

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE CULTURE

An education and training action plan for the information economy 2005-2007



MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS



The MCEETYA Joint Statement on Education and Training in the Information Economy released in 2005 provides a national vision for improving education and training outcomes for all Australians through the ubiquitous use of information and communications technology (ICT).

In the joint statement, Ministers acknowledge that the everyday use of ICT in education and training has the potential to address many of the perennial issues faced by the education and training sector and, at the same time, to address some of Australia's contemporary issues. Ministers agree that cooperative, often cross-sectoral, national approaches and continued collaboration are essential in achieving their vision of:

- Creating an innovative society
- Ensuring that all learners achieve their potential
- Improving quality and raising standards
- Achieving efficiencies through sharing
- Capitalising on the internationalisation of education



This action plan identifies priorities for action and provides a common agenda on which stakeholders, including governments, education and training providers, and the private sector, can work together to fulfil the vision outlined by Ministers in their joint statement.

The plan recognises that, in order to achieve effective transformation in the education and training sector, all the components of change must be in place, including a comprehensive framework of policies and appropriate funding programs.

To achieve the Ministers' vision action must take place across the following interrelated and equally important areas:

1. People
2. Infrastructure
3. Online Content, Applications and Services
4. Policy and Organisational Framework
5. Regulatory Framework

People

- Raise the awareness and understanding of education workers, policy makers and leaders of the benefits of ICT and its power to transform teaching and learning and improve educational outcomes.
- Assist teachers, trainers and lecturers to use ICT to deliver improved teaching and learning experiences through:
 - Professional development and pre-service training;
 - Research into effective pedagogy;
 - Ensuring greater access to research findings for teachers, the community and policy makers;
 - Developing and promoting models of good practice; and
 - Developing networks of practitioners to foster innovation.

- Support educational leaders as agents of change in education and train them to develop and implement strategies for the effective use and integration of ICT in their institutions.
- Promote and facilitate effective use of ICT to improve access to learning opportunities for all Australians, including disadvantaged groups.
- Promote the use of ICT that leads to teaching and learning that is targeted to individual needs.
- Build linkages and strengthen partnerships between the three education sectors so that students' ICT learning experiences become part of a continuum which is characterised by consistent, best practice.
- Encourage the use of ICT that leads to administration systems that facilitate a range of individualised pathways through education and training.
- Provide opportunities for learning throughout life by enabling access to individualised and flexible quality education and training using ICT.
- Work towards all learners having the necessary knowledge and skills for work and life in the twenty-first century, particularly ICT literacy and core generic ICT skills.
- Enable the development of sufficient specialist ICT skills.

Infrastructure

- Advocate the supply of adequate bandwidth across all sectors to support wide access to innovative teaching and learning and business processes at a sustainable cost including regional areas.
- Build on existing work and investment in the sector to provide Australian higher education and research institutions with access to sufficient affordable high bandwidth both nationally and internationally.
- Encourage the efficient utilisation of technical infrastructure by exploring opportunities for cooperation and coordination within and between all governments and institutions.
- Encourage the integration of technologically facilitated learning by exploring the development of new organisational models and innovative physical design of institutions.
- Monitor and share across the sector emerging technologies for potential application in education and training.



Online Content, Applications and Services

- Integrate ICT into all facets of education and training including: tools to support the teaching and learning process; information systems; and administration and business functions.
- Promote continuous improvement in Australian shared online content and web-based services through research, evaluation and quality assurance.
- Promote a coherent national approach to interoperability and common technical standards consistent with international benchmarks.
- Make available cost effective ICT services and management systems that support teaching and learning using ICT.
- Stimulate the education and training e-learning market by developing and implementing strategies to foster: industry competence and innovation; industry collaboration and benchmarking; and public/private partnerships for content development and delivery.
- Foster understanding of the opportunities for expanded online content and services by researching future online content needs and directions and by sharing analyses of evaluations, and best practice regarding content, services and development programmes.
- Contribute to the development of national and international technical standards, based on agreed principles, in order to: reduce unnecessary barriers to the international exchange of data, information and knowledge for research and innovation; and ensure cost effective access to publicly funded digital research data.



Policy and Organisational Framework

- Enhance the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of policy makers in government, industry, the education and training sector, and the community with regard to ICT and its power to transform teaching and learning.
- Encourage embedding of ICT policies within broader education related policy, legislation and planning to ensure that effective, innovative approaches to ICT are mainstreamed throughout the education and training sector.
- Develop a strong research base across key policy areas for the purpose of establishing priorities and benchmarks, developing new policy, and reporting on progress.
- Report regularly on Australia's performance in comparison to its international peers.
- Investigate and disseminate information on the effective provision of quality online education services to strengthen Australia's presence internationally and expand its international markets.
- Develop funding models that facilitate the cost effective uptake of ICT and recognise that ICT is integral to the business of education and training.
- Encourage all sectors to review their institutional capabilities, support structures, organisation and functions in order to better accommodate ICT rich environments and the internationalisation of education.



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Regulatory Framework

- Research, develop, and encourage legislative solutions which maximise effective use of ICT in education and training in the context of the global economy while encouraging creativity and innovation.
- Advocate legislation that recognises the impact of ICT across the education and training sector and does not increase barriers to implementing cross-sectoral ICT solutions.
- Develop regulatory policies which balance the need to protect students from exposure to inappropriate online content with the right of the education and training community to access the broadest possible range of online education resources and services.

- This action plan was developed by the Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education Committee (AICTEC) and was endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in May 2005. AICTEC and MCEETYA encourage full and open use of this policy document. Additional copies of the action plan, and the Joint Statement on Education and Training in the Information Economy, can be downloaded from the publications page of the AICTEC website at:

<http://www.aictec.edu.au>.

- AICTEC is a cross-sectoral, national committee responsible for providing advice to MCEETYA on the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and online services in Australian education and training to enable all sectors of education and training to contribute to the growth and vitality of Australia's society and economy.
- MCEETYA comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs. It coordinates strategic policy at the national level, including the negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives and interest, sharing information and collaborative use of resources towards agreed objectives and priorities. Further information is available at:

<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/aboutmc.htm>.