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Teachers' proposed improvements to MySchool website should not be ignored

There are legitimate concerns over the inaccuracy and potential misuse of information on the MySchool website and the proposals by teachers for improvements should not be ignored, says the ACTU.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said no-one's interests are served by the current stalemate and urged the Federal Government to sit down and work with teachers to resolve their concerns.

Ms Burrow said unions supported both the NAPLAN tests and the MySchool website as a means of helping drive better educational outcomes for students and urged the Federal Government to consider the teachers' proposals to improve their operation.

"It is important to recognise that the refusal of public school teachers to supervise the tests in their current form is not an industrial issue, but one of professionalism and educational values," Ms Burrow said.

"There is no strike. Students will be taught on the days next month that the tests are scheduled for, but teachers have said they will not administer the tests.

"Teachers are not opposed to the tests but believe it is not professionally acceptable for them to stand back and watch them being used as a simplistic and inadequate measure of school performance.

"Through their unions, teachers have proposed a range of constructive measures to the Government that are needed to improve the accuracy of the information that is provided to parents, including the comparisons between schools.

"The teachers' proposals would also protect the site from being misused through the production of school performance "league tables" that are inaccurate and would wrongly stigmatise particular students or schools.

"We would hope the Government would want to further refine its comparative methodology and urge them to fully consult with teachers and parents.

"For example, it is absurd and ridiculous for the MySchool website to compare the 15 student Teealba State School in outback Queensland or one student Dargo Public School in the Victorian alps with Melbourne's exclusive Xavier College which has almost 2000 students.

"There needs to be a full disclosure of the financial resources and socio-economic status of schools and students on the website and a more rigorous enforcement of copyright to prevent misuse of the data.

"Parents and students are losing out while the expertise and knowledge of teachers is being overlooked," Ms Burrow said.

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