

Race to keep terrorists in jail

JANET FIFE-YEOMANS

AT least four of the country's most notorious convicted terrorists are eligible to walk free from NSW's Supermax jail as the federal government fights to keep them locked up.

They include Fahem Khalid Lohbi, who planned to blow up the electricity grid, ex-baggage handler and former Osama bin Laden confidante Bilal Khazaa, a Sydney man who went to Syria to fight and a man allegedly at the centre of a

group of Islamic extremists. All are currently eligible for parole, along with radical Melbourne cleric Abdul Nacer Benbrika.

59, the spiritual leader of two terror cells that plotted attacks in Melbourne and Sydney in 2004 and 2005, who is locked up in Victoria.

In the wake of the fatal London stabbing by a terrorist on parole, the government late on

Wednesday passed a Bill to close a loophole that could have prevented some of these high-risk terrorists being kept locked up when their sentences ended on continuing detention orders.

There is already a presumption against parole for convicted terrorists with the final say down to Attorney-General Christian Porter. So far, he has not granted any terrorist release to parole.



Henry Cavill as Superman

I MAY BE SUPERMAN AGAIN

HENRY Cavill is all-in on his Netflix fantasy series *The Witcher*, but he says the "door hasn't closed" on a return as Superman in the DC cinematic universe.

Cavill last played the superhero in 2017's *Justice League* and it's unclear whether any new films will feature the character.

Cavill dons a long white wig to play monster hunter Geralt of Rivia in *The Witcher*, an ambitious eight-

episode adaptation of Polish author Andrzej Sapkowski's books.

"I live in the fantasy genre anyway, that's my hobby. And so for me, it was always obvious," Cavill said.

"It was always a target. I always wanted to bring things like this to the screen in one way, shape or form."

There are several DC superhero films in the works, including *Wonder Woman* and *Aquaman* sequels.

GRADE 6 PRIMARY CONCERN

CLARE MASTERS AND ASHLEY ARGOON

AUSTRALIAN students are slipping in the transition from primary to high school, with an analysis of NAPLAN data showing schools and students were treating Grade 6 as a "gap year".

It comes as the controversial NAPLAN test is under fire for not being implemented properly, and instead forcing schools to compete with each other and educators to "teach to the test".

The Victorian, NSW, Queensland and ACT governments today released an interim report of an independent joint review of NAPLAN, stating there were major issues with the national test.

Experts also pointed to a discrepancy between NAPLAN scores and this week's OECD assessment of Australia as falling behind other nations, suggesting that NAPLAN needed to be reviewed.

The interim report called for further investigation into keeping school data secret to prevent comparisons, changing NAPLAN testing year levels, shifting the test to earlier in the year so results could be better used and reviewing the content of the assessment.

Victorian Education Minister James Merino said NAPLAN needed to change. "We need a test that has the support and engagement of the teaching workforce, parents and students," he said.

But Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan dismissed the interim report as a "distraction". "My focus is on implementing the Gonski reforms to improve student outcomes," he said.

Gonski Institute for Education director Adrian Piccoli said the education system was losing students when they hit high school. "We need to look at the way secondary school is delivered," he said.



TOP MARKS A JOINT EFFORT

ASHLEY ARGOON AND GEOFF EGAN

THE best Victorian schools have been revealed in a five-year analysis of NAPLAN data, as top campuses boost entire class performance with high-achieving role models.

Rather than segregating gifted pupils, the best public schools have seen their brightest students lift the skills of their classmates.

An online searchable database of Victorian schools' long-term NAPLAN results found girls campuses were the strongest performers from 2014 to 2018 in Grade 5 and Year 9.

Private campus Presbyterians Ladies' College, in Burwood, was number one for primary school while select-entry MacRobertson Girls', in

NAPLAN results show top schools

Melbourne, was the state's best high school.

With little surprise, select-entry high schools took out the four top spots.

But some public campuses weren't far behind. Glen Waverley Secondary lost almost 30 students every year to select-entry campuses.

But the school still smashed the NAPLAN scores of elite private campuses, coming in 38th of more than 500 Victorian high schools.

Principal Joanne Wastle said the school didn't separate its pupils and instead found real benefits in students of different levels working side by side.

"We do not have a SEAL

(Select Entry Accelerated Learning) program — we put all the kids in together," she said.

"That means we have the high-end role models in the class for kids who might not be as academically strong — they can see what a strong academic student looks like."

Ms Wastle said teachers worked hard to continue challenging the top students so they learned to their capability, not simply to the curriculum.

Box Hill High, the state's top public school with a rank of 29th, had a similar strategy.

Principal Losh Pillay said the school had high expectations of its students, no matter their level of achievement.

"One of the mantras of the school is that it's not just about your ability, it's about your effort and your growth," she said.

They don't just challenge their students and expect them to learn from one another, but their teachers as well.

"We don't allow ourselves to become complacent — we continue to challenge our teachers to ensure they continue to be lifelong learners," she said.

"Our teachers then learn from other teachers and share their knowledge."

Ms Pillay said the whole school was constantly evolving — "the work is never really done".

VICTORIA'S TOP 5 NAPLAN SCHOOLS 2014-2018

GRADE 5

- PRESBYTERIAN LADIES' COLLEGE 2990.8
- ST ANDREWS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 2867.4
- HAILEYBURY COLLEGE 2864.1
- ERASMUS PRIMARY SCHOOL 2862.6
- HUNTINGTOWER SCHOOL 2854.0

YEAR 9

- MACROBERTSON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL 3510.6
- MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL 3486.1
- NOSSAL HIGH SCHOOL 3355.0
- SUZANNE CORY HIGH SCHOOL 3326.8
- PRESBYTERIAN LADIES' COLLEGE 3310.2

*Total raw NAPLAN scores with data from MySchool

Glen Waverley Secondary College pupils Amy, Fatih, Yathavan, Amritha, Kasey, Lashana and Arsha. Picture: ROB LEESON

Victoria's second-best performing Grade 5 school was St Andrews Christian College, in Wantirna South, followed by private campus Haileybury College, in Keysborough.

The Year 9 school in second place was select-entry Melbourne High, in South Yarra, then select-entry Nossal High, in Berrwick.

The best-performing schools were established by combining every school's results across five different NAPLAN subjects and calculating the yearly average score from 2014 to 2018.

Each school's results were independently collated through the federal government's MySchool website. Victoria's 2019 NAPLAN results will be released in March. ashley_argoon@news.com.au