



# newsletter

NSW Teachers Federation  
December 2010

## Make a submission

The Federation is encouraging and supporting members to make a submission either as an individual, or as a school or as part of their school's P&C or as a member of your local Teachers Association to the Review of Funding for Schooling.

The Federation has built an interactive website ([forourfuture.nswtf.org.au](http://forourfuture.nswtf.org.au)) to support the members of this union and the community to respond to this once in a generation opportunity to have your say on the funding of our schools. Go and visit this site. It is easy to use and filled with useful information to empower you to speak with authority to your colleagues and communities.

It is the Federation's view that there are two simple demands for any new funding system and they are that it:

- ensures public schools have increased funding to meet all students' individual needs, and
- recognises the additional costs of educating children from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances — family income, special needs

and geographic location.

With this understanding the Distance Education Restricted Committee at its term 4 meeting put together a submission to the review that focused on the situation for Distance Education.

We acknowledge that you are all busy and tired after a long and stressful year but the members of this committee believe this review is important for public education. Therefore, we want to encourage all members of the Federation to make a submission, to have your say. We do this not to create more 'busy' work for teachers but to rattle the body politic of public education. As former High Court Judge The Hon Michael Kirby said earlier this year, public schools communities "need to be aware that lobbyists for private schools are highly skilled and organised."

"They are constantly advocating on behalf of the schools they represent and they have good roads into the print media..."

"I am not against private and religious schools but not at the price of the proper funding of public education."

# Submission from the Distance Education Restricted Committee to the Review of Funding for Schooling

The Australian ethos is built on the premise of a “fair go for all”. Historically, the richly diverse democratic culture that defines Australia has been achieved because of its strong provision of a well resourced public education system. We should not allow this vital institution to be undermined.

The NSW Teachers Federation Distance Education Restricted Committee has developed this submission to highlight how distance education is one of the means through which public education provides equity to students. The role of distance education is to guarantee curriculum and cater for students regardless of background and circumstance.

As noted in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training’s document - *A More Connected Future*: produced in 2010, from Page 5 “Access to the program is targeted for students with the greatest need.”

“Education is provided for students in Years P-12 through a network of autonomous and integrated distance education schools and centres.”

“Distance education supports secondary schools to provide curriculum access beyond what is available through the use of school resources.”

“Access to the program is targeted to the smallest schools with the least capacity to provide a broad curriculum”

Distance education (DE) provides a supportive educational environment that enables an alternative education delivery program to students unable to attend a mainstream school. Each eligibility criteria requires a unique method of delivery to cater for the students’ particular needs. For example: home isolated, travellers in Australia and overseas, medical, significant support needs, vocationally talented, pregnant/young parent, extraordinary circumstances, single course for government and non-government, juvenile justice and pathways students.

The following chart illustrates the diversity of students enrolled in the New South Wales distance education program as of 2008, which is delivered by public school teachers of this state.

## Review Report – Current provision of Distance Education in NSW, produced 2009 –

### Page 6 of this report

Section 1 Student profile

(Data collected from schools at end of Term 1 each year)

### 1.1 Enrolments

#### Enrolment data for 2008

63	students were enrolled in Preschool
694	students were enrolled in fulltime primary education
1418	students were enrolled in secondary fulltime, pathways and secondary curriculum access
4681	students were enrolled in single course provision of which 3066 were from government schools and 1615 were from non-government schools

#### Primary student enrolments

264	home isolated enrolled in six distance education schools
163	travellers in Australia enrolled in six distance education schools
114	travellers overseas enrolled in five distance education schools
51	Australian Capital Territory and Papua New Guinea students enrolled in one distance education school
30	medical enrolled in six distance education schools
44	students with significant support needs enrolled in seven distance education schools, including 30 behaviour
28	extraordinary circumstances enrolled in three distance education schools

#### Secondary fulltime and pathways (FTE) student enrolments

114	home isolated enrolled in six distance education schools
57	travellers in Australian enrolled in four distance education schools
71	travellers overseas enrolled in two distance education schools
8	Australian Capital Territory and Papua New Guinea students enrolled in one distance education school
239	students with medical needs enrolled in seven distance education schools
293	students with significant support needs enrolled in seven distance education schools, including 164 behaviour
184	vocationally talented enrolled in five distance education schools
32	pregnant/young parent enrolled in six distance education schools
181	extraordinary circumstances enrolled in five distance education schools

#### Secondary curriculum access FTE enrolments

210	students at schools for specific purposes and Tutorial Centres enrolled in five distance education schools
28	Educational and Training Unit students enrolled in two distance education schools

### Access Program equivalent fulltime enrolments

44	Year 11 and 40 Year 12 in the Lachlan Cluster
23	Year 11 and 4 Year 12 in the NBSA Cluster
67	Year 11 and 37 Year 12 in the Riverina Cluster
55	Year 11 and 32 Year 12 in the Western Cluster
19	Year 11 and 11 Year 12 in the Wilvande Cluster Review Report-Current provision of distance education in NSW, Page 6

Funding is needed to cater for these students' individual educational needs in order to ensure that viable quality learning programs can be delivered by keeping abreast with developments in technology and pedagogy.

However, there are many issues that need to be addressed regarding technology, including lesson delivery, development of specific teaching and learning materials, record keeping and data analysis. Any equitable funding model developed as a result of this review, must include a component of funding to support additional teacher release time, technology support, specific targeted professional learning for resource production, both in hard and electronic forms. This is required in order to enrich teaching and learning experiences for students thus enhancing their learning outcomes.

Due to the changing demographics of student categories that access distance education, specifically students with mental health and multi-category diagnosis, additional support services, such as counselling and teacher support are required to maximise student engagement. The following charts demonstrate the growth of students in the behaviour category over the past 12 years.

### Enrolment data-Primary student numbers that fit in the behaviour category in DE

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
8	8	17	27	14	11	21	29	29	29	22	30

### Enrolment data-Secondary student numbers that fit in the behaviour category in DE

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
51	71	73	53	40	60	99	112	101	127	233	164

Review Report-Current provision of distance education in NSW, Page 7

Provided these funding shortcomings are addressed, distance education will continue to effectively support our valuable public education system.