



AEU NT Branch Executive resolution on NAPLAN Online – September 2017

Branch Executive strongly endorses the decision of the AEU Federal Executive to withdraw the AEU's support for the introduction of NAPLAN online and to lobby federal, state and territory ministers to abandon its development and implementation.

Branch Executive calls on the federal and NT governments to put the needs of students first and not engage any further in the rollout of NAPLAN online because it is educationally unsound and will significantly disadvantage students and schools across the Territory by:

- reinforcing existing inequity because of unequal access to computer technology (including insufficient ICT hardware and inadequate bandwidth) for students from lower socio-economic, regional and remote communities;
- inappropriately requiring children in the early years of schooling to complete online NAPLAN testing;
- further adding pressure on teachers to teach to the test, including developing and implementing NAPLAN online preparation programs addressing student ICT skills for the specific purpose of undertaking online testing;
- distorting the curriculum in early primary including students' developing of handwriting and attainment of core language and mathematical skills due to unnecessary emphasis on acquiring ICT competency in order to sit the test;
- seeking to introduce computer based marking of students' written prose responses, and
- disrupting the educational program of schools for the duration of the two week testing period.

Branch Executive notes that the decision to withdraw support for NAPLAN online is one element of a broader concern about the negative impacts on public education of NAPLAN. Consistent with longstanding AEU policy on the use of standardised testing in our schools, we again highlight the unacceptable impacts of NAPLAN, including:

- the narrowing of the curriculum and the loss of quality teaching time to focus on test preparation and delivery;
- the illegitimate judgement about student achievement and school performance, including league tables, based on a point in time test with unacceptably large margins of error which does not genuinely capture student learning progress;
- the inappropriateness of this test for our large Indigenous student cohort, for whom the tests represent a blunt instrument failing to take into account recognise cultural and language barriers;
- the stress and anxiety experienced by students and school staff because of the high stakes nature of the test;
- the undermining of the professional knowledge, practice, and judgement of teachers in terms of assessing student learning and implementing teaching and learning programs that effectively support student achievement;
- the linking of NAPLAN results with the achievement of any other certification; and

- the increasing use of NAPLAN results to inform the funding of our schools.

The AEU also recognises the increasing involvement of commercial interests and so-called edu-business in the development and delivery of NAPLAN, NAPLAN online, and associated products. This involvement does not serve the interests of our students and school's but instead the profit driven motives of those companies and their shareholders.

Branch Executive congratulates Education Minister Eva Lawler on the principled decision the government has taken to keep NT schools out of NAPLAN online in 2018, however we note with concern the expectation that the NT will move online in 2019.

The AEU NT Branch will continue to work with other AEU Branches and associated bodies through the AEU Federal Executive to develop and implement a range of strategies to ensure that NAPLAN online does not proceed in the context of continuing to identify the broader problems of the standardised testing regime.

The Full-Time Officers will ensure Branch's position is communicated to members, the Minister and the Chief Executive, as well as parents and relevant stakeholder organisations such as COGSO.