

Senate inquiry re NAPLAN, My School and league tables.

Caulfield Park Community School is most concerned at the use of the NAPLAN data and the creation of league tables through misuse of the current data on the My School website and the limited, often very misleading, picture of the school provided by the website. Schools are far more complex environments than the sum of student postcodes and a snapshot test at one point in time.

The assessment of school "success" or otherwise is equally a complex task. We wholly support rigorous and transparent assessment and reporting as a central part of successful teaching and learning. We equally support parents' right to access information on their student's progress and the effectiveness of the school settings. This partnership is a central part of effective schooling.

Our concerns are as follows -

1. The current structure is too easily misused to create league tables which are one dimensional, provide limited information to parents and can be very damaging to schools, students, staff, and parents.
2. NAPLAN testing was never designed to compare schools or cohorts. It was designed to help students and teachers. To use it as the basis of school rankings is distortion of the data and risks damaging the vulnerable students schools most need to support.
3. The use of the ICSEA data creates a flawed index for school comparison. It does not take into account critical factors affecting school performance including family background, ethnicity, school size and target group etc. The suggestion that postcodes are homogenous entities is a nonsense. It is, at best, a very broad starting point for comparison.
4. My School does not provide the information parents need. The site does not include information about school resources, programs, target groups and specialised structures, support programs etc. These all go to create the ethos, culture and ultimate "value add" of a school setting.

We urge the committee to act in favour of all students and all schools with a more meaningful process which supports all students and school to improve, not a process which divides and stigmatises.