

## Parents Need Clarity In This Unprecedented Crisis

P&C Federation is calling on all levels of government and their agencies to provide clear and unified responses the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the last 48 hours, the advice from the Commonwealth Government based on expert health advice was that schools were to stay open, yet the NSW Government has effectively overturned this by asking all parents to keep their children at home if possible. This has generated enormous anxiety amongst parents and students and placed many parents in a difficult situation.

Of particular concern is how students will continue to receive their education. We are being told that students will be transitioning to online learning, but the Department of Education's own website acknowledges that due to differences across schools, offline methods of learning such as the delivery of worksheets or USB sticks to households may be more appropriate. This in itself will lead to major differences in the delivery of classes.

P&C Federation has serious doubts over the practicality of online learning in being able to deliver in an environment where there is a huge inequity in access to technology across schools and within households. This will be further compounded by the continued failure to provide suitable technology and professional development across NSW public schools over the last decade. With the distinct possibility that school closures could last for months, increasing loads on the nation's internet, and children fighting over limited computer access, delivering meaningful lessons will become very difficult.

There is also a significant lack of clarity over how these classes will be delivered, how effective such lessons will be in delivering the curriculum, especially in senior years, and what role parents will need to take in this process. There is no information at present about how all of this will impact on those students sitting the HSC this year. Parents and students need a clear strategy which they are simply not getting.

Without doubt we are in uncharted waters, and governments have been caught off-guard and are now scrambling to respond. Governments and their agencies need to provide consistency and unity in advice, and offer clear strategies and support for long term school closure. We will be happy to work with the State and Commonwealth Government in supporting our students in any way we can, however we cannot do this in an atmosphere of uncertainty with no consultation.

**Sydney, NSW, 24 March 2020**

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