INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) have the potential to radically change the nature of schooling and education.

While ICT has been in use in Australian schools over the last two decades, it has primarily been used for administration and discrete information technology studies. The full potential for the integration of ICT as a learning tool into the day to day teaching and learning programs within the school is only now emerging.

As a general principle enhancing learning should be the main focus in the development of ICT in the school environment

However the introduction of ICT into schools has been characterised by a neglect of training, professional development, technical support and occupational health and safety information, leaving teachers and support staff with feelings of inadequacy.

All too often there has been competition for scarce resources within a school, and a haphazard approach to whole school ICT development.

The consequences of this history are increased stress levels and workloads for support and teaching staff.

To ensure that ICT is introduced into schools to enhance teaching and learning, thoughtful policy and procedures need to be developed.

At *Systems Level* policy and procedures should:

- ensure proper ongoing resourcing;
- plan to provide budgetary, technical (hardware and software), OHS and curriculum advice (especially through including the use of) specialist consultants;
- plan for staffing;
- plan for technical support;
- outline reasonable timelines for implementation;
- plan to ensure equity of access for all groups (female and male students, teachers, support staff, special needs students, etc);
- provide for ongoing training and professional development programs in regard to the integration and incorporation of ICT into the curriculum;
- set standards including those for Occupational Health and Safety;
- provide for a K-12 approach.

At *School Level* policy and procedures should:

- require a planned approach to whole school ICT development;
- establish a technology committee with responsibility for planning and development;
- budget to provide recurrent funding for all aspects of school ICT implementation;
- reflect systems level policy where appropriate;
- provide for training appropriate to the needs of all staff;
- plan for ongoing professional development to support the integration of ICT into the school's curriculum programs and meet other relevant needs;
- provide strategies for equal access for all groups.
- consider the roles and responsibilities of staff including release time and remuneration;
- provide healthy and safe work spaces for all staff and students;
- address organisational issues including appropriate teacher-student ratios.