



Syd Stirling

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION & TRAINING

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WORLD CLASS DISTANCE LEARNING SERVICE ESTABLISHED AS EDUCATION REFORMS CONTINUE

The Martin Government has established a new world class distance learning service to deliver education to remote Territory students, Employment, Education and Training Minister, Syd Stirling, announced today.

Mr Stirling said that the new \$12 million a year service was the result of extensive review and consultation across the Territory.

“This action will help to lift educational outcomes and standards in one of the world’s most remote settings,” said Mr Stirling.

“We were the first government to provide proper secondary education in bush communities, now we are extending that with a distance learning service ensuring all students receive a quality education across the Territory, no matter where they live.”

The new *NT Distance Learning Service* will:

1. Bring three schools – the *Alice Springs School of the Air*, the *Katherine School of the Air* and the existing *Northern Territory Open Education Centre* - under one framework, while retaining each of the schools as individual operations;
2. Place 10 new *Regional Learning Agents*, who will work to provide teachers and students with increased support, into remote communities;
3. Trial a “virtual school” at an urban or regional high school or secondary college to allow specialist teachers to deliver lessons across the Territory, not just in their own school;
4. Trial the extension of education services to the end of year 9 by the Katherine School of the Air. This will allow remote parents to keep their children at home for a longer time;
5. Provide 60 new *Interactive Distance Learning* sites complete with satellite dishes and new computers, and updates more than a hundred existing computers for all home based learners;
6. Include a new *Distance Learning Materials and ICT Innovation Unit*. This unit will tailor teaching and learning materials to remote Territory and Indigenous students’ needs.

The Government has accepted recommendations to change the staffing formula for the existing *NTOEC Service* and free 29 positions to finance the creation of the 10 *Regional Learning Agents* and 7 new positions in the *Distance Learning Materials and ICT Innovation Unit*.



“Distance education was the subject of much concern in the Ramsey Report into Secondary Education.

“As a result, the Martin Government decided to overhaul the way education was delivered to students in remote communities.

“We have funded this entirely within existing resources by using them in more effective and efficient ways.

“This new service will see a significant lift in support for students in remote communities and on pastoral properties and their teachers and support personnel.

“It will provide a greater focus to their work and more relevant materials to back their learning and teaching.

“It will mean students in schools across the Territory will also be able to benefit from the expertise of staff in major centres through our new virtual school.

“This is an exciting time for education. These reforms complement the work of the Martin Government across the Territory. They are the next step towards better results for students,” Mr Stirling said

Contact Minister Stirling's Office: 08 8901 4053