

CORONAVIRUS — SCHOOLS — REMOTE LEARNING

360. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and the move to provide access to education through remote learning and distance education.

- (1) Is the minister aware of the bandwidth and connectivity issues in regional areas?
- (2) If yes to (1), how does the minister intend to mitigate these issues so that regional students are not disadvantaged?
- (3) How many dedicated technology support people will be appointed to support principals and teachers in developing their online resources in regional areas in term 2?
- (4) Has the minister spoken to the Minister for Regional Development about a rollout of regional telecoms improvements to ensure baseline connectivity for students?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A comprehensive rollout of bandwidth increases for schools has been underway since last year and the department is continuing to work on solutions for regional and remote areas where infrastructure is limited. Alternative arrangements such as physical work packages will be made available for students where required so they are not disadvantaged.
- (3) Many schools are well advanced in the use of technology, and where resources are not available we are ensuring students have access to printed work packages. The Department of Education will be providing comprehensive technical support to all schools through its customer service centre, as well as access to specialist advice on online teaching and learning.
- (4) No.