Assessing Student Achievement in Australia

What are the benefits of national and international assessments?
Participation in state and territory literacy and numeracy assessment programs allows student progress to be monitored over time. The assessment programs aim to support student learning and allow schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching programs. Schools and their communities are able to compare their students’ achievements with national benchmarks and with students in other states and territories.

The national assessment program gathers information for schools, education Ministers and the community about the achievements of students and how they compare across Australia.

Participation in international assessments helps to develop a better understanding of Australian children’s skills and knowledge in an international context as well as supporting improvements in teaching and learning.

How will the results be reported?
Parents and carers of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participating in state and territory assessments will receive individual reports that show where the results place a student in relation to the benchmarks and in comparison to the rest of the students in the year level.

State and territory results from the national assessment program for science literacy, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy are reported nationally and can be viewed on the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) website, www.mceetya.edu.au.

State and territory results from the international assessment programs can be found in specific international and national reports, and summaries of the results are provided in the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia which is also available on the MCEETYA website.

In addition, schools receive reports on the achievement of those students who participate in national and/or international sample assessments.

What are national and international standards?
National and international standards describe the level of skills and understanding needed by students for full participation in society.

Achievement in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy is measured against nationally agreed proficiency standards.

Which students participate in the assessment programs?
All Australian school students participate in state and territory assessments of reading, spelling, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5 and 7 and, in some states and territories, in Year 9.

Some students in Years 6 and 10, as well as some 15-year-olds, participate in national and/or international sample assessments.

Trials are also conducted in preparation for both national and international sample assessments.

Some students may be exempt from the assessments for reasons such as:
- lack of competency in English where English is not their first language
- intellectual impairment
- special circumstances.

Parents and carers should speak to their child’s school if they have any questions about exemptions.

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What is the role of parents and carers?
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What is the role of parents and carers?
It is important that parents and carers help their children to feel comfortable about the assessment program.

They can do this by reassuring their children that the tests cover a variety of skills and include content they have learnt in class.

For more information, parents and carers should contact their child’s school or visit the MCEETYA website.

www.mceetya.edu.au
National and International Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program (NAP) encompasses all MCEETYA endorsed tests such as the triennial sample assessments in science, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology as well as the national literacy and numeracy assessments (the latter to commence in 2008). NAP also includes Australia’s participation in two international assessments, the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the IEA’s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The term NAP is used within the titles of nationally developed assessment programs to identify them as part of this suite of assessments eg NAP — Civics and Citizenship 2007.

2007 Assessment Participation

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<th>National Assessment Program</th>
<th>Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>State or territory assessment of reading,</td>
<td>All students in Years 3, 5 and 7 and, in some states and territories, all</td>
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<td>spelling, writing and numeracy</td>
<td>students in Year 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Assessment Program — trial of</td>
<td>A sample of Years 1, 5, 7, and 9 students in several states and territories</td>
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<td>additional literacy and numeracy items</td>
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<td>National Assessment Program — Civics and</td>
<td>A trial will be conducted in early 2007 for a small sample of students in</td>
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<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Years 6 and 10 in selected schools in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria</td>
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<td>A sample of students in Years 6 and 10 in selected schools in all states and</td>
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<td>Citizenship</td>
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<td>National Assessment Program — ICT Literacy</td>
<td>A trial will be conducted in late 2007 for students in Years 6 and 10, in</td>
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<td>preparation for the main assessment in October 2008</td>
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Assessing Student Achievement in Australia 2007
Information for Parents and the Community

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS