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**National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy 2008:  
Assessment of Parent Perceptions of the NAPLAN Student  
Report**

prepared for

**Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and  
Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)**

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

Colmar Brunton Research was commissioned by the Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT), on behalf of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), to conduct research to evaluate the 2008 NAPLAN student report.

The overall aim of the research was to determine the extent to which parents of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 understand the information communicated by the NAPLAN individual student reports.

The research findings will be used to:

- assess the extent to which the student reports effectively communicate the information about the testing program and the individual students' results
- recommend required improvements to the student reports to be issued for 2009 NAPLAN student reports and beyond
- provide baseline information for any future review or evaluation of the reporting of student literacy and numeracy assessment at the national level.

The findings of the research were drawn from qualitative and quantitative methodologies conducted specifically for this research project. The methodologies from which findings were drawn involved 30 face to face depth interviews across NSW, QLD, WA and ACT and an Australia-wide telephone survey of 1,500 parents who have received the 2008 NAPLAN student reports. The research project was conducted in October and November 2008 immediately following the issue of the NAPLAN student reports.

This report presents the findings of this research.

## 1.2 Key Findings

The 2008 NAPLAN student report was generally well-received by parents. Broad evaluations of the national assessment and the NAPLAN report are overall positive. Almost nine out of ten (87%) parents interviewed consider national assessment to be important and four out of five (82%) consider the NAPLAN student report to be a valuable document for monitoring their child/ren's progress at school. There are some statistically significant differences in perceptions across states; specifically, parents in NSW are significantly more likely to consider national assessment to be very important (51% c.f. 39%) and the NAPLAN report to be very valuable (42% c.f. 31%).

Parents mostly received the report when it was brought home by their child from school. Many parents received a covering letter with their report (71%). There is a minor concern from some parents that an informal distribution process such as this could lead to the risk of not receiving the NAPLAN student report.

Parents are paying most attention to the inner pages of the report, in particular the graphs that display student results, with 94% stating that they had read all or most of these pages. Approximately two thirds (67%) are reading most or all of the introductory page and 73% are reading the back page.

Understanding of the report was reasonably high, with 80% of parents agreeing that the report was easy to understand and 84% agreeing that they were able to understand how well their child/ren performed. However, the back page of the report may require further thinking as parents had varied opinions on the usefulness of the back page – this may need to be taken into account for future reports. There were approximately 8% of parents interviewed who did not find the NAPLAN student report to be easy to understand. This group of parents is not defined by any particular demographic or socioeconomic profile nor are they defined by the nature of their child/ren's education.

The majority of parents are not taking formal action after reading their child's report (60%) but mostly this relates to the nature of the information and the alignment of the child/ren's result to parents expectations. The most common action taken is further speaking to their child about the results (20%). Fewer parents spoke to a teacher (14%) or arranged formal support such as tutoring (9%).

Although the NAPLAN student report was considered effective by most parents, there were some suggested improvements for future reports. In particular, parents would like to see more personalised information or at least, they would like to see how well their child performed relative to their school, region or state. They would also like to see detailed, but still clear, information within the report. While some parents would like to see more detailed information, others have indicated that the information needs to be simpler and less technical.

The qualitative and quantitative results are very closely aligned in providing a positive evaluation of the 2008 NAPLAN student report. Due to this positive evaluation there are very few recommendations that would significantly change the success of NAPLAN student reports in the future.

The core issues which should be kept in mind for future years include:

- If further personalisation or tailoring of the NAPLAN student report is pursued caution should be taken to ensure that this does not detract from the simplicity of the report.
- If further support should be provided to certain groups, parents with children in year 3 should be prioritised in order to establish a clear ability to interpret the NAPLAN student report. If they do not clearly understand the report upon the first viewing then it is hypothesised that subsequent reports will not be given as much consideration.
- Steps to create the impression of the NAPLAN student report being a formal and important document would better fit with parent's perceptions of the importance of this level of assessment. Related to this, parents suggested the report should be mailed rather than being sent home with their child.
- Given that the tests occur early in the year there could be benefit in schools communicating with parents prior to the student report being issued so that it doesn't come as a surprise.
- The additional materials received with the report and the method of receiving affect evaluation of the NAPLAN report. Parents who received an additional report containing school results were significantly more likely to understand how their child performed relative to the national average and overall, found the



report useful. Also, parents who collected the report from the school evaluated the report more negatively on several aspects including whether the report was easy to understand.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Colmar Brunton Research was commissioned by the Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT) on behalf of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) to conduct research to evaluate the 2008 NAPLAN student report. This report presents the findings of this research.

### 2.1 Background

AESOC leads the development and implementation of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Under NAPLAN, annual full-cohort national literacy and numeracy testing is conducted in government and non-government schools across Australia. The NAPLAN tests were first implemented in May 2008 and these tests replaced the previous State and Territory-based assessments. Student reports were issued to parents in mid September 2008 and the content and format of these reports differ significantly from that previously issued to parents as a result of State and Territory literacy and numeracy testing.

To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of 2009 NAPLAN student reporting, an understanding is required as to how parents felt about the 2008 NAPLAN student reports, their interpretation of the reports, and how this knowledge impacts their behaviours and attitude.

### 2.2 Research objectives

The overall aim of the research was to determine the extent to which parents of students in Years 3,5,7, and 9 understand the information communicated by the NAPLAN individual student reports.

The research findings will be used to:

- assess the extent to which the student reports effectively communicate the information about the testing program and the individual students' results
- recommend required improvements to the student reports to be issued for 2009 NAPLAN student reports and beyond
- provide baseline information for any future review or evaluation of the reporting of student literacy and numeracy assessment at the national level.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

Note: All discussion guides and questionnaires can be found in the Appendices to this document.

The methodological approach to the study can be summarised as follows:

- A mixed method approach, using qualitative and quantitative methodologies conducted over the period October 8 and November 23;
- Initially 30 face to face depth interviews conducted with parents who had received their 2008 NAPLAN student report in NSW, ACT, QLD and WA in order to understand the interpretation issues that might exist;
- Following this a survey was drafted and 1,500 telephone surveys were conducted with parents who had received their 2008 NAPLAN student report across Australia.

#### 3.1 Qualitative Methodology

##### Depth Interviews

Depth interviews of approximately 45 minutes were conducted face to face with parents who had received a 2008 NAPLAN student report.

**Table 1: Depth interview structure**

	NSW		QLD		WA		ACT
	Sydney	Bathurst & Cooma	Brisbane	Townsville & Maryborough	Perth	Mandurah & Northam	
1 child of school age in household	2	1	2	1	3	1	2
2 or more children of school age in household	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Indigenous households	1		1		0		1
English as a second language households	1		1		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>6</b>

The participants further met the following specifications:

- Had at least one child in the household who sat the NAPLAN tests;
- Were at least jointly responsible for decisions regarding their child's schooling;
- Had reviewed the NAPLAN student report that was provided for their child/ren;
- Mix of government vs. non-government school students;
- Mix of socio-economic status; and
- Mix of participants whose child/ren were in years 3, 5, 7 or 9.

Parents were recruited from the Colmar Brunton panel and purchased lists. Each depth interview ran for a duration of approximately 1 hour and respondents were reimbursed a total of \$70 for their time.

## 3.2 Quantitative Methodology

### Telephone Interviewing

1,500 interviews were randomly recruited across Australia against quotas set for each state.

Interviews of approximately 15 minutes were conducted with parents who had received a 2008 NAPLAN student report. Regional quotas were applied to obtain a capital/ non capital city split in each state.

Survey respondents were targeted using a purchased list from Great Australian Surveys. A sample of families with children in the age group of 7 – 18 years was drawn across the locations required. These parents were further screened during initial interviewing to ensure they had received a 2008 NAPLAN student report.

The final sample achieved by location is noted in the table below. Results were weighted against ABS Census 2006 figures for families to account for the quotas implemented by region.

**Table 2: Telephone interviews by geographic area**

<b>Respondent Location</b>	<b>Target Sample</b>	<b>Sample Obtained</b>
NSW – Sydney	n=100	n=101
NSW – Other	n=100	n=114
VIC – Melbourne	n=100	n=100
VIC – Other	n=100	n=129
QLD – Brisbane	n=100	n=107
QLD - Other	n=100	n=210
WA – Perth	n=100	n=100
WA – Other	n=100	n=125
SA – Adelaide	n=100	n=100
SA – Other	n=100	n=111
TAS – Hobart	n=100	n=63
TAS – Other	n=100	n=121
ACT	n=100	n=75
NT – Darwin	n=100	n=33
NT - Other	n=100	n=11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>n=1500</b>	<b>n=1500</b>

*The following series of results are displayed to profile the parents included in the telephone interviews. All results in this section are presented unweighted and are intended to describe the interviewed population, not be reflective of the actual population.*

Among parents interviewed, the majority (92%) had more than one child with most households having 2-3 children (63%). However, three quarters of the sample (75%) only had one child who sat the 2008 NAPLAN test and one in five (21%) had two children sitting the test in 2008.

The sample obtained an even spread of parents with children in all of the NAPLAN assessed years. As such, approximately three quarters have seen prior State and Territory literacy and numeracy tests. While the majority of the sample obtained had children at a Government school, there is also sufficient sample to test for differences across other schooling types.

**Table 3: Children sample profile**

*Q20. What year level are they in? Q21. What type of school are they enrolled in? Q22 Have any of your children previously completed State or Territory literacy and numeracy tests? (Multiple responses allowable for multiple children households).*

<b>% of the Sample Obtained</b>	<b>Total Sample</b> (n=1500)
<b>Responses can total more than 100%</b>	
Year 3	33%
Year 5	31%
Year 7	33%
Year 9	28%
Government school	79%
Catholic school	16%
Independent school	11%
Another type of school	11%
Children have previously completed State or Territory literacy and numeracy tests	73%

Mothers were most commonly interviewed during the telephone interview process. This is to be expected given their role in the household and a general tendency of females to participate more often in market and social research. As such, many respondents were either in part time or casual employment or primarily focused on home duties. The interviewed sample included a range of ages from 26 to 55 years, levels of education and some representation of multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households.

**Table 4: Parent interviewed sample profile**

*Q23. Gender Q24. Roughly, what is your age? Q27. What best describes your current employment status? Q28. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have completed? Q33. Do you speak a language other than English at home? Q34. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?*

<b>% of the Sample Obtained</b> <b>May add to more than 100% due to</b> <b>rounding of decimal places</b>	<b>Total Sample</b> (n=1500)
Female parent	89%
Male parent	11%
18 – 25 years	0.4%
26 – 35 years	24%
36 – 45 years	56%
46 – 55 years	19%
55+ years	1%
Part Time/ Casual employment	32%
Home duties	25%
Full time employed	24%
Self employed	10%
Not currently employed	4%
Student	4%
Other	2%
Year 10 or below	28%
Year 12	24%
TAFE/ Trade qualifications	29%
Undergraduate University	11%
Postgraduate University	9%
Speak LOTE at home	7%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin	2%


Just under two thirds of households captured were a married household. They represent a variety of socioeconomic statuses.


**Table 5: Household sample profile**

*Q25. Which of the following best describes your marital status? Q26. What is your annual total household income before taxes?*

<b>% of the Sample Obtained</b>	<b>Total Sample n=1500</b>
Married	64%
Defacto	13%
Single	12%
Divorced	11%
Less than \$19,999 per annum	5%
\$20,000 to \$49,999 per annum	23%
\$50,000 to \$99,999 per annum	33%
\$100,000 + per annum	18%
Refused/ don't know	21%

In all charts in this report, groups are compared against each other and, where possible, differences are tested for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level.

Where the result for a group is significantly higher than the total sample, the result will be circled in green. E.g. 

Where the result for a group is significantly lower than the total sample, the result will be circled in red. E.g. 

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 3.3 Overall Evaluation of NAPLAN Student Reports

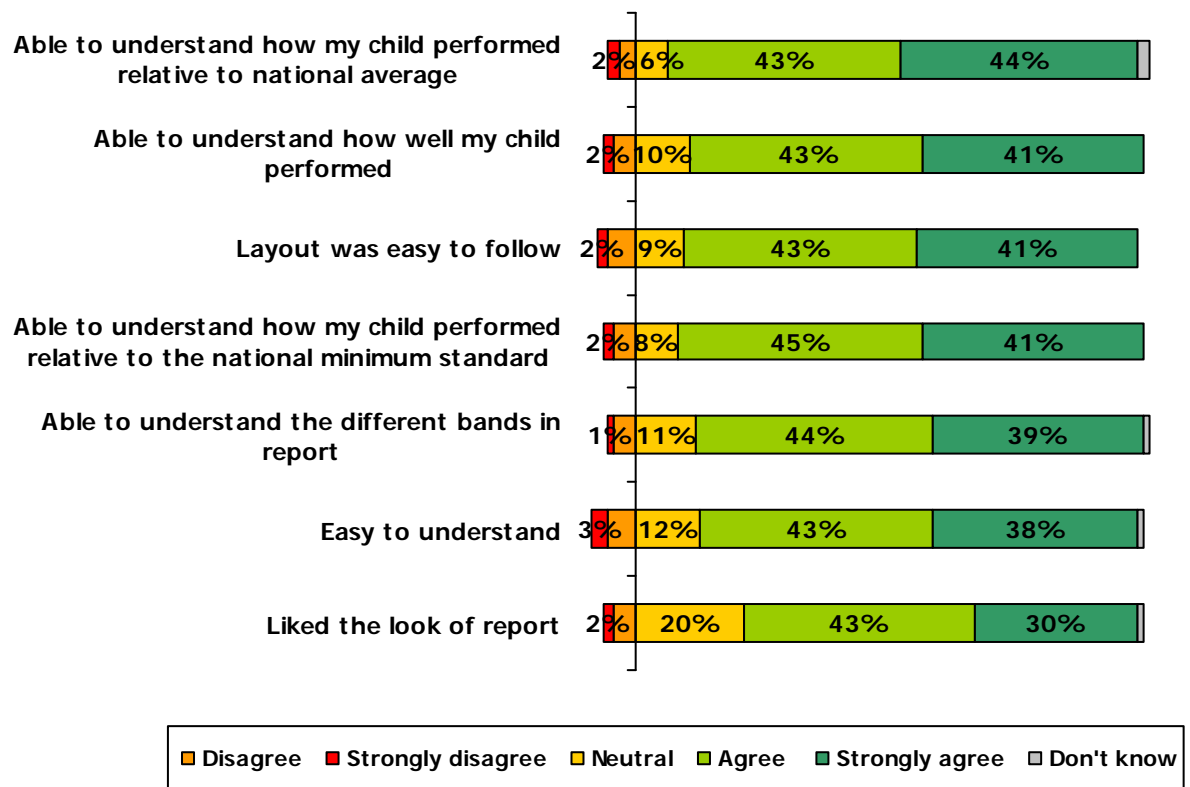
The qualitative and quantitative research findings indicate that the majority of parents who received the 2008 NAPLAN student report were relatively happy and positive towards the new report. The most positive results were in regard to the ability of parents to interpret the new NAPLAN student report.

Parents are most satisfied with the ability to understand their child's individual performance. They are able to understand this performance comparison relative to the national average (44% 'strongly agree'), the national minimum standard (41%), and also on an individual level (41%). The reports are also considered to have an 'easy to follow' layout (41%) and to be easy to understand (38%).

Fewer than one in ten (8%) parents interviewed indicated they did not find the report easy to understand and this group is investigated in subsequent sections of the report.

**Figure 1: Evaluation of NAPLAN report on interpretation factors**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree). Total sample n=1,500*



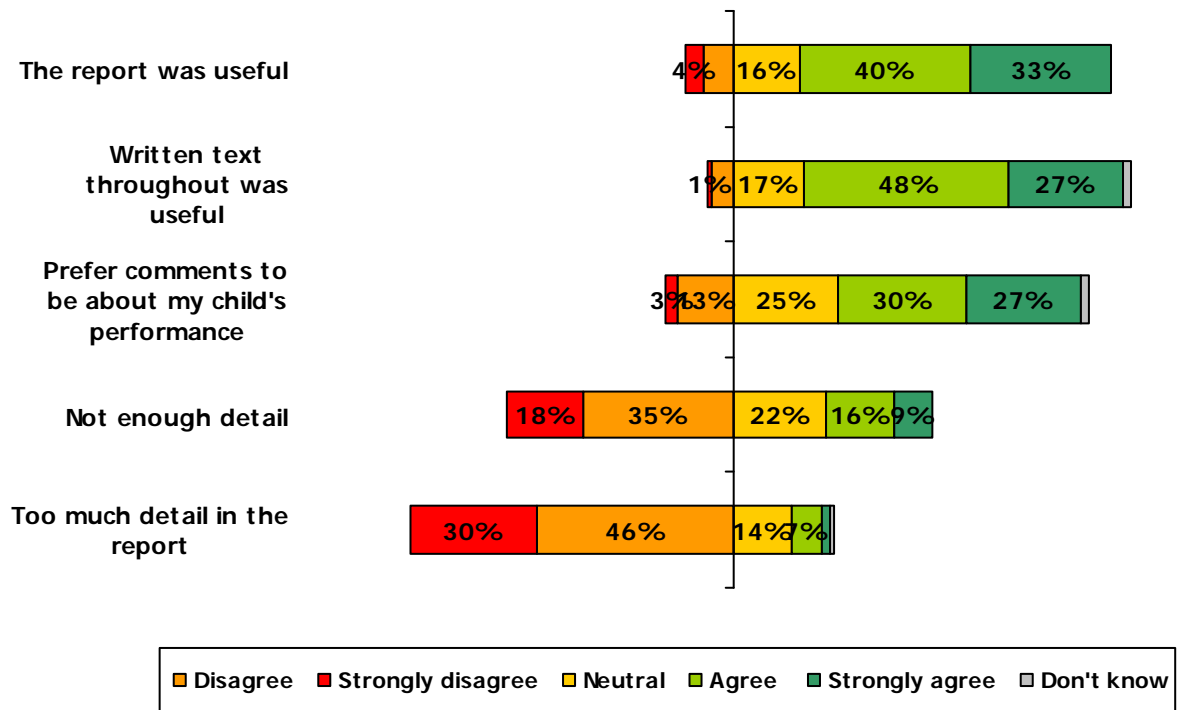
There were some significant differences in evaluation of the NAPLAN student report across the states. Significantly fewer parents in QLD strongly agreed that they were able to understand how their child performed relative to the national average (38% c.f. 44% total). Also, significantly fewer parents in QLD (24%) and SA (20%) liked the look of the report (c.f. 30% total). This was the extent of the geographical differences noted in terms of interpretation of the 2008 NAPLAN student report.

Approximately three quarters (73%) of parents interviewed consider the 2008 NAPLAN student report to be useful. While approximately one in ten (11%) disagrees, there are 16% who consider the report's usefulness in a neutral regard.

A sizeable proportion (57%) of parents interviewed indicated that their natural preference is for commentary on the report to be pertaining to their child's performance. Only one quarter felt that the report did not provide enough detail.

**Figure 2: Evaluation of NAPLAN report on nature of the content**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree). Total sample n=1,500*

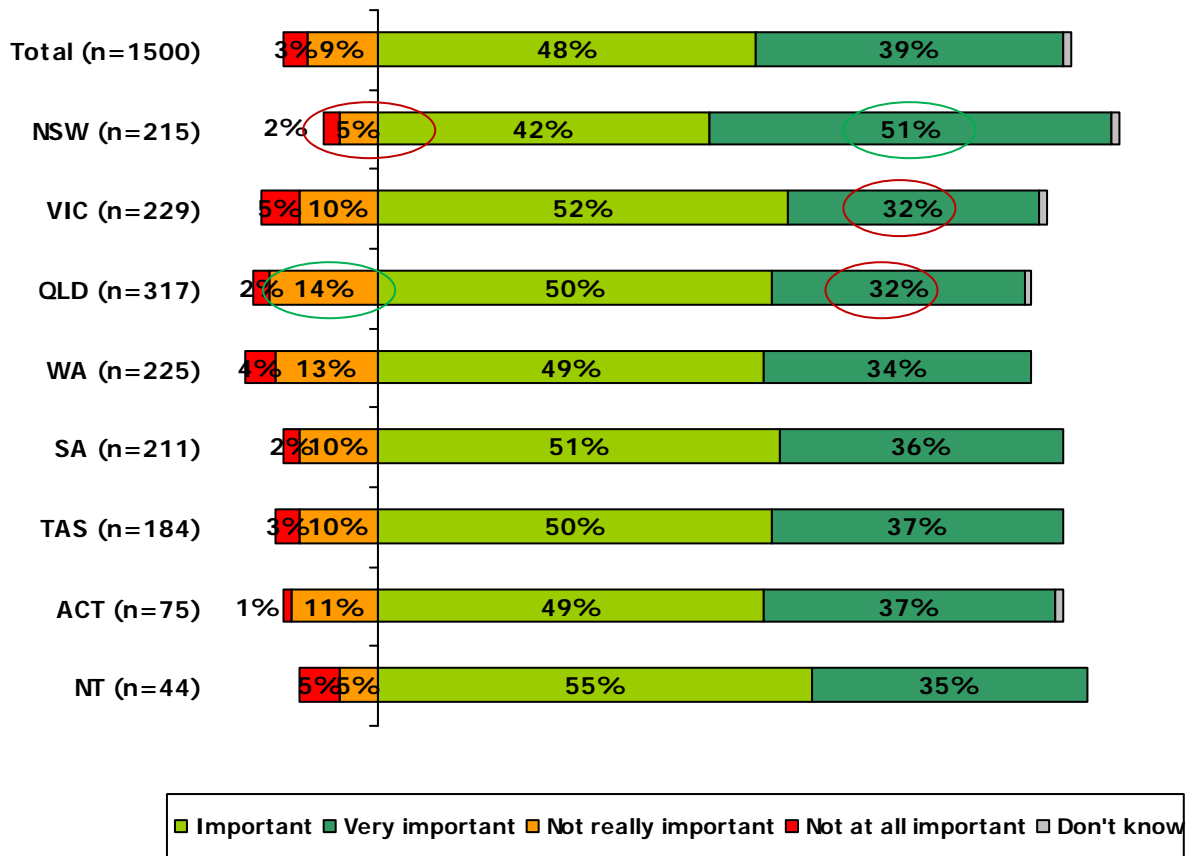




Australian parents place significant importance on national literacy and numeracy testing for their child/ren. Nearly nine in ten parents (87%) consider national assessment to be either very important or important. A significantly higher proportion of parents in NSW consider it to be very important (51% c.f. 39%), while parents in VIC and QLD are less likely to feel this strongly (32%).

**Figure 3: Importance of national assessment**

*Q11: Do you consider National assessment to be...?*



Nearly a third of parents consider the NAPLAN report to be very valuable (31%) and another half consider it to be valuable (51%). The qualitative research highlights that parents find the NAPLAN student report valuable as it informs them of their child/ren's average results compared to nationwide results, areas of their education where they are currently doing well and areas for improvement. It provides an extra source of information (in addition to school reports and teachers' comments) for parents to gauge their child/ren's academic progress. Parents also valued the ability to assess the results of their child/ren on a national level and enabled them to compare their child/ren's progress nationally as well as within their schooling environment.

*"Results reinforced the hard work I had put in with my child in one area, and encouraged me to start working on the other areas with him."*

*"The skills tested in this are the important ones – maths, English. It is helpful to be able to see where my child is lacking and I can do things at home to improve problem areas."*

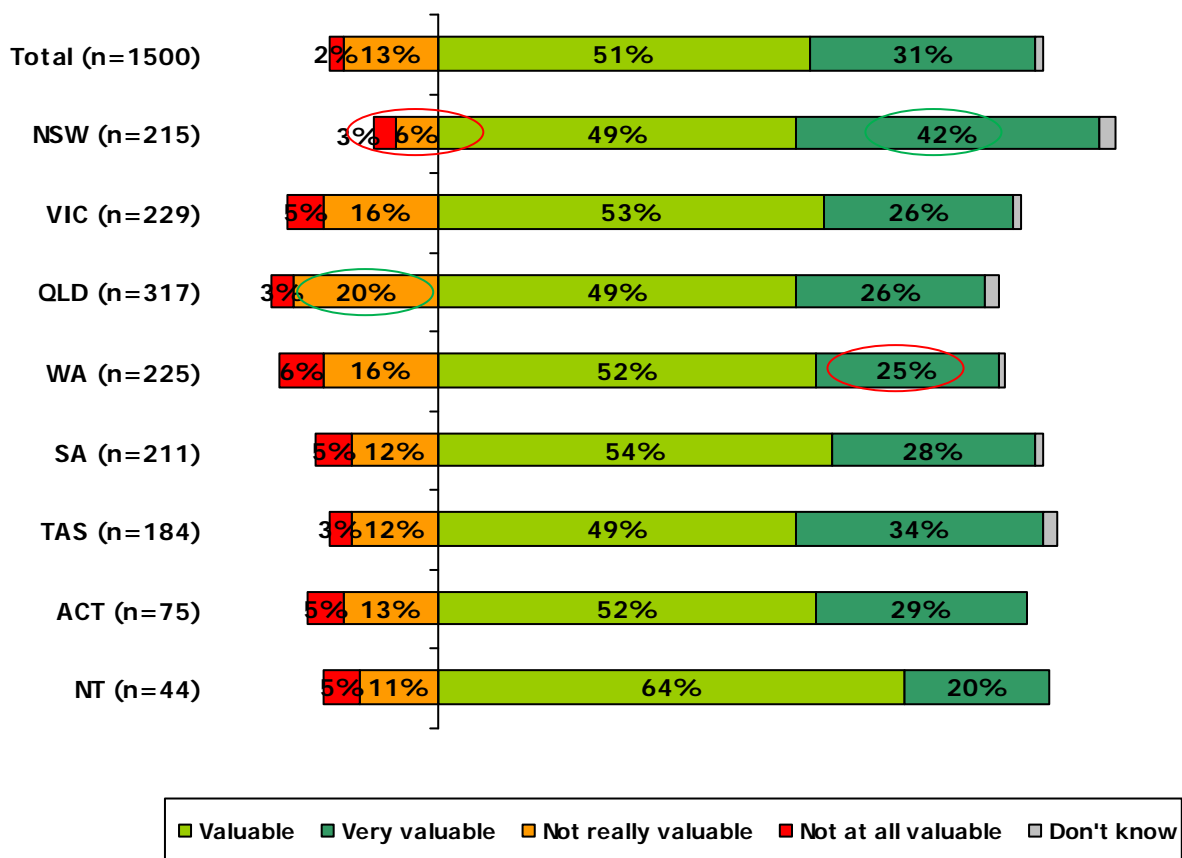
Parents in NSW seem to find the report particularly useful with significantly more feeling the report is very valuable (42%). While not able to be directly attributed to the additional NSW school report, those NSW parents who did receive the additional report were significantly more likely to see a high level of value overall in the 2008 NAPLAN student report.

In WA, significantly fewer parents (25%) view the NAPLAN report as being very valuable. While in QLD there was a significantly higher proportion of parents who 'don't really' find the report valuable.

*"I don't place a huge amount of importance on the NAPLAN results...because WA start school a year earlier than VIC there is a mismatch there. Six months can make a difference, it's not comparing like with like."*

**Figure 4: Value gained from NAPLAN report – by State**

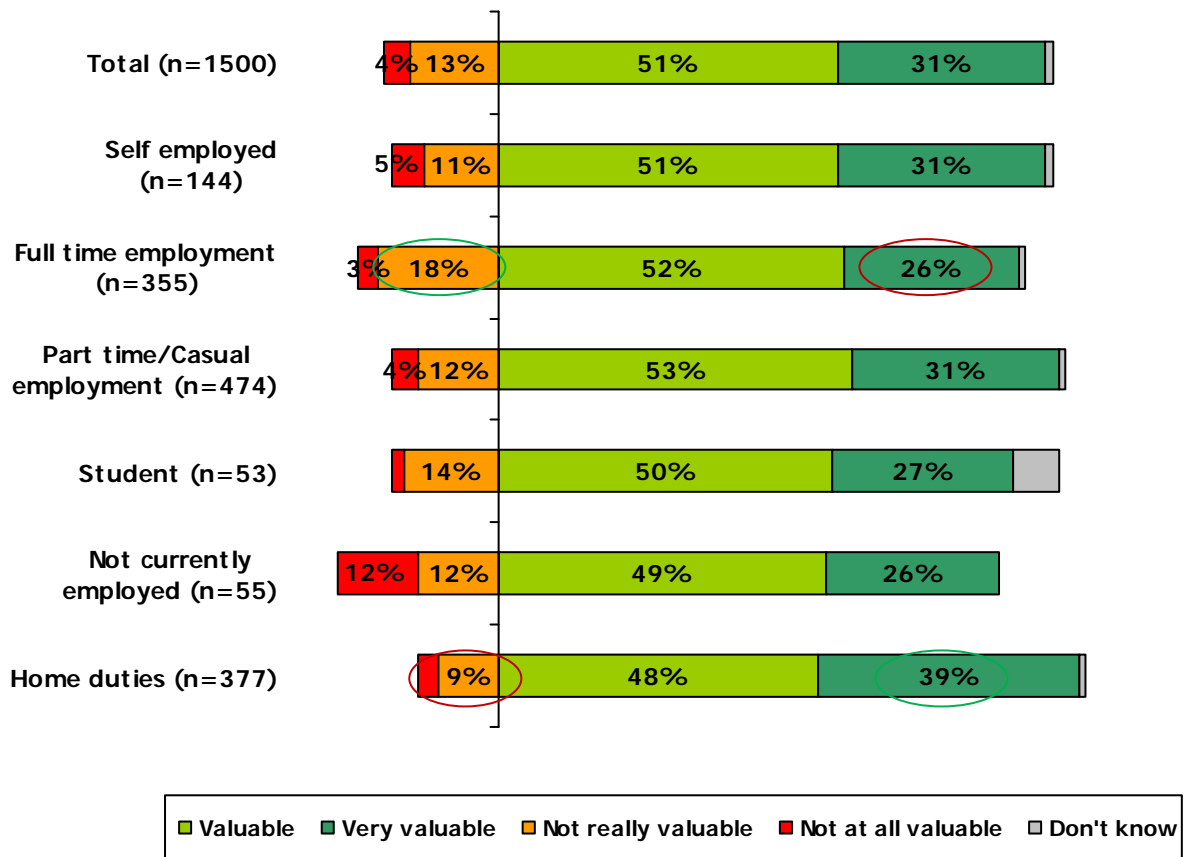
Q10: Do you consider the NAPLAN student report to be...



There are also significant differences in perceived value of the NAPLAN report across employment status of the parent interviewed. Specifically, significantly fewer parents interviewed who work full time considered the NAPLAN report to be very valuable (26% c.f. 31%). In contrast, significantly more parents interviewed who perform home duties find the report to be very valuable (39%).

**Figure 5: Value gained from NAPLAN report – by Employment Status**

*Q10: Do you consider the NAPLAN student report to be...*



## 3.4 Section Specific Evaluation

### 3.4.1 Overall Assessment of Sections

Parents generally read all or most of each page in the NAPLAN student report. A higher proportion of parents read all (77%) or most (17%) of the two inner pages compared with the introductory and back page. This is to be expected given that the results are contained in this section, however it does highlight that the explanation pages are not read in all instances.

*"I was a little confused...I wanted to see the results straight away. I didn't read the front page at first. I was confused with the graph at first, but once I read the example it was fine."*

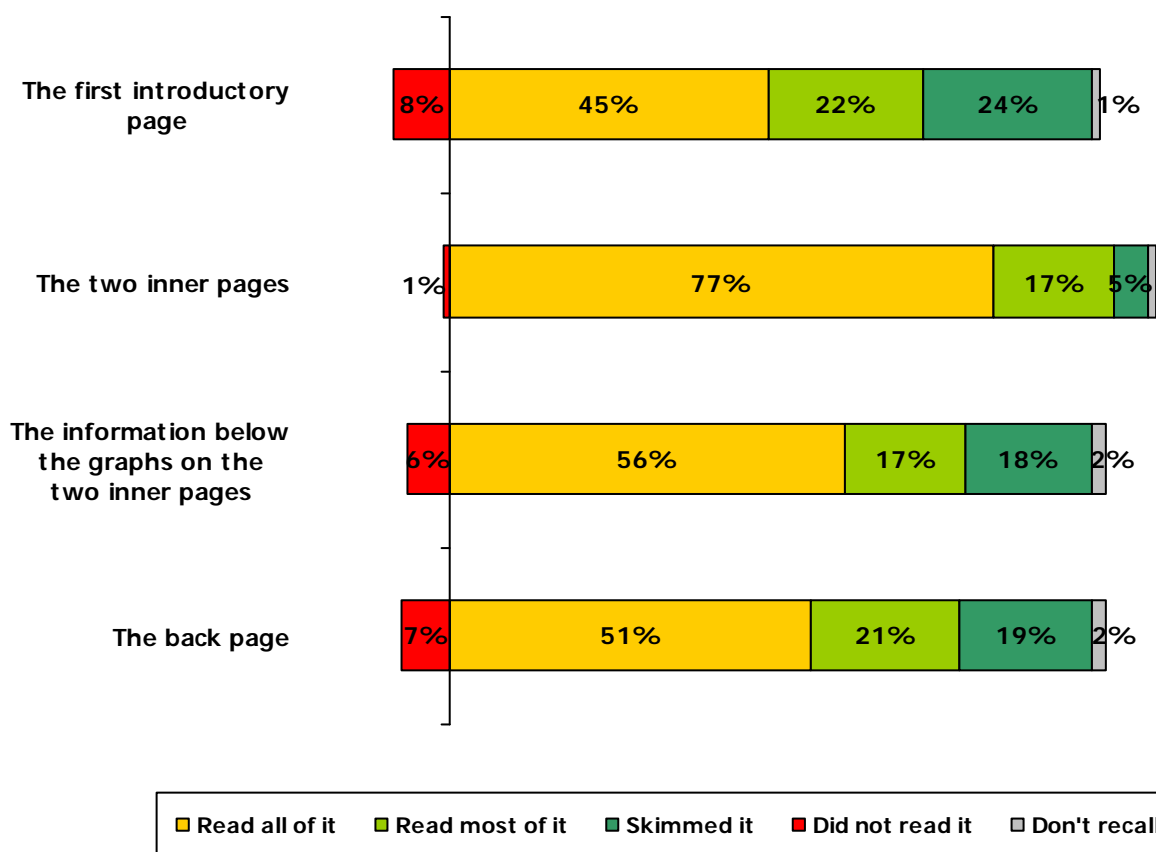
*"I didn't read the first page. I went straight to the results."*

*"I went straight to the example (graph). I looked at how to read the graph and interpret the results."*

On the two inner pages, parents pay greater attention to the graphs of results than to the text below.

**Figure 6: Reading of NAPLAN report sections**

*Q6: Thinking back to when you received your child's report, did you read the following sections? Please indicate if you read all of it, read most of it, skimmed it or did not read it at all. Total sample n=1,500*



There are few significant differences across states in terms of how thoroughly parents read the NAPLAN report. However, significantly more parents in NT read the entire first page (64%) but were less likely to bother with reading the back page of the NAPLAN student report.

**Table 6: Reading of NAPLAN report sections – by State**

*Q6: Thinking back to when you received your child's report, did you read the following sections?  
Please indicate if you read all of it, read most of it, skimmed it or did not read it at all.*

	Total (n=1500)	NSW (n=215)	VIC (n=229)	QLD (n=317)	WA (n=225)	SA (n=211)	TAS (n=184)	ACT (n=75)	NT (n=44)
<b>First page</b>									
Read all of it	45%	46%	42%	45%	43%	46%	41%	51%	64%
Read most of it	22%	20%	26%	24%	20%	20%	29%	24%	12%
Skimmed it	24%	25%	21%	23%	29%	26%	22%	20%	21%
Did not read it	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%	7%	4%	4%	3%
<b>Two inner pages</b>									
Read all of it	77%	74%	80%	80%	76%	77%	76%	71%	81%
Read most of it	17%	18%	16%	13%	17%	17%	18%	17%	15%
Skimmed it	5%	6%	3%	7%	6%	4%	3%	9%	4%
Did not read it	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Information below graphs on inner two pages</b>									
Read all of it	56%	57%	54%	59%	55%	58%	51%	56%	69%
Read most of it	17%	15%	19%	18%	16%	17%	19%	17%	13%
Skimmed it	18%	22%	16%	15%	20%	18%	13%	16%	12%
Did not read it	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%	8%	7%	2%
<b>Back page</b>									
Read all of it	51%	53%	48%	55%	46%	53%	47%	52%	67%
Read most of it	21%	20%	22%	23%	20%	22%	28%	20%	21%
Skimmed it	19%	21%	17%	18%	25%	18%	14%	21%	10%
Did not read it	7%	5%	10%	5%	7%	6%	6%	5%	2%

There are significant differences in readership across parents with children in different year levels. Parents with children in year three read the NAPLAN report more thoroughly, with significantly more of them reading all of the four pages of the report. In contrast, significantly fewer parents with children in year nine read the entire introductory page, the information below the graphs on the two inner pages and the back page.

**Table 7: Reading of NAPLAN report sections – by Year Level of Student**

*Q6: Thinking back to when you received your child's report, did you read the following sections?  
Please indicate if you read all of it, read most of it, skimmed it or did not read it at all.*

	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Yr 3</b> (n=500)	<b>Yr 5</b> (n=467)	<b>Yr 7</b> (n=491)	<b>Yr 9</b> (n=462)
<b>First page</b>					
Read all of it	45%	52%	47%	43%	36%
Read most of it	22%	21%	24%	22%	24%
Skimmed it	24%	20%	21%	26%	29%
Did not read it	8%	6%	8%	9%	10%
<b>Two inner pages</b>					
Read all of it	77%	81%	79%	76%	76%
Read most of it	17%	14%	15%	15%	18%
Skimmed it	5%	3%	5%	8%	5%
Did not read it	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Information below graphs on inner two pages</b>					
Read all of it	56%	63%	59%	58%	48%
Read most of it	17%	17%	14%	17%	20%
Skimmed it	18%	16%	18%	17%	22%
Did not read it	6%	3%	6%	5%	7%
<b>Back page</b>					
Read all of it	51%	57%	52%	50%	43%
Read most of it	21%	21%	22%	20%	22%
Skimmed it	19%	16%	18%	21%	26%
Did not read it	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%

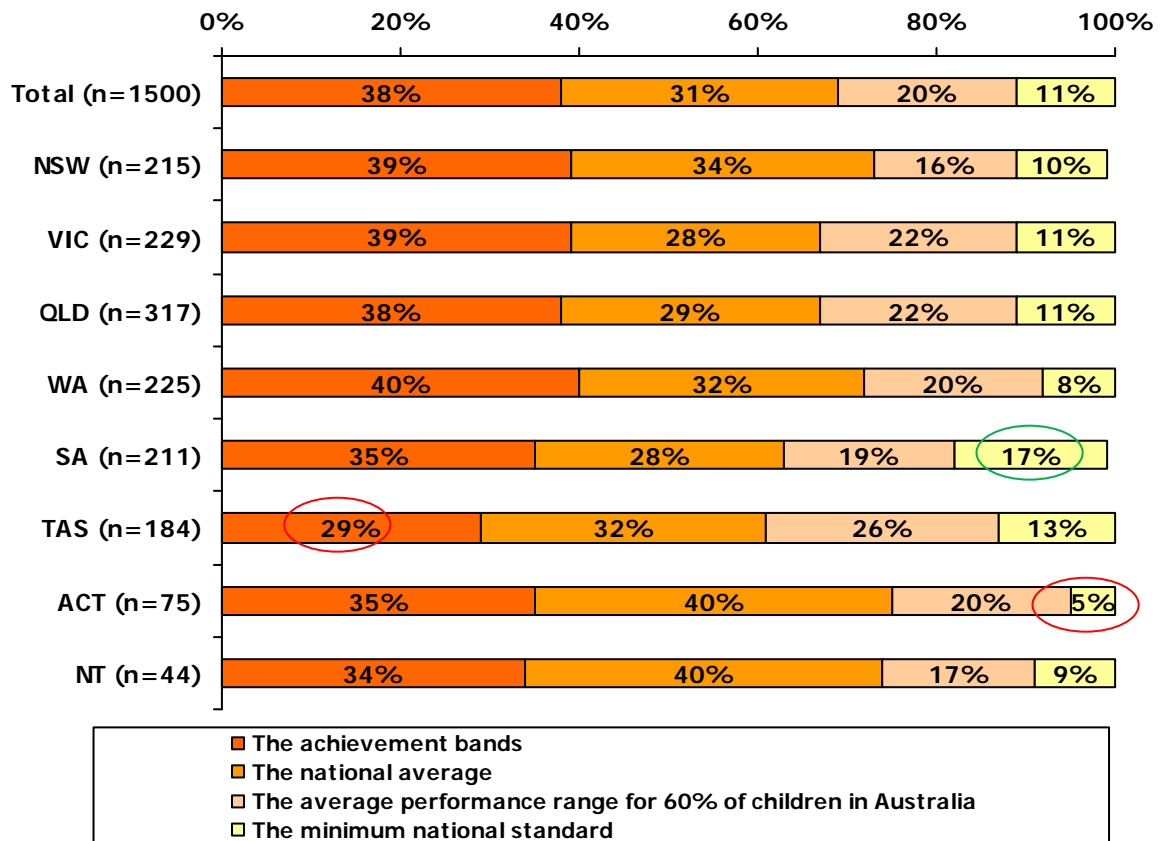
Of the various comparisons that exist in the NAPLAN reports, the two most valuable are considered to be the achievement bands and the national average. This distinction varies only marginally across the states and other profile variables.

The minimum national standard is of lesser importance in relation to other comparison points; while 11% rank it as the most valuable, 41% indicate this is the least important comparison point that they referenced.

**Figure 7: Most important comparisons provided in NAPLAN report**

*Q12: There were four different comparisons in the report to assist you in understanding your child's performance. I would like you to rank them from 1 to 4 where 1 is the most important and 4 is the least important.*

*Results represent the proportion who allocate the comparison as the most important.*



### 3.4.2 Introductory Page Evaluation

Approximately two thirds of parents read all or most of the introductory page of the report (67%) while only 8% did not read it at all. Significantly more parents in NT read all of the introductory page (64% c.f. 45%). Also, significantly more parents with children in year three read all of the introductory page (52%), while significantly fewer parents with children in year nine read it (36%).

Qualitative research provides context for this level of readership. Parents reported that they did not necessarily need to read this information as it had already been provided by the school prior to the NAPLAN test occurring. This background information was mostly seen as secondary to the student results and not essential in aiding interpretation.

*"The introduction reinforced what I already knew. It was necessary information though, it gave basic background and explained the purpose of each test."*

*"I read this (introduction/explanation) after I read the results. I didn't need to read it to understand the results. It is good for parents to be able to get an understanding of the test without having to spend twenty minutes reading up on it."*

*"I don't remember what the first page said, it explained the report, but I was keen to get into the report."*

*"I didn't read the first section (introduction/explanation). When I opened the report I could instantly see from the key on the second page what the results were."*

For those parents that did read this section, the information provided was sufficient. It was also clear and easy to follow. This information provided a 'refresher' for parents as to what had previously been provided by schools prior to the testing occurring.

Overall, the graphic on the first page was easy to interpret and parents reported that this example helped them to understand how to interpret the results. It provided them with cues for the following information:

- Indicated the different bands that children could fall into
- Indicated my child/ren's result/s
- Indicated where my child was in comparison to the national average
- Indicated the bands in which 60% of the nation fell (for that particular grade)

For some parents, the example used in the NAPLAN student report was similar to examples used in previous state/territory testing. For these parents, this section was easily understood and often skimmed, before moving quickly to the results section.



### 3.4.3 Inner Pages Evaluation

The inner pages were most important for parents with the majority (94%) of parents having read most of all of their child/ren's specific result and only 1% did not read these at all. More parents read this section of the report more thoroughly than any other section.

*"When I opened it [report] I went straight this section of the report."*

*"I can look at the two pages and straight away work out how my child performed"*

In particular, parents focus on the graphs on the inner pages more so than the information below the text, with fewer (73%) parents reading all or most of this text to assist with interpretation.

*"This section is clear and concise and easy for parents to interpret"*

*"Each skill is on a separate graph making it easy to read"*

Regardless of this lower level of reading the interpretation notes, across all parents in the qualitative research, the majority had a 'clear' understanding of:

- All aspects of the graphs,
- The national standard,
- Their child/ren's results,
- 60% range of achievement and
- The minimum standard.

There are few significant differences in readership of the inner pages across states. However, significantly more parents with children in year three read all of the inner pages (81% c.f. 77%) and the information below the graphs (63% c.f. 57%).

### 3.4.4 Back Page Evaluation

Nearly three quarters of parents read all or most of the back page (72%) of the NAPLAN report while 7% did not read it at all. Significantly more parents in NT (67% c.f. 51%) and those with children in year three (51%) read the entire back page while significantly fewer parents with children in year nine did this (43%).

The parents that did read this section used it a variety of ways including:

- Read sections that were relevant to their child's place within the band width,
- Identify areas of improvement that can be worked on at home,
- Read up and down the bands to learn about the different skills assessed, and
- Read the bands under the student's status result to confirm that their child demonstrated these skills.

*"I'll use it to show my daughter where she is on each of the skills and how she feels about her result, whether it is accurate or not".*

*"I read the sections pertaining to my child, I also looked to see what skills were in the higher bands."*

*"I read the parts based on where my kids were at...I looked at the what the average skills were if my kids were below average."*

Parents who read the detail felt that this section was presented well with clearly partitioned descriptions and clear headings. Parents mentioned that this section provided useful information to support the students' results.

However, there was also some evidence in both stages of the research that not all parents are able to use the information on the back page to assist with interpretation. The main reason was related to the presentation of this section which made interpretation and understanding difficult for some parents interviewed. Parents commented that there was too much writing and the print was too fine ("like a legal document") preventing some parents from reading this section. It was suggested that bullet points would make this section easier to read. Parents thought that the information in this section should contain more concrete examples of what skills had been achieved. For example, 'spells frequently used words with less regular spelling patterns', parents would like further interpretation or examples of these words.

*"I didn't read this as completely as the rest of the report, probably because it was a whole page of writing. I read more clearly where my child's points were listed."*

*"It's hard to see when different sections start within the yellow sections (writing and numeracy)."*

*"Change the block text to dot points to make it easier to read and interpret."*

*"I don't understand some of the terminology used to explain the skills." (e.g. Reads a protractor scale to measure angle size.)*

*"It does give me a clearer picture of my son's overall skills, but I still need more of a breakdown."*

## Supporting Materials and Information

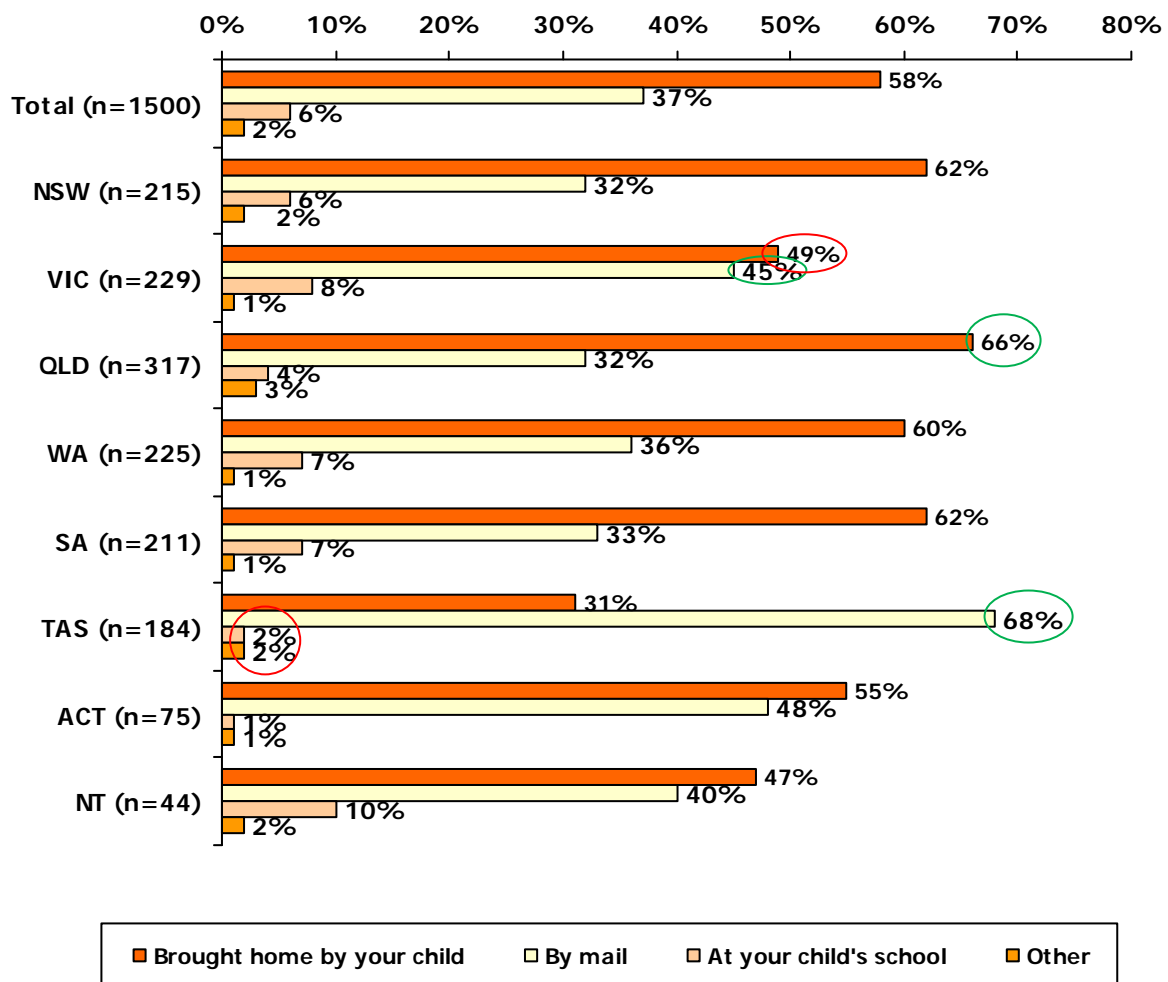
### 3.4.5 Process of Receiving

Across most states, the most common method of receiving a NAPLAN report was the report being brought home by the child. In particular, QLD parents were most likely to have had the report brought home by their child. In Tasmania, most parents received the report via mail (68%). Significantly more parents in VIC also received the report via mail (45%).

The one negative issue raised in the qualitative research by some parents was that the NAPLAN student report did not look like an 'important' document or a student report. A number of parents commented it looked more like a newsletter or pamphlet - particularly those parents that did not receive the report in an addressed, sealed envelope. These parents would prefer, in future, to have the reports mailed to ensure they receive this important document.

**Figure 8: How NAPLAN report was received – by State**

*Q2: How did you receive your child's NAPLAN report?*



Parents generally received their child's report before the end of term three. In Tasmania, due to the differences in term scheduling, most parents received the report early in term three. Only a small proportion received the report during the school holidays.

**Figure 9: When 2008 NAPLAN report was received – by State**

*Q1: When did you receive the NAPLAN report?<sup>1</sup>*

	Total (n=1500)	NSW (n=215)	VIC (n=229)	QLD (n=317)	WA (n=225)	SA (n=211)	TAS (n=184)	ACT (n=75)	NT (n=44)
Before end of Term 3	65%	77%	66%	46%	65%	77%	0%	71%	61%
Early in Term 3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	NA	NA
During the school holidays	7%	3%	8%	11%	8%	10%	19%	7%	2%
After the school holidays/beginning of term 4	20%	14%	19%	36%	20%	9%	11%	9%	32%

A number of parents did indicate that they were surprised when the NAPLAN student reports arrived home with their children or came in the mail as they had not been expecting them. One third (34%) were not aware that they'd be receiving the 2008 NAPLAN report before it arrived home. Parents at Catholic and Independent schools were more aware of the arrival of the NAPLAN student report (70% and 72% respectively).

During the qualitative interviews parents expressed they would like to be given information via the school newsletter or a letter home as to when to expect the NAPLAN results. This was particularly the case for those parents that did not receive the report in the mail, but rather unsealed and unaddressed; as they were concerned there may be situations under which their children may forget to pass on the report.

<sup>1</sup> The differences in Tasmanian school terms were accounted for by allowing for only these individuals to see the code Early in Term 3 #

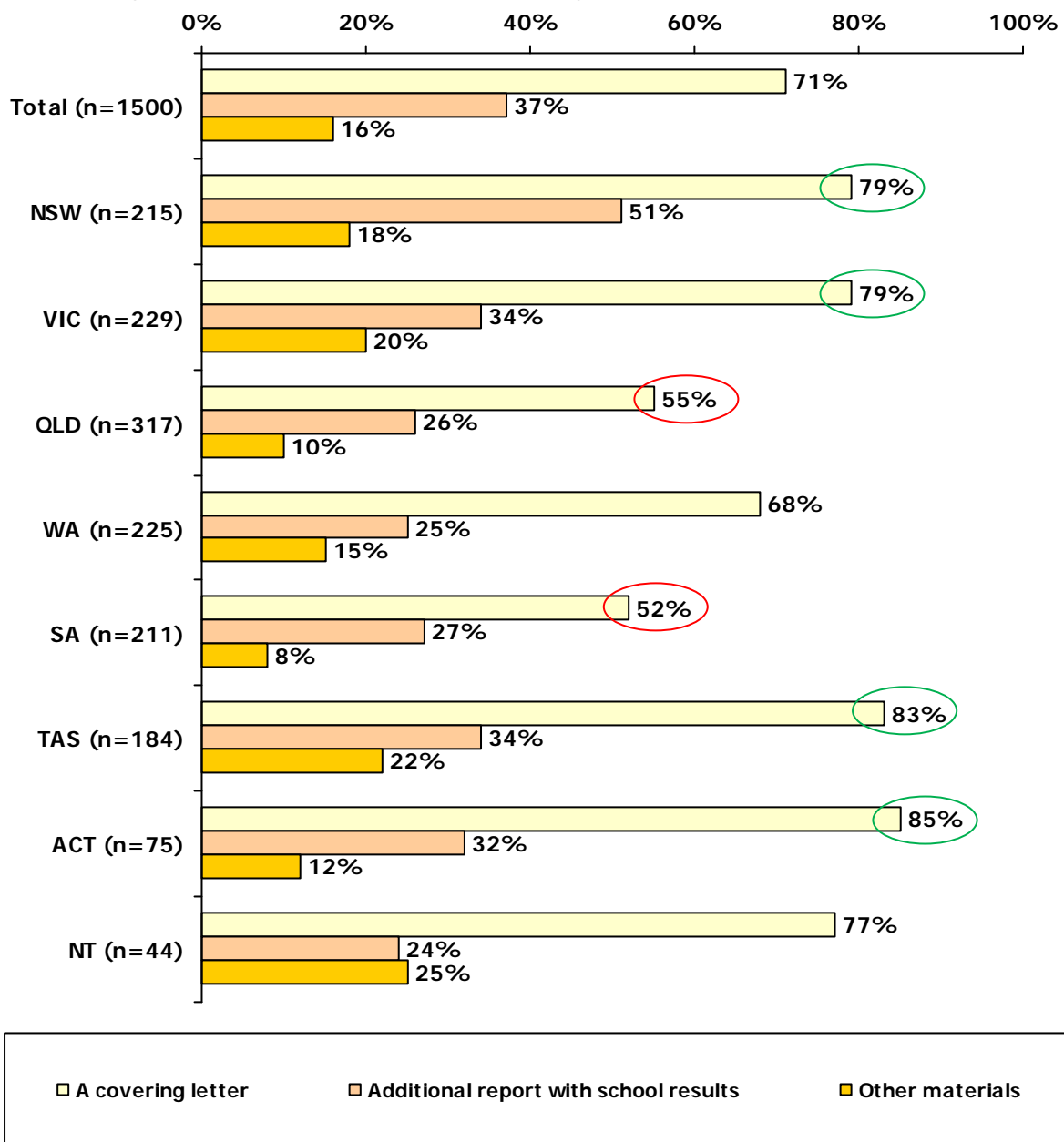
Generally, whether or not extra information was received with the NAPLAN student report, parents were happy with the amount of information they had been given. Parents most frequently received a covering letter with their NAPLAN report (71%). Letters provided by the school were highly valued for their information on school results.

More than one third received an additional report detailing the school results (37%). While this was most often received in NSW, there was a substantial proportion of parents in other states who also believe they received an additional report with school based results. When tested among NSW parents, the additional student report received by parents was perceived to be helpful. This separate report provided information about the school average, which allowed comparison of the child to the school and the school to the state. Approximately half of NSW parents interviewed did not recall receiving this additional school based report.

Significantly more parents in NSW, VIC, TAS and ACT received a covering letter while fewer in QLD and SA received this item. Significantly more parents with children in year 9 received a covering letter (77%) but there were no other significant differences observed across different year levels or types of schools.

**Figure 10: Additional items provided with NAPLAN report – by State**

*Q3: Were any of these additional items provided with your NAPLAN report?*



There are several significant differences noted in evaluation of the NAPLAN student report depending on how the parent received the report.

Parents who collected the report from the school evaluated it more negatively on several aspects. For example, significantly fewer of those parents were able to understand how their child performed relative to the national average and found the report easy to understand. Significantly more parents who received the report from the child's school would prefer comments about their child's individual performance to be included in the report.

**Table 8: Evaluation of NAPLAN report – by Method of Receiving**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements using a 5 point scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.*

<b>% who strongly agree</b>	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Mail</b> (n=609)	<b>At child's school</b> (n=82)	<b>Brought home by child</b> (n=833)
Able to understand how my child performed relative to national average	44%	45%	<b>32%</b>	45%
Able to understand how well my child performed	41%	44%	38%	41%
Layout was easy to follow	41%	40%	39%	42%
Able to understand how my child performed relative to the national minimum standard	41%	42%	35%	41%
Able to understand the different bands in report	39%	39%	35%	40%
Easy to understand	38%	36%	<b>28%</b>	40%
The report was useful	33%	33%	40%	33%
Liked the look of report	30%	30%	32%	31%
Written text throughout was useful	27%	31%	23%	26%
Prefer comments to be about my child's performance	27%	28%	<b>41%</b>	27%
Not enough detail in the report	9%	10%	12%	8%
Too much detail in the report	2%	3%	1%	2%

There are also some significant differences apparent based on the types of additional information that parents received with their NAPLAN report.

Overall, parents who received an additional report containing school results evaluated the NAPLAN report more positively. In particular, parents who received school results were significantly more able to understand how their child performed relative to the national average, found the report useful and also found the written text throughout the report useful.

**Table 9: Evaluation of NAPLAN report – by Additional Items Received with Report**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements using a 5 point scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.*

<b>% who strongly agree</b>	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Covering Letter</b> (n=1040)	<b>Additional Report with School Results</b> (n=480)	<b>Other Materials</b> (n=234)
Able to understand how my child performed relative to national average	44%	45%	<b>50%</b>	44%
Able to understand how well my child performed	41%	42%	45%	42%
Layout was easy to follow	41%	40%	42%	42%
Able to understand how my child performed relative to the national minimum standard	41%	42%	44%	42%
Able to understand the different bands in report	39%	41%	42%	36%
Easy to understand	38%	38%	40%	35%
The report was useful	33%	34%	<b>39%</b>	31%
Liked the look of report	30%	32%	33%	27%
Written text throughout was useful	27%	30%	<b>32%</b>	26%
Prefer comments to be about my child's performance	27%	25%	28%	25%
Not enough detail in the report	9%	8%	8%	11%
Too much detail in the report	2%	3%	3%	5%

### 3.4.6 Referral Points

Parents are generally referring to friends and family members to better understand the NAPLAN student report – almost half of parents are doing this (44%). Few parents seek external reference points such as an education department or organisation, internet or newspaper. Significantly fewer parents in VIC spoke to someone at their child's school (13%), while significantly fewer parents in WA spoke to other parents at their child's school (32%). It appears that the same parents are using several referral points, as 43% of parents did not refer to another source. Significantly fewer parents in ACT did not use any referral points (32%).

In most instances, the level of information and support provided prior to the NAPLAN assessment was more than appropriate for interpretation and parents did not need further explanation or assistance regarding the NAPLAN report or results.

**Figure 11: Referral points used – by State**

*Q7a: Did you do any of the following to better understand your child's NAPLAN report?*

	Total (n=1500)	NSW (n=215)	VIC (n=229)	QLD (n=317)	WA (n=225)	SA (n=211)	TAS (n=184)	ACT (n=75)	NT (n=44)
Speak to other friends/family	44%	51%	38%	45%	32%	47%	42%	44%	52%
Speak to other parents at child's school	19%	23%	13%	20%	23%	17%	19%	21%	32%
Speak to someone at child's school	16%	13%	16%	19%	18%	19%	18%	19%	25%
Look for information on the internet	6%	10%	3%	2%	5%	6%	6%	7%	2%
Speak to an education department/organisation	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	1%	9%
Reference information in a newspaper	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%
Did not refer to another source	43%	39%	49%	40%	49%	41%	46%	32%	40%



### 3.4.7 Information Required

Parents were asked whether there was any other information that they would have liked to receive with the NAPLAN student report. Approximately a third did not answer this question indicating that they did not need other information, while another third specifically mentioned that they did not need anything else. In most instances, the level of information and support provided prior to the NAPLAN assessment was more than appropriate for interpretation and parents did not need further explanation regarding the NAPLAN student report or results.

Of those who did request other information, parents generally would have liked to receive more detailed and personalised information.

- Parents would prefer to see **personalised information** about their child's individual performance rather than seeing a 'dot on a graph'.
- Parents would also like to see a comparison of how their child performed **relative to their own school** or local schools.
- They would also like to see a copy of the test or an **example of the questions** asked. Although there was information on the nature of the questions; parents may require more detailed information or may have simply not realised that this information was included.
- Parents would also like to understand which areas specifically their child **performed poorly** in. Some parents were concerned because their child was performing below average but they did not clearly understand what their child is struggling with which makes it difficult for them to take action. Similarly, they would also like the report to clearly communicate those areas which the child needs to **improve** in and suggestions for getting help in those areas.
- It was also suggested that schools and teachers could provide **personalised feedback**. Rather than teachers simply distributing the reports, parents would prefer them to provide an overview of their child's performance.
- Another request was a breakdown of the percentage of children within each band. This would provide parents with an idea of whether their child/ren were in a similar position to others in the nation, for e.g. for a year three student, if 40% of children scored within band 3, parents would know that other children were having problems with this particular skill area as well.
- A few parents thought that they should have been given information on how to help their child/ren improve in the skills and areas that they did not do so well in or, if child fell below 60% bands. Related to this was the question of whether the school or education departments would be acting on the results to increase the national average for these literacy and numeracy skills.

Given the option of additional information on their child's performance, 57% of parents indicated that this would be preferred.

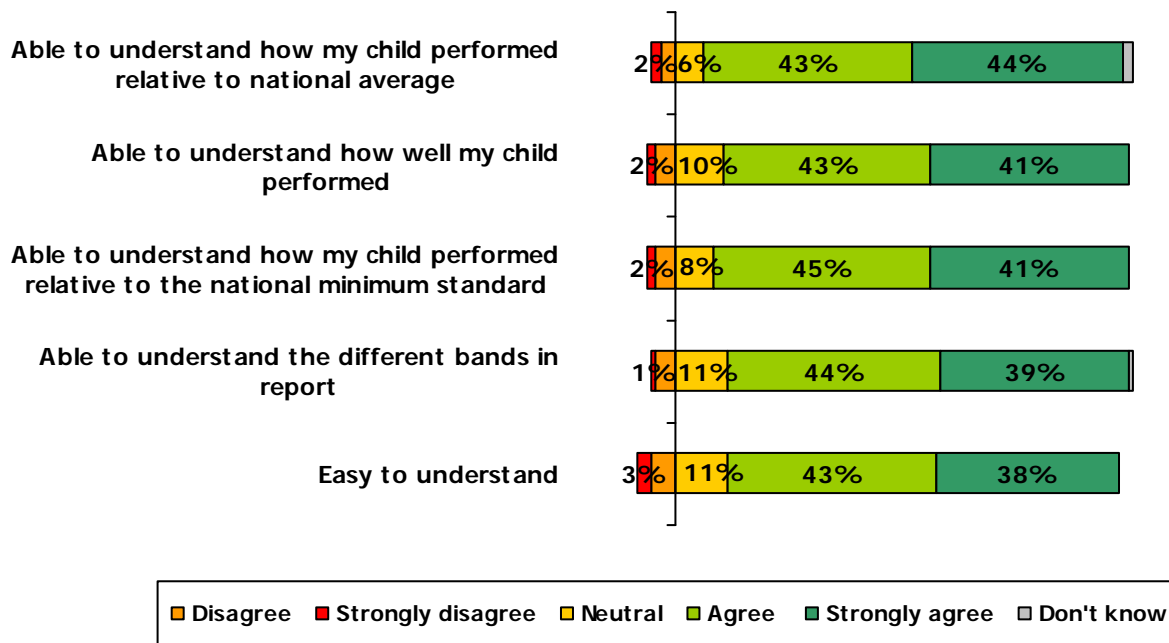
## 3.5 Interpretation and Resulting Outcome

### 3.5.1 Ability to Interpret Results

The NAPLAN student reports are generally able to be interpreted by parents, with over 80% agreeing they are easy to understand and, more importantly, high levels of agreement that parents are able to understand how their child performed against the benchmarks provided. There is a small proportion of the parent sample interviewed who indicated that they could not interpret the NAPLAN student report.

**Figure 12: Interpretation of the NAPLAN student report**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).*



Overall parents were able to interpret and gain a good understanding of the NAPLAN student report. The qualitative research indicated that parents valued the clarity and simplicity of the report as it was easy to read and self-explanatory i.e. they did not need to read a lot of supporting documentation to be able to understand the report.

*“(NAPLAN is) clearer than the school report and the results correspond with my child's workbooks. It's clear, bold and precise. There is no misinterpreting it (results section).”*

*“The report was very simple, no complicated language was used and I didn't need to go through a lot of paperwork to be able to understand it.”*

Depending upon parent's prior exposure to National assessment and prior reporting there were differences in the current assessment of the 2008 NAPLAN student report. For example, the previous Western Australia Literacy and Numeracy Assessment was described as much harder to read in a three page fold out format. There were also comments about liking/ disliking the colours in contrast to prior reports and references to having numbers and scores provided previously.

Ability to interpret the NAPLAN student reports is more apparent among certain parental types. Parents who had two or more children sit the NAPLAN tests and received student reports in 2008 were significantly more likely to 'strongly agree' indicating they were more comfortable with their interpretation and understanding. Respondents who are primarily at home were also consistently more comfortable in interpreting the NAPLAN student reports as were parents aged between 26 and 35 years.

**Table 10: Interpretation of the NAPLAN student report**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).*

% Strongly Agree <sup>2</sup>	Total (n=1500)	Received 1 NAPLAN report (n=1113)	Received 2 or more NAPLAN reports (n=369)	26-35 yrs (n=354)	36-45 yrs (n=835)	46 – 55 yrs (n=279)	Home Duties (n=376)
Able to understand how my child performed relative to <b>national average</b>	44%	41%	54%	51%	42%	44%	50%
Able to understand how my child performed	41%	38%	52%	47%	40%	41%	48%
Able to understand how my child performed relative to the <b>national minimum standard</b>	41%	38%	47%	49%	38%	39%	47%
Able to understand the different bands	39%	37%	47%	43%	36%	44%	46%
Easy to understand	38%	34%	37%	46%	35%	37%	47%

Evaluation and interpretation of the NAPLAN student report does not differ significantly based upon readership of the first page or back page. That is, parents have similar interpretation of the report regardless of whether they read the entire first page or did not read it at all. Therefore, understanding of the report does not appear to be significantly helped or hindered depending on whether parents have actually read the explanatory pages provided. The front and back pages assist as a reference point for interested parent but not reading them does not restrict the ability to interpret the results.

**Table 11: Interpretation of the NAPLAN student report – By Readership of the First Page**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).*

% Strongly Agree	Total (n=1500)	Read all of first page (n=669)	Read most of first page (n=337)	Skimmed first page (n=362)	Did not read first page (n=123)
Able to understand how my child performed	41%	43%	39%	40%	46%
Easy to understand	38%	41%	35%	34%	40%

<sup>2</sup> Figures have been shown for Strongly Agree only rather than the cumulative 'Agree/ Strongly Agree' in order to better display the statistically significant differences apparent in the data.

**Table 12: Interpretation of the NAPLAN student report – by Readership of the Back Page**

Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).

<b>% Strongly Agree<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Read all of back page</b> (n=669)	<b>Read most of back page</b> (n=337)	<b>Skimmed back page</b> (n=362)	<b>Did not read back page</b> (n=123)
Able to understand how my child performed	41%	42%	41%	39%	44%
Easy to understand	38%	40%	34%	37%	34%

Within the quantitative survey, there was a capture mechanism to understand if any sections of the NAPLAN student report that were not liked or understood. Of the 1,500 parents who were interviewed only 221 provided a comment to the telephone interviewers when prompted. The majority (85%) did not comment indicating there were no major issues that they had with the report. The major themes of feedback that were received included:

- Parents wanting a bit more explanation on interpreting the **individual child's results** and **personalisation** of results. For some the results were considered a bit too broad with not enough context or detail to enable the parent to take action.
- **Concern over the child's results**, which was typically expressed when the child was performing below average.
  - Some parents were concerned when their child's performance was more negative than anticipated. A number commented upon inconsistency between the NAPLAN results and the school based feedback from teachers. This raises concerns for these parents about how NAPLAN was graded, how to interpret and concern that this discrepancy can be a confidence blow for students.
  - For others there is concern that the situation of the child is not acknowledged e.g. may have been sick or have a disability. For these parents it is less important to know their child's progress against a national level and more important to understand how their child is progressing individually.
- Some **confusion** was expressed over the 'graphs, bands and dots'. This included a variety of issues and examples including:
  - Bands not even in interpretation; blank components of the report; some concern about the distinction between the three literacy scores and explanations; results can seem contradictory across the literacy components when scoring highly in one area and quite low in another; wanting numbers or percentages rather than the dots.
- Some parents found it generally **hard to understand** for a variety of reasons and had to give it a lot of consideration time to properly interpret. The back page was cited with mixed feedback; at times providing assistance for interpretation and at times being too difficult to use.
- There was also some **negative sentiment** against the NAPLAN tests, content and process which parents felt may have negatively biased their child's result. Examples provided by parents included dissatisfaction with wording of questions being vague from their child/ren's perspective; not understanding the testing that was done; the child being sick on the day or not sitting the exam; the test is only being reflective of that one point in time; WA & QLD schooling system differences; and level of preparation and warning provided by the school. These issues of concern are unrelated to their feedback on the NAPLAN student report, although would have influenced their opinions in general.

<sup>3</sup> Figures have been shown for Strongly Agree only rather than the cumulative 'Agree/ Strongly Agree' in order to better display the statistically significant differences apparent in the data.

Parents feel the NAPLAN student reports provided them with confirmatory information or a 'jolt' to investigate further their child/ren's performance. When the results are more positive or negative than anticipated, parents notice and want to understand the results more thoroughly. Here are some example comments from parents who did learn something new about their child's performance:

*"I know he's really good at maths and he did way above the national average, so that cemented and concreted that for me. He's really bad at spelling and he came in way below, so it reinforced what already believed, which is a good thing. The teacher told me that he was so behind that he might have to repeat, and then I go the NAPLAN report and he was right on what he should be except for the spelling."*

*"I didn't realise she was low on her spelling, it did shock me."*

*"I don't think so [told me new information]. I believe it would be more valuable for my 2nd child, my first child is high achiever so I wasn't surprised with results. With my 2nd child I'm more interested with results."*

*"Just an arrow...a black dot ....what it means within the bands ....does not tell me any more in terms of the whole performance ..."*

*"The results contradicted her school results, been doing well at school but didn't do that well at the NAPLAN as the curriculum was not the same."*

*"It was particularly interesting to us because it contradicted a test taken at beginning of year to understand literacy and numeracy level and whether she would need ongoing support."*

### 3.5.2 Action Taken by Parents

The majority (97%) of parents interviewed will keep their child/ren's 2008 NAPLAN student report for future reference.

While many parents probably spoke to their child about their results, 20% formally took action by talking further to their child about their results. In terms of other action taken 14% spoke to their child's teacher and 9% arranged for additional tutoring or other support. Six in ten parents interviewed did not take any specific action after receiving the 2008 NAPLAN student report.

Parents with children in year five were more likely to take some degree of formal action to further understand their child's result while parents with children in year level nine were most likely to speak to their child further. Parents interviewed who have a child at an independent school were least likely to take any further action as a result of seeing the NAPLAN results.

**Table 13: Action taken by parents since receiving the NAPLAN student report – by Year Level and School Type**

*Q14: Since receiving your child's NAPLAN report, have you taken any actions as a result? (Multiple Response)*

	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Yr 3</b> (n=500)	<b>Yr 5</b> (n=467)	<b>Yr 7</b> (n=491)	<b>Yr 9</b> (n=426)	<b>Govt.</b> (n=1179)	<b>Cath.</b> (n=246)	<b>Indep.</b> (n=159)
Spoke to child	20%	18%	17%	18%	23%	20%	20%	11%
Spoke to teacher	14%	15%	17%	14%	11%	14%	14%	7%
Arranged tutoring	9%	8%	12%	9%	6%	8%	8%	9%
Spoke to principal	2%	4%	4%	3%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Took other action	11%	12%	12%	9%	8%	12%	9%	5%
No specific action	60%	59%	56%	63%	62%	57%	63%	75%

## 3.6 Parent Segment Investigations

### 3.6.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) Parent Profile

Parents of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island background had some issues with the NAPLAN report. These are detailed below. Please note that only a small sample of 33 parents was interviewed quantitatively and 3 were interviewed qualitatively so results should be used indicatively.

**Table 14: Profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) parents**

<b>Process of Receiving</b>	Many ATSI parents received the NAPLAN report before the end of term three (65%). They generally received the reports from their child/children (55%) or by mail (44%). Significantly fewer ATSI parents received the report at their child's school (1% c.f. 6%).
<b>Evaluation and Interpretation</b>	<p>ATSI parents generally find the NAPLAN report to be a valuable document with 92% indicating it is very valuable or valuable. They generally evaluated the report positively with almost half strongly agreeing that they were able to understand how well their child performed (50%) and how well their child performed relative to the national average (45%). Despite this, it appears that ATSI parents may have had difficulty in understanding the detail of this document. In particular, significantly fewer strongly agreed that the report was easy to understand (20% c.f. 38%).</p> <p>ATSI parents have significantly higher readership of certain sections of the NAPLAN report. Specifically, significantly more of these parents are reading all of the first page (62% c.f. 45%) and significantly fewer are indicating that they are not reading the inner pages at all (0%).</p>
<b>Referral Points Used/Supporting Information</b>	<p>Many ATSI parents did use a referral point to better understand their child's NAPLAN report. Approximately half spoke to friends or family members (52%) and another quarter (23%) spoke to someone at their child's school. Although ATSI parents experienced some difficulty in understanding report, they did not rely on referral points significantly more so than other parent groups.</p> <p>ATSI parents mostly received some type of supporting information with their child's report. Most commonly, they received a covering letter (69%). Almost half (47%) received an additional report with school results and a third (34%) received some other type of material – frequently mentioned responses here were pamphlets and brochures that explained the test and how to interpret the results.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	Considering the results for evaluation and readership of the NAPLAN report together, it seems that ATSI parents are certainly engaged in the report - however, they do not always clearly understand it. ATSI parents may benefit from receiving supporting documents with their report which explain how the report should be interpreted. However, it is important to ensure that the documents provided do indeed explain the test and the report simply – although a third (34%) indicated that they did receive supporting information with this NAPLAN report, they still had some difficulty in understanding it. It may also be beneficial to suggest contact points for ATSI parents to refer to should they have questions about the report.

### 3.6.2 Multicultural Parent Profile

Parents who have a multicultural background were quite positive toward the NAPLAN student report and were generally quite engaged. In the quantitative survey n=100 parents were interviewed who spoke a language other than English at home and this has been used as the classification of a multicultural background in this instance.

**Table 15: Profile of multicultural parents**

<b>Process of Receiving</b>	Multicultural parents commonly received their NAPLAN reports from their child who brought it home from school (52%) or by mail (39%). Significantly more multicultural parents received the report directly from their child's school (13% c.f. 6%).
<b>Evaluation and Interpretation</b>	<p>Multicultural parents recognise the importance of national assessment with significantly more of them strongly agreeing that is it very important (54%). They also consider the NAPLAN report to be valuable, with 86% perceiving this to be a very valuable or valuable test.</p> <p>Multicultural parents generally had positive perceptions of the NAPLAN report. In particular, they were able to understand how well their child performed relative to the national average (45% strongly agree); they considered the report useful (43%) and they were able to understand how well their child performed relative to the minimum national standard (42%). Significantly more multicultural parents strongly agreed that they found the report useful (43%) than other parent types.</p> <p>Multicultural parents read most of the NAPLAN report. Approximately three quarters read all or most of the introductory page (74%) or the back page (79%). The vast majority read all or most of the two inner pages (95%).</p>
<b>Referral Points Used/Supporting Information</b>	<p>Many multicultural parents received supporting information with their child's NAPLAN report. Approximately three quarters received a covering letter (78%), half received an additional report with school results (54%) while 11% received some other material.</p> <p>Multicultural parents most frequently referred to friends and family members for help to understand the NAPLAN report (54%). This is a significantly higher proportion compared to other parent groups. Approximately a fifth also spoke to someone at their child's school (23%) or another parent from their child's school (22%).</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	Currently, multicultural parents appear to be engaged and interested in the NAPLAN report and also seem to have a solid understanding of this document. This may be related to the fact that this parent group received a number of supporting documents with their NAPLAN report – in particular, significantly more of these parents received an additional report containing school results. They also used a number of referral points to aid their understanding of the report, especially friends and family members. The supporting materials and referral points may have improved their understanding for these parents.



### 3.6.3 Parent Groups Requiring Support

Among the small group of parents who express difficulty with interpreting and understanding the NAPLAN report there is no clear profile of who they are. There are few distinguishing factors such as socio-economic status, demography or the child/ren's educational profile. Rather they are simply struggling to understand for a variety of different reasons. This makes it challenging to provide targeted support to assist with interpretation.

Interpretation of the NAPLAN report seems to be strongly linked to the value that parents place upon the test and the perceived importance of national assessment. It is the same core group of parents interviewed who have a tendency to respond negatively towards the NAPLAN student report. Those parents who do not consider the report valuable have significantly lower ratings on all aspects of understanding the report. Further, those who do not consider national assessment to be important also rate significantly lower on many of the interpretation aspects.

<b>% Strongly Agree<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Total</b> (n=1500)	<b>Consider report valuable</b> (n=567)	<b>Do not consider report valuable</b> (n=48)	<b>Consider national assessment important</b> (n=578)	<b>Do not consider national assessment important</b> (n=41)
Able to understand how my child performed relative to <b>national average</b>	44%	49%	25%	48%	25%
Able to understand how my child performed	41%	46%	19%	44%	22%
Able to understand how my child performed relative to the <b>national minimum standard</b>	41%	45%	22%	44%	23%
Able to understand the different bands	39%	43%	24%	41%	26%
Easy to understand	38%	41%	22%	40%	22%

<sup>4</sup> Figures have been shown for Strongly Agree only rather than the cumulative 'Agree/ Strongly Agree' in order to better display the statistically significant differences apparent in the data.

There are a couple of indicators within the quantitative research but the patterns are not overly strong. One of the more consistent patterns is related to employment status between the parent interviewed working full time and doing home duties. Parents who work full time were less likely to 'strongly agree' that they were able to understand how their child performed and the different bands in the report. Furthermore, they were less likely to consider the report easy to understand. In this instance, however, it may be the case that parents who work full time are just less engaged in the process of receiving and interpreting the NAPLAN report, rather than not being able to understand it. Another hypothesis is that they have slightly less time to consider the report, the implications and get engaged than those parents who assume a role focused on home duties.

Significantly fewer ATSI parents (20%) strongly agreed that the NAPLAN report was easy to understand.

**Table 16: Interpretation of the NAPLAN student report**

*Q5: Could you please tell me your agreement with the following statements (references a 5 pt Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).*

<b>% Strongly Agree<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total</b> (n=606)	<b>Full Time Employee</b> (n=355)	<b>Home Duties</b> (n=376)	<b>ATSI</b> (n=33)
Able to understand how my child performed relative to <b>national average</b>	44%	<b>37%</b>	<b>50%</b>	45%
Able to understand how my child performed	41%	<b>33%</b>	<b>48%</b>	50%
Able to understand how my child performed relative to the <b>national minimum standard</b>	41%	<b>35%</b>	<b>47%</b>	41%
Able to understand the different bands	39%	<b>31%</b>	<b>46%</b>	31%
Easy to understand	38%	<b>28%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>20%</b>

<sup>5</sup> Figures have been shown for Strongly Agree only rather than the cumulative 'Agree/ Strongly Agree' in order to better display the statistically significant differences apparent in the data.

There were several significant differences in the referral points used across the year level of the child who sat the NAPLAN test. Generally, it appears that parents with a child in year three were significantly more likely to rely on contact points such as other parents to better understand the NAPLAN student report. This is possibly due to their greater likelihood of 2008 having been their first experience with national assessment. Parents with children in year nine, however, are less likely to use referral points such as someone at their child's school (10%), other parents (12%) or friends/family (37%). Again, it may simply be that they are not as interested or concerned about these results.

**Table 17: Referral Points for Interpreting NAPLAN report – by Year Level**

*Q7: Did you do any of the following to better understand your child's NAPLAN report?*

<b>% Strongly Agree<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Total (n=1498)</b>	<b>Yr 3 child (n=500)</b>	<b>Yr 9 child (n=426)</b>
Speak to someone at your child's school	16%	19%	<b>10%</b>
Speak to other parents at your child's school	19%	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Speak to other friends/family	44%	48%	<b>37%</b>
Speak to an education department or other education organisations	4%	3%	5%
Look for information on the internet	6%	8%	5%
Reference information in a newspaper	3%	4%	2%

<sup>6</sup> Figures have been shown for Strongly Agree only rather than the cumulative 'Agree/ Strongly Agree' in order to better display the statistically significant differences apparent in the data.

### 3.7 Conclusions

The 2008 NAPLAN student report issued is considered to have received a consistent and positive evaluation. NAPLAN student results were valued, considered important and were able to be understood by the majority of parents who received them. There were no major issues raised during the evaluation which would indicate that significant changes are required for subsequent years.

The core messages received from the NAPLAN student reports is the comparison of their child/ren to the national average and an ability to assess their child/ren's performance. The achievement bands and the national average were the most important comparison points so that parents can assess their child/ren to be higher or lower than average. This is more important than understanding the national minimum average.

If performance is in-line with expectations there is less engagement and subsequent reaction to the NAPLAN report as the message is confirmatory to messages that parents receive from their child/ren's school. When performance is higher than expectations, parents express a degree of pride and delight in their child. When performance is lower than expectations there is confusion, concern and a bit of distrust in results. Some parents take note of lower than average performance and realise that their child may require support in this area. Other parents choose not to believe the results for varying reasons and place more emphasis on the school's assessment of performance. Confusion can also occur when results for literacy components vary significantly for the child.

Based upon the feedback, there was general acceptance of the 2008 NAPLAN report and there are no significant changes required. However, consideration could be given to providing scored results as some parents are conditioned to expect a score rather than relative indication of performance. Further thinking may also be required around the format of the back page of the report. There were varied opinions on this page; although some parents found it useful, others found the presentation difficult to understand and interpret. Formatting and delivery of the report could also be made more 'formal' to convey to parents the importance of the document. This may involve designing the report to look 'less like a brochure' and posting the report directly to parents.

Parents did tend to focus primarily on the graphs of their child/ren's results. Approximately two thirds to three quarters of parents interviewed read most or all of the other informative and text sections of the report. The introduction page was considered to be a good overview and a refresher of the process. The back page consistently received mixed feedback from parents and there is no clear recommendation on how to proceed with results being so highly varied – further thinking may be required for future reports. Parents who were positive about the back page of results were more likely to have read it in full and, while sometimes struggling, were able to use the information contained within to better interpret their child's result. However other parents considered the back page to be 'too hard' to interpret to be useful.

Looking at the evaluation factors by state, there is some evidence these differences were influential in the overall evaluation of parents in those states:

- In NSW an additional school based report was provided. When noticed by parents there was an increase in the perception of 'value', however 49% of NSW parents interviewed did not recall receiving this report.
- QLD & WA results occasionally indicated a degree of scepticism towards the NAPLAN report and process. Commentary from these parents indicates some are concerned about the interpretation of the nationwide results when these two systems operate at a different age level.
- Despite these few differences, parent's reaction and evaluation of the 2008 NAPLAN student reports were relatively consistent across the states.

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Because there are limited indicators with population profile or child educational profile as to where assistance is required, rather than requiring a push of additional information to a particular group of parents it might be more appropriate to ensure there is a clear and easy reference point so that these parents can proactively seek easy clarification.

However, it is important to continue to consider sub groups of the parental population such as ATSI and multicultural groups. While there were no significant concerns with these parents interviewed, there is some evidence that ATSI parents may need further support to interpret and that parents with a multicultural background are using reference points to become engaged with the report.

### ***Potential Improvements Raised by Parents***

There were a number of improvements and suggestions raised by parents. While these did form common themes, Colmar Brunton Research would caution against trying to implement these without due consideration of potential negative implications. Largely the existing format of the NAPLAN student reports performs quite well.

The main recommendation from parents which would strengthen the value of the NAPLAN student report would be a more personalised and tailored report. This might not be feasible given the scope of the distribution and the general positive results received with the current format. Parents are also interested in seeing how well their child performed within their school, region or state. It appears that seeing their child/ren's performance relative to the national average is too 'abstract' for some parents. An understanding of where their child is ranked at a local level may provide more meaning and context to the results.

Many parents also expressed concern over not being able to take action on their child/ren's NAPLAN report results. This issue was mentioned as something that was missing from the recently issued report and also as a suggested improvement for future reports. Parents have mentioned that although the report shows that their child is performing poorly, it does not specify which areas their child needs to improve in or offer recommendations on how to help their child. While it may not be feasible to identify those problem areas for individual children, some clear recommendations on actions that can be taken would be well-received by parents.

Parents have mentioned that they would like the explanatory information in the report to be detailed but still clear and simple. It is important to achieve a balance between providing all the necessary information that parents need to comfortably interpret the report and not providing excessive and overly 'technical' information.

The more they view the report the easier it becomes to interpret. However, future interpretation behaviour might be ingrained upon the initial receipt of their child/ren's first NAPLAN report. For example, if the parent considers the first report to be of limited particular value or they do not fully understand the content, it is possible that future reports may be given a lower level of priority. Moving forward it could be a priority to support parents with children being tested for the first time in year level three. Parents in year three have read the report more thoroughly; parents with children in year five appear to be the most active in deriving action from the NAPLAN reports, while parents with children in year nine have a history of understanding of their child's performance and take less formal action based upon results.

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## 4 APPENDIX A: TECHNICAL NOTES

### 4.1.1 Quantitative research approach

A Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) approach was used to administer the survey. The sample for the survey was a random selection from a purchased panel of parents with children aged 7 – 18 years. The source of this list was Great Australian Surveys. The overall sample size for the survey was 1500 persons.

#### Scope of the survey

It is important to note the following about the scope of the CATI survey:

- a targeted survey of parents whose child/ren had undertaken NAPLAN assessment in 2008 from grades 3,5,7, or 9;
- all parents had received their 2008 NAPLAN student report;
- if multiple children in the household received a NAPLAN student report the questionnaire captured details for all children.

#### Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the survey was conducted by an experienced fieldwork team, who are fully accredited with Interviewer Quality Control Accreditation and have undergone training set out by these standards. A briefing, including a practice interview, was held with all interviewers and the field supervisor prior to the commencement of interviewing. This was followed by a pilot consisting of 20 interviews, after which some amendments to the survey were made.

Fieldwork for the survey was conducted between October 8 and November 23, 2008.

#### Weighting

To ensure the telephone survey results are representative of the Australian population, they were adjusted, or **weighted**, using population information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This is done because the sample data on its own is biased. For example, in telephone surveys typically greater proportions of females participate than males, when compared to the proportion of females in the population. Similarly, we need to adjust because approximately the same numbers of people were interviewed in each state, whereas the population of Australia is distributed unevenly by state.

The geographic quotas of the sample are the same dissections applied to the total Australian population. What weighting does is adjust the proportions of these geographic locations in the sample so they are the **same** as the proportions in the wider population.

The results from this survey were weighted by geographic spread to nullify the quotas by region placed on the sample.

The following table shows how weights for this survey were calculated and applied. Column A shows how many interviews were achieved by location. Column B provides this as a proportional figure. Column C shows the total parental population breakdown by state. These figures are the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics year 2006 parental Census figures. The adjusted sample size, correcting for any disproportions in the sample, is shown in Column D. Column E shows the needed weight factor to achieve the proportionate sample shown in Column D.

**Table 18: Statistics used in weighting**

	Column A Interview #	Column B Proportion of Sample	Column C Australian Population	Column D Adjusted sample proportion	Weighting factor
Sydney	101	7%	13%	13%	1.897493
NSW	114	8%	20%	20%	2.672831
Melbourne	100	7%	11%	11%	1.578672
VIC	129	9%	14%	14%	1.680175
Brisbane	107	7%	6%	6%	0.862028
QLD	210	14%	14%	14%	0.972681
Adelaide	100	7%	3%	3%	0.453921
SA	111	7%	4%	4%	0.559999
Perth	100	7%	4%	4%	0.637654
WA	125	8%	6%	6%	0.691572
Hobart	63	4%	2%	2%	0.386543
TAS	121	8%	1%	1%	0.084699
Darwin	33	2%	1%	1%	0.291141
NT	11	1%	0%	0%	0.479901
ACT	75	5%	1%	1%	0.337193
Total	1500	100%	100%	100%	

## Percentages

Respondents who completed an interview but did not answer a particular question are excluded from the tabulation of results and calculation of statistics for that question.

Percentages are generally rounded to whole numbers. Some percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

## Prompted and unprompted responses

Some questions in the survey collected both a prompted and an unprompted response. For example, respondents were asked:

*'Were there any sections of the report that you did not like or understand?'*

This question was asked in an open fashion without providing the respondent response categories to choose from. The resultant answer is the 'unprompted' response. Unprompted responses capture what is top-of-mind for the respondent and hence probably most influential in terms of their beliefs or decision-making.

The interviewer then went on to probe about specific options that were not mentioned by the respondent on a top-of-mind basis. For example, the interviewer will ask:

*"Do you consider the NAPLAN student report to be...."*

Very valuable	1
Valuable	2
Not really valuable	3
Not at all valuable	4
Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT)	5

By reading out (prompting) each of the possible answers and recording them correspondingly. The resultant answer is the 'prompted' response.

## Error

All surveys are subject to errors. There are two main types of errors: sampling errors and non-sampling errors.

### Sampling error

The sampling error is the error that arises because not every single member of the population was included in the survey.

Naturally it is simply not feasible to survey the whole population to avoid this type of error. One can, however, estimate how big this error component is, using statistical theory. This theory indicates that with a sample of 1,000 people from a population of 100,000 people or more, the maximum margin of sampling error on an estimate of a proportion is 3.1%.

The way this can be interpreted is as follows. The survey results estimate that 36% of respondents would feel less safe if the prohibited list was reduced. The maximum margin of error on this estimate of 36% is 3%. Hence, one can be 95% confident that the actual proportion of people in the population that is 36% +/- 3%, i.e. it is between 33% and 39%. Another way to phrase this is: if CBSR had taken 100 samples of 1,000 people, 95 of those samples would yield an estimate of the proportion of people that is between 33% and 39%. Hence, one can be very confident in our estimate of the proportion of people who would feel less safe if the prohibited list was reduced.

In all charts in this report, groups are compared against each other and, where possible, differences are tested for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level.

### Non-sampling error

All surveys, regardless of whether they are samples or censuses, are subject to other types of error called non-sampling error. Non-sampling error includes things like interviewer keying errors and respondents misunderstanding a question.

Every attempt has been made to minimise the non-sampling error in this study. For example, use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) reduces the number of keying errors and ensures interviewers ask the right questions. However, some types of error are out of the control of the researcher. In particular, the study is reliant on accurate reporting of behaviours and views by respondents. For example, a respondent may forget that they played tennis nine months ago and fail to report this activity.



## 5 APPENDIX B: DISCUSSION GUIDES

### Project NAPLAN DEPTH DISCUSSION GUIDE – (V3) FINAL – 1HR 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2008

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#### Research Purpose of Overall Study:

- The key purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which parents of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 understand the information communicated by the NAPLAN individual student reports.
- The research findings will be used to:
  - assess the extent to which the student reports effectively communicate the information about the testing program and individual students' results,
  - recommend required improvements to the student reports to be issued from the 2009 NAPLAN and beyond, and
  - provide baseline information for any future review or evaluation of the reporting of student literacy and numeracy assessment at the national level.

- 
- This report was sent home in September quite independently from any school term reports. It did not include any state referencing (to previous report scales etc). It is less likely that parents would have looked at the NAPLAN report in conjunction with the school report than in previous years... this may be an issue for parents in itself.
  - The NAPLAN report was for testing that took place in May... well before the Semester 1 school reports were sent home, so it is most likely that the NAPLAN results received in September could be of a lower standard than those received in school reports in July for an individual student. This was pointed out in at least 2 jurisdictions

What to Ask	Stimulus	Outcome			
<b>Section 1: Introduction and Respondent Background</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>5 mins</b></span>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain confidentiality, independence, taping of session, ask if any questions.</li> <li>➤ To get started, maybe just tell me a little bit about yourself and your family.</li> <li>➤ Before we go on, let's take a couple of minutes to complete some questions that will help us understand more about what we're going to talk about today.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COMPLETE PROFILE TEMPLATE WITH RESPONDENT</li> <li>○ ASSURE CONFIDENTIALITY IF QUESTIONED</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	PROFILE TEMPLATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Set session rules</li> <li>➤ Relax respondents and create rapport</li> <li>➤ To gain an idea of SES, respondent/child breakdowns</li> </ul>			
<b>Section 2: General Discussion of Student Assessment Functionality/Role</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>5 mins</b></span>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Let's first discuss reports in general for a moment.</li> <li>➤ What role does a report play? Why?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What makes a good or bad report? Why?</li> <li>○ How much importance do you place on a report? Why?</li> <li>○ What do you most value in a report card?</li> <li>○ What do you do with reports? Why?                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you use them?</li> <li>• Do you and your child sit down together with it or do you review it on your own?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ How do reports today compare to your own reports that you received?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To establish the degree of importance the parent places on student assessment</li> <li>➤ To understand how parents use their student assessments</li> </ul>			
<b>Section 3: NAPLAN Report – First Impressions</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>5 mins</b></span>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You probably know a little bit about the National Assessment Program for literacy and numeracy (or NAPLAN assessment) that was conducted this year in May with all government and non-government students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 being assessed.</li> <li>➤ Today we will be talking about the NAPLAN assessment and student report that your child received. We want to understand your first impressions of the report, and also gain a greater understanding of how helpful this report was in communicating your child's results.</li> <li>➤ Is this the first experience you have had with literacy and numeracy tests (state/territory or national?) or has your child/children taken these kinds of tests before?</li> <li>➤ How did you receive the NAPLAN report?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe: Came home with child, sealed/unsealed, addressed/not addressed to parent, mailed to parents, picked up from teacher or school office</li> <li>○ What did you think of the way you received this? Why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	NAPLAN STUDENT REPORT AND OTHER STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To gain an understanding of first impressions of the report and reactions to the report</li> </ul>			
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="173 1503 868 1547">What to Ask</th> <th data-bbox="868 1503 1094 1547">Stimulus</th> <th data-bbox="1094 1503 1415 1547">Outcome</th> </tr> </thead> </table>			What to Ask	Stimulus	Outcome
What to Ask	Stimulus	Outcome			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you received the NAPLAN student report, what were your first impressions/thoughts on the format/presentation?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ Overall presentation – good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ Any likes/dislikes?</li> <li>○ Easy or hard to understand? Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ When you received the NAPLAN student report, what did you do?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe: Open and glance through, read the whole report straight through, glanced and put down to read later? Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ When you went to read the report, did you read the whole report in one sitting or put it down to come back to later? Why?</li> <li>➤ How much importance do you place on the NAPLAN assessment? Why?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How much importance do you place on your child's NAPLAN results? Why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					
<b>Section 4: Drill Down into Main Components of the Report</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>15 mins</b></span>					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Now we will take a look at each of the sections of the NAPLAN student report and we can talk about what you like and dislike about each of these and what the report tells you about your child.</li> <li>➤ <b>First page/introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did you read this? Why/why not?</li> <li>○ What do you think of this? Good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ What did this tell you about the NAPLAN assessment?</li> <li>○ Did you need any more information to help you understand the NAPLAN assessment?</li> <li>○ Is there anything you don't understand?</li> <li>○ How could this section be improved?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>How to read the student report (REFER TO YELLOW BOX ON FRONT PAGE)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did you read this? Why/why not?</li> <li>○ What do you think of this? Good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ What did this section tell you?</li> <li>○ What did you think of the example provided?</li> <li>○ Any thoughts on the national minimum standard?</li> <li>○ Was it easy or hard to understand? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Probe re: graphics and colours used</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ How could this section be improved?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Now focusing specifically on the <b>inside of the report</b> (REFER TO INSIDE PAGES)- <b>your child's report</b>, what can you tell me about the information in these 2 pages? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think of this? Good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ What did this section tell you?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>NAPLAN STUDENT REPORT AND OTHER STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To drill down into the reactions to and understanding of the main components of the report</li> <li>➤ To identify any areas of confusion</li> <li>➤ To ascertain any areas of the report were liked/disliked</li> </ul>
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What to Ask	Stimulus	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Was it easy or hard to understand? Why?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Probe understanding of:</b></li> <li>● Their own child's result</li> <li>● The national average</li> <li>● Range of achievement for 60% of children in that year</li> <li>● Meaning of the bands</li> <li>● <b>Probe:</b> information at bottom of each section</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Is there anything you don't understand?</li> <li>○ How could this information be improved?</li> <li>➤ Now I want to talk a bit more about the back section – <b>Summary of Skills Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did you read all of this section or not? Why/Why not?</li> <li>○ What did you think of the information? Why?                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Probe: informative, easy/hard to understand, too much/not enough information</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ What information about your child did you take from this section?</li> <li>○ How useful was this information to your overall understanding of your child's NAPLAN results? Why?</li> <li>○ Is there anything you don't understand?</li> <li>○ How could this information be improved?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>STATE SPECIFIC INFORMATION</b></li> <li>➤ Now I want to talk about any additional information that you received with the NAPLAN Student Report. When you received the report (in the mail or from your child, etc) was there any other information with it?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe: Information for Parents brochure, Additional Student Report information, etc</li> <li>○ Did you read this? Why/why not?</li> <li>○ What do you think of this? Good/bad? Why?</li> <li>○ What information about your child did you take from this additional report?</li> <li>○ How useful was this information to your overall understanding of your child's progress? Why?</li> <li>○ Is there anything you don't understand?</li> <li>○ How could this information be improved</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>NAPLAN STUDENT REPORT AND OTHER STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS</p>	<p>➤ To understand how effectively the report communicates individual students results</p>



What to Ask	Stimulus	Outcome
<b>Section 6: Impact of Report Results</b>		<b>10 mins</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We've talked in detail about the sections of the report and if you needed any assistance with understanding the report</li> <li>➤ Now I want to get an idea of how you feel about your child/children's results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What was your initial response after reading and understanding your child's report? Why?</li> <li>○ How did you feel about the results? Why?</li> <li>○ Were you surprised by the results or not? Why?</li> <li>○ What did they communicate to you? Why?</li> <li>○ How do you feel about your child being nationally assessed on literacy and numeracy? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does this mean to you?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ How well did this report provide you with a good understanding of your child's abilities in reading, writing, language and numeracy? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EXPLORE FOR DIFFERENT TEST SECTIONS (e.g. literacy). How did this part of the report guide you as a parent?</li> <li>○ Will you be doing anything different for your child from this report? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENSITIVELY PROBE (if necessary): tutoring, accelerated learning classes, help with homework, make sure homework is done.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ What will you do with this report in the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probe: compare to any future NAPLAN or other reports, take to school to discuss</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Did you consider the NAPLAN report results in conjunction with any other feedback about your child's school performance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If yes – what did you use? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probe: term reports, teacher feedback, teacher/student night</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Which source of information about your child's school progress do you value the most?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Did you use any other prior knowledge to help you understand this report? Why/why not? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If yes – what did you use? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probe: previous State/Territory testing reports</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="890 331 1070 456">NAPLAN STUDENT REPORT AND OTHER STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To explore in greater detail the impact of the results on parents</li> </ul>

<b>Section 7: Suggestions for Improvement</b>		<b>5mins</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Now we will talk a little bit about overall suggestions for improving the student report.</li> <li>➤ We want to know if there is anything else that could be done overall to make understanding this report easier for you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What would be the single biggest improvement required? Why this?</li> <li>○ What type of information would you need to make this report easier to understand?</li> <li>○ Who would you like to receive this information from? Why?</li> <li>○ In what form would you like to receive this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probe: letter from school/teacher, information night, in school newsletter, other suggestions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Now looking at examples or thinking back to previous State or Territory reports that provided information on your child's literacy and numeracy skills, is there anything about these reports that you would like to see in the NAPLAN report? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe: Presentation, information, explanation provided, structure, design, colours, graphics</li> <li>○ IF THE PARENT HAS OTHER EGGS OF PAST STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS AVAILABLE, PROBE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were past styles better or worse than this NAPLAN report? Why?</li> <li>• The NAPLAN reports are more ..... than the previous reports. Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ The NAPLAN reports are less..... than the previous reports. Why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>NAPLAN STUDENT REPORT AND OTHER STATE/TERRITORY REPORTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To determine if parents need any further information to understand the report</li> <li>➤ To ascertain parents' suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>	
<b>Section 8: Thank &amp; Close</b>		<b>2 mins</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you have any final words of advice or comments regarding the NAPLAN reports? Anything you would like the education department to consider?</li> </ul>			

## 6 APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

### NAPLAN

Research 2008

Final – 27/10/2008

### SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

#### SAMPLE FRAME:

National – quota structure below:

State/Territory	Location	Sample Size Option b.	Anticipated Sample based upon List Purchase
New South Wales	Sydney	100	Spare interviews will be targeted towards - QLD other locations - WA other locations - Other areas in remaining states  This will assist most to supplement the potential indigenous sample which is the shortfall in the NT.
	Other	100	
Victoria	Melbourne	100	
	Other	100	
Queensland	Brisbane	100	
	Other	100	
Western Australia	Perth	100	
	Other	100	
South Australia	Adelaide	100	
	Other	100	
Tasmania	Hobart	100	n=43 to 61 (428 records)
	Other	100	n=60 to 86 (602 records)
Australian Capital Territory	ACT	100	n=52 to 74 (520 records)
Northern Territory	Darwin	100	n=27 to 38 (269 records)
	Other	100	n=7 to 10 (67 records)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,500</b>	

#### TARGET RESPONDENT:

Parents with at least one child in year 3,5,7 or 9 who has sat the NAPLAN tests in 2008 and has been issued with the report in September 2008.

Parents should be at least jointly responsible for decisions regarding the education of their child/children.

#### INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

#### RESEARCH AIMS:

The overall aim of the research is to determine the extent to which parents of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 understand the information communicated by the NAPLAN individual student reports. The research findings will be used to:

- assess the extent to which the student reports effectively communicate the information about the testing program and individual students' results,
- recommend required improvements to the student reports to be issued from the 2009 NAPLAN and beyond, and
- provide baseline information for any future review or evaluation of the reporting of student literacy and numeracy assessment at the national level.



**BACKGROUND:**

This research project is being commissioned by the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) Queensland on behalf of the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC).

AESOC leads the development and implementation of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Under NAPLAN, annual full-cohort national literacy and numeracy testing is conducted in government and non-government schools across Australia. The NAPLAN tests were first implemented in May 2008 and these tests replaced the previous State and Territory-based assessments. Student reports were issued to parents in mid September 2008 and the content and format of these reports differ significantly from that previously issued to parents as a result of State and Territory literacy and numeracy testing.

**SPECIAL INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Please code wherever possible. Record verbatim for 'other specify' responses where required.
- If a respondent cannot complete the interview at the given time, try to obtain an appointment to call them back. This appointment must be followed through.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **APPROACH:**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is < INTERVIEWER NAME > from Your Source, an independent research company. Today we are doing a survey of parents whose children sat the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy tests earlier this year. This survey is being conducted on behalf of education departments, independent and Catholic education organisations and the Australian Government.

The survey will help to guide the issue of NAPLAN student reports into the future. Your opinion is important, and the interview will only take about 15 minutes.

Are you able to participate in this research? YES/NO

Alternatively, I could make an appointment to call you back at a time that is more convenient?

### **INTERVIEWER NOTES:**

- Sample source: please insert list source
- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and if you are not interested in participating this will not impact on you in any way at all.
- If respondent is unsure, all students in grades 3,5,7 and 9 this year should have sat these tests in May and received reports in September.

**SCREENERS**

S1. Do you have a child or children attending school in years 3, 5, 7 or 9 this year? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE	ACTION
Yes	1	Continue
No	2	Terminate – <i>Thank you for your time but we only need to speak to parents whose children have sat the NAPLAN tests.</i>

S2. In which state does your child currently attend school? (CLARIFY REGION WITHIN STATE – SR)

	CODE	ACTION
NSW - Sydney	1	Continue
NSW - Other	2	Continue
VIC – Melbourne	3	Continue
VIC – Other	4	Continue
QLD – Brisbane	5	Continue
QLD – Other	6	Continue
WA – Perth	7	Continue
WA - Other	8	Continue
SA – Adelaide	9	Continue
SA - Other	10	Continue
TAS – Hobart	11	Continue
TAS - Other	12	Continue
ACT	13	Continue
NT – Darwin	14	Continue
NT - Other	15	Continue

S3. Did your child/children sit the NAPLAN tests this year? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE	ACTION
Yes	1	Continue
No	2	Terminate – <i>Thank you for your time but we only need to speak to parents whose children have sat the NAPLAN tests.</i>
Don't Know	3	
Refused	4	

S4. Have you received your child/children's NAPLAN student report? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE	ACTION
Yes	1	Continue
No	2	Terminate – <i>Thank you for your time but we do need for you to have received and viewed the NAPLAN student report.</i>
Don't know	3	
Refused	4	

S5. How many children in your household sat the NAPLAN tests this year?

\_\_\_\_\_ (CAPTURE NUMBER OF CHILDREN)

S6 Before we continue would you like to get your NAPLAN student report for reference or would you prefer to continue without it.

NOTE: There is no specific requirement for them to get the report as they should be able to answer all questions without.

PLEASE RECORD

	CODE
Have report for reference	1
Do not have report while answering survey	2

**SECTION 1: PROCESS OF RECEIVING**

Q1. When did you receive your child's NAPLAN report? Was it...? (PROMPT TO CLARIFY – MR)

	CODE
Before the end of Term 3 [ALL STATES OTHER THAN TAS]	1
Early in Term 3 [TAS APPLICABLE ONLY]	2
During the school holidays	3
After the school holidays – that is, at the beginning of Term 4	4
Don't know	9

Q2. How did you receive your child's NAPLAN report? (READ OUT – MR)

	CODE
By mail	1
At your child's school	2
Brought home by your child	3
Other (specify)	4

Q3. Were any of these additional items provided with your NAPLAN report? (READ OUT – MR)

	Yes	No	Don't know
A covering letter	1	2	9
An additional report with school results	1	2	9
Other materials (specify)	1	2	9

NOTE: *If respondent mentions they would like these items, interviewer to note and include in Q9 feedback.*

Q4. Were you aware that you'd be receiving the NAPLAN report before it arrived? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE
Yes	1
No	2

**SECTION 2: EVALUATION**

Q5. I will now read out a number of statements about your child's NAPLAN report. Could you please tell me your agreement using the scale:

- 5 = Strongly Agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly Disagree.

<b>RANDOMISE</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
I was able to understand how well my child performed on the NAPLAN tests from the report	1	2	3	4	5	99
The NAPLAN report was easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	99
There was not enough detail in the report	1	2	3	4	5	99
I found the report useful	1	2	3	4	5	99
I liked the look of the report	1	2	3	4	5	99
The layout of the report was easy to follow	1	2	3	4	5	99
The written text throughout the report was useful	1	2	3	4	5	99
I was able to understand how well my child performed relative to the national average	1	2	3	4	5	99
I was able to understand how well my child performed relative to the minimum national standard	1	2	3	4	5	99
I was able to understand the different bands in the report	1	2	3	4	5	99
There was too much detail in the report	1	2	3	4	5	99
I would prefer the report comments to be about my child's performance	1	2	3	4	5	99

Q6b. Thinking back to when you received your child's report, did you read the following sections? (READ OUT). If you can please indicate if you read all of it, read most of it, skimmed it or did not read that section.

	Read all of it	Read most of it	Skimmed it	Did not read	Don't know/ can't recall
The first introductory page – this included a description of the NAPLAN tests and instructions on how to read the report.	1	2	3	4	98
The two inner pages that showed the four graphs of your child's results	1	2	3	4	98
The information below the graphs in the inner two pages which told you about the questions asked in the tests	1	2	3	4	98
The back page – this included a table explaining the skills assessed in the bands across the four areas of the tests.	1	2	3	4	98

Q7a. Did you do any of the following to better understand your child's NAPLAN report? (READ OUT - MR)

		Yes	No
1	Speak to someone at your child's school	1	0
2	Speak to other parents at your child's school	1	0
3	Speak to other friends/ family	1	0
4	Speak to an education department or other education organisations	1	0
5	Look for information on the internet	1	0
6	Reference information in a newspaper	1	0

ASK IF Q7a.5 = 1

Q7b. What internet sites did you reference? [VERBATIM RESPONSE]

Q8. Were there any sections of the report that you did not like or understand? What were these sections? [VERBATIM RESPONSE]

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NO – CODE 99

Q9. Was there any other information that you would have liked to have received? [VERBATIM RESPONSE]

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NO – CODE 99

Q10. Do you consider the NAPLAN student report to be (READ OUT, SR)

ROTATE READ OUT 1-4; 4-1	
Very valuable	1
Valuable	2
Not really valuable	3
Not at all valuable	4
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	5

Q11. Do you consider National assessment to be (READ OUT, SR)

ROTATE READ OUT 1-4; 4-1	
Very important	1
Important	2
Not really important	3
Not at all Important	4
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	5

Q12. There were four different comparisons in the report to assist you in understanding your child's performance. I'll read out all four and would like you to rank them from 1 to 4, where 1 is the most important and 4 is the least important.

Randomise	RANK 1-4
The national average	
The minimum national standard	
The average performance range for 60% of children in Australia	
The achievement bands	



**SECTION 3: ACTION TAKEN**

IF S5 >1 READ INTRODUCTION & LOOP THROUGH Q13 – Q15

Intro for multiple NAPLAN tests: "Starting with your youngest child who sat NAPLAN ...."

Q13. Did the NAPLAN report tell you anything new about your child's performance? [VERBATIM RESPONSE]

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Q14. Since receiving your child's NAPLAN report, have you taken any actions as a result? (PROMPT TO CLARIFY – MR)

	CODE
Yes, I spoke to my child's teacher	1
Yes, I spoke to the principal	2
Yes, I spoke to my child	3
Yes, I have arranged for tutoring or other support for my child	4
Yes, I have taken other action (specify)	5
No, I have not taken any action	6

Q15. Will you keep your child's NAPLAN report for future reference? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE
Yes	1
No	2

IF S5 >1 READ 'Now in regards to your next child who sat the NAPLAN tests

ALLOW UP TO 4 LOOPS

Q16. Can you suggest any improvements to the NAPLAN student reports for the future? [VERBATIM RESPONSE]

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**SECTION 4: CHILD PROFILING**

Q17. How many children do you have...? (READ OUT)

Under 18 years old____ (CAPTURE NUMBER)
Over 18 years old____ (CAPTURE NUMBER)

Please loop Q18-Q21 for each child under 18 years old.

INTRODUCTION: I just have a couple of quick questions about your child/children under 18 years.

IF MULTIPLE CHILDREN:

Starting with your first child ....

Q18. What is the gender of your child? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE
Male	1
Female	2

Q19. What age is your child? (SR)

CAPTURE AGE \_\_\_\_RECORD NUMBER

IF AGE IS 4 OR YOUNGER PLEASE LOOP TO NEXT CHILD

Q20a. Are they attending a school?

	CODE	
Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	LOOP TO NEXT CHILD

Q20. What year level are they in? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE	INSTRUCTIONS
Pre grade 1/ Kindergarten/ Prep/ Preschool		SKIP TO NEXT RELEVANT SECTION
1	1	CONTINUE Q21
2	2	
3	3	
4	4	
5	5	
6	6	
7	7	
8	8	
9	9	
10	10	
11	11	
12	12	
Not currently in school	98	SKIP TO NEXT RELEVANT

Q21. What type of school are they enrolled in...? (DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT TO CLARIFY – SR)

	CODE
A government school	1
A Catholic school	2
An Independent school	3
Another type of school e.g. home schooled	4

ASK ALL

Q22. Have any of your children previously completed State or Territory literacy and numeracy tests? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

	CODE
Yes	1
No	2

**SECTION 4: HOUSEHOLD PROFILING**

And finally some questions on your household which are only going to be used for analysis purposes.

**Q23. INTERVIEW TO CODE GENDER OF RESPONDENT**

	CODE
Male	1
Female	2

**Q24. Roughly, what is your age? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)**

	CODE
18-25 years	1
26-35 years	2
36-45 years	3
46-55 years	4
55+ years	5
Refused	99

**Q25. Which of the following best describes your marital status? (READ OUT – SR)**

	CODE
Married	1
Defacto	2
Divorced	3
Single	4
Widowed	5
Refused – DO NOT READ OUT	99

Q26. What is your annual total household income before taxes? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR) INTERVIEWER TO CODE INTO CODEFRAME BELOW

No household income	1
Under \$10,000 per year	2
\$10,000-\$19,999	3
\$20,000-\$29,999	4
\$30,000-\$39,999	5
\$40,000-\$49,999	6
\$50,000-\$59,999	7
\$60,000-\$69,999	8
\$70,000-\$79,999	9
\$80,000-\$89,999	10
\$90,000-\$99,999	11
\$100,000-\$119,999	12
\$120,000-\$139,999	13
\$140,000 or more	14
Don't know <b>DO NOT READOUT</b>	99
Refused <b>DO NOT READ OUT</b>	97

Q27. What best describes your current employment status? (READ OUT – SR)

Self employed	1
Full time employment	2
Part time/Casual employment (not a student)	3
Student	4
Not currently employed	5
Retired	6
Home duties	7
Carer	8
Other	9

Q28. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have completed? (READ OUT – SR)

Year 10 or below	1
Year 12	2
TAFE/ Trade qualification	3
Under Graduate University	4
Post Graduate University	5

Q29. Could you please tell me if you or anyone in your family are also...? (READ OUT – MR)

A teacher	1
An employee of your state's education department	2
An employee of an educational institution, but not a teacher	3
None of the above – DO NOT READ OUT	96

Q31. Were you born in Australia or overseas? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

Born in Australia	1
Born overseas	2

IF Q31 = 2

Q32. How long have you been living in Australia? (DO NOT READ OUT – SR)

Less than 5 years	1
5-10 years	2
11-20 years	3
Longer than 20 years	4

Q33. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

If yes, which of the following languages do you speak at home? (READ OUT – MR)

	CODE
English	1
Italian	2
Greek	3
Cantonese	4
Mandarin	5
Arabic	6
Vietnamese	7
Other - specify	8
Refused	9

Q34. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? (DO NOT READ OUT – MR)

	<u>CODE</u>
No	1
Yes, Aboriginal	2
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	3
Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	4
Don't know	5
Refused	6

Q35. Can you please tell me the post code of the suburb you live in?

\_\_\_\_ (CAPTURE POSTCODE)

THANK & CLOSE

PRIVACY INFORMATION

*This document takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our Client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.*

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