Minister for Communications, Dr Peter Toyne, has joined the Federal Communications Minister, Senator Richard Alston, at the Alice Springs School of the Air to launch a new Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) Project.

The Northern Territory Government has contributed $3.2 million dollars to the project as well as a substantial amount of in-kind contributions.

"This project marks the start of an exciting new era of communications for School of the Air families in the Northern Territory and New South Wales.

"The high quality of sound and vision in two-way communications is described as the biggest technological change for School of the Air since the introduction of the High Frequency radio.

"It establishes a shared broadband Interactive Distance Learning infrastructure for small rural communities and isolated homesteads throughout the Northern Territory and parts of outback New South Wales.

"Two IDL studios – at the School of the Air in Alice Springs and the Open Education Centre in Darwin – will deliver education services to students at 150 new two-way sites and 27 existing sites in the Territory."

Dr Toyne said the project would significantly improve learning opportunities for primary, secondary and Vocational Education students in remote communities.

It also offers a range of other communications opportunities for families of students, teachers, education department staff and other people in communities linked through the IDL project.

"The IDL project signals a truly historic change in distance education delivery, teaching and communications and my Government is proud to be a major contributor," Dr Toyne said.

23 May 2003
$3.2M interactive distance project launched

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