

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 2 – Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0741_13

Senator Mason asked on 18 October 2012 , Hansard page 96 & 98

Question

Dr Thompson's research

Senator MASON: It is under an ARC grant. So, in effect, it is an ARC grant for himself and the university. He conducted a survey of almost 1,000 teachers from South Australia and from Western Australia. Seven out of 10 teachers did not see that NAPLAN improved literacy and numeracy. The majority of teachers also indicated that they did not feel that NAPLAN results adequately reflected classroom learning. What is your response to that?

Ms Paul: I think we will have to take it on notice, because we could not comment on something that we have not heard of and have not seen. We will have to take it on notice and analyse it.

(Page 98) Senator MASON: With NAPLAN, Dr Thompson found that, when two teachers say that children are so stressed by national literacy and numeracy tests, some are having anxiety attacks, being physically ill and calling in sick to school. Does that surprise you?

Ms Paul: Is it the same person we have not heard of?

Senator MASON: Yes.

Ms Paul: We will just have to take it on notice.

Answer

The research referred to in this question is being conducted by Dr Greg Thompson, a research fellow at Murdoch University and is being funded by the Australian Research Council. The focus of the research is discussed in the Executive Summary of the report "Effects of NAPLAN" which is the only part of the report published to date. The Summary discusses the results of a voluntary survey of teachers in two states, Western Australia and South Australia.

Insufficient information is available to indicate whether the findings published are representative of the teaching profession. The results referred to by the Senator are based on a sample of 200 responses received in the voluntary survey.

The NAPLAN tests identify whether students have the literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge which provide the critical foundation for other learning and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community. The tests provide parents and schools with an understanding of how individual students are performing at the time of the tests. They also provide schools, states and territories with information

about how education programs are working and which areas need to be prioritised for improvement.

NAPLAN results provide valuable information on how students, schools and school systems are performing against national standards, including national minimum standards in each of the assessed areas to help inform the improvement efforts of schools and teachers.

It must be recognised that NAPLAN results are only part of the student and school performance picture, and complement teachers' class and school-based assessments to provide a comprehensive picture of student achievement. NAPLAN tests do not replace the extensive, ongoing classroom assessments made by teachers.