



# Connecting Country Schools

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY FOR NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Introducing Connecting Country Schools

Modern teaching practices require reliable access to the internet and online learning materials. Schools need strong and extensive wireless infrastructure to support future focused learning.

Regional schools offer quality teaching and learning experiences enriched by online tools and digital resources.

The 2017/18 state budget included funding to improve wireless services and internet access in regional schools. Additional funding has also been allocated for local area network remediation and other special projects.

Connecting Country Schools will upgrade wireless services in more than 13,000 learning spaces in more than 900 regional schools.

## For Students

We live in a digital age where our students need new knowledge and skills to succeed in their studies today and their lives ahead.

To hold digital-age jobs, our students will need to think critically, solve problems creatively, work in teams, communicate clearly in a range of media and continue to learn new and ever-evolving technologies.

Improved wireless and internet services will give students more chances to connect and collaborate and greater access to online knowledge databases, streaming media, educational institutions and experts.

## For Teachers

Immediate and reliable access to digital resources, anywhere, anytime on mobile devices, is at the heart of flexible, responsive, future focused learning.

This access is essential to student centred pedagogical approaches such as inquiry, project and problem based learning.

Network reliant technologies such as virtual reality, robotics and artificial intelligence will soon be common in K-12 classrooms.

Together with increasing use of cloud based software and storage solutions, these new tools and new ways of teaching require new standards of wireless connectivity.

## For Schools

Improved wireless services will also ensure schools can make full use of resources such as the new web-based school library system.

It will allow better support for secondary students enrolled in vocational courses at TAFE through improved access to online course materials.

Schools will also have access to new tools to monitor and manage their ICT, and analytics about the use of technology across their sites.

An innovation fund will be offered to support further investment in locally sourced solutions, and the sharing of excellence between schools across the state.

## For Communities

Connecting Country Schools will also deliver a range of benefits beyond the school gate.

The Department of Education is engaging suppliers to deliver and support the program, creating jobs across the state.

Schools will be encouraged to use this core infrastructure to build a smart and connected school, as a centre for both learning excellence and community engagement.

## Implementation

Pilots have been run across the state to test the new equipment, the delivery and support model for Connecting Country Schools.

The full rollout commenced in Term 1, 2018 and the project is scheduled to conclude October 2019.

We will liaise with schools on the delivery schedule to ensure timing suits the school's needs.

Regular updates, training, support and resources to make the best use of the new environment will also be delivered throughout the transition.