

Communiqué

NAPLAN Online

The NAPLAN assessments for 2019 commenced on Tuesday 14 May 2019 with approximately 50 per cent of students undertaking the assessment online this year. A total of approximately 2.17 million NAPLAN online tests were completed by students nationwide in 2019.

Education Council discussed the technical issues that affected the 2019 NAPLAN Online assessment, which resulted in significant connectivity disruptions across jurisdictions and a substantial number of students being adversely affected. Ministers reaffirmed a key aim of NAPLAN Online is a simpler and more efficient experience for students and schools. Ministers received an update on the independent review commissioned by education officials into this disruption, which will support efforts to identify and address the issues for future assessments.

Education Council agreed to extend the current plan for schools to transition to NAPLAN Online by one year to 2021, with further consideration by Education Council of the transition arrangements once the independent connectivity review has concluded and the scope of the Low/No Bandwidth solution finalised.

Ministers also agreed that given the events of NAPLAN 2019, further consideration will need to be given to the reporting of 2019 results.

NAPLAN data reporting on My School

Education Council received a presentation from Emeritus Professor William Loudon on a review of NAPLAN data reporting on the My School website.

Professor Loudon's recommendations include reviewing the quantity and focus of NAPLAN data displayed on My School and that in order to reduce the risk of misuse of NAPLAN data, clear guidance be provided to schools, the public and students about the purposes and proper uses of NAPLAN and My School. Ministers requested ACARA and jurisdictions develop options to respond to a number of recommendations, for subsequent decision by Education Council in September 2019.

Senior Secondary Pathways Review

As part of the National School Reform Agreement in December 2018, Education Council agreed to a review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training.

The review will provide Ministers with advice and recommendations on how senior secondary students can better understand and be empowered to choose the most appropriate pathway to support their transition into work, further education and/or training. It will also take account of the barriers faced by some students in pursuing certain pathways, including students with disability, those in regional, rural and remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Ministers agreed to the Terms of Reference for the review that will be undertaken by an expert panel which will report by June 2020.

National Teacher Workforce Strategy

Education Council has committed to reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future to attract and retain quality teachers and prioritise specific areas of need.

Ministers agreed that shared challenges and opportunities in developing a skilled, capable and sustainable quality teaching workforce that supports the best outcomes for students will be explored in the development of the strategy. Areas of potential focus include developing an understanding of supply and demand, supporting teachers and the teaching profession, identifying and developing the 'educators of the future', addressing priority needs and building data and evidence.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) will lead the development of the strategy, in close collaboration with all states and territories and the Australian Government. Ministers will receive a draft strategy by March 2020.

Update on the review of the Melbourne Declaration

Ministers received an update on the review of the national declaration on educational goals for young Australians, otherwise known as the *Melbourne Declaration*. Following the forum held on 22 February, a discussion paper was released for public consultation and submissions. Over 140 submissions were received by the closing date.

Public consultations will be held in states and territories over the next two months. Three further national consultation events have been planned for key stakeholders, including a workshop for young Australians. Ministers agreed to host the youth workshop, scheduled to coincide with the next Education Council meeting in September 2019. Ministers expect to consider a final declaration at the December 2019 Education Council meeting, to be held in Alice Springs.

STEM Partnerships Forum

The *STEM Partnerships Forum*, chaired by Dr Alan Finkel AO, was established by Education Council in 2017 to facilitate a strategic approach to school-industry partnerships to develop the engagement, aspiration, capability and attainment of students with STEM.

Ministers endorsed a response to the *STEM Partnerships Forum* report and provided feedback on a mapping of work underway at a national level that is applicable to the report's recommendations regarding science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education. The response endorsed by Ministers today outlines relevant national, and state and territory actions. It will shortly be published on the Education Council website, www.educationcouncil.edu.au

Legislation to deter cheating in Higher Education

Ministers discussed the growing availability and provision of academic cheating services by third party actors, and the threat such activity poses to the integrity and reputation of Australia's higher education sector.

Council noted the Australian Government's proposed legislative approach to prohibit academic cheating in higher education through the draft *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Bill 2019*. An exposure draft of the Bill was released by the Australian Government in April 2019 for stakeholder comment.

The outcomes sought from this proposed legislation are to make it an offence for any person to provide or advertise academic cheating services relating to the delivery of higher education in Australia; provide for significant financial and custodial penalties where an offence is proven; and appoint the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency as the regulator responsible for administering the law.

Early Childhood Education – Universal Access National Partnership

Ministers agreed to progress the draft Universal Access National Partnership (UANP) extension. It is expected First Ministers will formalise this extension shortly.

The draft UANP extension makes \$449.5 million available to states and territories to continue Commonwealth support for preschool throughout 2020. The policy parameters, performance indicators and payment schedule for 2020 remain unchanged from those in place under the current UANP for 2018 and 2019.

Education Council also endorsed Terms of Reference for the Universal Access National Partnership Review, which will inform Education Council's consideration of future early childhood funding and policy arrangements from 2021.

Extension of transitional provisions under the National Quality Framework

Education Council agreed to extend a number of expiring transitional workforce provisions in the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, to address the continued pressures faced by the sector in building a highly skilled early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce, particularly in rural and remote areas. This also takes into account the impacts of the requirement from 1 January 2020 in most states, that providers of centre-based services have a second early childhood teacher or 'suitably qualified person' in attendance when 60 or more children preschool age or under are being cared for.

Education Council also noted the work currently underway to build a national approach for the ECEC workforce.

'Suitably qualified person' consequential amendments to the Education and Care Services National Regulations

On 1 January 2020, regulations will come into effect in all states and territories (other than New South Wales) that require providers of centre-based services to have a second early childhood teacher or, alternatively, another 'suitably qualified person' in attendance when 60 or more children preschool age or under are being cared for and educated.

Education Council agreed to the proposed minor and consequential amendments to the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* which support the practical operation of the 'suitably qualified person' requirement from 1 January 2020. Ministers will be asked to endorse the amending regulations prior to the end of December 2019.

ACECQA Board Appointments

Education Council made two appointments to the Board of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). Ministers appointed Professor Marc de Rosnay, the Academic Head of Early Start at the University of Wollongong, to his first term on the ACECQA Board. Professor Joce Nuttall was reappointed to the Board for her second term.

Both appointments take effect from Monday 1 July 2019 and are of three years duration.