



Dale Last MP
Member for Burdekin

Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Shadow Minister for Fire and Emergency Services
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July 20th, 2021

Media Release – Distance Ed must be enabled too

The release of an Auditor General’s report into digital learning has prompted a Queensland LNP MP to call for assurances that Queensland’s Distance Education sector will not be left behind.

Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Affairs, Dale Last MP, welcomed the recommendations of the report but believes access to digital learning must be available to all students, including those in remote parts of the state.

“Queensland’s Schools of Distance Education (SODE), or School of the Air as it used to be known, is recognised worldwide for making education available to students in remote areas,” Mr Last said. “I want to be absolutely sure that, while we are focussing on ensuring access to digital learning for students affected by the pandemic, SODE students are not left behind.”

“In reality, what a lot of students have faced with home-based learning during the pandemic is exactly what SODE students face every day. I have no doubt that having the SODE capability assisted greatly in implementing home-based learning during the pandemic and we need to ensure we continue to develop that capability.”

Mr Last said that the success or otherwise of digital learning relied heavily on internet services but that technology for both teachers and students could make or break the system.

“At the height of pandemic related school closures last year there were many students throughout regional Queensland who simply didn’t have access to a computer at home,” he said. “That presented real problems during the school closures but has the potential to cause even bigger problems for SODE students.”

“The lessons that have been learnt through implementing home-based learning during the pandemic must be used to ensure the continued long-term success of SODE. I’d like to see an iron clad commitment from government that the technology needs of SODE students and teachers will be fully met not just during the pandemic but for the longer term as well.”

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