

## **PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL**

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION, SOTA & CURRICULUM REPORT**

#### **Louise Ford – Portfolio Holder, March 2023**

At the 2022 State Conference, allowance motion A4 was presented by the Meekatharra Air Branch.

A letter was sent to both the Hon. Sue Ellery, MLC (former Minister for Education) and the Hon. Mark McGowan, MLA, State Premier. A response received on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022 outlined the many services offered to regional students but stated “*that a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) was not going to be considered*”. With the point of the initial letter being lost, another email was sent dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 outlining once again the purpose of the DETA.

The second response received 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 from Minister Ellery stated that the Australian Government administers Assistance for Isolated Children and has no plans on implementing the DETA allowance. She did however encourage me to raise the idea with the Federal Minister, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP.

#### **CURRICULUM**

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was completed for the first time fully online in May 2022 by more than 1.3 million students. 2022 was the final year that testing was completed in May and from March 2023 NAPLAN will move to Term 1. By bringing the testing time forward, results can be accessed earlier in the year, allowing for more targeted teaching and learning programs throughout the school year and also give teachers more time to better assess what support students need for the remainder of the year.

The way NAPLAN is reported to parents and carers is also changing. New proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement for each year level will replace the previous 10-band structure that covered all 4 levels tested and the old national minimum standard set in 2008. The numerical NAPLAN bands and the national minimum standard will be replaced by the following 4 levels of achievement:

- Exceeding
- Strong
- Developing
- Needs additional support.

NAPLAN 2023 will run from 15<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March.

In October 2022, ACARA released the 2022 NAPLAN national report. According to ACARA CEO, David De Carvalho, the national results continue to defy earlier predictions that COVID-19 would negatively impact NAPLAN performance. The results were stable on a national level, except for year nine spelling and year five numeracy, which saw a drop in performance.

In 2008, all governments agreed a national curriculum was needed to deliver an equitable, quality education for all young Australians and the national curriculum was then developed over a number of years. The national curriculum is reviewed every 6 years and the 2020-21 review resulted in the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0. The new curriculum provides schools, teachers, parents and students with a clear understanding of what students should learn. This curriculum applies no matter where a student lives or what school system they are in. It is now available online and is designed to be clearer for teachers when assessing students.

Recently endorsed languages approved for the Australian Curriculum included German, Indonesian, Modern Greek, Korean and Spanish for Foundation – Year 10. These were approved after public consultation last year.

## **SCHOOLS OF THE AIR (SOTA)**

Schools of the Air had to unfortunately cancel plans for Canberra camp or replacement camps due to COVID-19 restrictions earlier in 2022. School camps and home visits were permitted to resume from the commencement of Term 2.

Schools of the Air also unfortunately had to cancel plans for their annual Muster Camp stating *“the revised COVID-19 regulations brought out in early August as being too hard to adhere to”*. Many parents were very upset about this and as a result a letter was sent to the Director General, Lisa Rodgers, asking for consideration of SOTA families when guidelines are being made. A letter of response was received stating that camps should all be taking place and parents should consult with their relevant schools.

A meeting was held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 for parents from all SOTA’s across the State to be able to connect and discuss the positive and the challenges of schooling your children through SOTA. Approximately eight parents attended, and a great dialogue about what works and what they struggle with were tabled. Some of the main areas of concern were that Principals were losing flexibility to make standard SOTA practices happen, e.g. camps, delivery of curriculum to a standard way above expectations and fundamentals getting lost. This results in children struggling and families leaving SOTA because the programs are unengaging for the students and difficult to deliver.

All in all, this was a great discussion and the passion for our SOTA’s remains strong. It is proposed that these meetings continue each term with hopefully more parents in attendance.