

A vision for distance learning for the 21st century

Response proforma for Discussion Paper

Respondent: Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre, Staff and School Community
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Development Process for Distance Education Review Response

- Term 4 – 2008:** Placement of Review Documentation on school website and school community informed of review findings.
Executive and staff meetings with members of Distance Education Review Team.
Survey of teaching and administrative staff re preferences for future mode of school operation and satisfaction with current method of school operation.
Survey of Distance Education parents, students and principals of schools where single-subject service is provided to determine levels of satisfaction with current service provision and preferences for future school operation methods.
Analysis of Higher School Certificate and School Certificate data from 2005-2008.
A range of forums provided to allow discussion and feedback (DE Supervisors' Day, Faculty Meetings, Executive Meetings and Community Groups)
- Term 1 – 2009:** Development of draft response based on data findings by senior school executive.
Draft response emailed to Distance Education Parents, school staff, School Council and P&C for comment. Draft response placed on school website and wider-community comment invited through school newsletter.
One staff meeting and two meetings of staff to discuss draft review – with the draft being refined and developed from feedback received.
Ongoing discussion at Executive Meetings and Executive Conference – to allow for executive and faculty feedback.
Draft response sent to Regional Director and School Education Director for comment.
Combined School Council and P&C Meeting to discuss draft response on February 10.
Response unanimously endorsed by School Council and Parents and Citizens' Association at meetings on February 24, 2009
Response endorsed by staff vote – March 3, 2009
Letter of support for this response from the Regional Director, Illawarra and South-East Region, Mr Graeham Kennedy – March 4, 2009 (copy forwarded with school response)

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre staff should be provided with a guarantee that any existing staff position in the school that may be affected by the recommendations in the Distance Education Review Discussion Paper and this proposal will be treated in a fair and equitable manner to maintain career continuity and development. DET support will be necessary to assist transitioning staff from the current method of school operation to the method proposed in this document.

The proposals contained in this response require the following support if they are going to successfully implemented. To ensure the success of any change of Distance Education delivery, it is essential that:

- * The proposed Professional Learning structures identified in the Discussion Paper are developed and implemented by the Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate.
- * The proposed technology infrastructure support the Review Process has identified as necessary to implement to learning modes identified in the Discussion Paper is provided by DET.

Response Summary

Both the Distance Education Review and Discussion Paper outline a preference for distance education delivery to occur from autonomous distance education schools.

In the spirit of responding to this preference Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is proposing a campus structure, on our current site, for distance education and face-to-face teaching.

Distance education provision would occur through a model of mixed autonomous and semi-autonomous distance education delivery. Teaching of full-time students in large candidature courses would be undertaken by full-time distance education teachers. Full-time students would be enrolled under three different categories:

- * Home distance learners;
- * Tutorial distance learners; and
- * Mobile distance learners

To enhance educational outcomes for students there would be variations to the numbers of teachers for students in each category, with an emphasis for teachers to teach more than one subject to some students.

To accommodate and maintain the current breadth of single subject provision and for small candidature subjects a semi-autonomous model of distance education delivery is proposed. This would ensure the continued provision of a broad curriculum for students enrolled in single subject courses, from Illawarra and South-East Region (ISER) and the four School Education Groups (SEG's) from Riverina Region currently serviced by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. Students enrolled in one of the full-time student category groups would also be able to access enrolment in courses, offered via this mode as a means, of extending their curriculum options.

In line with current DET and Regional priorities Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre would also work towards the continued establishment of on-line distance learning opportunities for distance education students and to support students in small candidature courses in other schools in the Illawarra and South-East Region.

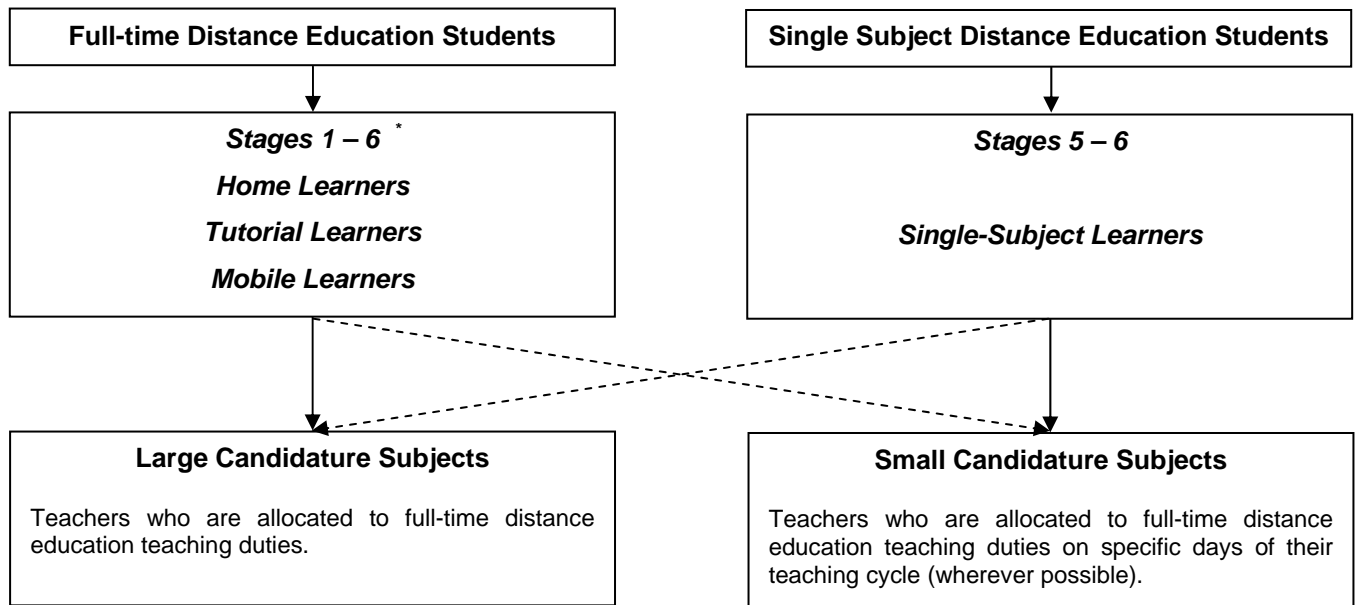
The proposed campus structure would maintain its current senior management structure. The Principal would manage whole-school operations, including both the Distance Education and Face-to-Face Campuses. Deputy Principals would maintain their current substantive roles (with some reallocation of other existing duties), with one Deputy Principal being allocated to the Distance Education Campus and two Deputy Principals being allocated to the face-to-face campus.

The proposal would require a significant reorganisation of middle management structures with the allocation of more head teachers to specific roles within the proposed autonomous distance education structure.

Teachers of large candidature courses would either be allocated to full-time distance education or face-to-face teaching duties, while teachers of smaller candidature courses would teach distance education and face-to-face students to ensure current levels of curriculum breadth and choice for all students enrolled at the school.

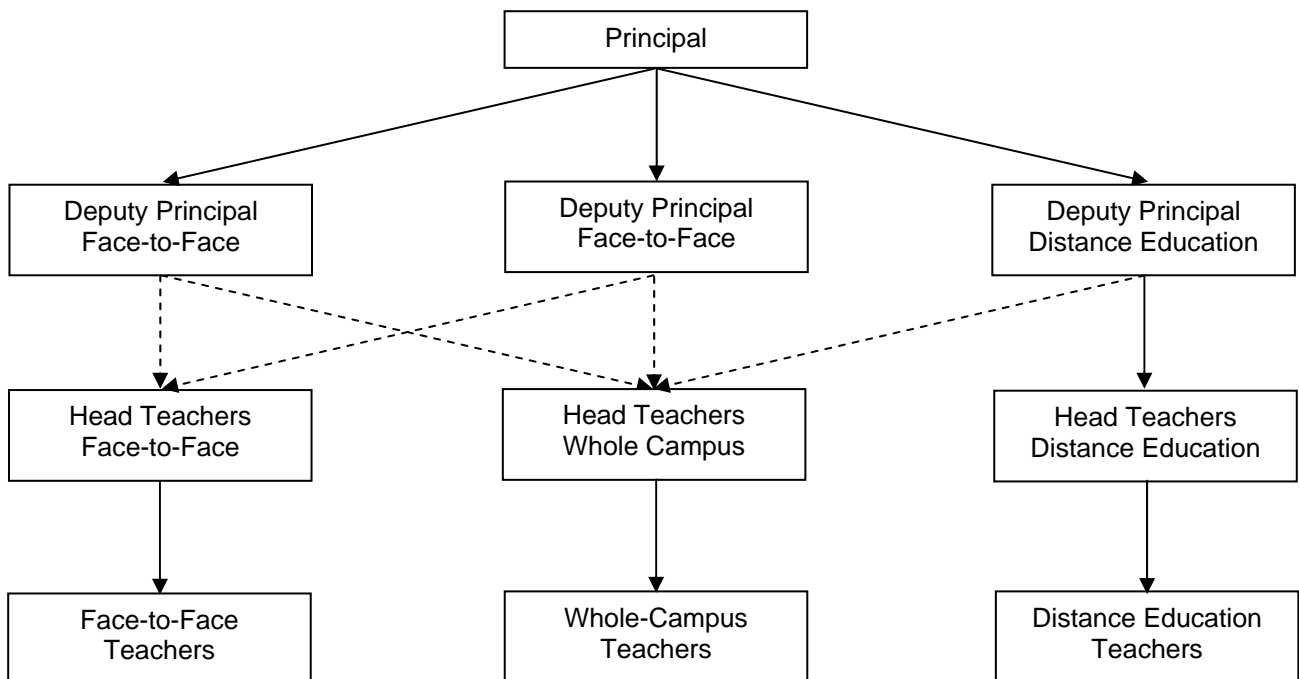
DET and Regional support would be needed to support the reallocation of distance education and face-to-face teaching resources (both physical and material) throughout the proposed new campus structure. This proposal is further developed in the section *Building and Supporting the Model*.

Proposal for Distance Education Learning at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre



NB: Surveys of Distance Education parents have shown a preference for students to be serviced on a K-12 continuum. Discussions about this possible model have occurred between Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre and Queanbeyan Public School. Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre acknowledge that Queanbeyan Public School may present a different proposal for school operation in their response to the Distance Education Discussion Paper.

The Operation of School Management to Support the Proposal



NB: The number of Head Teachers allocated to each area of school operation would be finalised after a full analysis of the staffing needs of each area of school operation has been completed.

Proposal to Maintain Distance Education at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has been a distance education provider for sixteen years, providing curriculum for students in Illawarra and South-East Region, ACT and students travelling in Australia and overseas.

During this time distance education provision has changed significantly and the school has been an innovator in adapting to these changes, particularly in terms of the nature of distance education delivery and changes in student enrolment demographics.

In 2008 Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre became the distance education provider for four School Education Groups (SEG's) in Riverina Region after Balranald Central School ceased to operate as a distance education school. In the past two years enrolments from this area of Riverina Region have grown significantly and the school has received a lot of positive feedback on the quality of service provided in this area.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is strategically placed, as our proposed model recommends, to continue being an innovator in distance education delivery for a range of reasons:

- * Geographically the school is ideally positioned to service a clientele living in Illawarra and South-East Region and the four SEG's from Riverina Region, being no more than four hours' drive from any school currently being serviced.

Currently Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre services students living in an area covering Wollongong and along the South Coast of NSW to the Victorian Border, and in-land from Moss Vale to Young, Wagga Wagga and Corowa (on the Victorian Border).

This provides students with ready access to services such as field-trips and attendance at mini-schools – both of which are highly valued by students, parents and course supervisors.

- * The school is located in a large community, adjacent to the ACT, which makes the area popular for attracting, and maintaining, staff. The school is ideally located to attract a flexible staff, particularly with staff being willing to teach part-time to service school curriculum provision. The school also has a significant pool of casual teachers to provide relief for staff when they are absent.
- * Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has established links with the University of Canberra, being a preferred placement school for pre-service teachers. The school has also established academic links with the University of Canberra, which provides an academic pathway for students when they complete their secondary education.
- * Illawarra and South East Region has reached an agreement with the Queanbeyan Australian Technical College for a proposed new structure which relies heavily on the current Distance Education facility for its implementation. While this is still subject to government approval, planning is proceeding on the assumption of a Distance Education provision in the region, particularly at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.
- * There is strong school-community and regional support to maintain distance education provision, not just in Queanbeyan – but primarily at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.

Staffing Implications of Any Proposed Change to the Current Structure of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

Whilst the Distance Education Review is focussed solely on the distance education learner, the Review Team, the Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate and DET Staffing Operations need to consider the impact for staff in any proposed model for change. The nature and quality of the relationship between teachers and learners is the essence of any successful and Quality Teaching framework. There are a number of potential implications that need to be considered. These include:

- * ***Timing of the Introduction of Change***

The timing of any proposed change to the current operations needs to consider the existing relationships between teachers and students. If change is to occur in line with the commencement of the 2010 school year, as has been widely discussed during the review process, a number of staff-student relationships will be

affected. Teachers allocated to distance education students in the two year cycle of teaching a subject, particularly in Stage 6, may see the continuity of that teaching cycle broken if they are not allocated to distance education teaching in 2010 in a revised school operational structure. This will have a negative impact on teacher-student relationships and the quality of course continuity. It is proposed that any structural change be planned, and assessed, in 2010 with a view to full implementation in 2011 at the earliest.

* ***The Nature of the Proposed Change***

a) *Relocating Distance Education Away From Queanbeyan*

The development of a fully-autonomous Distance Education Centre to service Illawarra and South-East Region and the four School Education Groups (SEG's) currently serviced in Riverina Region, in any centre other than Queanbeyan, will necessitate the relocation of up to sixty-four (64) current members of staff (a figure that may be reduced by the resignation and retirement of some staff members who do not wish to move from the Queanbeyan/ACT area).

This action would be at large expense to DET and cause considerable difficulty in successfully relocating such a large number of staff to new schools, particularly if such an action is compounded by the impact of similar decisions being made in relation to Camden Haven High School and Southern Cross School.

b) *Establishing a Fully Autonomous Distance Education School Elsewhere in Queanbeyan or at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre*

All teaching staff are currently appointed to Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. Establishing a fully autonomous distance education school would, presumably, follow existing DET processes for the establishment of a new school – including the merit selection of a school principal.

Executive roles in the new school may be substantially different to those currently operating at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. This raises the issue of guaranteeing positions for existing executive staff, who would no longer have a substantive position at Karabar High School, and would require appointment to the new school under nominated transfer processes. The same guarantee would need to occur for the allocation of teaching staff if a fully-autonomous school was established.

Staff at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre would need to be guaranteed job security if they relocated from one school to another: particularly if there is a redefinition of existing roles or if there are staff with nominated transfer status elsewhere in the region or state who would receive priority in the transfer process or if redefined roles were approved for merit selection procedures.

The operation of two autonomous schools on the same site may prove problematic, as evidenced by other examples where two schools, with different functions and operating processes exist in NSW. The same staffing concerns would exist whether the fully autonomous school was located on the same site as Karabar High School or elsewhere in Queanbeyan.

It is recommended the Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre proposal be adopted. It will minimise the staffing impact of transitioning to an autonomous distance education operation for students and families identified in the report as wanting an autonomous school operation.

* ***Managing the Transition***

Any proposal for change in the current integrated schools will place significant pressure on the Principals of those schools. The Principals of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre and The Southern Cross School, in conjunction with the Relieving Principal of Camden Haven High School acknowledge that the Distance Education Review provides the opportunity to improve learning outcomes for distance education learners.

However, each Principal is concerned about the personal impact of managing how current staff members will be allocated to new duties, regardless of which model is adopted for each of the current integrated schools.

It is recommended that the Review Panel, the Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate and DET consider an independent arbitration process to assist Principals in the allocation of staff to new roles and duties when new models of school operation are decided and planned. This will help ensure the transition process is seen to be fair and equitable by all participants.

The model places the learner at the centre and it is from that perspective that we invite your comment.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre's response to the Distance Education Discussion Paper takes a holistic approach to the opportunity to improve learning outcomes for distance education students by improving the quality of relationships between students, teachers, parents/care-givers and supervisors.

This response reflects the views of the whole-school community, particularly in considering the impact of changing the current structure of distance education and face-to-face teaching at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.

The following section outlines the recent trends and significant achievements of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre as an integrated distance education provider, concentrating on the changing nature of distance education enrolments; improvements in pedagogy and curriculum delivery; and systemic measures of school success.

Enrolments

The nature of enrolments in distance education at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is changing, as indicated by the 2008 enrolment figures for the different categories of enrolment provided below:

*	35%	Single Subject	(30%; 2004	-	17%; 1998)
*	24%	Overseas	(32%; 2004	-	31%; 1998)
*	20%	Medical and Behaviour	(18%; 2004	-	9%; 1998)
*	9%	Travellers	(10%; 2004	-	7%; 1998)
*	6%	Rural and Isolated	(7%; 2004	-	16%; 1998)
*	6%	Vocationally Talented	(3%; 2004	-	2%; 1998)

Parents and care-givers, enrolling their students under the structure currently operating at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre, know they are enrolling their child in an integrated distance education and face-to-face school.

Under the current enrolment guidelines, a parent or care-giver who is dissatisfied with the current structure of the school may seek to change the enrolment of their child to another school with an enrolment and teaching/learning pattern which they feel better suits their needs.

There have been no such applications to change enrolments, to another distance education school on this basis, over the past five years at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. There have been applications from families to change the school of enrolment due to student service issues, with some of these applications seeking enrolment in an autonomous distance education school. However, the school has also received applications from families with students enrolled in autonomous distance education schools for the same reason.

Provision of Curriculum

The report and discussion paper identify the need to provide a more flexible means of curriculum delivery to distance education students, particularly using current Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) using synchronous and asynchronous methods of curriculum delivery to students who live overseas to speed-up the rate of delivery of units of work and the rate of return of marked work.

Currently our three main methods of preparing work for distribution to students are:

- * Paper based and mailed to students.
- * Digital (eg CD or DVD format) which is either mailed to students or, potentially, can be downloaded from the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLE) website or Department of Education and Training (DET) website or from our school website.
- * On-line, using resources such as MOODLE, enabling students to download work directly from the school.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre's capacity to provide work to students, in a range of methods, is indicated below. The chart shows the amount of work available to students in each of the identified presentation modes at the end of 2005, the end of 2008 and the school/faculty plan targets for the end of 2011.

Material	Paper			Digital			On-line		
	2005	2008	2011	2005	2008	2011	2005	2008	2011
Distance Education Resources	100%	100%	100%	10%	50%	100%	0%	15%	70%

Distance Education Higher School Certificate Data

The analysis of Higher School Certificate Data, outlined below, differs significantly from the data presented in the Distance Education Review (page 10). The following information demonstrates significant improvement in the achievement of single subject students in the achievement of Band 5 and 6 results in the Higher School Certificate (HSC), with an accompanying improvement, across all student enrolment groups, in Band E4 results in extension subjects offered to distance education students.

The data used in the Distance Education Review to indicate relative levels of Higher School Certificate achievement between different categories of distance education schools, provided by Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD), does not appear to include information for students enrolled in single subject courses, in integrated distance education schools, or students from outside the NSW Public Education system. The validity of the data presented in the report has been put to the Review Team and clarification has not been provided at this stage.

Our analysis of HSC data shows a pattern of continuing improvement of HSC results, amongst distance education learners, over the past four years. This has resulted from a combined effort to ensure more effective communication with students, improve the school's technological resources and focus teacher professional learning on the needs of distance education learners.

Year	Total Band 5 and 6 results	Full-time students – Band 5 or 6	Single-subject students – Band 5 or 6
2005	36%	34%	40%
2006	37%	29%	43%
2007	40%	35%	46%
2008	43%	36%	51%

These results are for all students receiving either a Band 5 or Band 6 results in all 2 Unit examinations (including VET subjects), but do not include student results in extension subjects. These results are indicated in a separate table below.

The small size of distance education student cohorts presenting for the HSC through Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre (generally between ten and fourteen students) means that significant changes to student result patterns can occur easily, impacting on their statistical validity.

Year	Band E4 results	Band E3 results	Band E2 or E1 results
2005	17%	66%	17%
2006	13%	62%	25%
2007	50%	50%	0%
2008	76%	12%	12%

These calculations are based on the course result information provided to the school by the Board of Studies. It includes students enrolled in single subjects and students enrolled either from non-Government NSW schools and ACT schools.

Current EMSAD reports do not enable the determination of what value adding has occurred to students' results if they have enrolled in distance education after completing their junior education at another school. However, the trend over the past three years shows an improvement in Band 5 and 6 results for these students.

School Satisfaction Data

School satisfaction surveys show a high level of satisfaction, amongst our distance education community, at the

level of service currently provided by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. A survey, conducted via email to distance education parents and students in Term 4 2008, provided the following results:

77%	were happy with the level of service and education currently provided by the Distance Education Centre. Further examination of this data showed that the majority of students enrolled in single subject courses showed a higher level of satisfaction with the level of service and education they were currently receiving. This was matched by the fact that the level of satisfaction was slightly lower for students and parents in the Isolated/Rural; Medical and Overseas Student categories of enrolment.
69%	preferred for the Distance Education Centre, if it were to become an autonomous centre, to remain on the site of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre, rather than be relocated elsewhere in Queanbeyan or in the region.
63%	felt that an autonomous distance education centre might provide more effective educational experiences for students, with the highest level of support coming from the students and parents from the Isolated/Rural; Medical and Overseas Student categories of enrolment.
63%	would prefer the Distance Education Centre to be a K-12 distance education centre, with the strongest levels of support for this option coming from students and parents in the Isolated/Rural; Medical and Overseas Student categories of enrolment.

Principals of schools where Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre currently provides single-subject service were also surveyed, via email, in Term 4 2008. Survey results, for principals, shows:

88%	were happy with the level of service and education currently provided by the Distance Education Centre.
94%	preferred for the Distance Education Centre, if it were to become an autonomous centre, to remain on the site of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre, rather than be relocated elsewhere in Queanbeyan or in the region.
19%	felt that an autonomous distance education centre might provide more effective educational experiences for students.
31%	would prefer the Distance Education Centre to be a K-12 distance education centre.

Distance Education students and parents and Principals were also asked if they were happy with the proposal to change the current structure of Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre and whether, or not, they felt that an autonomous distance education centre would provide better service and educational provision for distance education students. The responses for these questions are outlined in the following table:

Respondent	Synopsis of Question	Yes	No
Distance Education Parents and Students	Do you agree with the review proposal that Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre no longer operate as an integrated Distance Education and Face-To-Face School?	48%	52%
	Do you believe an autonomous Distance Education Centre would provide a more effective educational experience for you and/or your student(s)?	67%	37%
Principals	Do you agree with the review proposal that Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre no longer operate as an integrated Distance Education and Face-To-Face School?	12%	88%
	Do you believe an autonomous Distance Education Centre would provide a more effective educational experience for students enrolling in Distance Education from your school?	19%	81%

The proposals, as outlined in the section *Building and Supporting the Model*, aim to maintain the breadth of current delivery provided under our current operational structure to continue meeting the needs of a diverse, increasing and changing, enrolment of students in distance education.

NB: The responses to the proposed learning modes, outlined on the following pages, represent our thoughts on how autonomous distance learning, in some modes could lead to improved outcomes for students, when compared to our experience of operating in an integrated mode.

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * Scheduled “class” timetables for students in each year in the core subject areas
- * Using video and/or satellite conferencing for teaching groups of up to fifteen students in a class cohort
- * Enhanced social contact/interaction for students through teacher established blogs and on-line discussion forums
- * Establishing forums for students to discuss ideas through asynchronous tools such as Moodle
- * Conducting “virtual” mini-schools, in conjunction with existing mini-school organisation to enhance student learning experiences
- * Development of stronger student-student and student-teacher relationships
- * Further development of forums/debriefing sessions with home supervisors via tele- and/or video-conference
- * Virtual excursions as part of class work activities
- * Development of an interactive student record card, which can be accessed by students and parents/carer-givers/supervisors to check student progress
- * Extension of the Learning Support Team structure to assist student learning
- * More effective teacher professional learning opportunities to enhance student learning
- * Potential for acceleration of students across years of learning and enrichment class provision
- * Potential to provide dedicated services in areas of careers, library and possibly counselling through appointment of careers, library and counselling staff to autonomous modes of distance education learning.

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * DET support – particularly in the establishment and provision of the technology required to support student learning
- * Provision of systemic or DE specific teacher professional learning in distance education pedagogy. This has been undertaken at a school level but would need to occur across all distance education centres
- * Provision of enhanced video-conferencing facilities and associated infrastructure to support teaching and learning at the school and in the home
- * Varied home circumstances of the learner – particularly in terms of access to technology to supplement and potentially replace paper-based learning materials – some students will remain dependent on paper-based learning, affecting their capacity to become involved in other technology-based learning modes
- * Students’ social circumstances which may inhibit their capacity for extended socialisation opportunities which may be presented through the establishment of on-line class groupings
- * Capacity of the school to provide the same level of curriculum offerings, beyond the “core” subject areas, as is currently available through an integrated school structure.
- * Restriction of current curriculum offered by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

- * Development of an autonomous group of distance education teachers who teach students in “core” subject areas, such as English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE, TAS and PD/H/PE. This would enable the development of class groups and the timetabling of class lessons.
- * Development of more effective social structures and interactions between students
- * Interaction with students’ peers through on-line lessons
- * Possible extension of provision of enrichment lessons for students with specific needs
- * Use of technology to improve learning delivery and feedback
- * Development of a team approach to enhance students’ learning (student/teacher/supervisor)
- * Potential to ensure support structures for specific categories: eg – young parents, aspergers enrolments.
- * Potential to improve professional support for home supervisors enhancing confidence in supporting K-12 children, beyond levels currently occurring in an integrated centre.
- * Potential to increase parents/supervisors in support structures such as P&C; parent/teacher interview processes; parent/student information sessions – although these could also be established under the existing integrated structure, through the school’s P&C, distance education membership of the School Council and extending existing processes to accommodate this potential

The Home Distance Learning Mode is supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * Teachers able to teach students across a range of subjects (already being trialled at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre) to improve student engagement in learning
- * Capacity to appoint Special Education teachers to assist student learning if current special education processes are modified
- * Extension of existing outreach centre philosophy and practice. Further development of partnerships with local PCYC organisations, Campbell-Page, etc
- * Provision of curriculum guarantee for “at risk” students
- * Re-integration processes supported, via development of personal/social skills, to school/TAFE/work to improve outcomes and processes.

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * Who has responsibility for providing internet access for students?
- * Provision of learning space, materials and teaching support – supervision of the student while doing their work – responsibility for return of technological equipment that may be loaned to students to support their learning
- * Provision of counsellor support for the Learning Support Team structure required to assist student learning
- * Length of enrolment – sufficient time needs to be provided to address issues and support successful return to other modes of learning
- * The stages of student learning proposed for access to this mode – stages one and two may also need to be included
- * Regional support for this type of learning – particularly in expediting the enrolment process and providing school counsellor support
- * Development of appropriate professional learning modules to equip teachers with the skills to successfully operate in this mode of distance education delivery

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

- * Multiple subjects could be taught by a single teacher to enhance student learning and engagement in learning
- * Enhancement of existing regional processes to facilitate the placement of students in this mode of learning and support, wherever possible, their return to mainstream learning processes
- * Expansion of outreach centres (such as Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre currently operates in Goulburn) to enhance student engagement in learning. Discussions needed with regional directors to improve current processes
- * Attach specific staff to various/appropriate centres to enhance existing support for students and teachers.

The Home Distance Learning Mode is supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre, with the caveat that both the timeframe for enrolment be extended to further support students' needs and circumstances and that the learning mode is available to students in all stages of learning.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre does not currently participate in Access Programs. However, the school is currently developing partnerships with Mulwaree High School and Goulburn High School to provide enhanced curriculum delivery for face-to-face students via a Connected Classroom initiative.

There is further potential in the development of this partnership to include distance education learners who are currently in very small cohorts in the school.

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * Provision of enhanced opportunities to study subjects/areas of interest not available in the student's "home" school

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * Maintaining quality education provision in small rural communities which are steadily contracting due to the ongoing drought and economic conditions that are forcing many families to move to other centres
- * School timetabling factors to facilitate an apparent expansion of this method of delivery
- * Improving results for students – the current Access model of education delivery appears to be the least successful in terms of reported HSC data
- * Pressure on staff in small schools to support curriculum delivery
- * Professional development of a constant turn-over of newly appointed staff to rural schools which have a limited residual staffing of experienced teachers across all KLA's

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

The Rural Linked Distance Learning Mode is supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * Upgraded technology to deliver single-subject course to students. Provision of learning materials through synchronous and asynchronous methods of program delivery to enhance student engagement in learning
- * Creating “class cohorts” through use of facilities such as video-conferencing and on-line learning materials to provide forums for student discussion of work
- * Current discussions to share teaching and learning resources across distance education centres to enhance the provision of digital learning material for students
- * Specialist offerings, as already occurs through distance education schools (operating in autonomous or integrated mode), in hard to staff subjects such as Extension English and Mathematics, Software Design and Development, Physics, Chemistry, Agriculture and VET areas.
- * Potential to introduce a wider range of workload options for students, to address different learning styles, learning circumstances and higher order thinking.

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * Maintaining Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre’s current breadth of curriculum delivery for single subject learners. The quality of students’ results in the Higher School Certificate examinations also demonstrates strong school success in this teaching mode, using current practices.
- * Feedback received from Principals of schools that receive single-subject teaching provision from Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre shows very strong satisfaction with our current method of operation and a desire to maintain our current organisational structure for single-subject delivery and concern that this quality and range of service will decrease if a fully autonomous distance education centre is established.
- * It is likely that there would be a reduced range of curriculum options available to students if all single-subject teaching was delivered by teachers working in an autonomous distance education allocation.

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

- * An option is to look at flexible staffing allocation of staff who teach single subject courses. A teacher may be appointed to Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre as a permanent member of staff (1.0). The teacher’s placement in the school could then be divided between face-to-face teaching (0.7) and distance education teaching (0.3) to enable the person’s skills to be utilised in both schools.

This may also prevent the loss of staff expertise in a number of teaching areas because there is an insufficient teaching load for them if this flexibility is not utilised. Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre also commenced looking at how the school timetable might be adjusted to cater for this.

The Single Course Distance Learning Mode is supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * The potential for improved curriculum delivery and contact between students, supervisors and teachers if the teachers of this mode of learning are allocated discretely to distance education teaching
- * Using video and/or satellite conferencing for teaching groups of up to fifteen students in a class cohort
- * Enhancing social contact/interaction for students which can be enhanced through teacher established blogs and on-line discussion forums for work
- * Conducting “virtual” mini-schools, in conjunction with existing mini-school organisation to enhance student learning experiences
- * Independent Learning Plans (ILP’s) used in conjunction with “class program” structure to support and extend student learning
- * Extension of the Learning Support Team structure to assist student learning
- * Extension of Moodle-based lessons
- * Potential for acceleration of students across years of learning
- * Potential for enrichment class provision
- * Potential to provide dedicated services in areas of careers, library and possibly counselling.

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * Situation/location. Some overseas learners are in locations where access to technology is very limited and they will still rely on the provision of paper-based material. This will continue the time delay created by mailing work to students and waiting for it to be returned by mail
- * Does this proposal limit learning opportunities if it is restricted to Stages One to Four? Current enrolments also cover Stages Five and Six and this proposal should include the continuation of this practice.

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

- * Examination of the possibility to have staff work more flexible hours to enable direct contact with students living in different time zones
- * Continued development of on-line materials (already a school focus using Moodle) to provide on-line lessons, interactive work, CD resources and discussion forums for students
- * Developing a repository of distance education learning material (from all distance education centres) on TaLE to enable students to download course material from one website
- * Developing a K-12 model of curriculum delivery, at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre for Illawarra and South East Region, to ensure continuity of access to consistent processes and levels of appropriate technology and software
- * The potential to develop a “middle school” model for education provision to distance education learners
- * Development of an autonomous group of distance education teachers who teach students in “core” subject areas, such as English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE, TAS and PD/H/PE. This would enable the development of class groups and the timetabling of class lessons.
- * Development of more effective social structures and interactions between students
- * Potential for the provision of enrichment lessons for students with specific needs
- * Use of technology to improve learning delivery and feedback
- * Capacity to develop the breadth and quality of curriculum offerings.
- * Potential to ensure support structures for specific categories: eg – young parents, aspergers enrolments.
- * Potential to improve professional support for home supervisors enhancing confidence in supporting K-12 children, beyond levels currently occurring in an integrated centre.
- * Potential to increase parents/supervisors in support structures such as P&C; parent/teacher interview processes; parent/student information sessions – although these could also be established under the existing integrated structure, through the school’s P&C, distance education membership of the School Council and extending existing processes to accommodate this potential

The Mobile Distance Learning Mode is supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre with the caveat that students in Stages 5 and 6 are also eligible to access this mode of learning.

What do you see as the opportunities for the learner?

- * The opportunity for students to engage in self-directed learning using ICT
- * The potential to “accelerate” gifted and talented (GAT) students in subject areas
- * Support for flexible learning patterns and opportunities

What might be some limitations for the learner?

- * The potential for social isolation of students not working in cohorts
- * The need for DET support to provide the funding and time for the development of appropriate resources for this mode of learning
- * The need for a DET standard set of ICT protocols to be established to support learning through this mode of learning
- * Inadequate teacher professional learning to enable a sufficient number of existing distance education teachers to successfully develop the skills required to use the ICT to support this mode of learning
- * Unless contact and support structures for students studying via this mode are improved, and maintained as a significant area of focus, this mode of curriculum delivery could prove quite alienating for many students. Students studying via this mode would need to be carefully “screened” before being enrolled
- * Many students living overseas do not have quality internet access. These students would need to be placed in the Mobile Distance learning or Single-Subject category (depending on the nature of their enrolment. They continue to need to use mail as well as the internet for curriculum delivery and return
- * This mode does not appear to place sufficient emphasis on the quality and importance of teacher/student interaction

- * To what extent is this mode addressing a learning style rather than a category of distance education enrolment?

What might be some further enhancements for the learner?

- * Extension of learning opportunities for GAT students
- * Provision of flexible pathways for students with special needs (eg: young mothers, students with serious medical health issues, students with mental health issues, school refusers, etc)
- * There is potential for some learners, particularly highly independent learners, to benefit from this mode of learning.
- * This mode of learning could help preparing some learners, depending on their learning style and situation, for on-line tertiary learning through universities and colleges of TAFE.

The On-Line Distance Learning Mode is **not** supported by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre in its current form as the relationship between the teacher and the student is an essential component of Quality Teaching and achieving quality educational outcomes. This relationship needs to be maintained and developed.

Building and supporting the model

In addition comment is invited on each area identified in this section:

Community of Distance Learning Schools

A community of Distance Learning Schools could provide the potential for the provision of professional learning specifically directed to distance education pedagogy. There is scope to further develop this sense of community under existing practices.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has succeeded in developing sound teaching and learning practices, as evidenced in the growing success of students in the Higher School Certificate.

A community of autonomous schools could provide systemic support to the development of school cultures focussed on improving methods of curriculum delivery, engaging students in learning and developing more effective connections between teachers and learners.

This community would need to be DET supported to establish the required infrastructure for the community to be successful.

The organisation of distance education learning could be restructured so delivery occurs from five centres with varying degrees of autonomous operation to maximise use of staff currently allocated to schools.

This would require a long-term, planned transition process to ensure staff career continuity and aspirations are guaranteed for current staff, whilst provisioning for the long-term transition process required in this proposal.

These could be organised with schools servicing the:

- * South-East of the state (such as currently serviced by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre) for Illawarra and South East Region and the areas currently serviced in Riverina Region;
- * North Coast and Northern Tablelands of the state;
- * Central West, and Western areas of the state;
- * Sydney Metropolitan Area; and
- * provision of language courses throughout the state that cannot be serviced by the other centres.

The internal organisation, staffing and resourcing of these schools would need careful planning.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre would seek to plan a campus structure, utilising the current senior management structure, by allocating current staffing resources to support the proposal.

There will also require the reorganisation and reallocation of middle-management, student services and staffing structures in the school. Autonomous staffing will be required for all modes serviced by the school except single subject provision.

Negotiation would need to occur at the Regional and State Office level to establish strong relationships with student services personnel and providers to meet the needs of students enrolled in the Tutorial Learning mode.

A common platform of synchronous and asynchronous learning tools would need to be developed, with DET support, to ensure sound pedagogical practices and effective student learning across the community of distance learning schools and all in learning modes.

Teacher Professional Learning

Teacher professional learning has been identified as a key issue in the report and discussion paper. It is an issue that needs to be addressed in a multi-dimensional manner, rather than simply being left to individual schools to provide programs to enhance teachers' professional skills – as is currently the case.

There is potential for this issue to be addressed on several levels:

- * *Teacher Training.* Rural universities who prepare a greater percentage of students for placement in rural schools could include a section in their curriculum focussed specifically on issues related to working in rural schools and communities, including working with students who are undertaking distance education programs.
- * *Systemic Training Programs.* The Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate could take responsibility for developing and implementing training modules for staff newly appointed to distance education schools. This could then be used as part of the teacher's orientation program in their new school.
- * *Distance Education Schools.* In the past twelve months there has been some systemic introductory training in Moodle. However, schools currently have the responsibility for developing staff capacity in distance education pedagogy.

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has run a range of teacher professional learning activities and forums, specific to distance education pedagogy, utilising external presenters where relevant. These will continue, but the benefit of a more widely developed professional learning and orientation program would be of value to all distance education schools.

Learning Resources and Technology

Currently, there is no system wide standard for hardware and/or software protocols used by distance education schools. Responsibility for this rests at DET and Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate level for the establishment of a standardised technology base, as called for in the report and discussion paper.

Moodle has been adopted, to varying degrees, by the majority of distance education schools as a self-initiated process. However, it is only recently that Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre proposed a system of sharing Moodle-based resources, across all distance education schools, to enable any one distance education school carrying the responsibility of program and learning resource development without knowing what resources are being developed by other schools.

Distance education learning resources, whether developed at the school level or by the Centre for Learning Innovation (CLI), are DET intellectual property and need to be made available to all distance DET education schools as such. This would help alleviate a number of issues contained in the report and discussion paper relating to the development of resources for distance education students.

The location of these resources, possible on the TaLE website would ensure student access to digital resources when a protocol for hardware and software usage is established.

Learning Support

The allocation of learning support is an issue specifically affecting the growing number of students enrolling in distance education as behavioural or tutorial students. Currently school counsellor time is allocated to the student's base school. However, if the student has been removed from a school for behaviour or has not attended for mental or physical health reasons it is highly unlikely that the student will access that resource.

School counsellor time needs to be allocated to distance education schools (it currently is not allocated to integrated schools) to provide support for students enrolling in this mode of distance education learning.

Consideration also needs to be given to staff safety when conducting home visits to students in this enrolment category and protocols and risk management processes need to be established. An increase in HSLO, DOCS, police and other inter-agency support would be required to enhance and support this process. The establishment of specific staff support processes would also need to be developed, and implemented across all distance education schools.

The development of outreach centres, such as Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre currently has operating in Goulburn, and support of alternate programs operating Wagga Wagga and Nowra, need to be further supported and expanded as a means of providing effective supervisor support for students and a means of providing successful and safe staff access to students.

Student Access Criteria

Student access criteria need to consider the needs of all students who require distance education provision. Concern has already been expressed over the limitations suggested by some of the learning mode proposals. There also needs to be some clarification of the enrolment eligibility of students currently provided for as overseas travellers and the levels of fees that parents may be required to pay for students living in remote locations in different countries. Students' backgrounds, prior to engaging in this style of distance education learning, should be considered as part of the enrolment and fee charging process.

The paper also identifies issues for immediate attention while the consultation, planning and implementation process is progressed. Comment on the issues listed in the paper or other issues needed to be identified for immediate action should be included in responses.

Ideas in Relation to Implementation

Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is well positioned, capable and ready to continue providing quality distance education learning experiences for five of the six modes of learning presented in the Distance Education Discussion Paper and is able to accommodate the provision of autonomous distance education learning in a number of the suggested learning modes as a possible outcome of the Distance Education Review Process.

The school currently provides distance education learning in four of the six proposed modes:

- * Home Distance Learning
- * Tutorial Distance Learning
- * Mobile Distance Learning
- * Single-Course Distance Learning

The teaching staff has established strong relationships with a significant number of the families who have students enrolled at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.

Over the past three years a significant amount of the school budget has been dedicated to improving the school's capacity to provide on-line distance education experiences for students and places the school in a sound position to also provide teaching in the proposed On-line Distance Learning Mode.

In the past twelve months Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has assumed responsibility for providing distance education provision to four School Education Groups in the Riverina Region and the success and rapid growth of distance education provision to these schools has further provided an experiential base for the school to be a successful provider of on-line distance education learning.

Whilst the resources currently located at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre are not "purpose built" for distance education delivery, they have been considerably enhanced, over the past four years, through the:

- * implementation of an upgraded telephone system to extend the level of access distance education teachers have to make telephone contact with students and supervisors;
- * development of a technology centre (funding through an IIOSP Grant and CAP funding) to provide two video-conferencing facilities for distance education learning, a technology classroom for use during mini-schools and provision for the use of interactive white-boards during distance education lessons; and
- * the introduction of a Moodle server and significant teacher professional learning for staff to use this form of technology to enhance students' distance education learning experiences.

Each of the proposed learning modes requires some autonomous thinking about how to best cater for each category of student enrolment.

An outline of our proposal for each of the learning modes, presented below, is based on the information presented in the Distance Education Report and Discussion Paper and our own surveying of our distance education community:

<p><i>Home Distance Learning</i></p>	<p>Establishment of Kindergarten – Year 12 (K-12) distance education provision at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre. The number of students enrolled at Queanbeyan Public School is small, and in decline. A significant number of our Year 7 student intake comes from Sydney Distance Education Primary School.</p> <p><i>(NB: This proposal is based on responses received from a survey of distance education parents and the current enrolment data at Queanbeyan Public School. Discussions have occurred between the two school principals and Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre acknowledges that Queanbeyan Public School may include another preferred model of operation in its own school-based response to the Discussion Paper.)</i></p> <p>The establishment of a K-12 distance education facility has been requested by the home distance learning community for a number of years and is supported in the report and discussion paper.</p> <p>This mode would be staffed by teachers allocated entirely to distance education teaching. They would provide the core curriculum in each of the stages for English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE, TAS, and PDHPE in Stages 4 – 6, as well as Languages and CAPA in Stage 4.</p> <p>This staffing allocation would also have responsibility for providing some elective curriculum delivery in a range of subjects in Stages 5 and 6. This would, in essence, provide a “core” curriculum guarantee for home distance learners and access to a range of elective subjects.</p> <p>Elective, or single-subject provision, beyond what is provided in the staffing of this mode of educational delivery would be provided through the Single-Course Learning Mode</p>
<p><i>Tutorial Distance Learning</i></p>	<p>As above, for home distance learning.</p> <p>In addition to the service provided for home distance learners Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre would examine the possibility of allocating teachers to teach more than one subject to students.</p> <p>This would allow for the reduction of the number of teachers a student studying via this mode would require and allow for the development of stronger and more positive learning experiences for the student.</p> <p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has already commenced a trial of this style of curriculum delivery and has commenced developing specific curriculum materials for students in this category in a range of our KLA's.</p>
<p><i>Mobile Distance Learning</i></p>	<p>As above, for home distance learning.</p> <p>In addition to the service provided for home distance learners we would examine the possibility of DET support for flexible working hours for staff.</p> <p>Many students in this category live overseas and therefore in different time-zones. This means that any phone contact between teachers and students/supervisors frequently occurs outside of “normal” working hours. Staff often make this contact from home or through working extended hours at school.</p> <p>If staff were allocated a significant number of mobile distance learners it may be possible to construct a more flexible timetable and hours of work for them to accommodate this need for contact with students and/or supervisors.</p>
<p><i>Single-Subject Distance Learning</i></p>	<p>Our current mode of single-subject distance education learning is strongly supported by the schools Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre currently service in Illawarra and South-East Region and in Riverina Region.</p> <p>The school achieves very strong results with single-subject students and has increased the quality and level of these results significantly over the past four years.</p> <p>Our current method of integrated curriculum delivery enables the school to provide a wider range of curriculum options to students who study single-subject courses than we would be able to provide if this mode of learning was serviced by autonomously allocated distance education teachers.</p>

	<p>Principals of the schools serviced by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre have shown a strong preference for their students to be taught by teachers who also teach face-to-face classes in the subjects they teach via distance education.</p> <p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre would like to further examine the opportunities provided to appoint staff on a flexible nature to distance education single-subject teaching and to face-to-face teaching. For example a teacher who is appointed to the school as a full-time member of staff (1.0) could be appointed to distance education part-time (0.3) and face-to-face part-time (0.7) and maintain their permanent status as a member of staff.</p> <p>The implications for timetabling face-to-face classes would also need to be examined as part of this process and we have also initiated an examination of our whole-school timetable structure to look at other alternatives of providing for this mode of distance education delivery.</p>
<p><i>On-line Distance Learning</i></p>	<p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre does not support the proposal for On-Line Distance Learning in its current form. The proposed mode needs to be refined to address the issues of the importance of teacher-student contact and relationships identified in the Review and Discussion Paper.</p> <p>If these issues are addressed Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is capable of conducting learning via this mode. The school has made substantial progress during the past four years in the development of ICT based learning materials.</p> <p>A significant section of the current whole-school budget has been allocated to the purchase of a Moodle server, the professional development of staff in using ICT to enhance curriculum delivery to students and to paying support staff in the development of on-line materials to support student learning.</p> <p>A number of course components are now supported by ICT, either in synchronous and/or asynchronous curriculum delivery.</p> <p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is also working with other regional schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * develop partnerships for shared-curriculum delivery models to enhance student learning experiences and options in Stage 6 curriculum delivery; and * provide teacher professional learning in the implementation of these methods of curriculum material development and delivery across a range of schools and developing inter-school partnerships within the region. <p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is recognised as a regional leader in this form of curriculum material development and is also placed to develop this leadership role in a range of areas.</p> <p>The school supports a wide range of VET options through distance education and across the region and, currently, is in a position to further develop this role if an existing proposal to move the management of the Australian Technical College (ATC) in Queanbeyan proceeds.</p> <p>Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre is also examining the possibility of applying for the establishment of a Trade Training Centre (TTC) at the school, with a specific focus on ICT – which would provide direct support to the ongoing work to successfully establish the school as a centre for on-line distance education.</p>

Any Further Comment

Languages provision at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre

Languages provision at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has grown significantly in recent years. The Languages Faculty is looking at the following initiatives:

- * Ensuring language provision meets the guidelines suggested in the National Languages Curriculum Profiles.
- * Looking at the potential of introducing the study of local Indigenous Languages, utilising links with community and national organizations.
- * Improving the use of technology usage to support language learning, including the potential of more flexible curriculum delivery.
- * Applying for the establishment of one of the language laboratories announced in the recent Federal Government's economic stimulus package.
- * Providing greater continuity of language study throughout all stages of schooling, particularly if a K-12 Distance Education Centre is established.
- * Building on high level success in student outcomes – including students being placed in the top five in the state on six occasions in the past three years in courses such as French Beginners (2008-2007); Italian Beginners and Continuers (2008, 2006); Extension German (2008 and 2006). These results are supported by a high percentage of students achieving either Band 5 or Band 6 results in their language courses studied through Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.
- * The maintenance of the school's capacity to continue successfully delivering courses in small candidature subjects, such as Languages, is dependent on the adoption of the model for Distance Education proposed in this response.

Distance Education Infrastructure

Distance Education delivery at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre has operated from demountable buildings since its inception in 1991. The continuing growth of Distance Education delivery at the school is reflected in the current location of **nine** demountable buildings to accommodate staff and resources.

An *Investing In Our Schools Program (IIOSP)* grant of \$150000.00, which was supplemented with CAP funding, enabled the construction of a technology centre, in 2005-2006, to support the expansion of technology use.

The proposal to change the nature of Distance Education at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre provides an excellent opportunity for a commitment to be made to construct permanent Distance Education facilities at the school to replace the demountable facilities that have been on site since Distance Education commenced.

The introduction of this proposal will mean that several staff will teach distance education in an autonomous manner and will effectively divide the majority of school staff into two different operations within the school. This will necessitate separate meetings and requirements for space to conduct these meetings, including a common room or area for distance education staff to meet in either a formal or informal manner.

The funding of permanent distance education infrastructure could come from a variety of sources, including the federal government's economic stimulus package, the transition of Australian Technical College (ATC) operations to DET management and the inclusion of funding for a Trade Training Centre (TTC) to enhance the provision of curriculum and scope of operation for distance education, particularly in the area of Information Technology (IT).

The Equity Programs and Distance Education Unit may also identify funding from any savings to operational costs from changes implemented in response to the review process to promote the development of permanent resources for distance education at Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.

This would help to further enhance the planning, funding and implementation of technological resources to support distance education learning already undertaken by Karabar High School and Distance Education Centre.