

My School statistically similar schools to Thornbury High.

An examination of the 60 schools deemed to be statistically similar to our school raises a number of questions. It is difficult to understand how our school could be compared to most of the schools in our group.

1. 50% of the schools are interstate primary schools with prep to year 7 cohorts. As a high school our year 7 students have only been in the school for a few months before sitting for the Naplan test. Why would these schools be grouped with Thornbury High?
2. Logically the only criterion that a secondary school could be fairly compared to others is on the year 9 Naplan data. However the ICSEA is based only the total school population, not the year 9 cohort only.
3. Many of the schools, particularly the primary schools, were extremely small. One primary school in Queensland had only 13 students.
4. Only 10% of schools in our group had similar numbers of indigenous students.
5. Almost 50% were private schools. Many were p-12 and had very few students. An example is The Japanese School in Perth City Beach. The school has only 34 students. The instruction is in Japanese. Because the school website is written in Japanese it is difficult to determine who the students are but one could assume they are the children of expatriate Japanese families working in Perth. How they share much in common with Thornbury High students is hard to understand.
6. Private schools have a much greater control over entry and exit of students. Some of small faith based schools require commitments a government school like Thornbury could not legally demand. For example the Bethany Christian School's ultimate purpose is to bring glory to God. It provides God-centred training for children in a man-centred society.
7. Some of the schools in our group are selective schools. According to their websites students are merit selected and required to pass an entrance exam. They include John Curtin College of Arts in Fremantle and Gosford High School in NSW. Not surprisingly they do very well on the Naplan comparisons by eliminating underperforming students. How can this be a fair comparison?*
8. Our school was compared to only 6 schools in Victoria, a small country high school in the Mallee, a Grammar School in Ballarat, a small religious school in Lilydale and the Distance Education School in the same suburb but with a very different student population. The only school at all similar was a country high school in Wangaratta.
9. There is no school in the group that we would consider similar to our school, an inner suburban 7-12 college in a comparatively disadvantaged area with a relatively high indigenous and African refugee population, which takes all comers.
10. Only 6 schools in the group included post secondary destination data.
11. There is no data comparing year 12 results or student and parent surveys.