

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training

Inquiry into the use of generative artificial intelligence in the Australian education system

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 20 September 2023

Outcome: Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Department of Education Question No. IQ23-000100

MP Lisa Chesters on 20 September 2023, Proof Hansard page 10

ACARA | Use of generative artificial intelligence and the potential impact on educational outcomes

CHAIR: Your organisation has the data and reporting function. It is largely involved in statistics and information relating to educational outcomes for young Australians. We just heard from the previous witnesses one of the main concerns we have in this space is the digital divide and a concern that some who've got the ability to purchase the very new, high-functioning, state-of-the-art technology—and we know it's already rolling out of schools—will have a greater opportunity than others. Particularly when it comes to the use of Gen AI, is that something that you're already looking at and how that could potentially impact educational outcomes?

Ms Foster: I don't think I can answer that clearly for you as that's not my area of work at ACARA, but I can certainly take a question on notice and come back to you around that. Yes, we do look after data and reporting from the point of view of NAPLAN results and we obviously run the My School website and information. We do have that data of ICSEA and that information available. But I'm not sure, to be honest, whether we've started to look deeply into this area. I do know that AERO had been doing some work about the outcomes and looking at NAPLAN data.

Answer

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has provided the following response:

ACARA is responsible for NAPLAN and for the reporting of national results in literacy and numeracy. These results can be compared by state and by subgroup: gender, Indigeneity, geolocation, language background, parental education and occupation.

No data is collected on students' access to technology, and so it is not possible to provide any direct evidence of whether this has a bearing on students' literacy or numeracy outcomes. However, ACARA also administers a sample test that measures student achievement in ICT Literacy. This monitors students' competence in the use of ICT tools and contains a survey component that investigates the extent to which they are familiar with various technologies.