

DISTANCE EDUCATION

1. **A1.** LONGREACH BRANCH

“That ICPA lobby Department of Education to investigate and develop best practice guidelines for screen time for students in Schools of Distance Education.”

Carried

Explanation: Over time, there has been a steady increase in the number of screen time hours for students, especially at secondary level, as curriculum is delivered online through Schools of Distance Education. Coupled with individual after-lesson and assessment work requirements, students are expected to extend screen time beyond the Australian Government recommended guidelines of two hours total screen time per day for five to 17 year old children and young people. Research has proven that increases in screen time are linked to increases in sedentary behaviours by children, young people, and the associated health implications that result. Some studies point to social problems, cognitive developmental delays, sleep difficulties and poor academic performance as other potential outcomes associated with extended screen time. Obviously, the digital world is here to stay and SODE students are at the forefront of the digital age through their education and learning. This needs to be balanced with realistic screen time guidelines that acknowledge the current (and potential future) role of digital technology in the life of SODE students and enhancing their health and wellbeing.

2. **A5.** CAPRICORNIA BOTA BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister for Education to provide the fundamental rights for all students to have access to fit-for-purpose and future focused learning spaces in order to support active learning (classrooms) at all Schools of Distance Education to accommodate (geographically isolated) students attending ‘On Campus Curriculum Activities’, including minischools/clusters, testing/examinations and other times where students require face to face contact with teaching staff.”

Carried

Explanation: As highlighted in the Schools of Distance Education ‘Existing Facility Overview’ conducted in January 2018, enrolment growth in some SDE’s has been exponential and existing infrastructure has struggled to accommodate this growth. Future planning for enrolment growth has not kept pace for many years, in some instances, and classroom/appropriate group learning spaces and many support facilities (mailroom, administration areas) have been sacrificed as these spaces have been re-purposed to accommodate the additional teaching areas and staff increases.

3. **A6.** NORTH BURNETT

“That ICPA QLD lobby the Minister for Education to ensure geographically isolated students in Schools of Distance Education campuses have access to classroom facilities ensuring face to face teaching, testing and other social activities are able to occur for these students.”

Carried

Explanation: Geographically isolated distance education students have a fundamental right to basic educational infrastructure to ensure they are not disadvantaged. Student face-to-face interaction with teaching staff and peers is an important and necessary part of Distance Education and is used for teaching, testing and other social activities. Classrooms facilitate this interaction and ensure equitable access to education for students. The growth of enrolments in some Distance education schools in QLD has meant facilities at some campuses are unable to provide this for their students because these areas are filled by teaching staff and functions pertaining to other educational programs offered by the school.

4. **A7.** BELYANDO/MT COOLON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobbies the Department of Education to develop a formal process, such as a formula, to allocate a space entitlement within the School of Distance Education’s facility/campus for both staff and students.”

Carried

Explanation: Schools of Distance Education are finding that their capacity to provide safe and effective classroom spaces for students during “In Reaches” and “Mini Schools” is being eroded by the extra space required for teachers employed to service “by choice” and/or “single subject” enrolments. This has led to geographically isolated students having inadequate classroom space to conduct NAPLAN Testing, Mini Schools and Clusters with instances of students being taught outside in tents or sheds as their usual classroom has been converted to “teaching spaces” to accommodate the extra enrolment load.

Mainstream schools have a Space Entitlement formula of 7.5m² per primary student and 11m² per secondary student. The establishment of a Space Entitlement formula tailored to Schools of Distance Education considering:

Geographically Isolated/By Choice (in-contact) enrolment = Space Entitlement per student including teaching space

Non-Contact or Single Subject enrolment = Space Entitlement for teacher

Would ensure that both teachers and students enrolled through SDE’s have adequate workspace for the effective delivery of the curriculum to Geographically Isolated students. This will also provide security and longevity for SDE’s by being reflective of increasing enrolment numbers, and will maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment for students participating in testing, mini schools and other associated on campus school events.

5. **A8.** CAPRICORNIA BOTA BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Minister for Education to continue to provide the current level of Distance Education services to geographically isolated students from all School of Distance Education (SDE) campuses.”

Carried

Explanation: Some SDE’s have had huge enrolment increases and have continued enquiry and demand for future enrolments. Much of this demand for services has come from enrolment categories beyond those living in geographically isolated regions. Demands on space to accommodate these increased enrolments and the associated staff/teacher preparation areas must not impact on access to Distance Education services for those students enrolled due to Geographical Isolation at that campus. Geographically isolated students need to continue to access the SDE campus in their geographic region.

6. **A9.** BELYANDO/MT COOLON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobbies the Department of Education to ensure that the specific learning needs and required resources of geographically isolated students remain a priority within Schools of Distance Education (SDE) as SDE enrolments continue to swell.”

Carried

Explanation: Schools of Distance Education were established to support the needs of geographically isolated students. Over the years, the pressures on small schools, and that of some mainstream schools to secure and retain staff/resources to meet subject requirements of the curriculum (e.g. Languages), along with increased enrolments into distance education as a “by choice” education alternative, has seen the proportion of enrolments significantly shift away from geographically isolated students.

One SDE's enrolment figures greatly reflect this proportion change, with its geographically isolated students making up just 7.4%, i.e. 149 students of their total 2007 enrolments. Over 1000 of these students, greater than 50%, are "single subject/part time" enrolments. 150 – 200 students are medical enrolments.

Whilst SDE is a wonderful solution for those students who are unable to attend mainstream schools or have access to curriculum specific subjects, these enrolments are diluting the capacity of SDE's to provide strategic learning and diverting resources away from geographically isolated students. It is imperative that our geographically isolated children's education is not disadvantaged by growing enrolments in SDE's.

7. **A10.** BELYANDO/MT COOLON BRANCH

"That ICPA Qld Inc thanks the Department of Education for the development and funding of the Partners in Learning Program."

Carried

Explanation: Many of our School of Distance Education home tutor branch members have been participants in the Partners in Learning (PIL) program, receiving professional training and ongoing support in teaching/supporting their children's reading. This has resulted in home tutors having improved skills and higher confidence levels in teaching such a critical aspect of a child's development and education, especially throughout the early years. The PIL program has been positively accepted and sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

8. **A11.** BELYANDO/MT COOLON BRANCH

"That ICPA Qld Inc lobbies the Department of Education to continue the funding of the Partners in Learning Program beyond 2021 for new first-time home tutors with students enrolled in the early years (Prep – Year 2) through a School of Distance Education."

Carried

Explanation: The Partners in Learning (PIL) program is to support home tutors of students enrolled in Schools of Distance Education (SDE) to develop skills that will support children's reading linked to the Australian Curriculum. The PIL program, commenced in 2017, has been positively accepted by many home tutors within various SDE's and has provided improved skills and higher confidence levels in teaching such a critical aspect of a child's development and education.

Having no teaching background and being responsible for the education of your children is extremely daunting. Especially around the critical aspects of Literacy/Reading as this is the solid basis of a child's education. Providing new home tutors with the necessary skills and support to teach/support their children's reading abilities, builds the home tutors confidence and helps give the child a significant start to their education. Such a program as PIL is vital to new/first time home tutors, specifically for those who do not have any teaching qualifications.

9. **A12.** CLONCURRY BRANCH

"That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby DoE to form a dedicated curriculum writing team to update the C2C Independent Learning Materials now and into the future."

Carried

Explanation: At present, the responsibility to update C2C ILMs falls to the individual Schools of Distance Education. This is a labour intensive and extremely time-consuming process. Cloncurry Branch is of the understanding that no additional funding or personnel resourcing is provided for this purpose.

To compensate for the need to update resources at a school level, some SDEs have elected to teach the majority of subject's online, enabling adaptation and adoption directly by the teacher to the student and class. Whilst this may be a practical option to address curriculum updates, the disadvantage of this increased

direct teaching is student disengagement due to large class sizes and children online and/or on the phone for hours each day.

From a home tutor perspective, unless they are able to sit in on all lessons, which is impossible in a multi-age classroom, there is a disconnection from the emerging curriculum, as they are not seeing the resources used/lesson plans to support their students post lesson. Revision and consolidation of what is taught online is extremely difficult.

Some SDE's have chosen not to teach the majority of lessons online directly to the student, due to connectivity issues and/or the suitability of this mode of delivery within the school community. The need to provide updated ILMs directly to the home tutor for a blended delivery (i.e. some subjects delivered by the home tutor and others delivered online), has resulted in teacher's time updating resources, rather than interacting with their students. A dedicated Education Queensland Curriculum Team would allow teachers to return to teaching children and supporting home tutors and positive learning outcomes instead of aligning outdated ILM materials to V8 of the National Curriculum.

10. **A13.** CLONCURRY BRANCH

“That ICPA (Qld) Inc lobby DoE to ensure the provision of adequate resources to enable ongoing revision and update of the Prep curriculum.”

Carried

Explanation: The Cloncurry Branch understands that Prep was originally not part of the C2C as Prep was not mandatory until 2018. Therefore, the current materials are not ideal to fluidly align with the curriculum from Year 1 onwards. Materials are currently being 'rewritten' by individual SDEs by combining sections of the current materials with updates and additions eg phonics program and handwriting, which are currently absent from the Prep materials. This is very labour intensive to the school and is reliant upon experienced teachers voluntarily undertaking this project in addition to their core duties. This process as it is being undertaken by individual schools means that there is minimal standardisation of the curriculum across all schools in Qld and this could affect students who transition to different schools and/or different schooling platforms eg DE or mainstream schooling. It is imperative that Prep students have access to updated, aligned, standardised, paper based materials alongside digital delivery by SDE. This responsibility should lie with the Department, and not individual Schools of Distance Education, as ILMs are an imperative resource for home tutors in distance education, and particularly in early childhood where children and home tutors are beginning their teaching and learning journey.

11. **A14.** CLONCURRY BRANCH

“That ICPA (Qld) Inc. lobby DoE to ensure the provision of adequate resources to enable ongoing maintenance and updating of the eTeach resources.”

Carried

Explanation: eTeach was designed by SDE's in response to previous curriculum changes to HPE, Technology and The Arts several years ago. These were developed with a shelf life of around 3-5 years and it can now be seen that this time is coming to an end. There is no option to update the materials as they are like a recorded video and have no paper component that can be manually updated. This will require an intense, labour heavy and time consuming process for individual SDE's which are inadequately resourced to effectively undertake this task. A reformed writing-hub is imperative to update the superseded Arts, HPE, Technology & Design and now combined HASS subjects. Ideally, we would like to see a dedicated writing team employed for this purpose so that teachers can get back to teaching, marking, adapting and adopting lessons for individual learning needs while supporting students and home tutors in teaching and learning in isolated classrooms.

12. **A15.** LONGREACH BRANCH

“That ICPA lobby Department of Education to endorse and recommend handwritten communication across all distance education year levels to maintain balance with typing and digital technology skills.”

Carried

Explanation: With the advent of digital technology has come a decrease in the emphasis on handwritten communication in SODE, which involves more complex cognitive, visual and fine motor skills than typing. These skills are linked to academic performance in English but also broadly to other subjects like maths and reading and are associated with greater neural activity across different brain networks. Tactile skills like handwriting and letter formation help imprint the alphabet in our brains and can help improve memory and learning retention. At a practical level, there is less temptation to disrupt creative flow with editing when handwriting, just as brainstorming and mind mapping are less restrictive methods of capturing ideas and information. Students need to be prepared for the demands of secondary and tertiary educational handwritten note taking requirements. The skills learnt in early year’s handwriting books are not the same as those used in answering a maths problem or writing a paragraph; purposeful and practical handwriting skills are more beneficial than just letter formation practise from a handwriting textbook. Handwriting skills learnt at school are adapted to real life applications, such as writing a list, leaving a note or simply writing a letter or card and are linked to culture and language literacy. Digital technologies are here to stay, and need to be embraced, but a balance with lifelong functional skills like handwritten communication should be maintained.

13. S6. JULIA CREEK BRANCH

“That ICPA Queensland Inc lobby DoE and SDE Principals to provide printed unit materials of the current version 8 (v8) curriculum directly to the classrooms and students of distance education families.”

Carried

Current curriculum materials provided for distance education students are an older version of the curriculum, yet the distance education teachers are teaching the current version 8 English curriculum during on air lessons.

Teachers at distance education schools are taking 2 days per term to review the curriculum materials and provide adapt and adopt notations for individual home tutors to re-navigate the old materials. During these adapt and adopt days teachers are not available to connect with students for valuable personal learning and reading sessions. Constantly cross referencing adapt and adopt notes and timetables, is not an easy or efficient task for the home tutor managing an isolated, multi age classroom.

Curriculum materials need to be reorganised, updated, and printed and then provided to distance education teachers, students and classrooms.

If the expectation is for home tutors to teach the v8 curriculum then the v8 materials need to be printed and provided to the home tutors.

Solution:

SDE teachers are already in the process through adapt and adopt days of rearranging the lessons to meet v8 curriculum standard, so each SDE could either

Focus on rearrangement of a specific KLA or

Complete rearrangement of all KLAs

- a. Then the SDEs share their adopt and adapt materials, confer and agree.
- b. These rearrangement of lessons can be submitted and printed for distribution to the schools and families.