

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19

Minister for Education



Friday, 28 August 2020

EXPERT PANEL RECOMMENDS NEW STANDARDISED TEST

An independent review of NAPLAN commissioned by Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT is recommending an overhaul of the national standardised assessment to ensure that it meets the needs of schools, parents and students now and into the future.

The report was presented at today's Education Council meeting of state, territory and federal ministers and will now be considered and brought back to a future meeting for a decision on the recommendations.

The Review, conducted by Emeritus Professor Barry McGaw, Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon, and Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith, considered standardised assessment practices across the world, the uses of NAPLAN data, and the content and delivery of the assessment itself.

These recommendations address longstanding criticisms and concerns with NAPLAN and provide a blueprint for high-quality online national standardised assessment fit for the 21st century.

The NAPLAN Review Final Report released today recommends that:

- The current testing of students in Year 9 should move to Year 10 to enable greater engagement and to provide students with a more accurate indicator of learning achievement prior to their commencement of senior secondary education. This will also give secondary schools much more flexibility in how they structure their year 9 programs.
- The test should be brought forward from May to as early as possible in the year, so that results can be used more productively by schools and teachers. Students and teachers should also get results within one week of the test. This will help schools avoid feeling the need to 'teach to the test' each year.
- The tests should move beyond literacy and numeracy to include a new assessment of critical and creative thinking in STEM. This would replace the current NAP Science Literacy test conducted every three years. Critical and creative thinking is widely regarded as a key skill for the contemporary workforce. Assessment of critical and creative thinking in this way would place Australia as a world leader.
- Substantial changes should be made to the writing assessment to address long-standing criticisms that the current approach merely encourages formulaic responses.
- National standardised tests should continue as universal, rather than sample, tests because of the valuable information they provide to schools, as well as students and parents.
- The new test will be called Australian National Standardised Assessments (ANSA), to reflect the significant redevelopment of the national standardised assessment.

The report's recommendations reflect the widely held views of educators that substantial reforms are needed to ensure standardised testing remains a source of important and relevant information on learning progress.

The NAPLAN Review Final Report is available at: www.naplanreview.com.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"This is a big step forward for the future of standardised testing in Australia. If we're serious about delivering the best outcomes for our students, these recommendations must be supported."

"I have always said we will need national standardised testing. This report clearly shows NAPLAN must be overhauled in order to be genuinely useful to our students, their families and our schools."

"The time is right for a new test. The reforms recommended in this report must be implemented to ensure we can develop standardised testing that meets the changing needs of our school communities and provides us with greater insights into student learning."

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