




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

NAPLAN

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.11 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering a world-class education for all Queensland students. NAPLAN results from 2017 confirm our government's long-term commitment to, and investment in, lifting literacy and numeracy outcomes across the state is reaping rewards. Since the NAPLAN tests began in 2008, our schools have shown the greatest improvement of any state or territory. In recent weeks there has been a great deal of speculation about the future of NAPLAN or, more specifically, NAPLAN online. Queensland has always taken a cautious approach towards NAPLAN online in preparation for a full rollout from 2020.

This year 83 Queensland schools participated in NAPLAN online, including 18 state schools. Queensland has continually sought assurances that there would be no difference between the online and the paper based tests, particularly when it came to comparability of data. The federal government and ACARA consistently gave guarantees that there would be no issues. Unfortunately, early assessment by states and territories of the preliminary results demonstrated this is not the case. In particular, the states and territories questioned the comparability of data of all grammar and punctuation tests as well as year 9 numeracy and year 7 reading tests.

The states raised these issues with ACARA and called on the federal government to take urgent action, with Senator Birmingham and ACARA initially ignoring these concerns, but ACARA was working furiously in the background to identify how it might resolve the problem. Senior state and territory education officials were forced to intervene to work with ACARA to fix the issues, with this item urgently placed on the agenda during the meeting of directors-general in Canberra on 8 August. It was only at that point that ACARA finally acknowledged there were issues with the results of the online and paper based tests, particularly in comparability.

ACARA has now applied an equating technique to scale the data which states and territory bodies, including the QCAA, have been asked to review multiple times. It is clear to me confidence in ACARA has been eroded. I am advised ACARA will publish the 2018 NAPLAN results within the coming weeks. Again we have been given assurances the issues have been resolved. However, due to the level of disruption that has occurred with this year's data, we will continue to keep a close eye on the results. It is essential that we maintain the public confidence in the validity of the data. This shows that Queensland's ongoing calls for a comprehensive national review of NAPLAN is warranted and overdue and should now include an evaluation of the online test design, equating methodology and comparability of NAPLAN and paper based tests. Other states and territories support our calls, but unfortunately this push has been ignored by the Turnbull government and Minister Birmingham. In the meantime, we will continue with our state based evaluation of NAPLAN, due to be finalised by the end of October 2018.