

## COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2021

Welcome to my first Communications report. It was great to be able to return to Brisbane in February and meet face to face with the Information Technology (IT) team within the Department of Education. There was lots of positive news to share with one item being that the increased bandwidth provided to schools during Covid home schooling has been extended and costs covered by the Department.

The team also announced that \$400m has been allocated over the next five years to upgrade connectivity for Queensland State Schools and this rollout has already started. The Department is looking at fibre to as many schools as possible, retiring existing non fibre solutions. It is expected that only a small number of schools will be left on satellite and those schools will be provided with an upgraded Business grade service via satellite rather than the existing Skymuster service. This program aims to allocate a funded 1 Mega (1,000,000) Bits per second per student, 66 times increase on the current funded 15 Kilo (15,000) Bits per second per student allocation, to school bandwidth. All students in Queensland Government schools will have equal access to web-based content. The Department of Education will fund the upgrade and ongoing costs. The Department has also submitted 36 schools to be considered for the Mobile Blackspot upgrade program.

The contract with Blackboard which was meant to terminate at the end of June has been extended to the end of the year. This is to ensure that the roll out of Qlearn, which is replacing Blackboard, is not rushed. CANVAS is the component that will be used for on air lessons. Teachers in 60 schools, including rural and remote locations, have been included in an early adoption group and all reports have been positive. CANVAS has been designed to have a K-12 focus so should be user friendly. Parents are scheduled to start using it at their end by Term Three. Brisbane School of Distance Education will have a dedicated Technical Adviser who will work with all the Distance Education schools.

ICPA Qld continues to meet with May Boisen, Regional General Manager of Telstra, and Kylie Lindsay, Head of NBN Local, when in Brisbane. Both ladies will be attending conference and are very approachable if you would like to have a chat.

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