

## Submission calls for new assessment to replace NAPLAN

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The original, stated purpose of NAPLAN and the My School website have been “terminally corrupted”, the Australian Education Union asserted in its submission to the of the Council of Australian Governments’ review of NAPLAN data.

The AEU’s submission to COAG’s Education Council argues NAPLAN was never intended as a vehicle for the public comparison of results by individual schools, and the ability of parents to use My School to compare and potentially select a school solely on the basis of the very broad, simplified and misrepresented results reported on the website which allows for significant misinterpretation and potential misuse of its data.

The submission includes evidence from world experts in assessment, who concluded that “the design and execution of the 2018 NAPLAN made it so flawed that its results are of very limited use to students, parents, and schools” and that “there are no studies known of that report successful use of the two testing modes on a regular single national assessment ... In sum, the 2018 NAPLAN results should be discarded”.

“There is a wealth of evidence from the US, UK and now Australia demonstrating the negative impacts of high stakes standard assessment,” the submission states.

“In 2017, the Whitlam Institute concluded that such testing protocols inevitably lead to:

- the narrowing of teaching strategies and the curriculum
- negative impacts on student health and wellbeing
- negative impacts on staff morale, and
- negative impacts on schools reputation and capacity to attract and retain students and staff.

“Aside from the 2018 debacle, the presentation of NAPLAN data on the My School website is, at best, vague and at worst, misleading.”

The AEU’s policy conclusions are:

- The 2018 NAPLAN test cannot be validly used for comparison data processes such as My School deploys.
- My School data can only be refreshed with a new longitudinal starting point when all students are using the same assessment mode.
- The original stated purposes of NAPLAN and My School have been terminally corrupted.



- The My School website causes great social harm especially to our most vulnerable students and schools.
- The website is incompatible with contemporary policy approaches to privacy rights.
- Alignment with the 2018 Gonski “Growth to Achievement” approach provides a framework for resolving the profound problems that NAPLAN and My School have caused.

The AEU recommends that:

- A comprehensive review of NAPLAN be undertaken, focussing on whether the current approach to standardised testing is fit for purpose.
- The use of standardised testing, such as NAPLAN, as a scorecard for individual schools or groups of students in those schools, as currently promoted through the My School website, ceases.
- The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority provide plain-language explanations to parents of the very wide error margins used to calculate student and individual school scores and the misleading manner in which they are presented to parents on the My School site.
- An exploratory study is undertaken to determine the requisite sample size at the state/territory, sector and national levels for a new assessment program to replace NAPLAN.

— **Maureen Davis-Catterall**, relieving Communications and Online Coordinator