Mixed view on NAPLAN

EDUCATION | EMMA ALTSCHWAGER

NATIONAL literacy and numeracy tests are a useful tool to determine students’ aptitude but are only one piece of the puzzle, eastern principals say.

The Eastern Courier Messenger spoke with principals last week after the latest round of National Assessment Program for Numeracy and Literacy (NAPLAN) results were publicly released on the Federal Government’s My School website. Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are required to sit the national tests.

Loreto College deputy principal Phil Donato said NAPLAN testing was just one tool the Marryatville school used to gauge students’ learning progress. But the school never used it as a “stand-alone tool”.

“We do not wait for the NAPLAN tests to give us our direction, we take a much more proactive approach,” he said.

Unley High School principal Susan Cameron said NAPLAN test results were “one useful piece of information”.

“We look at all student results to identify what they’re doing well,” Ms Cameron said. She said the tests were beneficial for parents because they showed where their children were up to with their learning. But she said there was room for improvement with public perception.

“They take too much precedence in the eyes of the community and therefore the eyes of the kids,” she said. “The kids become anxious.”

Marryatville Primary principal Anne Bahnisch praised the tests.

“For us it’s excellent information - data for us to reflect on and inform where we want to go next with our teaching training and programs,” she said.

With the introduction of the National curriculum, NAPLAN assessments would be more comparable across the country, she said.

Residents’ group opposes plans for building height increase

BUILDINGS should be capped at four storeys on major roads in Unley, a residents’ group says.

The Adelaide Showgrounds Area Residents’ Group last week added its voice to the ongoing debate over plans to allow increased building heights around the fringe of the city.

The group’s spokesman, Dr Peter Marshall, was one of a more than 50 residents who attended a public meeting at Unley last week.

It had been held to give feedback to Unley Council on its Development Amendment Plan (DPA) to bring the council into line with State Government objectives as part of its 30-Year Plan.

“Trying to put everybody in a very close proximity to transit corridors is going to cause traffic chaos,” Dr Marshall, of Wayville, said. The group said three storeys on major roads and four storeys around parks was a sensible way to cope with increasing population.

Unley Mayor Lachlan Cridland did not return phone calls last week.

Volunteers needed.

Metropolitan Adelaide volunteers aged 18 or over who have recently had cancer and are not currently undergoing treatment are needed for a study to test an online resource and lifestyle program promoting physical activity and nutrition.

Volunteers will wear a pedometer daily and need regular internet access. An honorarium $60 voucher will be received upon completion.