

National Assessment Program: Science Literacy – Year 6

Information for parents

In October 2009 a sample of Year 6 students from across Australia will take part in a national assessment of science literacy.

The assessment will focus on *scientific literacy* – this means the emphasis is on students' capacity to use scientific knowledge, to pose questions and plan investigations, and to interpret evidence and draw conclusions.

The purpose of the assessment is to inform schools, education ministers and the community about the performance of Australia's students. It is part of a National Assessment Program (NAP) to monitor and report student performance in the areas identified in the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century*, which were agreed to by all state, territory and federal education ministers in 1999.

WHO WILL BE ASSESSED

A sample of Year 6 students will be assessed. Approximately 6 percent of the students for this year level across Australia will complete the assessment. Students will be selected by drawing a random sample of schools across Australia and then a random class of students within each of these schools.

All students who have been identified in the sample will be expected to take part in the assessment. The assessment will be conducted in the student's regular classroom and administered by the students' usual teacher.

HOW THE ASSESSMENTS WILL BE CONDUCTED

The students will complete a paper and pencil assessment individually but will work on practical tasks in small groups. Teachers will receive detailed instructions about selecting the groups and about the conduct of the assessment in general.

The assessment will be marked centrally by trained expert markers.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED

The principle purpose of the national Year 6 science literacy assessment is to monitor and report on the overall progress being made towards achieving high standards of science literacy.

Schools taking part in the sample assessment will receive reports summarising student's results.

A national public report describing students' scientific literacy will be published. No individual schools or students will be identified in this report. The report will include comparisons of the performance of various groups of students – for example, the relative achievements of:

- boys and girls
- metropolitan students and rural students; and
- students in each state and territory.

If you have any questions about the Year 6 national assessment of science literacy, please ask your child's teacher or school principal.

Students are NOT expected to study for this assessment. The assessment is designed to assess your child's knowledge and understanding of science literacy. Last minute preparation is inappropriate.