

League Tables and My School Website Survey of Schools March 2010

AEU

Timeframe

This survey was conducted over the period Friday 26 February to Thursday 11 March 2010.

1. Respondents

- 1,166 public school principals replied to the survey.
- 69.6% of respondents were from primary schools, 17.7% from secondary, 6.9% from combined Primary/Secondary, 2.6% from Special and 3.2% from others.

2. School Resources

- 27.2% of schools indicated they have experienced teacher shortages in the last year.
- Amongst those who indicated they had experienced teacher shortages, 37.2% indicated the shortage was becoming worse.
- Only 27.8% of principals indicated they believed their school had enough resources to deliver the educational programs their students need, with 72.2% indicating they did not.

3. My School Website

- 87.7% principals do not believe the My School website in its current form presents an accurate picture of “school performance” for parents. Only 12.3% believe that it does.
- 88.8% of principals indicated they believed it was wrong to launch the My School website without details of the total income/resources available to each school.
- 74.0% of principals believe the information on their school on the My School website to be correct. 26.0% indicated they believe it is not.
- The majority (51.7%) of principals believe the ICSEA rating for their school to be inaccurate.
- The vast majority (89.3%) of principals believe ICSEA in its current form is not a valid index to determine which schools are similar. Only 10.7% believe that it is.
- Similarly, the vast majority (89.4%) of principals believe all the schools their school is compared with on the website are not similar to their own. Only 10.6% believe that they are.
- The majority (60.7%) believe public comparisons of school results on My School will lead to greater emphasis on their school preparing for the NAPLAN tests. 39.0% believe it will make no difference, while only 0.3% believe it will lead to less emphasis on preparing for the tests.

- Amongst those who responded that My School would lead to a greater emphasis on preparing for NAPLAN, 80.6% believe it will do so to the detriment of other areas of teaching and learning.
- The vast majority (91.2%) of principals indicated they are concerned that there is nothing to stop the creation and publication of league tables using the NAPLAN data on the My School website.

4. League Tables

- 36.6% of principals Australia wide indicated their school had been listed in a league table this year.
- Of those who indicated they had been placed in a league table, 44.6% of principals indicated that their school had been placed in the middle section, with only 24.5% believing they were in the top section and 30.9% believing they were placed in the bottom section.
- Of those who indicated they had been placed in a league table, 58.1% believed it would have a negative impact on the reputation of their school, 27.0% no impact, and 14.8% a positive impact.
- Of those who indicated they had been placed in a league table, 51.0% believed it would have a negative impact on students in their school, 42.5% no impact, and only 6.5% a positive impact on students.
- Of those who indicated they had been placed in a league table, 67.6% believed it would have a negative impact on the teaching staff in their school, 25.7% no impact, and 6.8% a positive impact.

5. Schools listed on the bottom of league tables

- Responses from principals of schools which they indicated had appeared in the bottom section of leagues tables varied from that of overall responses. There were 106 schools in this category. Such schools were more likely to indicate shortage of resources and teachers. They were also more likely to believe that the information on the My Schools website was inaccurate and the methods of comparing schools lacked validity.
- 42.5% of such schools indicated that they had experienced teacher shortages in the last year, compared with 27.2% of all schools.
- 48.6% indicated teacher shortages are becoming worse, compared with 37.2% of all schools.
- 79.2% indicated they believed their school did not have the resources to deliver the educational programs the students need, compared with 72.2% of all schools.
- 96.2% believe the My School website in its current form does not present an accurate picture of “school performance” for parents, compared with 87.7% for all schools.
- 32.4% believe all the information concerning their school on the website is not correct, compared with 26.0% of all schools.
- 65.7% believe their school’s ICSEA rating is inaccurate, compared with 51.7% of all schools.
- 94.1% believe ICSEA not to be a valid index for determining similar schools, compared with 89.3% of all schools.

- 94.1% did not believe all schools they were compared with on the My School site were similar to their own, compared with 89.4% of all schools who believe this.
- 70.8% believe public comparison on My School will lead them to place a greater emphasis on preparing for NAPLAN, compared with 60.7% of all schools.
- 86.1% believe this will be to the detriment of other areas of teaching and learning, compared with 80.6% of all schools.
- 93.3% are concerned that there is nothing to stop the creation and publication of league tables using the NAPLAN data on the My School website, compared with 91.2% of all schools.
- 84.0% believe having their school named in a league table will have a negative impact on the reputation of the school, compared with 58.1% of all schools.
- 77.7% believe having their school named in a league table will have a negative impact on their students, compared with 51.0% of all schools.
- 86.7% believe having their school named in a league table will have a negative impact on their teaching staff, compared with 67.6% for all schools.

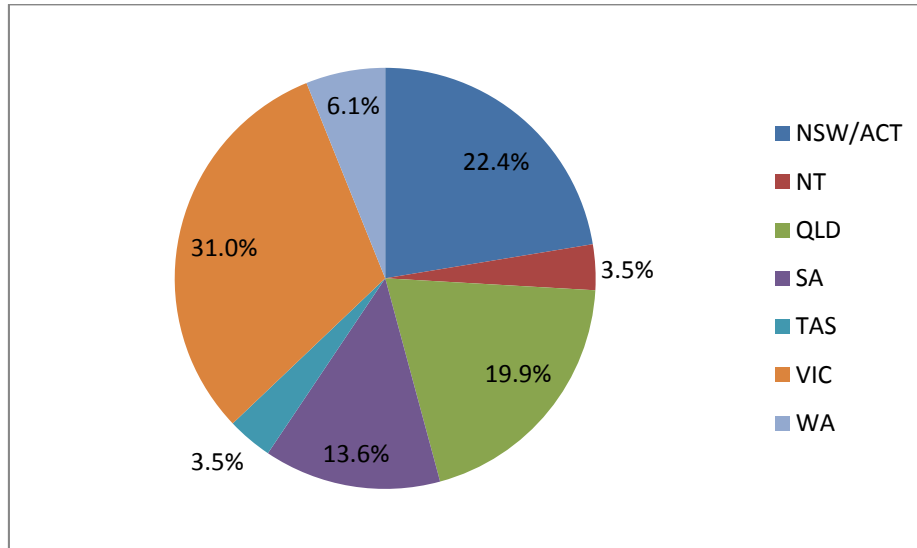
1. Respondent Information

1.1 State or Territory (number of responses)

(1,166 responses)

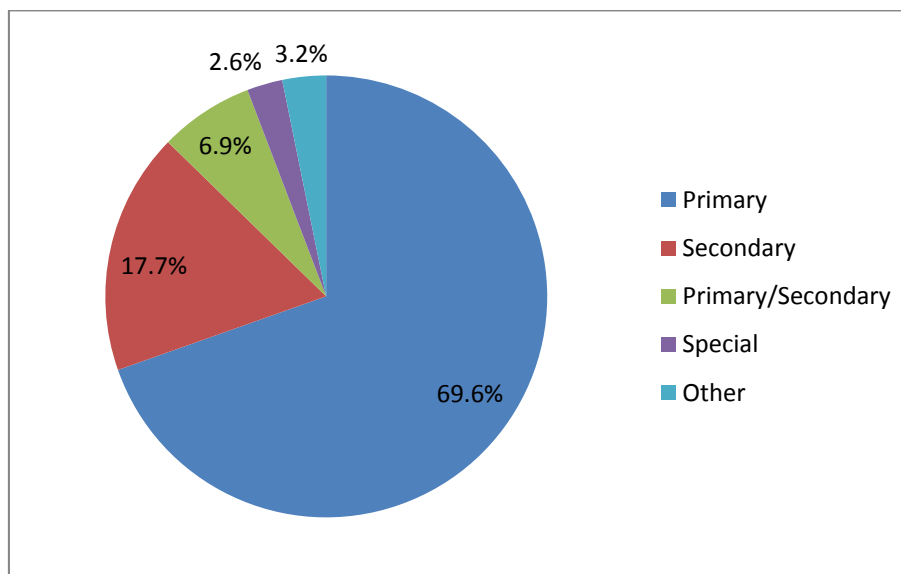
NSW/ACT	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom ¹	Aust
261	41	232	158	41	362	71	106	1,166

1.1.a State or Territory (percentage)



1.2 School Type (national)

(1,162 responses)



¹ Bottom = Respondents who indicated their school had been placed in the bottom section of a league table published this year.

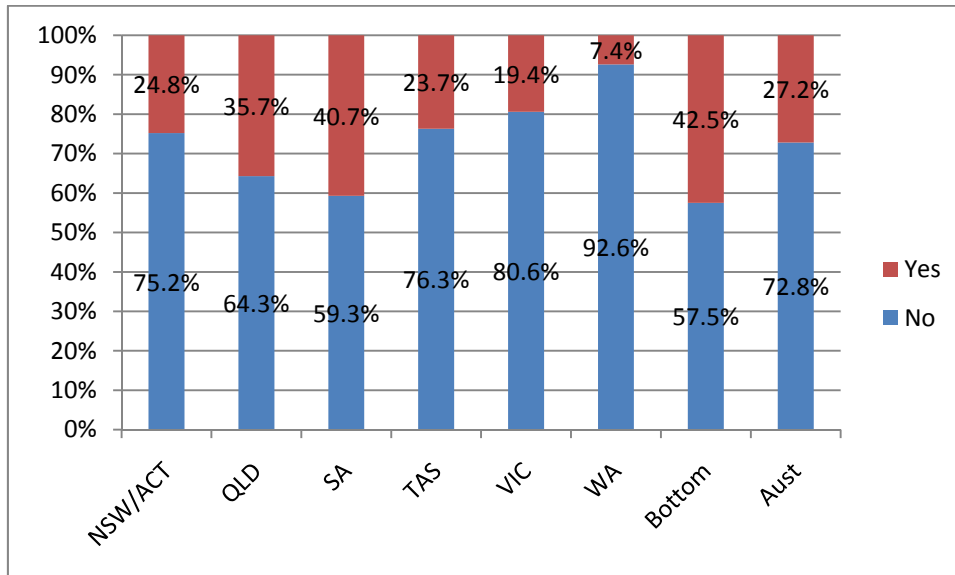
1.3. School Type (by jurisdiction)

	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Primary	66.7%	73.3%	58.7%	75.6%	74.9%	76.1%	58.5%	69.6%
Secondary	27.6%	15.5%	14.8%	9.8%	16.0%	14.1%	31.1%	17.7%
Prim/Sec	2.7%	7.3%	11.6%	12.2%	4.1%	5.6%	3.8%	6.9%
Special	1.1%	2.6%	2.6%	0.0%	3.9%	0.0%	1.9%	2.6%
Other	1.9%	1.3%	12.3%	2.4%	1.1%	4.2%	4.7%	3.2%

2. School Resources

2.1 Has your school experienced teacher shortages in the last year?

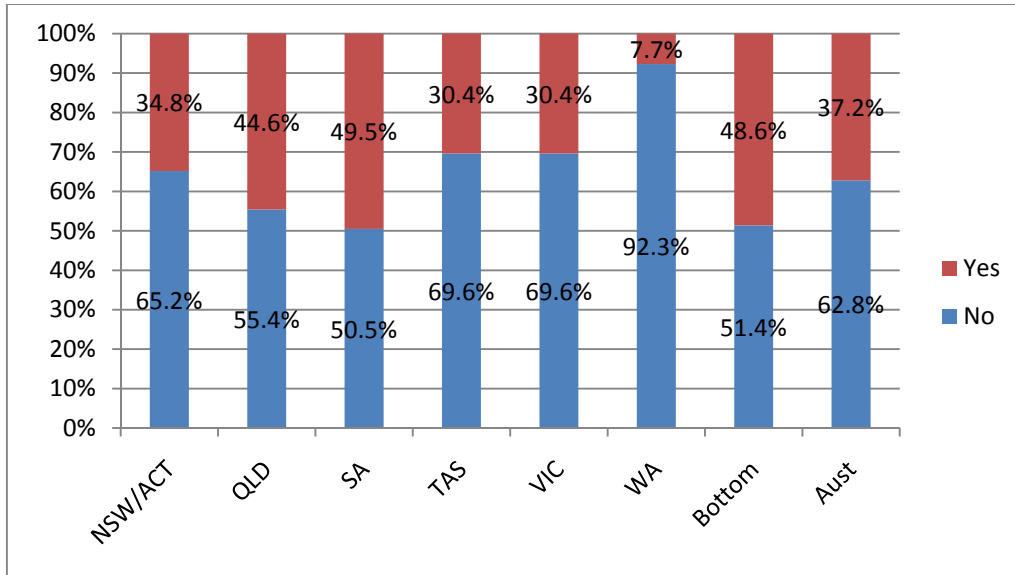
(1,112 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	24.8%	35.7%	40.7%	23.7%	19.4%	7.4%	42.5%	27.2%
No	75.2%	64.3%	59.3%	76.3%	80.6%	92.6%	57.5%	72.8%

2.2 If YES are the teacher shortages getting worse?

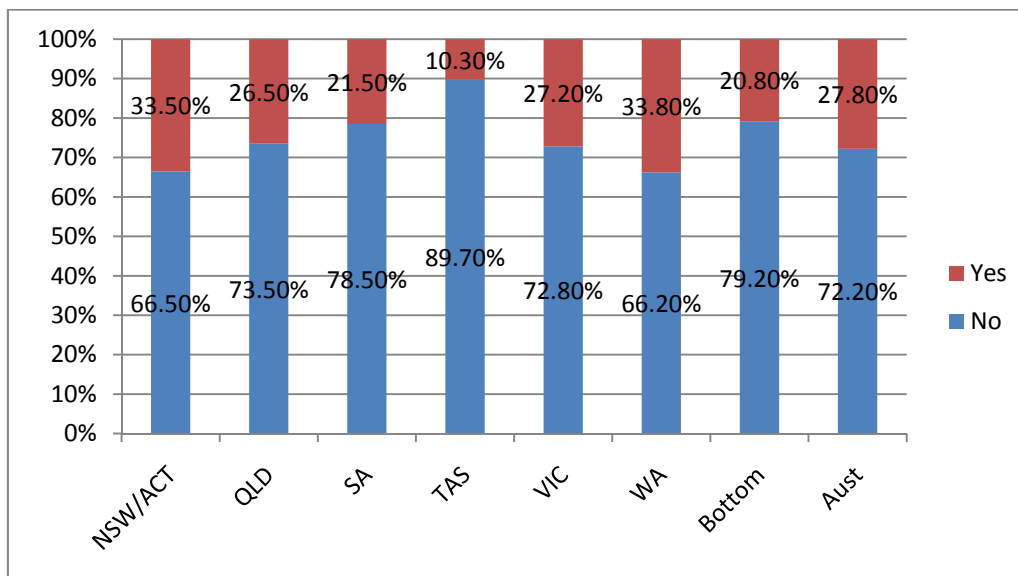
(675 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	34.8%	44.6%	49.5%	30.4%	30.4%	7.7%	48.6%	37.2%
No	65.2%	55.4%	50.5%	69.6%	69.6%	92.3%	51.4%	62.8%

2.3 Do you believe the school has enough resources to deliver the educational programs students at the school need?

(1,108 responses)

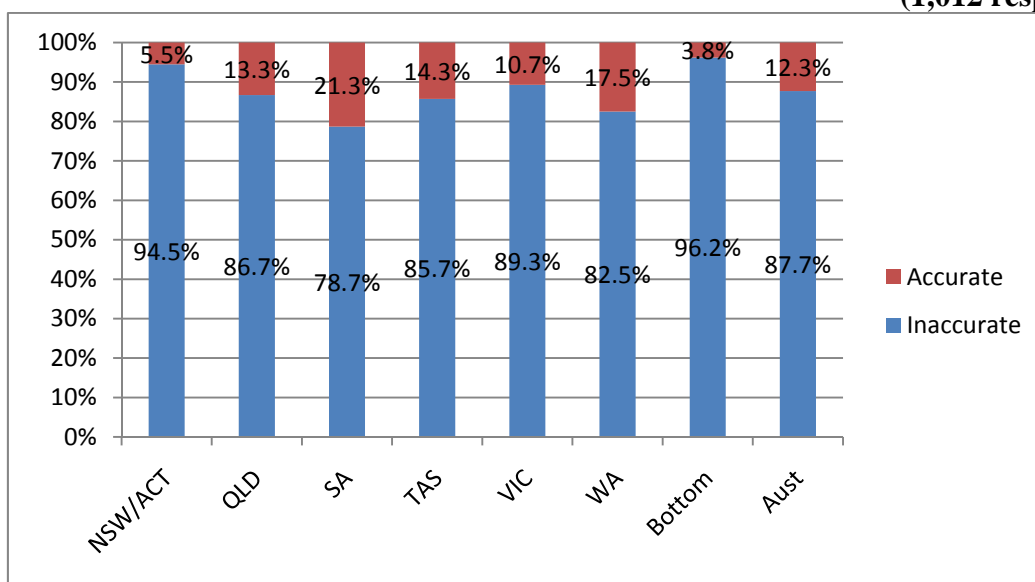


	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	33.5%	26.5%	21.5%	10.3%	27.2%	33.8%	20.8%	27.8%
No	66.5%	73.5%	78.5%	89.7%	72.8%	66.2%	79.2%	72.2%

3. My School Website

3.1 Do you think the My School website in its current form presents an accurate or inaccurate picture of "school performance" for parents?

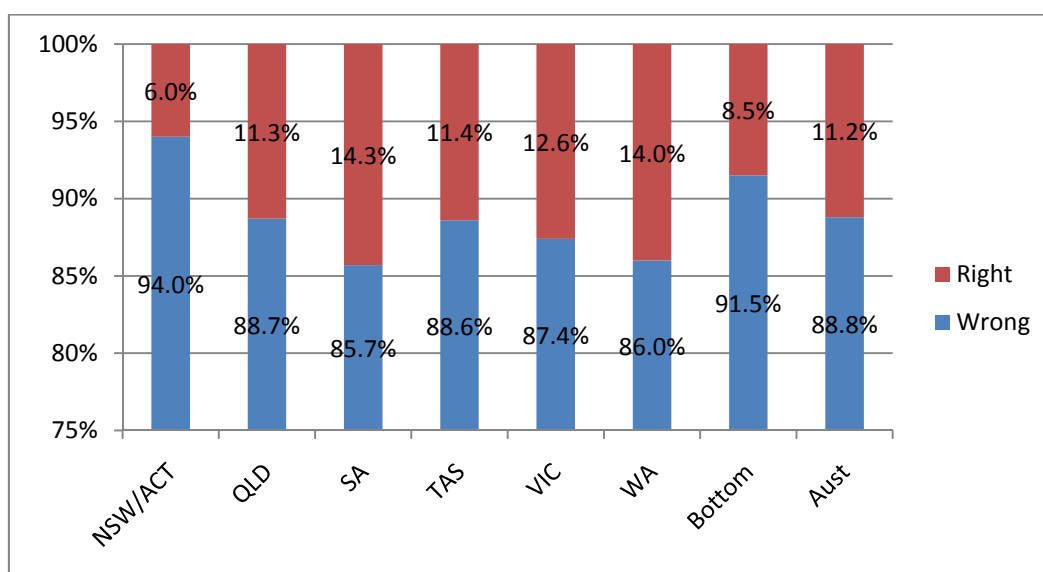
(1,012 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Accurate	5.5%	13.3%	21.3%	14.3%	10.7%	17.5%	3.8%	12.3%
Inaccurate	94.5%	86.7%	78.7%	85.7%	89.3%	82.5%	96.2%	87.7%

3.2 Do you think it was right or wrong to launch the My School site without details of the total income/resources available to each school?

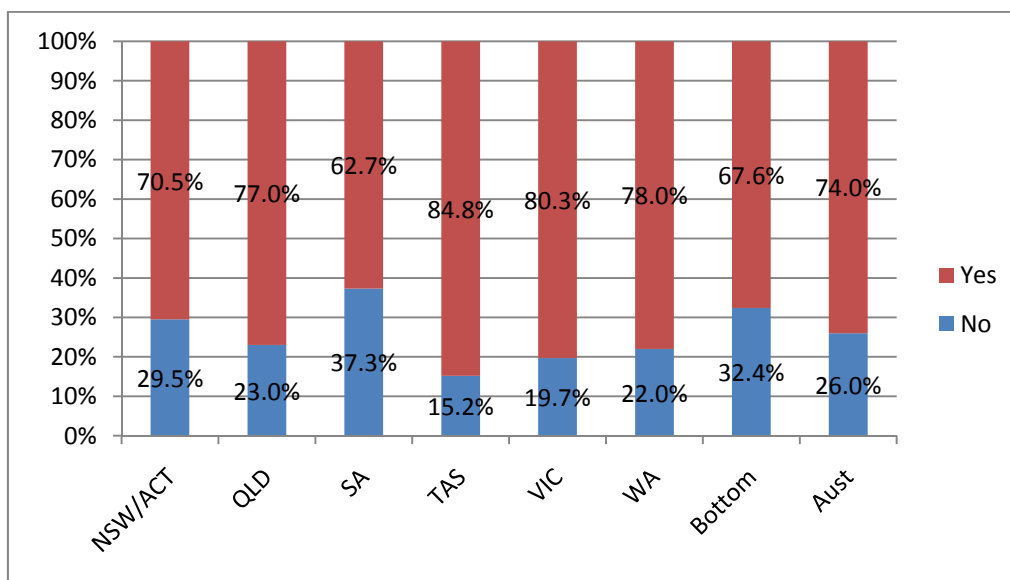
(996 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Right	6.0%	11.3%	14.3%	11.4%	12.6%	14.0%	8.5%	11.2%
Wrong	94.0%	88.7%	85.7%	88.6%	87.4%	86.0%	91.5%	88.8%

3.3 Is all the information on your school's page on the My School website correct?

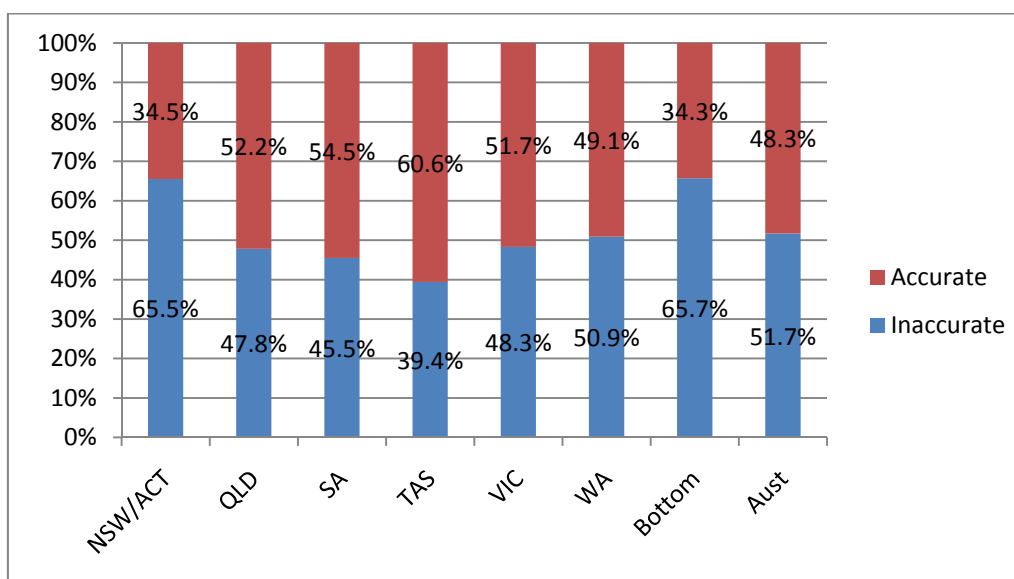
(994 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	70.5%	77.0%	62.7%	84.8%	80.3%	78.0%	67.6%	74.0%
No	29.5%	23.0%	37.3%	15.2%	19.7%	22.0%	32.4%	26.0%

3.4 Do you believe the ICSEA rating for your school is accurate or inaccurate?

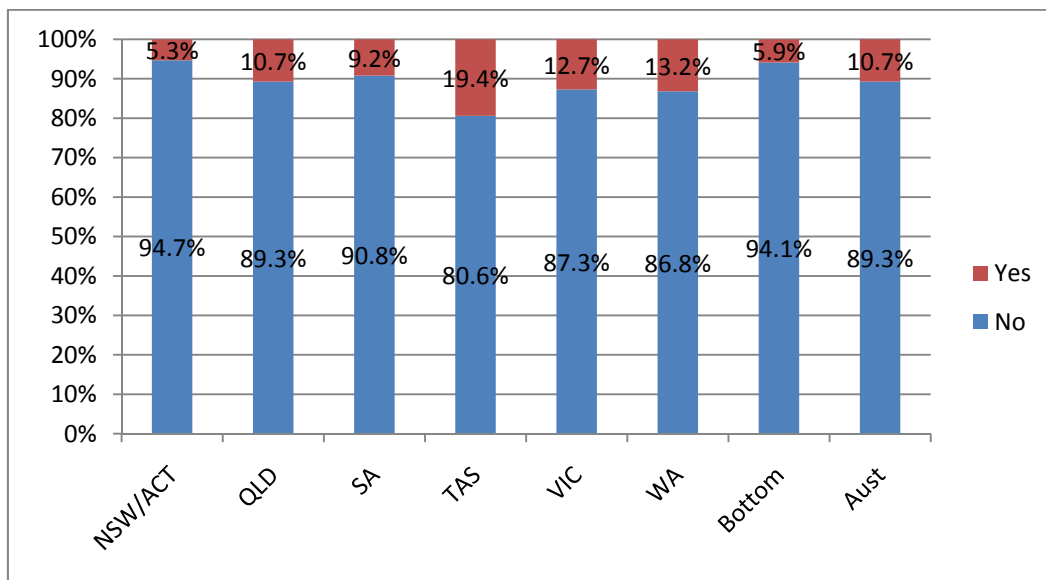
(950 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Accurate	34.5%	52.2%	54.5%	60.6%	51.7%	49.1%	34.3%	48.3%
Inaccurate	65.5%	47.8%	45.5%	39.4%	48.3%	50.9%	65.7%	51.7%

3.5 Do you think ICSEA, in its current form, is a valid index to determine which schools are "similar"?

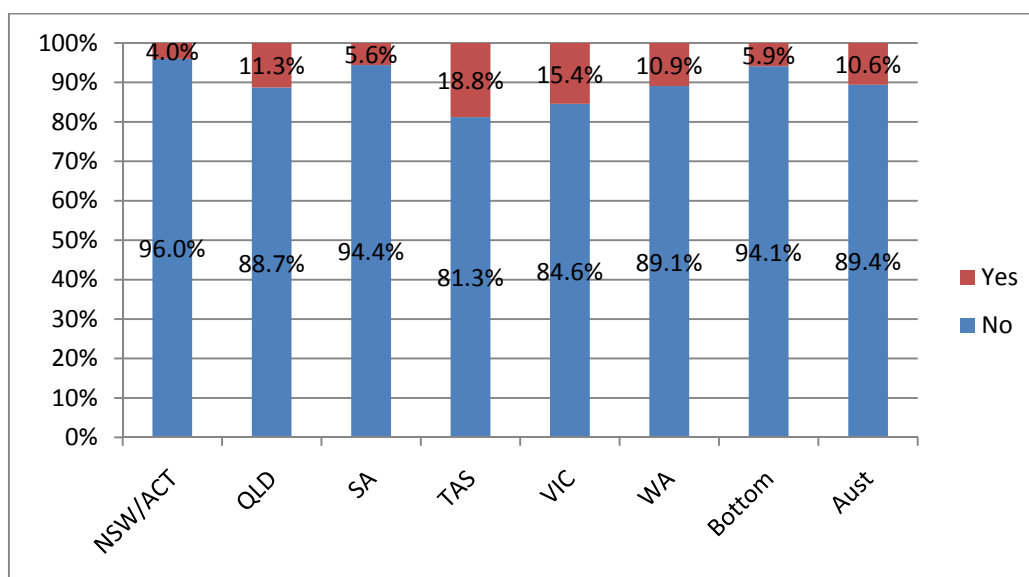
(959 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	5.3%	10.7%	9.2%	19.4%	12.7%	13.2%	5.9%	10.7%
No	94.7%	89.3%	90.8%	80.6%	87.3%	86.8%	94.1%	89.3%

3.6 Do you believe all the schools you are compared with on the site are similar to your own?

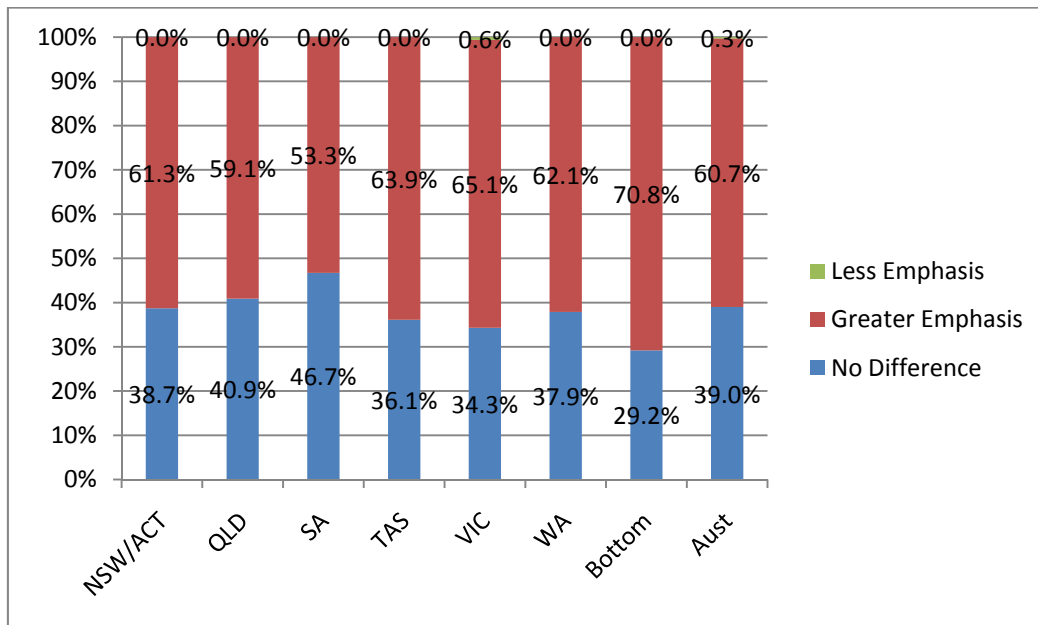
(950 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	4.0%	11.3%	5.6%	18.8%	15.4%	10.9%	5.9%	10.6%
No	96.0%	88.7%	94.4%	81.3%	84.6%	89.1%	94.1%	89.4%

3.7 Do you think the public comparison of school results on My School will lead to less emphasis or greater emphasis in your school on preparing for the NAPLAN tests or will it make no difference?

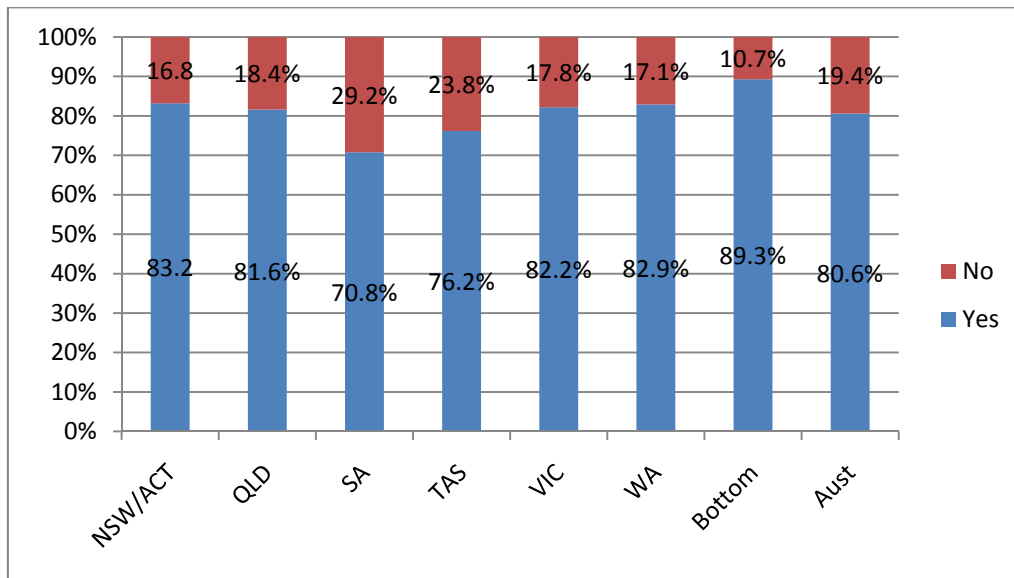
(1,009 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Less Emphasis	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Greater Emphasis	61.3%	59.1%	53.3%	63.9%	65.1%	62.1%	70.8%	60.7%
No Difference	38.7%	40.9%	46.7%	36.1%	34.3%	37.9%	29.2%	39.0%

3.8 If you answered a ‘greater emphasis’ will that be to the detriment of any other area of teaching and learning?

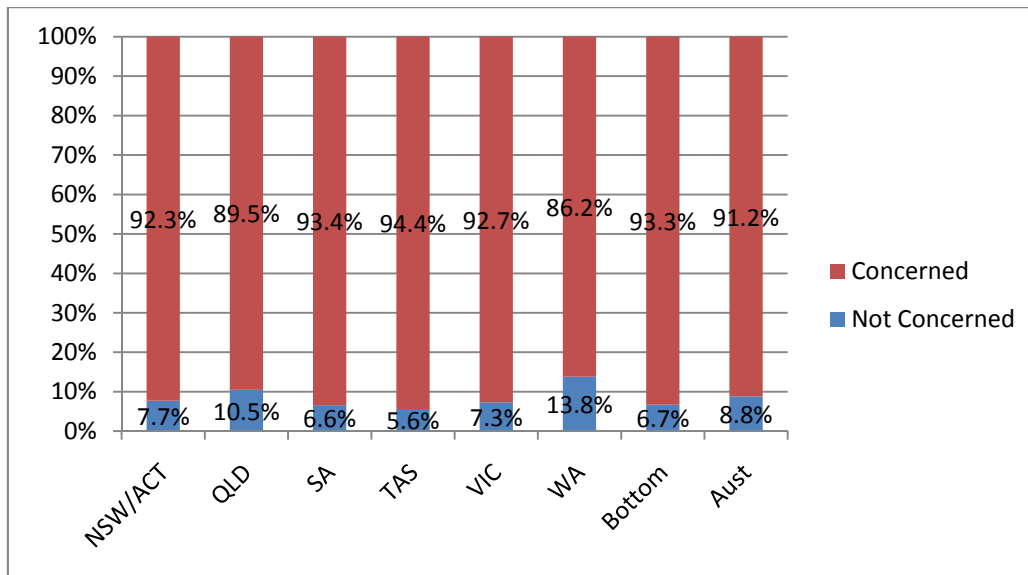
(604 responses)



	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Yes	83.2	81.6%	70.8%	76.2%	82.2%	82.9%	89.3%	80.6%
No	16.8	18.4%	29.2%	23.8%	17.8%	17.1%	10.7%	19.4%

3.9 Are you concerned or not concerned that there is nothing to stop the creation and publication of league tables using the NAPLAN data on the My School site?

(1,003 responses)



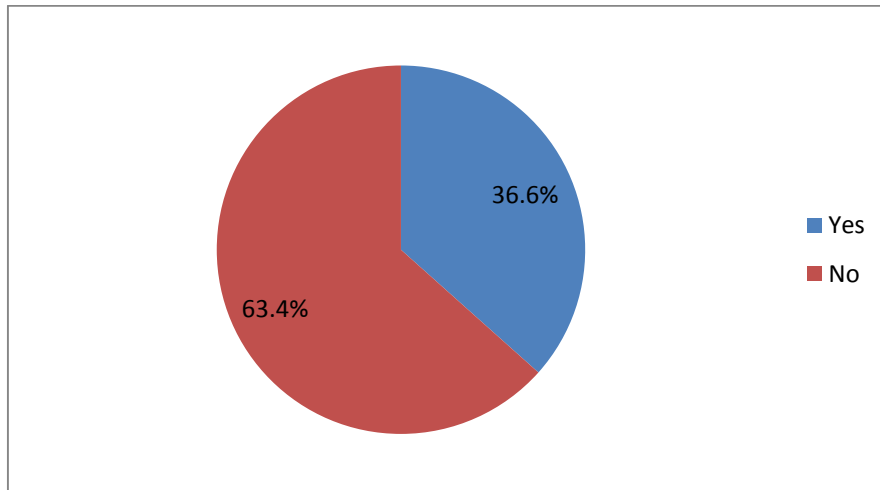
	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Bottom	Aust
Concerned	92.3%	89.5%	93.4%	94.4%	92.7%	86.2%	93.3%	91.2%
Not Concerned	7.7%	10.5%	6.6%	5.6%	7.3%	13.8%	6.7%	8.8%

4. League Tables

Information for questions 4.2 – 4.7 has been filtered to include only those who answered 'yes' to 4.1. (355 respondents).

4.1. Has your school been listed in a newspaper league table this year?

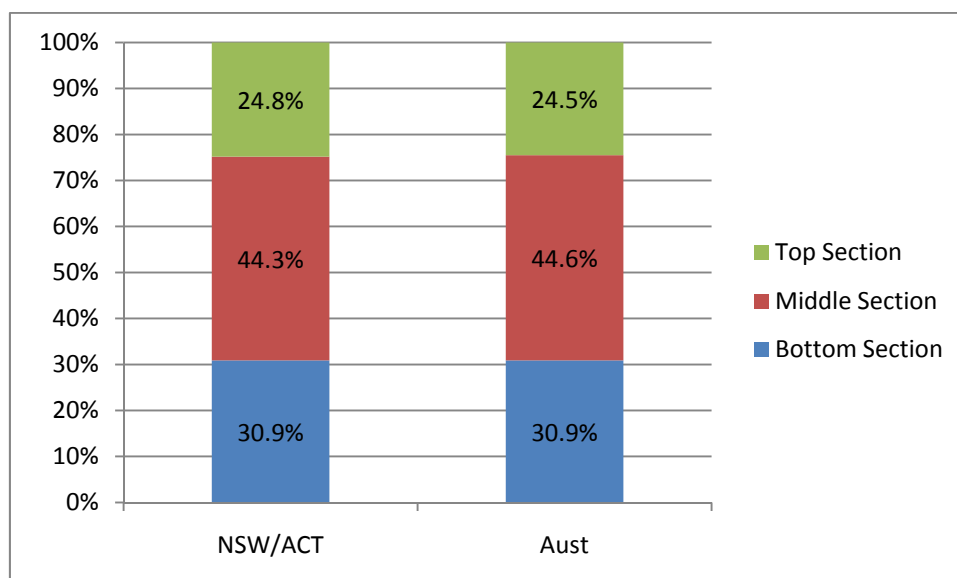
(971 responses)



	Aust
Yes	36.6%
No	63.4%

4.2 Would you describe your placement in the league table as being in the top section, the middle section or the bottom section?

(343 responses)



	NSW/ACT	Aust
Top Section	24.8%	24.5%
Middle Section	44.3%	44.6%
Bottom Section	30.9%	30.9%

4.3 Do you believe having your school ranked in a newspaper league table will have a positive impact on the reputation of the school, a negative impact or no impact?

(344 responses)



	NSW/ACT	Bottom	Aust
No Impact	30.9%	13.2%	27.0%
Negative Impact	53.9%	84.0%	58.1%
Positive Impact	15.2%	2.8%	14.8%

4.4 If positive or negative can you explain what you think the impact will be?

(237 responses)

Samples

It has had a very negative impact on our school and has shocked many members of our small community.

The rankings were unfair in that it compared schools that are incomparable.

Poor perception by the public who are informed only by raw data that does not place a context around the work been delivered within the school, nor does it show the value adding that is occurring across the whole school

No league table is positive. Schools are about much more than any league table could indicate.

We have had many enrolments from religious private schools in the area who wrote to families over the holidays advising them to find another school. This is because they do not want the Yr 9 NAPLAN results that these girls achieve.

This has had an extremely negative impact. We have lost students from our school because of "the league table" This in turn lost a teacher, teacher aide time, Learning Support Time and only made our classes larger.

This year our school was placed very high. Next year that might not be the case which I know will have a negative impact. Ranking schools based on one test is totally inappropriate.

This school was in the top 15% last year and bottom 2% this year. What has changed? Only one thing - the cohort of children doing the test.

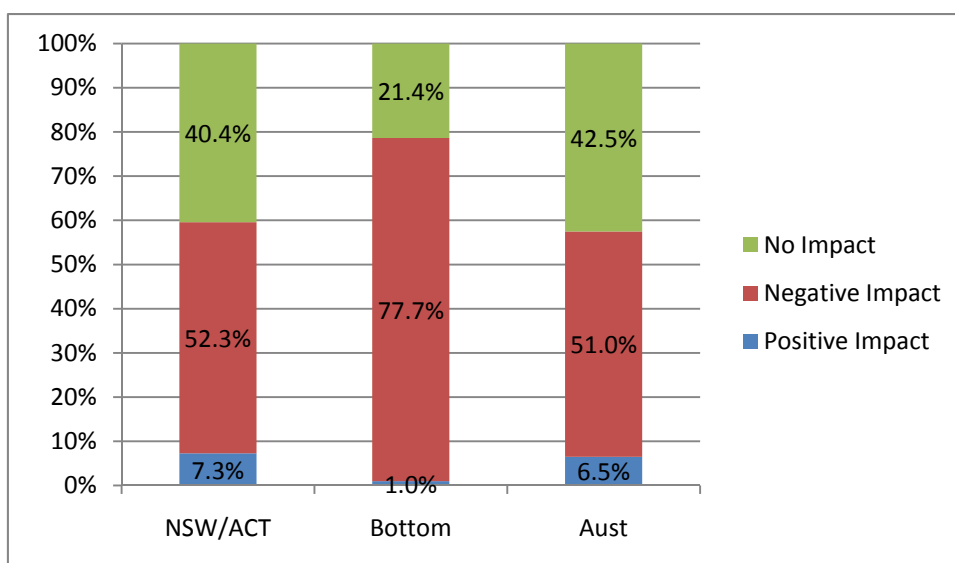
We have a very supportive community but when they see our school listed, for all intents and purposes, as a failing school, it creates concern and worry on their part and pressure on our part when we know we are working extremely hard to support the many and varied learning needs of our students.

Parents were agitated and concerned and those that spoke out were very against the publications as they could see the possible detrimental effects. They also felt that it did not take into account the ratio of teacher/staff member to student, funding, geographic position etc

Current and prospective parents may gain an inaccurate view of the school based on a very limited data set.

4.5 Do you believe having your school named in a newspaper league table will have a positive impact on the students, a negative impact or no impact?

(339 responses)



	NSW/ACT	Bottom	Aust
No Impact	40.4%	21.4%	42.5%
Negative Impact	52.3%	77.7%	51.0%
Positive Impact	7.3%	1.0%	6.5%

4.6 If positive or negative can you explain what you think the impact will be?

(165 responses)

Samples

We are trying so hard to build belief in our students (many of whom live in poverty) that another kick in the guts , will shatter both parental and student self belief that they are capable of growth and change.

Many of our students know they struggle, they do not need to have their noses rubbed in it.

Does not recognize excellent achievements of individuals and excellent progress of individuals. Does not account for the results of students with disabilities and therefore discriminates against them and the school.

Children will be bullied.

Students need to feel good about school. Student's self esteem is compromised by such tables. If students feel they are not attending a good school then they unfortunately act accordingly. Our school is working very hard to raise aspiration and standards. These comparisons only make things more difficult.

Students become unduly concerned about results when really it should simply be enough that primary school students do their best!

Our students are already stigmatised because of where they live. This will only add to that and pigeon hole them - a kind of self fulfilling prophecy.

Our kids actually speak well of their school and they feel embarrassed that all our work is just a thin red line.

No cohort of students need "branding" in the way league tables do.

Students will have greater confidence in their school and their education. The reverse of this, however, is also true for other schools and I fail to see how undermining the confidence of students in their school helps improve educational standards.

Try developing a sense of school pride among students when they believe they are underperforming.

Our school has been trying to build the self esteem of our students...this sets us back to where we started 5 years ago.

Children have been taunted on the bus home from other students

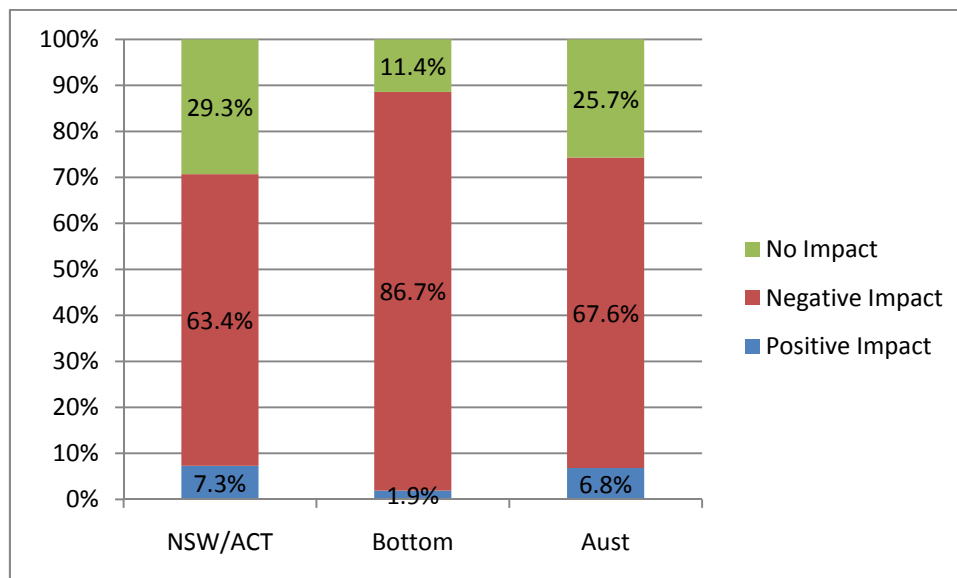
Why don't we all wear a sign around our neck saying..... Poor school... avoid!! It is a humiliating tactic and unnecessary. We don't need to be labelled as a low socio-economic environment. We know that and so does everyone else, including parents.

As a public school we are supportive of all other schools in the area and do not wish for children to have a sense that they are better or worse than others because of the school they attend.

As it is, the students are not proud enough of themselves and their achievements...this can often just reinforce the negativity.

4.7 Do you believe having your school named in a newspaper league table will have a positive impact on the teaching staff, a negative impact or no impact?

(339 responses)



	NSW/ACT	Bottom	Aust
No Impact	29.3%	11.4%	25.7%
Negative Impact	63.4%	86.7%	67.6%
Positive Impact	7.3%	1.9%	6.8%

4.8 If positive or negative can you explain what you think the impact will be?

(218 responses)

Samples

It won't matter if your school receives good or bad results, teachers will have increased pressure (to improve or remain on top) not to improve student outcomes for the benefit of individuals but to meet an expected score.

We have several unfunded literacy programs in our school. If I could make them work better we would have. If I had additional staffing or funding these students would be the target and we would get the lift. However we have 30 in a class school and it is difficult to get all the 1 on 1 that these kids need in a whole class situation.

Staff abhor league tables despite our ranking.

Teachers will feel pressured to teach to the test. Teachers are likely to want to avoid teaching the year groups being tested, especially if we know that a particular year is a low performing year - which all schools know they have every so often - even if it is a good year, but lower than a normal year or the previous year.

Teachers work very hard and deserve the recognition for their work. The League tables are very disheartening and do not recognise the commitment of teachers - nor do they tell the story about the student cohort

Increasingly attracting quality new staff to country locations is difficult - league tables will simply make this more of an issue.

Staff work very hard to do the best for students. This kind of negative press totally deflates their desire and does not recognise the excellent work that they are currently doing. Staff with difficult cohorts of students / families often can achieve far more from their students than some staff at more affluent schools.

Many of our teachers feel deflated by the publication of this data - they work very hard and are getting beaten up over this data

Staff may look to work in schools that are better performed, thus providing a disincentive to get our best teachers to the places they are most needed

Teachers will become disillusioned about their whole year of professional efforts being judged on one simplistic measure.

Teaching at our school is a work of heart and head. My teachers work hard every day to meet all our students intellectual, emotional and physical needs and this work is done with incredible understanding and patience. If schools are to be judged on NAPLAN alone then it will be a sad community for our very needy students as the whole child is our focus here.

Staff are devastated and have taken it personally.

We have a talented teaching staff and negative publicity just slaps them in the face after terrific effort all year. Our school has amazing programs and staff. The results of the testing should not be the determining factor of a school.

Cohorts of students do change. You can be heroes one year and poor teachers the next.

Teachers at this school work exceptionally hard at improving the outcomes for students. Additional funding, smaller classes and exclusivity would assist us immensely. That is not something we can manage.