Results from the 2011 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) show continued incremental improvement in literacy and numeracy for the Territory.

Education and Training Minister Chris Burns said the results show there is much more work to do in the bush and that school attendance directly relates to how a student performs.

“We know we start from a low base in the Territory but we also know that if a child goes to school every day in the Territory they get a great education,” Dr Burns said.

“It further demonstrates our previous experience that if students remain engaged with school, they will see improvements which close the gap.

“We also know the converse is true - that children who don’t attend regularly fall behind in the critical areas of literacy and numeracy.

“The 2011 NAPLAN testing allows us to track the rate of improvement for groups of students who sat their first tests in 2009.

“It is positive to see for these students that in most measures, the Territory’s rate of improvement is above the national average.

“This means students are improving at a faster rate than the rest of the country which is important if we are going to close the gap in the bush.

“We have one of the largest remote populations in the country, and we are focussed on literacy, numeracy and attendance in these areas to improve outcomes for all Territory students.

“We know urban schools perform as well as similar schools from across the nation and we expect the more detailed results which are published later in the year to confirm this.

“Education remains the top priority of the Henderson Government and we are continuing to invest in programs to benefit all Territory students.

“In August, the Territory Government released a report by Professor Geoff Masters which shows our schools are doing a good job and have sound systems in place to improve rates of literacy, numeracy and attendance.
“We will continue to engage Professor Masters and the Australian Centre for Education Research to independently monitor our progress and our strategies.

“As we implement the recommendations made by Professor Masters we expect to see continued improvement by setting a clear agenda for monitoring and improvement.

“Through the Smart Territory strategy we are also investing more than ever in our teachers, schools and in the early childhood years so children start learning prior to starting their formal education.

“The Every Child Every Day strategy is also in place to boost school attendance with a strong focus on the bush.

“Seeing major improvements to literacy and numeracy results in the bush will take time, but it is heartening to see positive growth in the rate of improvement in NAPLAN and as more children attend school regularly, I believe we will see more progress.

The second stage of NAPLAN assessment will be released in December, and will provide a more detailed analysis of literacy and numeracy based on gender, geographic location and language background.

Parents will receive NAPLAN results for their children from next week.

The 2011 NAPLAN Summary Report has been posted on the National Assessment Program’s website, www.nap.edu.au where support information about how to further interpret the results is also available.

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