

COMMUNICATION PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2023

ICPA Qld's Communications Portfolio has enjoyed productively working with key stake holders over the past Council year. We continue to lobby for all items on the Communication Policy to improve the communication and hardware required for rural and remote education.

The well received increase to the ICT package in 2022 has helped many remote students however with increased digital expectations, ICPA Qld will continue to encourage appropriate consideration in this space.

ICPA Qld commend the Department of Education in the successful roll out of Qlearn with schools implementing according to their selected strategies. Full functions of Qlearn are extensive with Schools able to activate as required and customise their landing page. The Department of Education's contract with Collaborate Ultra has been extended for another year to Schools of Distance Education as their preferred delivery platform.

The Department of Education is committed to Bandwidth upgrades, providing Queensland State Schools with internet services that will support world-class modern education for students and communities. The department's 5-year, \$187 million partnership with Telstra aims to deliver average internet speeds of 1 Megabits per second (Mbps) per student by September 2023 and 5 Mbps per student by 2026, which is 200 times faster than current average speeds. As at 16 May, 803 schools have been upgraded, with interim upgrades to an additional 213 schools. Over 506,000 students, or 88% of the cohort, already have access to speeds of 1 Mbps or greater.

The department is securing the best technology currently available from Telstra, as new technologies emerge, they will be incorporated into the contract. ICPA Qld will continue to advocate for the digital inclusion of geographically isolated students where their location of learning not at a school campus.

Telstra

12 months to go till the end of the 3G network. The first and most critical step in Telstra's aim to meet national levels of five megabits per second. By June 2025, Telstra is committed to 5G reaching 95% of the population and is already on track to hit 85% of the population by the end of this financial year.

But what if you are in the last 5%? A collective of Low Earth Orbit satellite services are on track to deliver, which will improve capacity and speed. Low earth orbit constellations provide greater capacity and are more responsive, aiming to bring high speed, low latency, and affordable internet options to rural and remote Australia.

NBN

nbn Co. together with the Australian Government, are also delivering on their commitment to upgrade the **nbn** network, including their satellite network. The rapid demand for speed and data keeps growing exponentially and over the last six years, data use has tripled. To combat this **nbn** is trialling a new Sky Muster Plus plan that is intended to deliver 100% unmetered data usage and faster speeds. **nbn**'s Fixed Wireless Satellite Upgrade Program will see 120,000 premises currently in the satellite footprint become ready for a fixed wireless service.

If you feel your lack of accessibility to the internet is the defining factor in achieving optimum connection and digital inclusion for your children's education, whether it be **nbn**, Telstra or Starlink- or if you are just feeling bamboozled or overwhelmed, please get in contact with the Regional Tech Hub.

The Regional Tech Hub (RTH) is a resource providing regional, rural, and remote Australians with the critical support needed to navigate the complex world of connectivity and technology options. They are independent and free, providing information about digital technologies, services available, equipment solutions, setup, and installation.

As we enable some of the most remote children access to the world through the internet, please remember to be safe online. Knowledge is power and prevention is key, so pop on your phone, and add a date and time to go to the E-safety commissioner website. We have all taught our kids to slip, slop, slap and slide to protect themselves from the sun so please don't let them get burnt online.

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