



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation**

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Our ref: J0702/201702  
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Ms J.M. Freeman MLA  
Chair  
Education and Health Standing Committee  
Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Ms Freeman

Thank you for the invitation to provide a submission to the Inquiry on Digital Innovation in Secondary Education. The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI) would like to acknowledge the committee's initiative in discovering actionable digital technology solutions for schools. JTSI's focus does not relate specifically to the scope of your inquiry. However, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some higher level initiatives that may broadly relate to the inquiry.

The recently released State STEM skills strategy, *Future Jobs, Future Skills: Driving STEM skills in Western Australia*, aims to ensure all Western Australians have the necessary skills to create and benefit from future job opportunities, which will require greater understanding of and skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Digital and technology skills are one component of STEM skills and critically important to citizens' preparedness for future jobs. Use of digital technologies in schools is fundamental to the development and application of digital and technology skills in students.

I note that one aspect of your inquiry relates to understanding how digital technology can be used to help ensure that no students are disadvantaged because of their ability, background, social circumstances or where they live. The State STEM skills strategy also highlights the importance of engaging populations under-represented in STEM studies, skills and careers – such as women, Aboriginal people, and those from low socioeconomic areas – or disadvantaged in some way, such as those in regional and remote areas or with a disability.

Following release of the strategy in May 2018, work to coordinate implementation is now underway through a collaborative approach across school education, industry, universities, VET, and community engagement sectors.

Several initiatives are already underway to kick-start implementation of the strategy, including the Digital and Technology Skills Program, which supports STEM education service providers to develop digital and/or technology skills, interest and awareness

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for career opportunities in the above-mentioned groups in STEM. The successful grant recipients are likely to be announced imminently.

JTSI recognises that increasing the use of digital technologies in secondary education among a wider population of students will enhance student engagement, accessibility and equity and assist to prepare Western Australians for the jobs of the future. I wish the Committee every success with its endeavour to expand students' use of digital technologies in schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RBrown', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Rebecca Brown  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

8 August 2019