

Failure on homework

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TASMANIAN students spend less time doing homework than students interstate, an international study has found.

The Trends in Mathematics and Science Study found 5 per cent of Tasmanian year eight students spent more than 90 minutes a week on maths homework.

The national average was three times higher — while the international average was five times higher.

By contrast, 62 per cent of Tasmanian students reported

spending less than 60 minutes a week on maths homework.

The results were similar for science.

Only 4 per cent of Tasmanian year eight students did more than 90 minutes' homework a week, while 72 per cent did less than 60 minutes — below national and international averages.

But the lack of homework did not stop Tasmanian stu-

dents recording the nation's top result for young scientists.

Education Department learning services manager (South) Brendan Kelly said individual schools set homework policies.

The changing nature of work and family meant children and parents had less time for homework, Mr Kelly said.

"These days a lot of students work after school, and a lot of

students these days have mums and dads who both work," he said.

Tasmanian Principals Association president Jan Larcombe said there was little evidence that doing homework made a difference.

"It's very difficult to make a direct link between homework and outcomes," Ms Larcombe said.

"There's a lot packed into a

week for students and teachers.

"If there's no real evidence showing it's making a difference, you'd have to question what is done, why it's done and what it achieves."

Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends president Jennifer Branch called for a rethink on homework.

"There's conflicting research on the benefits of home-

work and what the best type is," Ms Branch said.

"We need to seriously look at homework, review it, see what's best for our students."

The TIMSS study found that bullying in Australian primary schools was among the worst in the world.

More than a quarter of Australian Grade 4 students said they had been bullied.

The survey showed Australian primary-school students suffered bullying at a rate almost 50 per cent above the international average.

Tassie students at bottom of class