

# Findings and Recommendations

## Chapter 1 – Setting the scene

### Finding 1

Page 3

It has been three years since the Department of Education has had a current ICT strategy and vision statement for schools.

### Recommendation 1

Page 3

The Department of Education must hasten its provision of guidance to secondary schools on the use of digital technologies. It should consider releasing the infrastructure component of the strategy separately, while continuing to work on the vision statement.

## Chapter 2 – How digital technology is used to assist with engagement, inclusion and equity

### Finding 2

Page 21

Secondary schools with students who are not attending or are disengaged from school report improved attendance and engagement when activities using digital technologies are introduced.

### Finding 3

Page 25

Visual and audio aspects of digital technology may be particularly compatible with Aboriginal cultural traditions, such as storytelling. Digital tools can help disadvantaged Aboriginal students to learn and create in a way that is more suited to their culture.

### Finding 4

Page 28

Use of digital technologies in regional schools is seen as a way of retaining students at the local school, ensuring the sustainability of small regional communities.

### Finding 5

Page 28

The Committee is unaware of the degree to which students with a language background other than English are made aware of and provided with digital tools to assist them with English and language activities.

### Finding 6

Page 32

Evidence from Home Education WA suggests that more families are opting for home schooling because their children's special needs are not being catered for at school.

### Finding 7

Page 32

Evidence from Gifted WA is that use of digital technology can assist gifted students, who otherwise may become disengaged and not achieve according to their potential.

**Finding 8****Page 34**

The Department of Education provides assistive technologies and some professional learning support in the use of assistive technologies for school staff; however, studies suggest that the tools are under-used Australia-wide. We do not have evidence of this specifically for Western Australia.

**Recommendation 2****Page 34**

The effective use of assistive technologies in secondary schools should be part of the Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement.

**Finding 9****Page 36**

There are encouraging examples of how digital technology is being used to assist with engagement, inclusion and equity in secondary schools.

**Recommendation 3****Page 36**

The Department of Education needs to ensure that digital technologies designed to assist students with special needs are available and are being appropriately deployed to all students that require them, including those who:

- are from remote and regional areas
- are Aboriginal
- face socioeconomic, social and cultural challenges
- have a language background other than English
- have a physical or sensory disability
- have a learning difficulty
- are gifted
- have emotional, behavioural or mental health disorders
- are away from school for medical reasons

**Chapter 3 – Digital strategy****Finding 10****Page 39**

Almost all schools are now connected to the internet by fibre, but maintaining connectivity across the State is a challenge which the Department of Education is constantly forced to address.

**Finding 11****Page 41**

South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales have higher bandwidth targets than Western Australia.

**Recommendation 4****Page 41**

The Department of Education should review the bandwidth per user target in light of other States' targets.

**Finding 12** **Page 45**

There is uncertainty as to whether the Student-Centred Funding Model takes adequate account of differences in school connectivity and ICT support.

**Finding 13** **Page 45**

Almost one-third of secondary schools have chosen to supplement their bandwidth allocation by entering into a retail arrangement for extra bandwidth.

**Finding 14** **Page 45**

There is wide variation in the arrangements, bandwidths and costs individual secondary schools are making under the School Managed Internet program.

**Recommendation 5** **Page 45**

The Department of Education should review the contractual arrangements schools are making with internet retail service providers to ensure they are receiving value-for-money.

**Finding 15** **Page 46**

There is a wide variation in digital technologies resources between schools.

**Finding 16** **Page 47**

At least half of all secondary schools have a BYOD (bring your own device) program.

**Finding 17** **Page 49**

Without a specific ICT strategy at the school, it appears opportunities for digital learning are often dependent on the knowledge and enthusiasm of a particular teacher. The level of school leadership in establishing an ICT focus and strategy determines the extent to which technology is implemented within a school.

**Finding 18** **Page 50**

Teaching students are not necessarily graduating with the skills they need to use and teach with digital technologies throughout curriculum areas.

**Recommendation 6** **Page 50**

A goal of the Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement should be that teaching students graduate with skills to use and teach with digital technologies.

**Finding 19** **Page 51**

In-service teacher participation in professional learning for digital technologies is limited, despite opportunities provided by the Department of Education. This can result in schools having very few teachers with up-to-date digital technologies skills.

**Recommendation 7****Page 51**

A goal of the Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement should be that in-service teachers are able to demonstrate the skills to use and teach with digital technologies.

**Chapter 4 – Considerations for the future****Finding 20****Page 56**

Schools seem generally unaware of the potential for data harvesting using artificial intelligence embedded into computing applications used in their classrooms.

**Recommendation 8****Page 56**

The Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement must include principles related to technical, social and ethico-legal aspects of digital technologies and the regular training required for teachers on these aspects.

**Finding 21****Page 59**

Education leaders are aware of the need to ensure that digital technology is being integrated into the curriculum to deliver desired learning outcomes, and not just for the sake of using it. Creating rather than just consuming is considered important.

**Recommendation 9****Page 59**

The Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement must clearly articulate a method for integrating digital technology into the curriculum.

**Recommendation 10****Page 60**

The Department of Education must outline in its ICT Vision Statement how it will provide more support to secondary teachers in the form of software for all subjects and online resources for teaching the ICT capability.

**Recommendation 11****Page 62**

The Department of Education's ICT Vision Statement must clearly define a shared goal for all students to learn with, as well as about, digital technology.