

## ACARA masks truth about NAPLAN data

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ACARA's 'nothing to see here' approach to the NAPLAN 2019 data release and its mishandling of the NAPLAN online debacle has reinforced yet again the need for a comprehensive review of the entire NAPLAN testing regime.

Today's NAPLAN report attempts to ignore the widespread connectivity issues and outages that students experienced during this year's tests, and ignores the concerns of international experts about its discredited method of mixing online and paper tests.

Federation President Maurie Mulheron said that ACARA had used today's release of summary information about NAPLAN results to selectively ignore the issues that plagued the tests and fundamentally undermine the credibility of the data. He said the ongoing concerns and mistrust of teachers and principals in the NAPLAN testing process would be confirmed by the release of this data.



"Despite whatever story ACARA tries to spin, this data is so seriously compromised it should not be relied upon by education departments, schools, parents, and the broader community," Mr Mulheron said.

"This is evident by the inclusion of the caveat that they 'acknowledge the disruptions and emphasise that, as always, results should be interpreted with care'."

"Teachers and principals cannot trust NAPLAN or the results it has produced," Mr Mulheron said.

"We already know that tens of thousands of public school students were unable to log on or finish the test due to NAPLAN online connectivity issues, leaving many students anxious and some in tears after repeatedly losing work."

"Education authorities have previously disregarded these issues and ignored warnings to abandon NAPLAN online after last year's disaster. Now with today's NAPLAN data release we find ACARA is suddenly hedging its bets," Mr Mulheron said.

"ACARA is more concerned with saving its own skin and preserving a damaging test regime than ensuring the valid, consistent and reliable assessment of student achievement. There is no transparency about how ACARA have arrived at the results data published today, and the community must seriously question just how rigorous the independent assessment of the NAPLAN results were."

"We were assured that the review of the 2018 NAPLAN online debacle was rigorous; we were assured there were no problems comparing paper and online tests; we were assured that the online tests would run smoothly this year; yet we continue to see problem after problem which leaves no-one with any confidence,"

Mr Mulheron said.

“The AEU has repeatedly called on Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan to show some leadership and be completely transparent about finding solutions to the issues being experienced with NAPLAN online.”

“In light of Mr Tehan’s refusal to act, ACARA should focus on facilitating the comprehensive NAPLAN review announced by the education ministers of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and on encouraging other jurisdictions to join the review,” Mr Mulheron said.

“We believe that the full review, called by state governments with a combined responsibility for more than three quarters of all students in Australia, provides the best opportunity to date to consider the impact of NAPLAN over the last decade.”

“Given the significant concerns of the teaching profession, it is time to end NAPLAN and develop a new assessment strategy that has students and teachers at its heart,” Mr Mulheron said.