

ACARA CEO's opening statement

Supplementary Budget Estimates – 7 November 2024

Thank you Chair.

I'd like to take a few minutes to update the Committee on work ACARA has delivered since our last Estimates appearance in June 2024, in line with our work plan as agreed to by all education ministers.

Following ACARA providing the initial NAPLAN results to schools four weeks after the assessment – the earliest in the history of NAPLAN – parents and carers of students who took part in this year's assessment received an individual student report (ISR) of their child's results from their school early in Term 3.

These reports provide useful information on a student's results in reading, writing, conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

Following this, in August ACARA released the NAPLAN National Results, which show that results at a national level were similar to the results in 2023.

While there were small increases and decreases across domains and year levels, overall the results were broadly stable.

On average, across all year levels in numeracy, reading and writing, approximately two-thirds of students meet "challenging but reasonable" expectations.

The 2024 results continue to show strong performance from Australian students in literacy and numeracy.

However, they also provide clear information on areas requiring our collective focus and effort for improvement.

Nationally, NAPLAN participation rates have held steady, increasing on the 2023 average by 0.1 percentage points across all years and domains to 93.4%.

The overall increase in participation is a positive, consolidating on last year's bounce back in NAPLAN participation rates and continuing the reversal of the downward trend evident in recent years.

This shows the work of parents and carers in supporting our teachers and schools by understanding the importance of the NAPLAN assessments.

While it is a point-in-time assessment, NAPLAN remains the only national assessment that all Australian children undertake that helps governments, education authorities, schools, and parents and carers to see whether young Australians are reaching important literacy and numeracy goals.

Turning to the Australian Curriculum, we have continued to deliver improvements to our Version 9.0 Australian Curriculum website, which is the first port of call for educators bringing the curriculum to life in classrooms across the country.

The last 6 months to 25 October 2024, we saw a 21.49% increase in total visits and a 7.66% increase in unique visitors, when compared to the previous 6-month period.

I would also like to bring to the Committee's attention the findings of the OECD's latest PISA 2022 report: *'Creative Minds, Creative Schools'* and the subsequent report from the Australian Council for Educational Research published last week.

Critical and creative thinking is one of the Australian Curriculum's general capabilities, which are integrated and applied across all the learning areas.

So, it was pleasing to see Australia singled out for praise by the OECD as a high-performing system in the world for creative thinking in education.

Overall, Australian students' strong creative thinking results are a positive outcome of our country's long-term strategic commitment to creative thinking in our curriculum and our assessment and reporting practices.

We continue to focus on supporting teachers as they implement the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 and contributing to reducing their workload.

We also published 30 new work samples aligned to Version 9.0 of the curriculum. These contribute to reducing teachers' workload by showing how the achievement standards can be seen in real examples of student work.

As part of our work to support parents and carers to play an active role in their child's education, we published updated information about the Australian Curriculum, including learning area and year-level specific information in English and 6 additional languages.

ACARA continues to focus on key work as part of its work plan to support our amazing teachers, who of course we celebrated on World Teachers' Day on 25 October for all the work they do to educate and empower students across Australia.

Thank you.