

TO: QTU MEMBERS

NAPLAN vote extended to 6 October

Vote to make NAPLAN history!

The case against NAPLAN

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) is conducting a ballot of its members to ban all aspects of NAPLAN for 2020 and into the future after the Education Council meeting on Friday 4 September failed to make any changes to the testing regime. Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan is quoted in the media as saying that current problems will be resolved when NAPLAN Online works.

Queensland teachers and principals (and their colleagues nationally) have exhausted all avenues for negotiated changes to NAPLAN and its use. It is time for teachers and principals to vote to abolish NAPLAN and consign it to history.

The QTU has attempted to complete this ballot in the last two weeks of Term 3, but the feedback suggests that with all the other demands on teacher and principal time, we may have been too ambitious. The deadline for members to vote has therefore been **extended to midnight on Tuesday, 6 October** – the first school day of Term 4.

Another review fails to address concerns

The review of NAPLAN commissioned by Queensland, New South Wales, Victorian and Australian Capital Territory governments was released two weeks ago, but it recommended the extension of NAPLAN! The slant of the recommendations of the report is hardly surprising when one looks at the terms of reference the reviewers were given, e.g. to identify targeted improvements to standardised testing.

The bibliography of the review includes very few critiques of standardised testing regimes as opposed to numerous government reports extolling their virtues, and the submissions of teacher and principal organisations, including the QTU and other unions, have been largely ignored

The review suggests adding science, making it earlier in the year, revamping the writing task by 2023, doing it in Year 10 rather than Year 9, introducing robot marking for the writing test, and – once NAPLAN Online is sorted out – providing results within a week.

A number of the suggested changes are cosmetic, e.g. "Let's change numeracy to mathematics", but ANSA (their new name for NAPLAN) is not the answer.

The review recommends that the census testing of every child should continue in the high stakes format that teachers have repeatedly rejected, and that annual reports on performance levels should continue.

The reviewers' solution to the misuse of NAPLAN data is for Ministers for Education to tell people that they should use school assessments as well as NAPLAN results and that the MySchool website does not compare apples with apples!

To quote Douglas Adams from the marvellous Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series: "[Its] fundamental design flaws are completely hidden by their superficial design flaws."

Voices of the profession again ignored

Two galling and continuing failures of current education policymaking are the remoteness of decision-making from the classroom, and the lack of weight and regard given to the professional opinions of teachers and principals.

Once again, the views and concerns of the teaching profession, presented through the submissions to the review, including those of the QTU and other teacher unions around Australia, have been largely ignored.

This has occurred even though we have:

- identified the problems and consequences of NAPLAN to state and federal governments
- negotiated joint statements with the Queensland department to rein in excesses in areas such as practice testing
- secured a Queensland review of NAPLAN
- conducted several ballots concerning NAPLAN and MySchool, right from their inception.

One of the ways in which NAPLAN was sold back in 2008 was that it would provide the evidence to target the needs-based funding required to address disadvantage. Twelve years on, the areas of disadvantage have been clearly and repeatedly identified, but governments have failed to produce needs-based funding in quantity or targeting, AND WE STILL HAVE THE TEST!

What Queensland teachers and principals say

Every year, the Australian Education Union, the national union of state school teachers and principals of which the QTU is part, conducts a State of Our Schools survey using an external research company. In 2020, the survey included a range of questions concerning NAPLAN, and more than 3,000 Queensland teachers and nearly 300 Queensland principals participated – a very good sample size.

Here is what they said:

- 69 per cent of teachers and 83 per cent of principals said that NAPLAN increased or greatly increased teacher workload
- 64 per cent of teachers and 54 per cent of principals said it is not effective as a diagnostic tool for teachers
- 78 per cent of teachers and 68 per cent of principals said NAPLAN was not effective in measuring school performance
- 79 per cent of teachers and 78 per cent of principals said it was not effective in comparing schools
- The effects of NAPLAN publication included test focus (65 per cent), narrowing of the curriculum (58 per cent), increased student stress (70 per cent of teachers and 88 per cent of principals), its (mis)use as a measure of school performance (70 per cent) and pressure to improve NAPLAN results (77 per cent)
- 67 per cent of teachers and 62 per cent of principals said NAPLAN made no difference to student outcomes
- An additional 20 per cent of teachers and 12 per cent of principals said it led to WORSE student outcomes.

What are we to do?

The hallmarks of a profession include not just the pursuit of the beneficial – in the case of teachers, for students – but also the rejection of the harmful.

The efforts to negotiate about NAPLAN and its use, and to have teachers' and principals' views acknowledged and acted upon through independent reviews, have failed. NAPLAN will not be magically changed into something benign and beneficial by more talks or reviews.

It is time to reject NAPLAN, once and for all. Time to make NAPLAN history!

How to cast your vote and make NAPLAN history!

The continuing issues caused by the restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic mean that this ballot is being conducted electronically via [MyQTU](#). Casting your vote is secure and secret and only takes a minute to complete. To be able to vote, you will need to have your QTU membership number and MyQTU password available to login.

Login

Member login required

Membership number

Password

[Login](#)

What's your Member Number? - [Request it here](#)
Can't find your Password? - [Request it here](#)

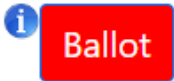
This area is only available to QTU members. To access it, you will require your membership number. This is printed on your QTU membership card or dues notice. Type in your membership number and password and click the Login button.

Can't remember your login details? No problem! Use the yellow request links.

Once you have logged in, you will then need to select “MANAGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP”.

MANAGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP >

Once you have selected “MANAGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP”, a red ballot button will appear at the top left of the page which, once clicked, will take you to the NAPLAN ballot page.



Once you are on this page, you can place your vote via a drop-down box. Once you have made your selection, you will need to click the submit button underneath.

Please be careful with the accuracy of your vote before submitting it, because once you have submitted your vote, you will be locked out of the ballot. This means you cannot cast another vote, and you also cannot change your vote. Instead, when you select the ballot link, you will be taken to a page that will show your vote.

This ballot process requires members to log in via MyQTU to ensure that only eligible members of the QTU cast their vote in the ballot. No record is kept of the actual vote cast by any member. Our system only records a deidentified vote of yes or no as a part of the total ballot outcome.

Authorised by:

Graham Moloney
General Secretary