

# A. Entity responses

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We gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to the Department of Education.

The head of the entity is responsible for the accuracy, fairness, and balance of its comments.

This appendix contains its detailed response.



## Comments received from Director-General, Department of Education

9 JUL 2021

Mr Brendan Worrall  
Auditor-General  
Queensland Audit Office  
Email: [gao@gao.qld.gov.au](mailto:gao@gao.qld.gov.au)



Office of the  
Director-General

Department of  
Education

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your email dated 22 June 2021 regarding the Queensland Audit Office's proposed report *Enabling digital learning*.

I welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the findings and recommendations, prior to the report being tabled in Parliament.

The Department of Education accepts the seven recommendations in the report. Please find enclosed with this letter, the management responses to the audit recommendations.

It is pleasing to note the report acknowledges the significant work the department has undertaken since 2018 in assessing the Information Technology environment along with the development of a detailed implementation plan, which aims to address the gap between current technology infrastructure and the preferred digital learning environment.

It is important to note that Queensland has some unique challenges when providing education services to our significantly distributed population. This includes isolated school locations that are often not within the proximity of a township and its associated services.

As the report has identified, the department is currently undertaking market engagement activities with telecommunications' providers for upgraded carriage services, and continues to work with the Queensland Government Chief Customer and Digital Officer to provide high-speed internet at schools as part of the Digitally Connected Regions Project.

The department has also recently commenced the consultation phase for development of a revised Digital Strategy. The department acknowledges the need to provide clear guidance for schools on the appropriate use of targeted technology funds, and the development of strategic plans that include the role of digital pedagogies for learning and wellbeing.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact [REDACTED]

The department looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Queensland Audit Office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Cook".

**TONY COOK**  
Director-General

Ref: 21/399857

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## Responses to recommendations

### Department of Education

#### Enabling digital learning

Response to recommendations provided by

Department of Education on 2 July 2021.

| Recommendation  | Agree/<br>Disagree | Timeframe for<br>implementation<br>(Quarter and<br>financial year) | Additional comments   |
|---|--------------------|--|---|
| <p>We recommend that the Department of Education:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reviews its targets for internet speeds and actively explores new types of services to increase internet speeds in schools in order to support equitable access to digital learning.</li> </ol>                    | Agree              | Q2, 21/22  | <p>The Department of Education's (DoE) proposed Network Upgrade Program is in the final stages of evaluation. DoE expects the new contractual arrangement will be in place by September 2021.</p> <p>DoE expects to have a basis for setting a new benchmark at the completion of this process. It is expected that any rollout of upgrades would be completed by mid-2023.</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborates and shares information with the Queensland Government Chief Customer and Digital Officer to ensure the regions where schools need improved infrastructure for high-speed internet are considered in any relevant whole-of-government initiatives</li> </ol> | Agree              | Q1,21/22   | <p>DoE is currently represented on the Whole-of-Government Digitally Connected Regions Project.</p> <p>The DoE approach to market will result in a Standing Offer Arrangement that will be available across government to leverage economies of scale based on an aggregated government spend basis.</p>  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collaborates with schools and continues to provide guidance materials and support for students' access to devices. It could review its funding model to ensure all students have access to a device</li> </ol>   | Agree              | Q2, 21/22  | <p>Schools currently provide access to devices in a range of ways - Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), school supplied devices and fee for service.</p> <p>DoE will continue to provide guidance and support materials for schools to use when making decisions about implementation models that suit their school communities.</p>  |

| Recommendation   | Agree/<br>Disagree | Timeframe for<br>implementation<br>(Quarter and<br>financial year) | Additional comments   |
|--|--------------------|--|---|
| <p>4. reviews its current policies for maintaining its technology infrastructure to better support digital learning outcomes in schools. New policies could include:</p> <p>a. replacing hardware on a regular basis or with services that keep the technology up to date</p> <p>b. implementing processes for regular updates to software and operating systems</p>               | Agree              | Q3, 21/22  | <p>DoE's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) assets are risk managed and subject to proactive investment planning to ensure they are performing optimally in the delivery of frontline and corporate services, in accordance with published policies and procedures.</p> <p>DoE will review their policies and support on maintaining and refreshing technology infrastructure.</p> <p>DoE is currently upgrading the windows operating system across its environment. It is expected that DoE will be able to leverage Windows evergreen capability in early 2022.</p> <p>Applications listed by QAO in Figure 4B are all under current support agreements.</p> |
| <p>5. support schools to manage their technology including:</p> <p>a. setting clear guidelines on how schools use the funding they receive from the department for information technology</p> <p>b. monitoring that schools develop and fund plans for maintaining their technology.</p>   | Agree              | Q1, 22/23  | <p>DoE will review the current process for IT planning and reporting in schools and guidelines for funding use.</p> <p>DoE will provide clear guidance for schools on the appropriate use of targeted technology funds.</p> <p>DoE will need to engage stakeholders in any activities that may be perceived as workload increases for schools.</p>  |
| <p>6. reviews its:</p> <p>a. digital strategy, including targets for upgrading its technology infrastructure and internet speeds in schools</p> <p>b. portfolio of projects, with an investment plan and project delivery dates that align with the revised strategy</p> <p>c. monitoring processes, to enable effective delivery of the revised strategy and related projects</p> | Agree              | Q2, 21/22  | <p>DoE is in the process of developing a new Digital Strategy 2022–2025 and will prioritise success measures tied to modern learning, business modernisation and core foundation outcomes. Consultation on the strategy has commenced with key stakeholders.</p>  |

| Recommendation   | Agree/<br>Disagree | Timeframe for<br>implementation<br>(Quarter and<br>financial year) | Additional comments  |
|--|--------------------|--|--|
|  |                    |  | The ICT Portfolio Prioritisation process is aligned to the current Digital Strategy and Savings and Debt Plan. This will be realigned once the new strategy has been developed.  |
| <p>7. supports schools to have:</p> <p>a. a clear digital component in their strategic plans, which could include how they will embed digital literacy into daily learning practices and their preferred digital technologies in the contexts of their teaching and learning methods</p> <p>b. monitoring processes in place to enable effective delivery of their strategic plans, including the digital component.</p> | Agree              | Q3 21/22   | DoE is currently working on a number of recommendations from our COVID-19 review. This review highlights the need for school strategic plans to include the role of technology in the support of digital pedagogies for learning and wellbeing. Strategic Plans are operationalised by the use of Annual Implementation Plans and by the annual reporting process. |

