

Information for school communities

ACARA welcomes new Chair

On the 24th of November, [ACARA announced Derek Scott as Chair](#) of the Australian Curriculum,

Assessment and Reporting Authority Board.

Derek has 20 years' educational experience and is currently the Principal and CEO of Haileybury, one of the largest schools in Australia with campuses in Melbourne and the Northern Territory.

In 2019, Derek was named Principal of the Year. He has served on the Board of ACARA since 21 January 2021, and was a member of the Expert Panel of the Australian Government's Quality Initial Teacher Education Review earlier this year.

Derek's appointment was agreed to at the Education Ministers Meeting on 12 November.

2022 Schedule

The 2022 meeting dates for the National Peak Parents and Principals Forum will be released shortly. Please keep an eye out for those invitations.

Quarterly Newsletters

As previously mentioned, in an effort to optimise our communications with you and your members, on a quarterly basis, we will share articles and resources that can be easily shared or repurposed for your newsletters or other communications.

We would appreciate if you could let us know if this information has been useful, or if you would like tailored or longer form content

Information for teachers

The COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to schooling had no statistically significant impact on students' literacy and numeracy achievement in NAPLAN at the national or state/territory level.

ACARA has released the 2021 NAPLAN National Report, which confirms the initial findings of the preliminary summary information published in August 2021.

This report provides further information to the preliminary release: comparisons of performance by gender, Indigenous status, language background other than English, parental occupation, parental education, and school location.

The report reaffirmed the preliminary findings that the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to schooling had no statistically significant impact on students' literacy and numeracy achievement in NAPLAN at the national or state/territory level. There were, however, some significant differences apparent when assessing long-term trends in the gaps between different demographic groups.

The report is published on the [National Assessment Program website](#).

Looking to upskill and teach Digital Technologies?

Thousands of Australian teachers who participated in a program to support the teaching of the subject

Digital Technologies in the classroom gained digital skills and confidence that proved vital for the switch to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher Rebecca Keough from St Mary's, a small Catholic primary school in Moruya, New South Wales, said some staff were initially reluctant to engage but improved in ability and confidence. "Our focus was meeting teachers at their point of need. Some staff are willing to dive in and some are more reluctant," she said. "A big win was that by the end of it, a lot of staff knew there are so many ways that you can engage with the Digital Technologies curriculum. Now teachers are asking questions and taking on challenges to improve their own practice. We've grown a lot in that respect."

The benefits were highlighted in a review by a team of academics at the Deakin University School of Education, which undertook a 3-year close-up study of 6 participating schools, and in a report published by ACARA. The reports are published on the [Australian Curriculum website](#).

You can access a large range of ACARA resources, including illustrations of practice, video content, vodcast tutorials, classroom ideas, lesson plans and assessment tasks can now be accessed by all teachers via the [Digital Technologies in Focus website](#).

Study shows high levels of public trust and value for Australian teachers

There are approximately 288,294 teachers working with close to four million students in 9,542 schools across Australia. Teachers play a vital role in the community and they have far-reaching influence.

New [research from Monash University](#) has found the role of teachers continues to be recognised as important and influential in developing students'

social and emotional development - which became even more important during COVID-19 remote learning.

Responses also showed that members of the public were aware of the complexity of teachers' work and the many challenges faced by teachers. The majority of responses recognised these challenges in the form of student disengagement with learning (80 per cent), mental health and wellbeing of selves or colleagues (85 per cent), complex student needs and diverse needs in classrooms (84 per cent) and administrative demands on teachers' time (88 per cent).

When looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the public perceptions of Australian schooling, 41.6 per cent of respondents said their perceptions of teachers' work had improved as a direct result of COVID-19.

Share this new app that supports children's mental health and wellbeing

[Raising Healthy Minds](#) is a new app was developed by the Raising Children Network as part of its program to support parents' mental health literacy by building knowledge and confidence concerning the social and emotional wellbeing of children.

This new app is aimed at parents and carers of children aged 0-12 years. but there are also resources aimed at professionals working with children and families, to ensure they have the latest evidence-based information to respond to questions raised with them by parents.

Information for parents

Have you read the National NAPLAN Report?

The 2021 [NAPLAN National Report](#) has been released, confirming the preliminary summary information published in August 2021 that, at a national and state/territory level, no statistically significant changes were observed between 2019 and 2021.

However, there were some significant differences apparent when assessing long-term trends in the gaps between different demographic groups; for example, between male and female students, where the gap between the groups is widening when compared against 2016.

Female and male students

Female students outperformed male students in reading and writing, and male students outperformed female students in numeracy.

Over the last 6 years, the gap in numeracy is generally widening, except in Year 9 where the gap is stable.

For primary school students, the gap is stable for reading but narrowing for writing.

For secondary school students, the gap is widening for reading but stable for writing.

In addition, the gender gap is larger in secondary schools than primary schools for writing.

Indigenous

The difference in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is large with no noticeable closing or widening of the gap between 2016 and 2021.

Major cities and regional areas

Students from major cities outperformed students from regional areas in numeracy, reading and writing. The gap in numeracy and reading has gradually widened between 2016 and 2021 for most year levels.

Regional and remote

Numeracy, reading and writing achievement by students from regional areas (inner remote and outer regional) was significantly higher than achievement by students from remote and very remote areas. The gap in achievement between regional and remote areas has remained steady over the past 5 years.

Free conversation cards and activity sheets to explore your child's strengths and ambition

Research suggests that children are already starting to make subconscious decisions about their future abilities and opportunities from as young as seven.

This is why the Career Industry Council of Australia has teamed up with the National Careers Institute to develop ['Little Ripples'](#), which provides parents and carers with a series of fun activities and games you can use at home with your children. Use these resources to start creating the right 'Little Ripples' early, helping to shape your child's future happiness, lives and careers.

There is also a [Parents and Guardians Guide](#) for school leavers which provides information that enables parents and carers to have discussions with school leavers on careers, education and training

pathways.

Ideas and tips to support your child's mental health and wellbeing

[Raising Healthy Minds](#) is a new app launched by the Australian Government that has been designed to promote children's social and emotional wellbeing, allowing you to check on emotions or behaviours that might be concerning you, or get helpful information based on your child's age.

This new app is aimed at parents and carers of children aged 0-12 years. It is free to download and filled with tips and practical ideas to help families raise confident, resilient kids.

The app has been developed in consultation with leading health, mental health, and parenting experts as well as being co-designed with parents from across the country. It provides evidence-based advice and referral information that can help you become more confident in identifying when additional help is needed.

You can download the app from Apple or Google Play stores or access it via their [website](#).