

Changes over the years..... School of the Air

Port Augusta Campus - Open Access College

The School of the Air is based in Port Augusta, the Crossroads of South Australia. As the only school educating isolated and remote children in South Australia, SOTA is highly valued as a unique example of educational innovation in outback Australia.

The school opened in 1958 to serve students living in remote and isolated locations across South Australia. The first lessons on “air” were made possible by the use of the Royal Flying Doctor Service HF radio, and through the crackles and static children were at last able to hear their teachers’ and class mates’ voices. This innovation of the 1950’s dramatically improved student’s learning, reducing the loneliness of remote outback classrooms. It was the beginning of an approach to learning that is still changing the face of education for students isolated by distance, in the 21st century.



In 1992 the School of the Air merged with the South Australian Correspondence School and became the Open Access College, providing education to students across metropolitan and rural areas of South Australia.

HF Radios continued to be used in lessons for remote and isolated students until 2003. Today radio lessons have been replaced with lessons via satellite connection and an e-learning programme called Centra Symposium. Additional communication occurs via phone, email and general postage. Students are now able to see and talk to their teacher and class mates, work collaboratively and receive immediate feedback on their work. This has been a huge step in allowing students to develop social relationships, work collaboratively, have work modelled by other students or teachers and develop expectations for standards to be achieved, as well as improve students’ technology skills.



Today the School Of The Air students are still geographically remote and isolated, living to the north, south, east and west of Port Augusta. Modern technologies support a strong sense of community, and the SOTA community is characterised by belonging

and commitment. Families and supervisors work together with teachers to encourage and motivate students’ participation and learning based on the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability framework (SACSA). With a commitment to developing cutting edge flexible online learning materials, literacy and numeracy are integrated across all learning areas. An innovative music programme offers choir and instrumental music lessons to students. Language lessons including Spanish or Indonesian are part of all Year 1 – 7 curriculum. Students with differentiated learning requirements are supported in a range of ways including learning intervention and Learning Assistance Programme.