



Cartoon: Daniel Clarke

## NAPLAN: is it just stress or necessity

### EDITORIAL

By SARAH HAYES and MIKAYLA STEPHENS

NAPLAN (the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy) is a series of government-funded exams designed to assess a child's skill level and identify areas in need of improvement. These tests are held every second year of schooling, beginning in year 3 then 5, 7 and again finally in year 9.

NAPLAN is often a cause of many reactions and differing views including both positive and negative. The country seems to be split in half when it comes to whether or not they support this program. Some believe it's a revolutionary idea while others think that it is the cause of too much worry and stress for children.

Many believe NAPLAN is a tool that helps students, parents, teachers and schools assess where they stand on a local, state and national level. It gives children an idea of what areas they are best in, teachers an idea of where certain students need help, parents an idea of where their children are at compared to others, and finally schools an idea of how they rate compared to similar schools.

Many parents, teachers and schools think that the exams are a positive idea. But that could be because they aren't the ones taking them. They just see the results.

Some students do see the benefits as it challenges them and makes them want to perform better. It gives them a goal to aim for. Also, it can really boost your confidence when you see your results are high and in the top band.

On the other hand, many students find it overwhelmingly stressful and worrying. They find it difficult to live up to the standards and expectations set by those around them. NAPLAN testing has been known to make students feel sick and cause anxiety, which no doubt would lead to a poor performance in the exams.

A year 3 student asked about her first time doing NAPLAN said, "I wasn't too worried about it, but some of my friends were really nervous that they wouldn't do well. My teacher told us it was nothing to worry about."

We believe that NAPLAN, if approached with the right attitude, can be a positive experience for all involved. We could survive without it but at the same time we understand the benefits of having that type of information accessible. Students need to stop putting pressure on themselves and just do their best.

# Young filmmaker set to roll out red carpet

By JOE EASTWOOD

LIGHTS, camera, action! When you think of movies you picture red carpets, glamorous award ceremonies, popcorn and full crews of people. But for young movie director Dan Clarke it means none of these things.

Twelve-year-old Dan, enjoys making movies on his family's camcorder on the weekends. He uses an old tripod and calls his friends over to get involved.

Dan has learnt his techniques from watching his heroes on YouTube. When he thought, 'I'm going to make my own movies,' he began by inviting his friends over and practicing lines in front of a camera. Then at the end of last year he took his big chance and entered Tropfest Jr, with one of his first videos: *Cookie Olympics*.

It didn't get very far, but Dan didn't give up. From that moment on his techniques only improved. A few months on from Dan's first video he got stage lights that he now uses for all his filming. As well as using the lights he also recently got a new camera, which has increased his productivity and usage.

His hobby keeps him motivated to do new things. Dan said "I love the feeling, I love being in charge of the situation, knowing that I have created a universe that I am in charge of. Knowing that once edited I can look back at the movie and think about how I made it, about how



Dan Clarke gets ready to film another video with classmates.

I can do whatever I want to in my movies. I just love that feeling."

Dan's love for movie making has only grown, and he suggested to his teacher that they could make a continuing soap opera, using the members of his class as actors. The teacher happily accepted and so far the class has loved being in these

short films.

On top of his directing skills, Dan has also edited, starred and written the movies that he makes. But Dan decided that he didn't just want to make videos. So now he frequently posts his home videos on YouTube, hoping to one day become as big as the people that inspired him.

## The Sapphires find early success and fun

By VINCENT VAN LEEUWEN

GLITTER, high tempo music, and leotards. The Sapphires, as they call themselves, are Tighes Hill's new aerobics team that have already blown the competition away with awesome aerobics skills.

The team consists of female year 5 and 6 students who have dedicated their time, effort and energy to training. The program, introduced this year, aims to incorporate fitness, fun, choreo-

graphed moves and teamwork. Last month, The Sapphires went to Sunderland to compete in the NSW school aerobics competition, and they won.

"It was a really nerve-racking experience, but once we were out there performing, it was all worth it," Sapphires performer, Sophia said.

The team are heading to Sydney next month to compete in the next stage of the competition. If they make it through, it's off to the Gold Coast to compete in National Championships.



The Tighes Hill Public Sapphires aerobics team.

Miss Elley, a Sapphires school holidays, the team coach said that "after a term of dedication and commitment to training during lunch, recess and various regions in NSW."

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