



# MACKSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parent/Carer

Macksville High School's Year 8 students are participating in the piloting of the 2010 Essential Secondary Science Assessment Online Practical Component (ESSA OPC) test. The date for this test is **Thursday 21 October 2010**. This online test is additional to the pencil-and-paper ESSA test held near the end of November.

The OPC pilot test provides a real-world scenario in which students work through an investigation, collect and interpret data, make conclusions and propose applications or implications of the findings. Test items are based on Stage 4 outcomes and essential content in the *NSW Science Years 7 – 10 Syllabus*.

Because students use a computer to complete the OPC pilot test, they will not need writing materials. However, each student needs to **bring headphones or earbuds** that will plug into a school computer. Earbuds for an ipod or portable player are suitable.

The test is presented as a series of webpages and contains text, audio, pictures, video and animations. Students also complete a survey about their opinions, attitudes and values. The test is expected to take approximately 30 minutes.

Students enter all their responses directly into the test using the mouse and keyboard. The test items are mainly interactive multiple choice items. There are some items where students type a response, including a longer response.

Additionally, students are asked to provide their name, gender and age. They are requested to provide information as to whether they are from an English or non-English speaking background and whether or not they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This information is treated confidentially and held securely to ensure that the right to privacy of all students is maintained.

I am able to provide you with more details about the ESSA program if you require additional information.

Yours faithfully

**PAUL HOLDING**  
PRINCIPAL