



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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TIMSS – AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS AGAIN DO WELL

Australian students maintained an achievement level at or significantly higher than the international average in the 2002 Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) international test results just released.

Australian results in Year 4 Maths and Science and Year 8 Maths maintained the same achievement levels of 1994/95. In Year 8 Science the results showed significant improvement.

Australian Education Union Federal President, Ms Pat Byrne, said, "However, the performance of a number of other countries has improved over that time, suggesting that increased investment in education in some overseas countries is having results.

"For Australia to maintain or improve its high international standing we must ensure that increased resourcing is directed towards areas of greatest need, rather than to those schools which are already well - resourced. This must include universal access to pre-school education and an additional focus on Indigenous student outcomes as well as those schools with significant numbers of high-needs students.

"Following on from the PISA results last week," said Ms Byrne, "TIMSS adds further to our understanding of Australian student performance in the areas tested. Direct comparisons however are not possible due to the fact that the countries involved were not necessarily those which took part in the PISA testing, though there was some overlap. Also, not all countries participated in all parts of the tests.

"The TIMSS test has a greater focus on curriculum content whereas the PISA test aims at assessing students' capacity to apply specific knowledge to practical situations. In other words, the tests do not measure the same thing.

"While each piece of information received from a range of sources is important in adding to the picture of student achievement in Australia, no single test should be seen as definitive. The similarities and differences between the tests and the results point to the need to view each result from a balanced perspective" Ms Byrne cautioned.

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