Proposal 1 is in response to the Board’s
Concerns about the excessive examination and assessment workload for students leading to an increase in stress levels

a. The Board will state that for a two-unit course only four assessment tasks are to be used and for a one-unit course only three assessment tasks are to be used.

*Implications:*
- The difficulty of working with the current weightings may be removed

*Issues:*
- Can we assess the range of syllabus requirements with this number?
- What constitutes a single assessment task? Can an assessment task be made up of several sections run over time?
- Does this restriction impact negatively on our capacity to make professional judgements about assessment based on the needs of our school or community?
- Can we still manage to assess the full range of modes or will pragmatics win and not the integrity of the syllabus design and the English it promotes?
- What will be the place of a Trial HSC Examination “assessment task” in an assessment program with only 4 school-based assessment tasks?

b. The Board will review the specifications and requirements for each major project or performance that is part of its requirements in either the school assessment program or the external examination to ensure they do not require students to spend excessive amounts of time in producing these components.

*Implications:*
- Students may better manage the demands of the course.

*Issues:*
- The BOS proposal acknowledges that such projects are rewarding learning experiences and are highly valued by students. To what extent are these demands are self-imposed by students and are learning experiences which shape their learning across their program of study.
- How will changes to major work subjects cohere with the reduction in the overall number of tasks that students will undertake across their programs of study?

c. The Board will incorporate reading and planning time into examinations. During this time students will be able to read the questions and make notes or prepare an outline of the structure of their responses. They will not be allowed to write their actual responses during this time. In order not to extend the duration of the examination this time will be included as part of the examination time.

*Implications:*
- Students will lose the extra reading time needed before the paper for the extended texts in the Reading Task

*Issues:*
- Can English afford to lose its 10 minutes pre-reading time?
- What is meant by reading time at the end?
- Should the notes made by students during their planning time be collected and considered in the marking process?
- English courses have extended responses that require students to write about texts that markers may not necessarily have read or to set up a situation for an imagined audience and purpose. Both these require contextualization which take up time and page space. Will there be enough time and page space to set up a situation adequately before launching into the detail of the response?
- How will planning time and editing time be supervised by presiding officers in a marking centre? How do we
know that a student's points in planning time are not shortened sentences for an introduction, for example?

- Can we ensure students are not simply writing out formulas or quotes and are in fact "critically thinking and planning"? Why does this time lead to higher order thinking and not last minute lower order recall?
- Will the standards be adjusted to enable students to achieve a Band 6 in less time?
- Will the assessment guides for students at the beginning of each question be closer to the demands of the question rather than unchanging from year to year, and generically derived from syllabus rubrics, as a way of reducing the scope students are required to cover?

d. The Board will provide further guidance on how much is required in answers to various types of questions, including an indicative number of pages, or similar advice, for all examination questions requiring an extended written response.

Issues:
- Does this seem reasonable, as long as students will not be limited in their capacity to response, or unreasonably penalised for exceeding the guidelines?

Proposal 2 is in response to the Board's concerns about
Inconsistencies in the assessment and examination requirements of courses with the Board’s principles

a. For those courses where they currently exist the Board will remove specified limits on the proportion of a school's assessment mark that can come from tests and examinations. Where a particular type of task is essential to the valid assessment of a course and that task can be conducted in a reliable and efficient manner that task will be included in the Assessment Requirements for that course.

Implications:
- Schools will be able to increase exam-type questions in assessments.

Issues:
- Will the Board regard non-exam type tasks essential to the valid assessment of English courses?
- How can we ensure that schools will assess a range of modes as specified in the syllabus and as necessary to meet student outcomes?
- How can we ensure Quality Teaching and assessment standards are being upheld in Stage 6 with no restriction on exam load?

b. The Board will revise the components used as part of the Assessment Requirements to ensure they are based on a manageable set of objectives

Implications:
- These proposals are interlinked as one change impinges on other suggestions. This change (2b) is closely tied with 2(a).
- Schools could revert to examination type questions for their assessment tasks.

Clarification:
- In the Background Paper the Board suggests that English is assessed by topics. This is a convenient category that applies across subjects and refers to the fact that assessment tasks are usually contextualised in modules or electives, organised by mode and assessed through outcomes.

Issue:
- Can English, a subject in which content is examined through skills and vice versa, be assessed through objectives, which in our syllabus separate out knowledge from skills?

c. Making the duration of each examination consistent with the Board principles

Implications:
- A shorter paper raises the stakes on each examination question.

Issues:
- A single 3 hour paper is proposed - would this be a welcome relief?
- Should the examination still retain its 50% value of the final assessment - does this make the exam too 'high stakes'?
- Does this conflict with the aim of reducing stress levels?
- How can we ensure that Creative Writing, having been removed from the examination, will continue to feature explicitly in subject programs?
d. The Board will revise the Examination Specifications to ensure the written examination in each course contains an appropriate mix of different item types and a better balance between the different items types.

*Implications:*
- Objective responses often assume specificity of content, especially in regards to terminology. We do not in the current syllabus have a list of specific content terms or concepts that we require to be explicitly taught.

*Issues:*
- Can English be assessed through multiple choice questions, given that this is not a literacy examination?
- Do objective response questions (e.g. multiple choice, cloze passage etc.) allow for students to demonstrate synthesis of knowledge and ability to express ideas?
- How can students to present a reasoned argument to support or a creative exploration of an idea in short answer questions?

e. The Board will review the Examination Specifications in those courses which have a core section and optional sections and make appropriate adjustments to obtain greater consistency in the structure of the examinations and optimise the measurement properties of the examinations without compromising the particular knowledge domain of the course.

*[This proposition is not relevant to English.]*

### 3. Consultation options

State a preference for a consultation option and give a reason

*Clarification:*
- The Board description of Extension 1 states: Students answer two sustained response questions, **one on each Elective**
  
  Extension 1 students only study 1 elective but will respond to 2 questions as they do now but these will only be 45 minutes rather than 60 minutes each.

*Issues:*
- Will students have the time in the reduced time for English courses to compose a response that shows depth of understanding and knowledge of the text?
- If students can choose to answer questions in their strongest two out of three Modules, how can we ensure that some schools do not focus disproportionately on two modules, neglecting the third?
- If Advanced Module A is not examined, two texts are not assessed rather than one text if Mod B or C is not assessed. This is a pretty significant proportion of the teaching program.
- Also what impact will this have in standard setting and the common scale for advanced and standard?