omit the study of Gallipoli, the historians who helped to draft it and the federal Education Minister said yesterday.

The president of the History Teachers Association of Australia, Nick Ewbank, who helped draft the curriculum, said Gallipoli was among the milestones for compulsory study. His fellow working party member, John Gascoigne, from the school of history and philosophy at the University of NSW, said Gallipoli was among the events in the draft curriculum that all students were required to study.

"It is certainly the case that you were expected to address these milestone events in the curriculum and Gallipoli was one of them," Professor Gascoigne said.

A spokesman for the Education Minister, Julie Bishop, said a media report that stated Gallipoli was not compulsory study was incorrect.

Ms Bishop said the report "appears to have been based on an incomplete draft" of the curriculum. "In line with usual practice in curriculum development, it has been referred to an external group for further work," she said.

The Federal Government commissioned a professor at Monash University and head of the National Centre for History Education, Tony Taylor, to write the Australian history draft curriculum, following the Australian History Summit held last August.

A number of historians who spoke to the *Herald* yesterday, but who did not want their names published, suggested the Prime Minister, John Howard, had been unhappy with Professor Taylor's final draft and had appointed another panel of experts to rewrite it. "I think the Prime Minister's office is not happy because they don't see dates and content driving this," one historian said.

This week Ms Bishop appointed the historian Geoffrey Blainey and the political commentator Gerard Henderson, who has written a history of the Liberal Party, to review Professor Taylor's draft curriculum.

The NSW Minister for Education, John Della Bosca, barred Jennifer Lawless, a Board of Studies inspector who has taught history for 20 years in schools, from taking part in the committee, which also includes historian Nicholas Brown, of the Australian National University.

The spokesman for Ms Bishop said that while the Prime Minister's office had been consulted about the history curriculum, Mr Howard "is not an interventionist in this process".

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