



INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION OF AUSTRALIA – QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH



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MySchool website fails school communities

The federal government's MySchool website fails school communities according to The Independent Education Union of Australia-Queensland and Northern Territory Branch (IEUA-QNT).

The website will compare schools based on the NAPLAN tests which are designed to ascertain individual student's achievements. 'This has relevance for teacher diagnostic purposes for their forward planning but fails as a means of identifying the character of a school', according to IEUA-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke.

"The NAPLAN tests were not designed to be used to compare the quality of teaching and learning that occurs in our schools across Queensland, but unfortunately this is what the federal government has deemed appropriate," Mr Burke said.

"Our major concern is that the data provided by the MySchool website will be used to present information about schools in simplistic league tables, which will ignore the broader context in which schools across Queensland operate."

"It is nonsense to use this type of data to compare our schools, when Queensland is made up of urban, rural and remote communities; what is best teaching and learning practices for a school in Mt Isa, may be completely different for an inner-city Brisbane school or one in Cairns."

"The tests do not provide the real picture parents want about their child and their school," Mr Burke said.

"Parents fundamentally want to know how their child is doing in relation to others in that year level. This website isn't going to do that."

"It is frankly a nonsense for one school to be compared to another on such narrow terms with a view to parents making a choice about schools."

"It is an even greater nonsense in rural and remote areas, where there may only be one school in the area," Mr Burke said.

The IEUA nationally has described the website unhelpful, noting it is not the case that its existence is necessary to identify underperforming schools so that action can be taken, as this information already exists.

The IEUA-QNT will continue to monitor the use of the MySchool website and campaign for the proper use of test data for diagnostic purposes not misguided comparisons.

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"The Queensland Independent Education Union represents nearly 15,000 non-government education sector employees including teachers, principals, school support staff, grounds and maintenance staff, early childhood education staff and employees in business, international and English language colleges."