

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016**

**Outcome: Agency: ACARA**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000418**

Senator Wright, Penny provided in writing

**ACARA: NAPLAN**

**Question**

With regard to the introduction of NAPLAN online and adaptive testing, ACARA told the committee the hypothesis that the benefits of adaptive testing would lead to improved score or more accurate assessments of student knowledge would require further study. Can ACARA explain how they propose to study this hypothesis?

**Answer**

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority(ACARA) has provided the following response.

ACARA would like to stress that this hypothesis, put forward by the Senator, is only a hypothesis and there is no evidence to support it. This is an area that ACARA continues to be attentive to in ongoing research.

In research conducted to date, ACARA has examined how the test delivery mode (paper or computer) affected student performance across year levels. Results support the claim that the transition of items to the online delivery mode would not substantially change the assessment properties of the NAPLAN tests. More details on this research can be found in *Tailored test design study 2013: Summary research report*, which is published at [http://nap.edu.au/verve/resources/Tailored\\_test\\_design\\_study\\_2013\\_summary\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://nap.edu.au/verve/resources/Tailored_test_design_study_2013_summary_research_report.pdf).

As part of the move to NAPLAN online ACARA is undertaking a number of research studies including a "linking study". This study will enable ACARA to compare test items taken by students online with the same items completed in a paper-based mode. By comparing performance at the student and school level, we can detect any potential performance differences in either direction.

This study will use a representative sample of students from across Australia.