



This week's stories from the media

- Higher ATAR may be needed to study teaching
- Naplan seamless transition
- Expert panel to guide sweeping education reform
- School absences understanding kids essential
- Union slams NAPLAN changes
- Nature play underused by schools

NAPLAN Seamless Transition

On Tuesday, more than one million Australian students finished their NAPLAN test which was held earlier in the year for the first time.

This year around 4.4 million online tests were sat nationwide by nearly 1.3 million students across 9,390 schools.

"I congratulate all students and schools for finishing the assessments," ACARA CEO David de Carvalho said.

"NAPLAN 2023 was a successful test event and that's due to the close collaboration and preparation by all involved."

The move of NAPLAN from May to March was in response to criticism that teachers did not receive the results early enough to guide individual feedback.

This year also saw four new proficiency levels: Exceeding, Strong, Developing and Needs additional support.

The change in students' results reporting was made to provide clearer information to students so parents can determine where their numeracy and literacy levels are.

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Higher ATAR May Be Needed To Study Teaching

Aspiring teachers would have to meet higher standards and focus more on reading and maths under the biggest shake-up of education degrees in decades.

A national taskforce is proposing a target ATAR of 80 for teaching students amid concerns over the dire standard of many graduates, as some degrees offer places for students with an ATAR of just 42.

The taskforce also proposes incentives of around \$20,000 to attract mid-career workers into courses.

Mid-career students lured to choose teaching could have their courses cut to as little as 16 months. The older students would also be able to work while studying.

Landmark reforms proposed by the Teacher Education Expert Panel, include public reporting of course quality be required for the first time, with \$800m in federal funding tied to outcomes.

The group is reporting to all state and territory education ministers and Federal Education Minister Jason Clare, amid a serious shortage of teachers and concerns about the quality of graduates.

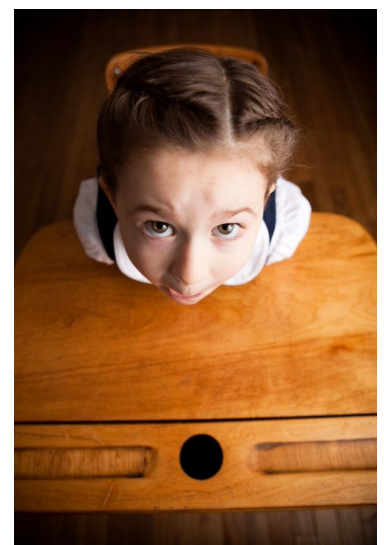
The panel does not make any recommendations about raising teacher salaries.

The panel's report reveals only 20% of teaching students across the nation have an ATAR of 80 or above.

The report also suggests prioritising the teaching of reading, writing, maths and First National cultures in teaching degrees.

And it calls for national standards, performance-based assessment and greater public accountability in education courses.

[More](#)



“....proposing a target ATAR of 80 for teaching students amid concerns over the dire standard of many graduates.”

Expert Panel To Guide Sweeping Education Reform

The Federal government has appointed an expert panel to help guide reforms tied to school funding and improving learning outcomes for disadvantaged students.

"If you're a child today from a poor family, or from the bush, or you're an Indigenous child, then you're three times more likely to fall behind at school," Education Minister Clare said.

The panel will deliver its final report to the government on 31 October.

The panel will also look at improving Australia's literacy and numeracy gap.

"Fifteen years ago, the gap in the reading skills of eight-year-olds from poor and wealthy backgrounds was a bit over a year. Now it is over two, and with every year, that gap grows bigger," Mr Clare said.

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School Absences Understanding Kids Essential

While school attendance levels have been dropping steadily for nearly a decade in Australia, experts say teachers should consult students first before "rushing" towards a broader solution.

New government data has revealed attendance levels dropped below 50% for the first time in 2022, with more than two million students missing out 10% of the school year.

Flinders University research associate Nigel Howard said attendance levels have "taken a huge dip" post Covid.

"We must understand why students leave, and unless we get to a very deep dive of what's going on in students' lives, we won't know what's really happening," research associate Howard told Education Review.

"If we rush to a solution, pushing the kids to go back, we're actually gonna miss what the problem is."

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Union Slams NAPLAN Changes

Changes to the NAPLAN testing window has raised stress for students and left little time for teachers to build relationships within their new classes, according to the Queensland Teachers' Union.

QTU Vice-President Leah Olson said teachers have reported increased pressure as a direct result of the change.

Ms Olsen said the time shift does not make a difference as teachers do not use NAPLAN results to inform their practice.

Additionally, the QTU said the overall accuracy of this year's NAPLAN results won't be useful to pinpoint kids' academic progress due to interruptions caused by Covid-19.

[Full Story](#)

World Autism Day

Autism Understanding Day - April 2



Nature Play Underused By Schools

Experts have encouraged primary school teachers to use nature play areas to teach the curriculum and improve students' learning and well-being outcomes.

Researchers from the University of South Australia analysed the use of nature play areas in 52 primary schools in the state and found schools have been using these spaces for play rather than learning.

Across the study, researchers found that 63% of primary schools have a built nature play space, and another 25% have been planning to make one, yet educators seldomly used them to teach students.

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