



# Digital Education Revolution

## NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS COMPUTER FUND (NSSCF)

Newsletter No. 2

July 2011

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### July 2011 Progress Report on NSW Independent Computer Installations

We would like to thank all schools that recently provided information about progress and plans for achievement of the computer to student target ratio of 1:1 by the end of 2011. With the timely information provided, we were able to collate your data and report on your behalf to DEEWR, by 15th July 2011, as required of us on progress towards meeting the target ratio across the NSW independent sector.

All funding previously available to schools to assist in reaching the initial target ratio of 1:2 has now been expended and paid. Across those rounds, schools installed more than 12,050 computers and utilised more than \$12m in on-cost funds to support the deployment of those computers.

DEEWR's expectation is that schools in this sector will install over 18,500 computers using grants provided with the first two instalments of funding available to support the 1:1 ratio. Your progress reports confirming that you have installed 13,165 (more than 70%) of those computers as at the end of June 2011, and your plans for completing the remaining installations by the end of this year, indicate that the sector is well on the way to achieving full utilisation of those two allocations of funding.

The third/final instalment of funding in this round (see below) will provide funding for the installation of another 9,000+ computers. At the completion of this round, funding will have been provided across all rounds of the DER NSSCF program for the installation of over 39,000 computers in NSW independent schools.

### Third/Final Instalment of 1:1 Funding

#### a) Notification

You will have recently received notification of the (third) final instalment of funding for the provision of computers and/or the associated deployment costs of those computers. These final instalments have been calculated based on information you provided in March about your student enrolments in years 9-12 as recorded in the February 2011 non-government school census. In many schools, enrolments in these grades have changed considerably since the initial audit in 2008 which informed DEEWR's allocations of the funding amounts for instalments 1 and 2. The up-to-date figures allow the funding to be allocated more realistically in relation to your current student numbers.

### b) Next Steps

What you need to do to access the final instalments:

1. **Sign the Acceptance of Grant Offer** and return this to the Grants Management team at AIS;
2. **Provide a copy of your updated ICT Strategic Plan** to the Grants Management team (please see the Grant Offer document for more details about the requirements);
3. **Once your Plan has been reviewed and approved** by a member of the BGA assessment team, the Grants Management team will confirm this to you;
4. **Proceed with your expenditure of any and all** unspent allocations;
5. **Submit your Certificate by School Authority** and **Certificate by Qualified Accountant** to AIS to claim for payment.

### c) Residual Funds

After reaching the 1:1 ratio, any residual funds available through the achievement of economies of scale can be used for effective deployment of the computers provided under the program. Infrastructure and installation costs may relate to networking, cabling, switches etc, telecommunications, security, software, ICT specific furniture such as laptop trolleys or ergonomic desks, technical support (in house and external), air conditioning, vents etc. Please keep in mind that allowable costs are only those costs related to the deployment of the computers for students in Years 9-12 in order to reach 1:1.

Following the completion of 1:1 purchase and deployment of computers, further residual funds may be used for purchasing other ICT items such as interactive whiteboards, data projectors or digital cameras.

### d) Receiving Your Final Payment

The documentation provided with your recent grant offer also includes the *Certificate by Qualified Accountant* and *Certificate by School Authority* for each element offered to you. You should ensure these are completed and returned to AIS once you have incurred expenditure and/or installed your computers. DEEWR has agreed that final installation can be completed in early 2012 – before the end of February.

#### Important Notes:

- **The AIS will not be able to guarantee payment of a school's unexpended or uncommitted funds after 31 December 2011.** This date is DEEWR's final deadline for reimbursement by AIS of all funding assistance available to you for the provision of computers to achieve the target ratio of 1:1.
- You do not have to wait until you have expended the full grant amount provided in any round of computers or on-costs before you can claim reimbursement. Should you wish to make a partial claim for computer purchases or costs associated with the deployment of those computers, you should submit a *Certificate by Qualified Accountant* which may be amended to reflect the actual expenditure incurred for reimbursement. Please contact the Grants Management team should you need an additional copy.

### School ICT Strategic Plan

A pre-requisite of the release of funds approved in any of the rounds has been the school's submission of an up to date ICT Strategic Plan. An ICT strategic plan should be a school-wide plan for the development and use of Information and Communication Technology. The content of the plan will provide information that informs DEEWR's understanding of how your school will make use of your funding for years 9-12.

The plans are assessed by a member of the AISNSW BGA DER assessment committee comprised of IT specialists. Should aspects of the plan need clarification by the school before it can be approved, the assessment committee member will contact the school direct to seek the information required before making recommendations for approval to the BGA. It is only once the plan is approved that relevant grant instalments can be released to the school.

### Students With A Disability

Should you need to utilise the provisions of this program for Flexible Funding to support students with a disability and their needs, your school ICT plan should address how the school assesses the needs of students with disability; the school's current approach to ICT for students with disability; and how additional ICT specific equipment would complement the school's current approach.

### Financial Accountability Review

25% of schools participating in the NSSCF were selected for a Financial Accountability Review.

A crucial part of the Digital Education Revolution (DER) Program is the transparency of our accountability both from the AISNSW Block Grant Authority (BGA) to the Commonwealth and from participating schools to the BGA. The accountability review sought to confirm that the DER funding received to date by your school was expended on eligible DER project expenditure, and that it accorded with the submitted ICT plan.

Thank you to all those selected schools that provided the information required. The review process, which is now complete, has provided the BGA with a high level of comfort that appropriate processes have been followed by most schools in their expenditure of grant allocations.

There were however some deficiencies noted during the reviews that we believe schools would benefit from knowing:

1. A number of schools are not keeping accurate records of the computer assets funded by Commonwealth funding. This is essential as proper identification of these assets is required once the program moves into the sustainment phase. We also noted the record-keeping related to serial numbers on computers was poor.
2. Software purchased under the On-Costs funding should relate to the deployment of the computers for students in Years 9-12. Purchase of software for the administration office would generally not be compliant with this purpose.
3. On-Costs funding cannot be used for capital (construction) purposes as it is not one of the identified infrastructure costs.
4. On-Costs funding cannot be used for purchasing staff laptops as this does not meet the criteria of deployment costs related to the provision of computers for students in Years 9-12.

### School Entry Point (SEP)

In May, DEEWR initiated a 'stocktake' in School Entry Point (SEP) to reconcile installation details with information provided to them through the 6 monthly progress reports. The reconciliation has now been completed and SEP reporting functionality has been turned back on. As the end date for the achievement of the 1:1 target approaches, in order for DEEWR to stay accurately informed about how schools are tracking towards that target, it is imperative that all schools use SEP on an ongoing basis to report all installations as they occur. This online reporting will provide 'real-time' data to demonstrate to DEEWR that installation is occurring in a timely fashion to reach the 1:1 target by the end of 2011.

In order to report the installation of computers you must first delegate the school authority to a nominated person within your school on the School Entry Point (SEP).

If you have not already done so or if your nominated user has changed, you should access SEP at: <https://schools.deewr.gov.au/SchoolEntryPoint/Default.aspx>. You should then provide the current username and email address to the BGA by emailing details to [nsscf@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:nsscf@aisnsw.edu.au). The BGA will use this information to delegate reporting authority to the nominated user for your school.

### Post 31 December 2011 - Sustainment Phase

As previously advised, the Australian Government will contribute 70 per cent of the cost to the sustainment of the 1:1 student to computer ratio with the expectation that schools will contribute the remaining 30 per cent. Funding available in 2012-13 financial year is to be used to replace those computers older than four years to maintain the 1:1 ratio. We have been advised that there is also a contribution to sustainment in the on-costs funding and capital funding which is provisionally allocated to the program in the Senate forward estimates until 2014-15.

DEEWR has acknowledged the many complexities around sustainment and are developing a review process to begin discussing sustainment issues with education authorities. Schools will be informed as this progresses.

### Parental Co-Contribution

The Australian Government does not support the charging of a fee, levy, co-contribution or bond to parents or carers for a computer provided under the NSSCF. However, there are limited circumstances where a parental co-contribution may be justified in consultation with the parent community. Those circumstances include:

- Maintenance of effort
- High end devices/more expensive devices
- Extending the program

You should email AIS ([nsscf@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:nsscf@aisnsw.edu.au)) with details of any scenario which you have any uncertainty about and we will request advice from DEEWR about its permissibility.

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