

## ***Review of NAPLAN: Purpose and Proposals***



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### ***Abstract***

NAPLAN is one of a number of standardised tests that are used in Australian schools, but it is the only one required of all students. Its introduction followed the removal of all system-level testing of students prior to the end of Year 12.

The review was commissioned by NSW, VIC, QLD and ACT Ministers. The Terms of Reference set the review in the context of a consideration of standardised testing. Standardised testing is often seen to be synonymous with normative testing which expresses results for individuals only in comparison with the performances of others. Modern psychometrics, since at least the 1970s, allows performances of individuals to be expressed in relation to standards of achievement on well-defined scales.

The paper provides the Terms of Reference for the review, examines the uses of assessments of samples of students and whole cohorts of students (census). It examines practices in other countries, either high-performing or of particular interest to Australia. It then considers what lessons we have learned from NAPLAN and how well NAPLAN measures student achievements. The paper concludes with an outline of the key recommendations of the report.

## ***Biography***

Barry McGaw is an Emeritus Professor of Murdoch University, an Honorary Professorial Fellow in the Assessment Research Centre in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. He has previously been Chair of the Board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Executive Director of the Cisco, Intel, Microsoft International Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills project, Director for Education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) based in Paris and Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

