



QUEENSLAND

TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES

QTU member survey on NAPLAN and MySchool

REPORT OF SURVEY RESULTS AT CLOSING DATE 25 MAY, 2018

Executive summary

The Queensland Teachers' Union conducted an online survey of its members between February and May 2018 about the impacts of NAPLAN testing and the MySchool website. More than 5000 of the QTU's teacher and principal members responded to the survey.

Ten years on from the introduction of NAPLAN, it is clear that the national testing regime has moved far beyond its alleged original purpose of providing a low-stakes measure of student performance. Negative consequences reported by QTU members include:

- high levels of stress for students, families and teachers
- public “naming and shaming” of schools based on the moment-in-time test that has a high level of statistical error
- inappropriate judging of teacher performance
- increasing pressure on school leaders to lift NAPLAN results at the expense of broader educational aims
- practice tests taking time away from student learning in curriculum areas.

QTU members saw little evidence that NAPLAN assisted teaching practice or student learning. More than half the respondents said NAPLAN data was useless or barely useful in informing teaching practice; two-thirds said students' experience at school would be improved if NAPLAN testing ceased, as would their own job satisfaction. More than 90% said the MySchool website was not useful to them as education professionals.

The big “winners” from NAPLAN and the MySchool website were seen to be the media, the federal government and educational businesses.

Given the wide range of deeply negative consequences of NAPLAN testing and its school-by-school publication on the MySchool website, and the limited usefulness of the data to teachers and school leaders, it is not surprising that 93.5% of respondents to the QTU's member survey said there was an urgent need for a comprehensive review into NAPLAN in Australia.

Details of survey

Distribution method	A link to the survey on the QTU website was emailed to all QTU members. The survey link was also posted on the QTU social media pages – Facebook and Twitter.
Date survey opened	28 February 2018
Date survey closed	25 May 2018
Number of responses	5,193

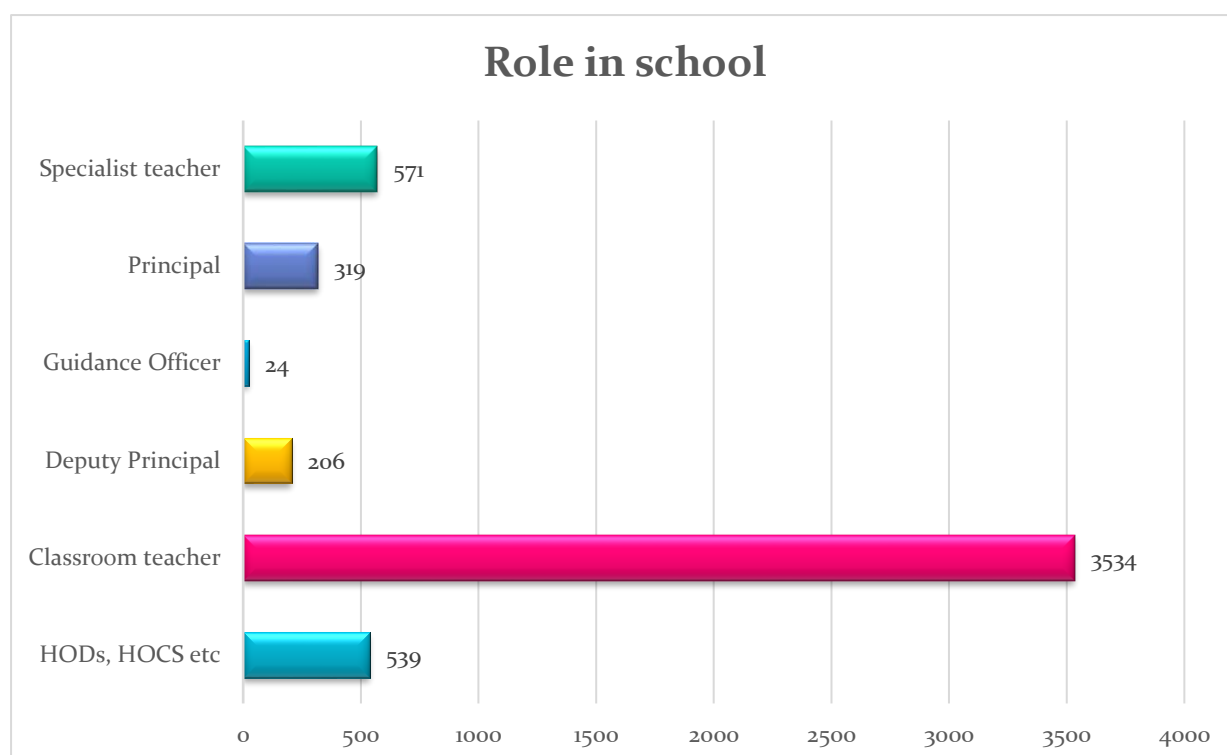
RESULTS

About the respondents

Questions relating to the demographics of the respondents were compulsory, to ensure that we had information on the spread of characteristics such as roles and years of experience, and whether respondents taught years that had NAPLAN tests or were responding on their general experiences with NAPLAN in their schools. Not all respondents have completed the entire survey.

Current roles

Almost two-thirds of respondents are classroom teachers. The distribution of the remaining groups is shown below.



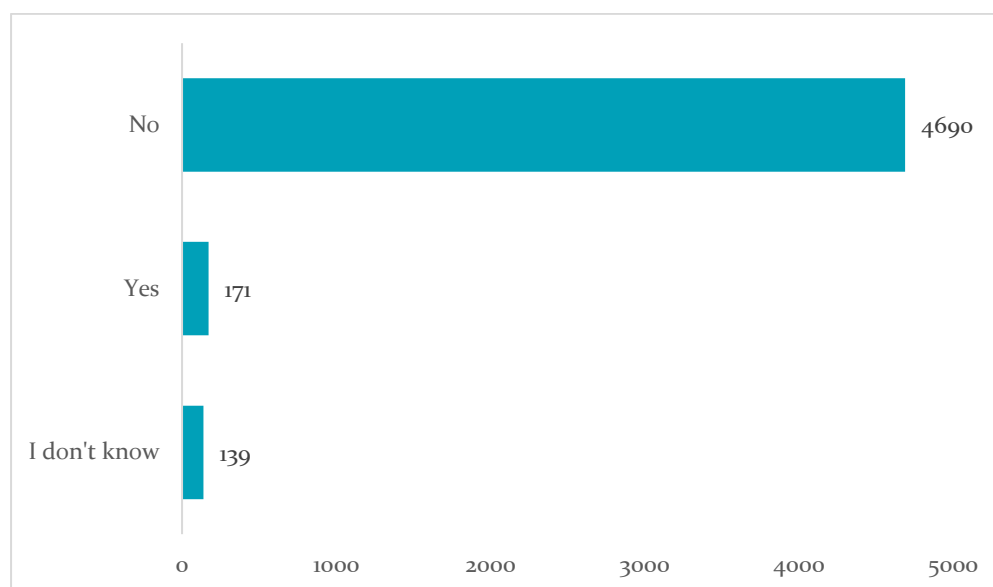
Data table for graph above:

Role	n	%
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HODs, HOCS etc	539	10.4%
Classroom teacher	3534	68.1%
Deputy Principal	206	4.0%
Guidance Officer	24	0.5%
Principal	319	6.1%
Specialist teacher	571	11.0%
	5193	100.0%

When NAPLAN testing was introduced in 2008, we were told it would be a "low stakes" and "light touch" form of assessment. Do you think it has remained true to that claim?

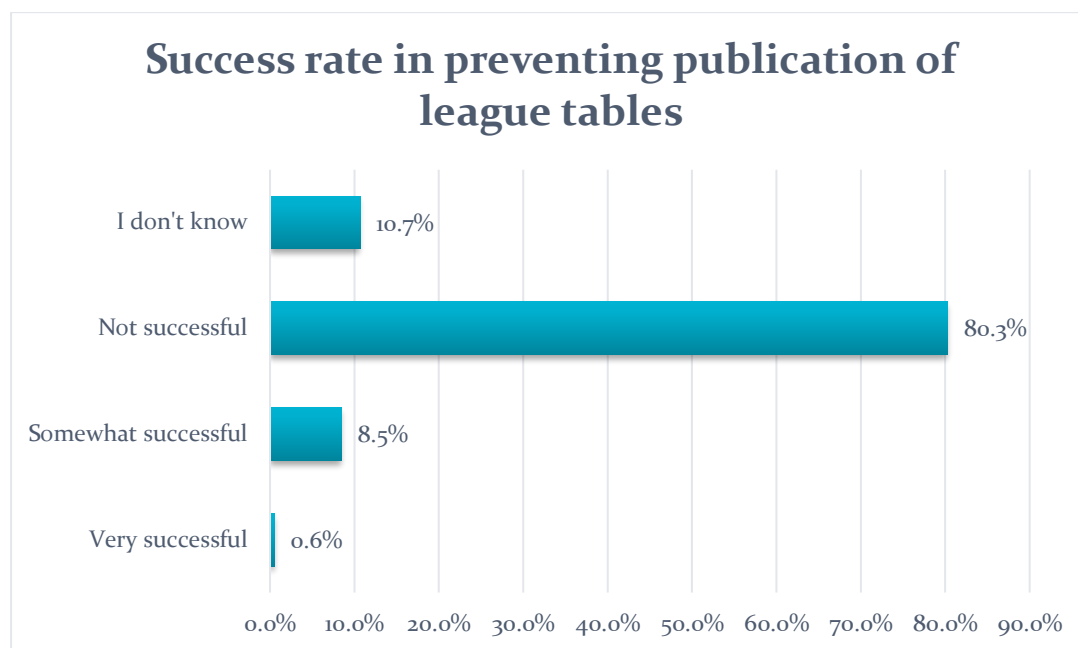
Almost all teachers and principals (94 per cent) think that NAPLAN testing is not low stakes or light touch.



I don't know	139	2.8%
Yes	171	3.4%
No	4690	93.8%
	5000	100.0%

When the MySchool website was launched in 2010, educators were assured there were sufficient protections in place to prevent league tables comparing schools being published. How successful do you believe these protections were?

80 per cent of QTU members said that the protections put in place to prevent league tables being published have been unsuccessful.

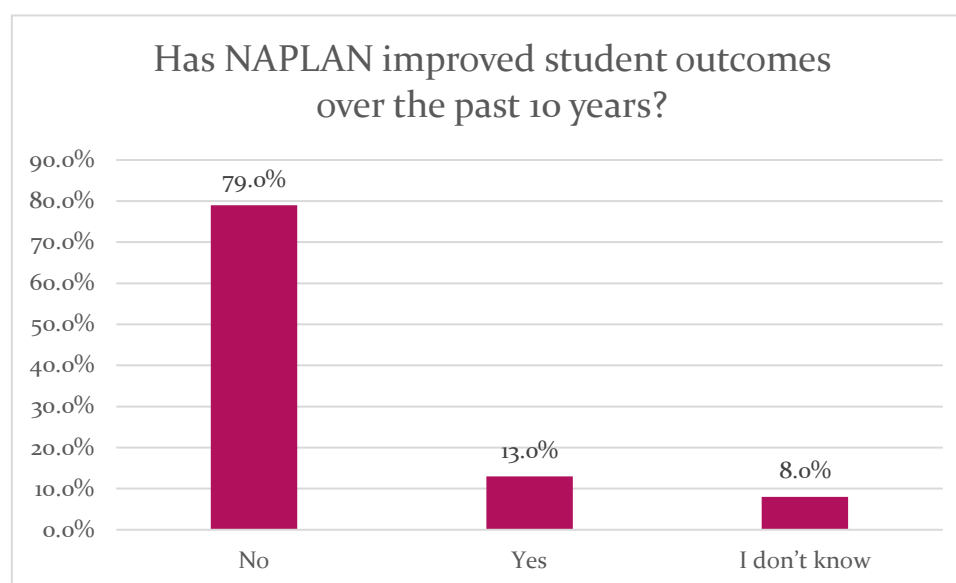


Response	n	%
Very successful	28	0.6%
Somewhat successful	424	8.5%
Not successful	4014	80.3%
I don't know	533	10.7%
	4999	100.0%

Generally speaking, what is the attitude of students towards NAPLAN testing?

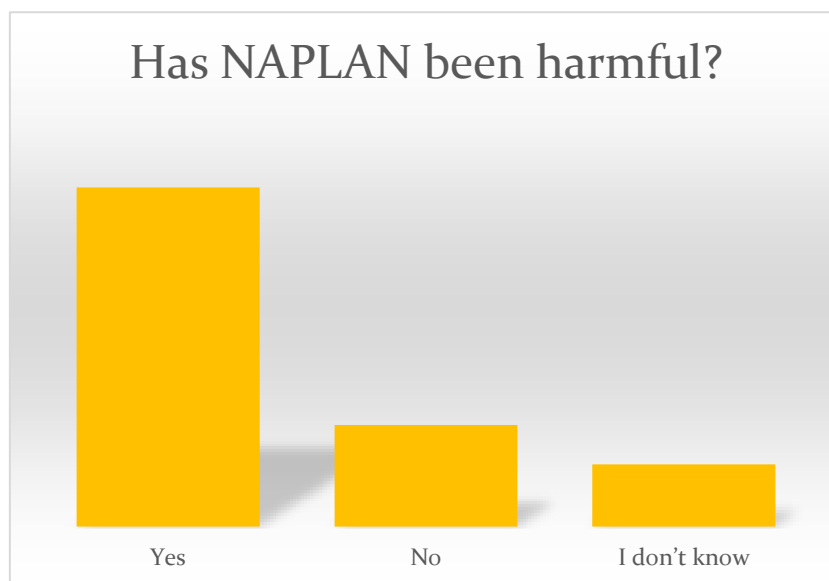
I don't know	276	5.5%
Negative	3,786	75.5%
No effect	511	10.2%
Positive	441	8.8%
	5,014	100.0%

Do you believe NAPLAN has improved student outcomes over the past 10 years?



I don't know	404	8.0%
No	3,973	79.0%
Yes	654	13.0%
	5,031	100.0%

Do you believe NAPLAN has been harmful?



I don't know	582	12.0%
No	942	19.5%
Yes	3,318	68.5%
	4,842	100.0%

Please elaborate

Some typical responses:

NAPLAN has become a very stressful test for students and teachers and has become the chief measure of school performance.

Secondary school HOD, > 20 years' experience

Harmful to schools' reputations, as the public often judge schools purely on NAPLAN data when it is really one test at a point in time. Harmful to some individuals too - teachers and students severely stressed.

Secondary classroom teacher, 11-15 years' experience.

Term 4 in year 4 has become a 'practise NAPLAN' term where kids have to do an old test and have their data analysed and then support teachers, HOC and master teachers use their time to focus in on gaps so that results improve before the actual test.

Primary classroom teacher, > 20 years' experience

A contributor to increased anxiety for students, parents and teachers.

Primary school principal, > 20 years' experience

I see NAPLAN as applying undue stress onto the students. With an increasing workload on students, the added stress of three days of testing is unnecessary. It also adds stress to my workload. Why do I need to be seen to be teaching NAPLAN style activities in my classroom? I prepare my students the best I can by immersing them in the curriculum. If they want our teaching to change, address these issues in the curriculum.

Secondary classroom teacher, > 20 years' experience

League table publication is quoted as a source of harm:

The stress for some students. Schools having to teach to NAPLAN instead of the curriculum, and the publication of league tables without further data about the school has seen a lot of false information impressed upon the general public.

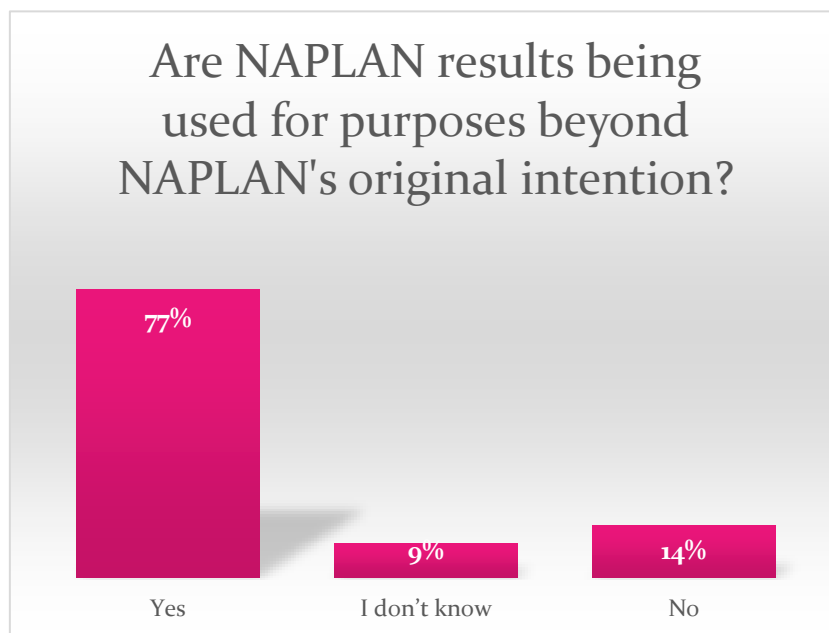
Secondary specialist teacher, >20 years' experience

NAPLAN tests are harmful to the department's reputation

Harmful to the reputation of Edn Qld and Australia in general - again, I would think so when a snapshot test such as this is used to categorise our literacy and numeracy levels and compare them to other states and even countries.

Secondary specialist teacher, >20 years' experience

Do you think NAPLAN results are being used for purposes beyond NAPLAN's original intention?



Yes	3752	77%
I don't know	447	9%
No	675	14%
	4874	100%

PLEASE ELABORATE

Respondents gave very good details of areas where they feel NAPLAN results are being used other than originally intended.

1. As a measurement of teacher performance:

I believe it's now used to measure teacher performance

2. Comparison of schools – league tables:

Comparing schools and promoting competition between schools.

*Comparing schools, **destroying collaboration***

3. Pressure on principals

District offices to demand more from principals.

4. Parents: Parents use results to rank schools.

5. Teacher 'bashing' and monitoring of performance:

At a previous school, which was a National Partnership School with 60 per cent learning support, the teachers were told that they were bad teachers because the students achieved poor results.

Bringing down the standing of teachers. Political punching bag

Attempts by government to tie wages to NAPLAN results. Used as a comparison to rate schools.

I think that schools are spending unnecessary money trying to improve their NAPLAN results instead of elsewhere.

Yes - awarding students, judging schools and teachers.

6. Referring to media:

After NAPLAN results are released, there are always reports in local media about which schools are doing well and which are not. This is where all the pressure surrounding NAPLAN comes from.

As a comparison by parents and newspapers as a league table.

How useful is the data to you in your teaching practice?

Over half (58.8 per cent) find the data from NAPLAN either useless or barely useful in their teaching practice. 34.8 per cent find data somewhat useful, with 6.3 per cent finding it very useful.

Barely useful	2063	42.1%
Somewhat useful	1704	34.8%
Useless	818	16.7%
Very useful	310	6.3%
	4895	100.0%

If NAPLAN testing ceased to exist tomorrow, do you think your students' experience of school would be better or worse?

QTU members do not think that students' experience of school is enhanced by NAPLAN testing. In fact two thirds (67.7 per cent) think that if NAPLAN testing ceased to exist tomorrow, their students' experience of school would be better.

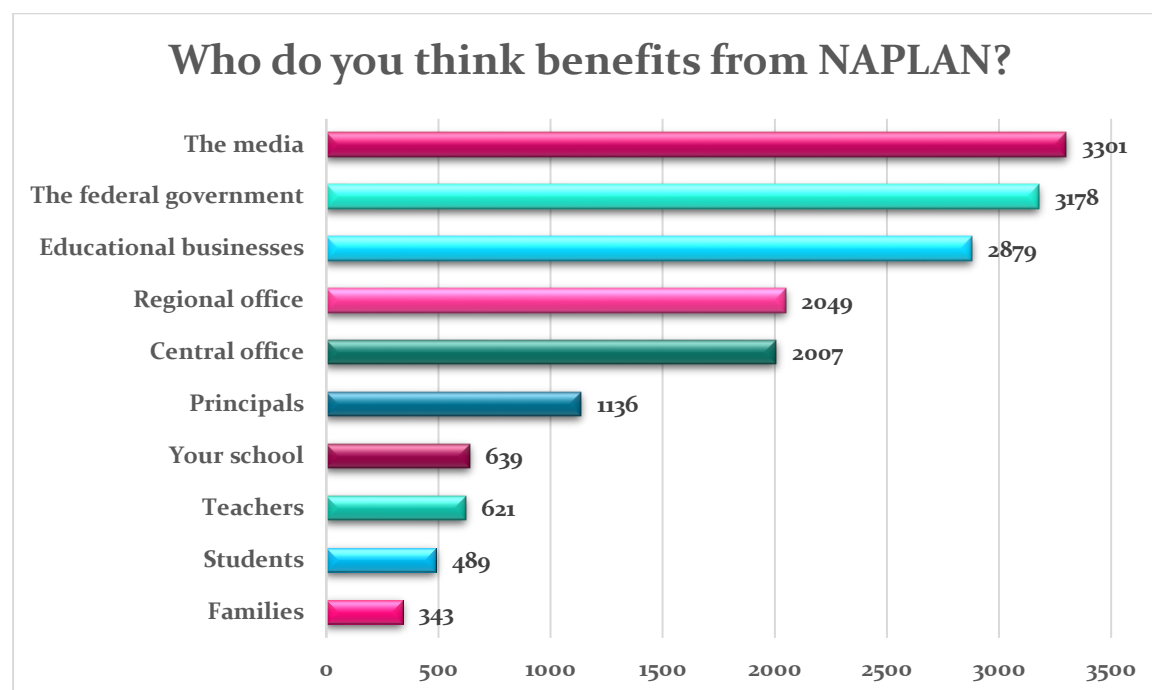
Better	3281	67.7%
I don't know	354	7.3%
No	1053	21.7%
Worse	160	3.3%
	4848	100.0%

If NAPLAN testing ceased to exist tomorrow, would your job satisfaction be higher or lower?

Higher	3213	66%
Lower	88	2%
No impact	1553	32%
	4854	100%

Who do you think benefits from NAPLAN?

Respondents were asked to check all responses that applied to them in this question.



Responses	n
The media	3301
The federal government	3178
Educational businesses	2879
Regional office	2049
Central office	2007
Principals	1136
Your school	639
Teachers	621
Students	489
Families	343

How much emphasis is placed on NAPLAN testing at your school?

Large emphasis	1,987	41%
Moderate emphasis	2,074	43%
No emphasis	102	2%
Small emphasis	665	14%
	4,828	100%

Have you ever felt pressure to change the way you teach because of NAPLAN?

Yes	3808	79.0%
No	1015	21.0%
	4823	100.0%

Are practice tests conducted at your school in preparation for NAPLAN?

I don't know	253	5.2%
Yes	4090	84.8%
No	482	10.0%
	4825	100.0%

Should test data about your school be publicly available (say, on a website or in a newspaper)?

I don't know	496	10.2%
No	3926	81.1%
Yes	419	8.7%
	4841	100.0%

Would it be more appropriate for territory or state data only (averaged across all schools in that jurisdiction) to be publicly available to see broad trends across state and territories?

I don't know	980	20.5%
No	1418	29.7%
Yes	2381	49.8%
	4779	100.0%

Would it be more appropriate for NAPLAN data to be available only to staff at the school and the student and their family, rather than on the MySchool website where school results can be compared?

I don't know	318	6.6%
No	439	9.2%
Yes	4027	84.2%
	4784	100.0%

Have you ever heard of a family choosing a school at least partially based on NAPLAN results published on the MySchool website?

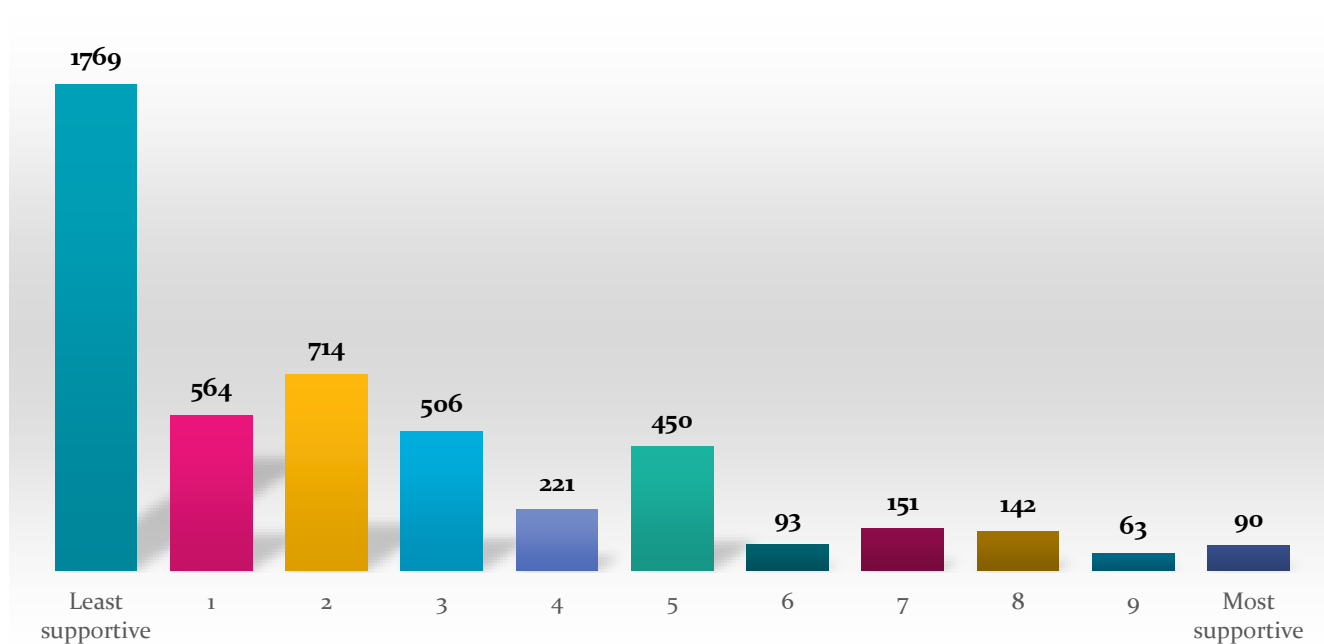
I don't know	392	8.2%
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No	1250	26.1%
Yes	3141	65.7%
	4783	100.0%

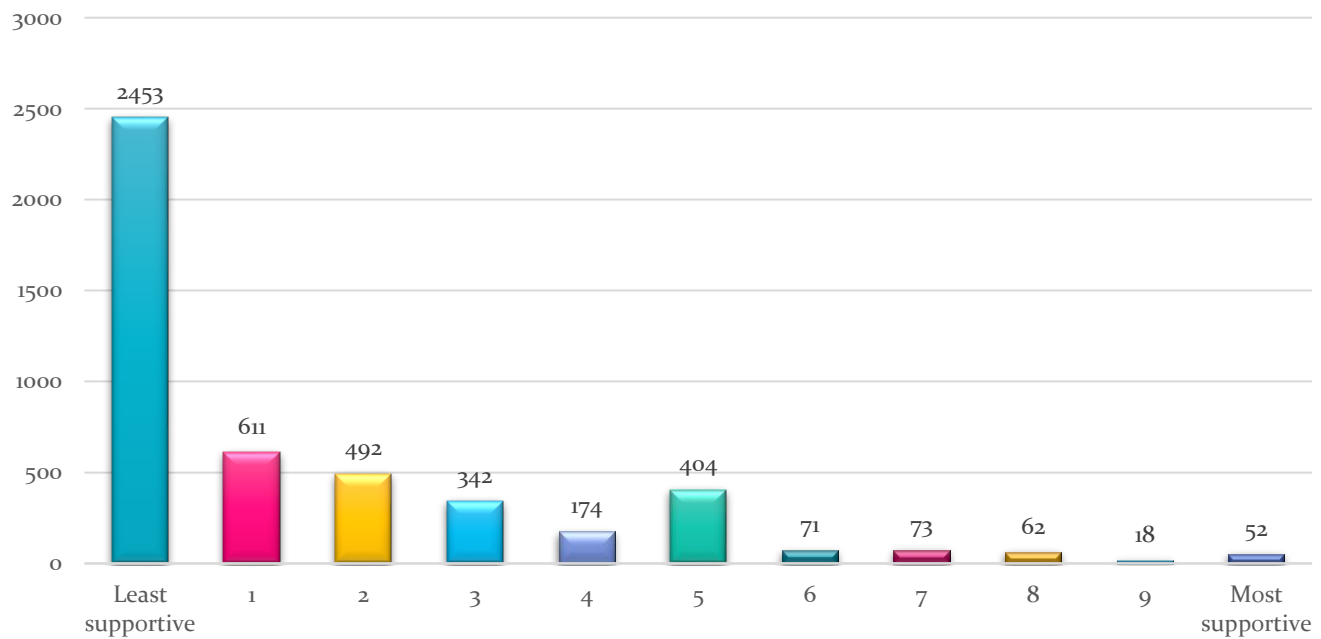
Is the MySchool website useful to you as a teacher?

No	4259	90.2%
Yes	461	9.8%
	4720	100.0%

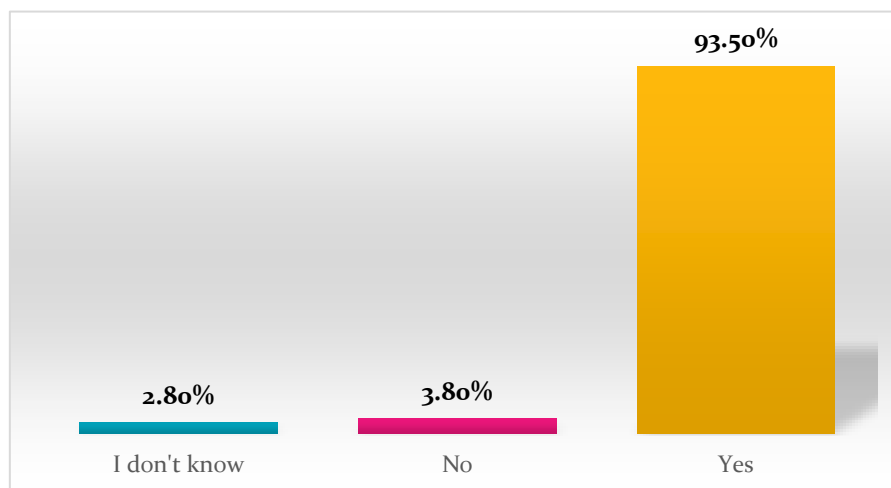
On a scale of 0-10 (0 being the LEAST supportive), how supportive are you of NAPLAN in its current form?



On a scale of 0-10 (0 being the LEAST supportive), how supportive are you of the MySchool website?



Do you believe it is time to conduct a comprehensive review into NAPLAN or national standardised testing in this country?



END OF REPORT