

DECISION OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AEU FEDERAL EXECUTIVE: 6 MAY 2010

The Federal Executive of the AEU acknowledges with admiration and respect the profound commitment and dedication of members in the campaign to protect students, schools and school communities from the misuse of student data and the damaging effects of league tables.

Acting with integrity, AEU members have demonstrated their professional and ethical commitment to their students and Federal Executive congratulates members on achieving an outcome that enables the profession's concerns to be addressed.

In contrast, this dispute has seen governments and their departments take extraordinarily deplorable and unwarranted actions, ignoring the professional and educational concerns at the heart of this dispute. The AEU Federal Executive condemns the intimidation and threats of disciplinary action, the recourse to punitive legal action raising the prospect of penalties and thousands of dollars in fines against individual teachers and principals as well as the employment of unqualified people, including tourists, to supervise tests.

The Federal Executive welcomes the proposal by the Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard to form a working party of educational experts including literacy and numeracy specialists, principal organisations and representatives of the AEU and IEUA to provide further professional advice on the use of student performance data and other indicators of school effectiveness as ACARA continues to develop the My School website.

The working party's advice and the work of ACARA in further developing the My School website will be in line with the clear commitments of the Federal Government, as stated in the Deputy Prime Minister's letter of 5 May 2010, which include "an opposition to the misuse of student performance data including simplistic league tables". This proposal from the Deputy Prime Minister will provide a process to advance and address the profession's educational concerns as they relate to the misuse of student performance data including league tables. It will also provide a way for the profession as a whole to engage in a genuine dialogue with the government on a sound approach to school accountability and improvement.

Accordingly, the Federal Executive of the AEU lifts the moratorium on the administration of NAPLAN 2010 and will advise members of this decision.

It is of concern and regrettable that the Federal Government has refused to entertain the option of delaying the NAPLAN in order to allow a smooth administration of the test. In light of the disruption to preparation over the last three weeks, the opportunity exists for state / territory governments and their departments to delay the tests as per the NAPLAN guidelines developed by ACARA.

The AEU remains resolute in its opposition to the publication of damaging league tables and other inappropriate, invalid, inaccurate and misleading school rankings and will continue to campaign against the misuse of student performance data and the creation and publication of league tables.