

Thursday, 12 May 2011

Peter Adams  
General Manager Assessment  
The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
Level Ten  
255 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Adams,

### **ONLINE NAPLAN**

I write in response to recent press reports that the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority intends to conduct future NAPLAN testing online.

For over 100 years the Mathematical Association of Victoria has provided voice, leadership and support for teachers of mathematics. The MAV is the only professional association of its kind in Victoria, promoting the importance and value to society of mathematics and mathematics education. Today the MAV provides more than 9,000 teachers with professional membership benefits across regional and metropolitan Victoria. In addition, the MAV offers an extensive catalogue of publications and teaching resources, together with professional learning programs designed to meet the specific needs of primary and secondary teachers.

Currently, the MAV provides schools with a freely available spreadsheet for recording the student responses to the NAPLAN Numeracy tests at <http://www.mav.vic.edu.au/mav-resources/curriculum-resources/naplan-support-material.html>. Once the teacher has recorded the correct responses to the test, the spreadsheet can obtain both a score for each student, and an indication of which questions are done well or otherwise. Most valuably, it gives a profile of the student's knowledge in terms of the NAPLAN test.

The MAV did this in 2010 and again in 2011 because:

- One mission of the Association is to assist schools to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- The NAPLAN has the potential to provide a teacher with valuable feedback about the knowledge of the students in the class. This is valuable formative assessment to guide instruction.
- This feedback makes a greater contribution towards to improving the students' learning the sooner the teacher obtains it after the test is taken. By the time the official NAPLAN results are released the data has lost much of its value for this purpose. (The MAV recognises that the feedback still has considerable value for other purposes, but not for *immediately* improving students' learning.)
- A teacher who has this information (formative assessment with the help of NAPLAN) is better able to meet the educational needs of their students. A teacher who knows about the strengths and weaknesses of their students, using NAPLAN as a key tool to obtain this

information is better able, as a principal example, to allow for individual differences in instruction.

Our staff have ensured that the advice they in provide in support of the spreadsheet, also found at <http://www.mav.vic.edu.au/mav-resources/curriculum-resources/naplan-support-material.html> is consistent with the NAPLAN National Protocols for Administration ([http://www.nap.edu.au/\\_Documents/PDF/2011%20National%20Protocols%20for%20Test%20Administration%20NA.pdf](http://www.nap.edu.au/_Documents/PDF/2011%20National%20Protocols%20for%20Test%20Administration%20NA.pdf)).

Clearly, the NAPLAN procedures will need to change along with a new online format. I believe that it would be useful if the design of a new online process took into account the value of being able to offer immediate feedback in support of formative assessment.

Yours sincerely,

**SIMON PRYOR**  
Chief Executive Officer