Our priorities:
At school
High expectations, closing the gaps

**Supporting students with disability, learning and behavioural difficulties**

Approximately 90,000 students enrolled in NSW public schools require additional support or adjustments to access learning on an equitable basis. In 2014, more than 2,500 specialist support classes were provided, with a further capacity to support more than 20,000 students. We provided additional assistance for around 7,500 students in regular classes through the Integration Funding Support program. A further 63,000 students were supported with specialist resources provided to public schools across NSW.

The Braille and large print service continues to support more than 500 vision-impaired students in NSW public schools. In addition, the department’s specialist itinerant teachers support more than 2,200 students with vision or hearing impairment.

The department is actively supporting the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Hunter region. The aim of this work is to ensure that students continue to be fully and effectively supported in the transition to the full NDIS in 2018.

Initiatives under the Every Student, Every School strategy, announced by the NSW Government in March 2012, focus on building the capacity of schools to meet the needs of their students. In 2014, we continued to build the capabilities of teachers in personalised learning and support for students with disability, learning and behaviour difficulties.

Over 44,000 teachers and school staff have completed accredited training on the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and Disability Standards for Education 2005, strengthening their understanding of obligations towards students with disability, their parents and their carers. More than 21,000 staff completed this training in 2014.

In 2014, over 2,500 staff completed more than 86,000 hours of accredited training across a range of six tutor-supported online learning courses that address educational support for students with disability. A new course to support personalised learning for students with disability and additional learning needs is under development in collaboration with other states and territories, for release in 2015.

Scholarships for teachers to undertake further tertiary study in education for students with disability continue to be offered through the Every Student, Every School initiative. Since July 2014, the department has offered a total of 24 scholarships to permanent teachers. Of these, 14 have been granted and 10 are under offer. Since the initiative began in 2013, 62 teachers have completed their masters degree following sponsorship through this scholarship program.

This year we further developed the Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool for all NSW public schools to use in 2015. The student profile report generated from the signposting tool will support teachers’ planning to personalise learning and support for students, in collaboration with their parents and carers.
Closing the gap in educational outcomes for Aboriginal students

The department remains committed to close the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and other students. The department continues to work closely with the NSW AECG at the state, regional and local level, as its main community partner in all matters concerning Aboriginal education. The 2014 Aboriginal Students in NSW Public Schools Annual Report and data appendix on key areas such as enrolment, NAPLAN performance, attendance, retention and suspension rates were published on the department’s website.

This year, we changed the way we provide support for Aboriginal students in NSW public schools through implementation of the new Resource Allocation Model (RAM) as part of the Local Schools, Local Decisions initiative. The RAM includes a loading for Aboriginal students and every NSW public school with Aboriginal students now receives funding to support their learning needs. More than $48 million was distributed to schools through the RAM in 2014.

In 2014, the department also allocated approximately $16 million to schools to continue implementation of Norte Norte. This provided approximately 2,400 Aboriginal students, including 200 students in juvenile justice centres, with additional learning assistance via the program’s NAPLAN component. In addition, under the program’s individual sponsorship component, over 3,800 Aboriginal students in Years 11 and 12 were provided with tutorial assistance to keep them engaged in school and improve their academic achievement.

A further 10 Aboriginal students from NSW public schools were selected to join the 40 Aboriginal students already involved in the Galuwa Sponsorship Program, a partnership between Glencore (formerly Xstrata Coal) and the department. The scholarships help students complete secondary schooling and plan for their future careers by providing tutoring and mentoring support, literacy and numeracy support and participation in cultural and career aspiration camps.

The department continued its partnership with the Clontarf Foundation, which provides mentoring and coaching for Aboriginal boys at risk of disengaging from school. In 2014, we agreed to fund nine NSW Clontarf academies until 2016.

In 2014, the department continued to work with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories to implement the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014.

Connected Communities

Connected Communities is our approach to improving educational and social outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people living in a number of complex and diverse communities in NSW. The strategy has been informed by advice from the AECG and broad consultation with key stakeholders.

The strategy is being implemented in 15 schools and is underpinned by a capital works program. The department has dedicated $25 million for substantial rebuilds and refurbishments at three Connected Communities schools and $10 million for maintenance and minor works in the remaining schools. We have recruited executive principals to lead these schools.
One of the key reforms is the introduction of Aboriginal languages into these schools. Connected Communities schools coordinate Aboriginal language classes, cultural studies or cultural activities in conjunction with the community.

We have focused on building relationships with local Aboriginal communities. An innovative example is the Coonamble Shop Front initiative, where the school has renovated a shop on the main street of Coonamble so that parents can meet with school staff on neutral ground and find out more about what is happening in the school. As a result, 500 interactions with parents have been recorded in two terms, more than the entire previous year.

Connected Communities schools have worked hard to establish partnerships with local health services to facilitate regular health checks for students. For example, at Bourke Public School, the Aboriginal Health Service and Bourke Community Health run a daily morning clinic where a nurse attends to students’ medical needs and contacts parents and carers if follow-up treatment is required.

Signs of improvement in the Connected Communities schools are already apparent and include:

- Primary attendance rates across Connected Communities schools increased by 1.8 percentage points from 2012 to 2014. The gap in primary attendance at Connected Communities schools compared with all NSW schools narrowed slightly from 8.9 percentage points in 2012 to 7.7 percentage points in 2014.
- Eight of the 11 schools with primary students reported improved attendance rates from 2012 to 2014.
- Three schools reported improvements in attendance of more than 7.0 percentage points over the last two years for Years 1 to 6.

- Overall attendance rates for Aboriginal Year 7 to 10 students improved by 2.3 percentage points at Connected Communities schools, compared with an increase of 1.2 percentage points at all NSW non-metropolitan schools, from 2012 to 2014.

The Minister for Education announced $8 million in funding over four years for the development and implementation of the Healing and Wellbeing Framework to provide support for trauma-related issues in Aboriginal communities. The model is culturally responsive and will be implemented across remote geographic locations, including the 15 Connected Communities schools, beginning in 2015.

**Supporting students learning English as an additional language**

Each year, public schools provide English as an additional language (EALD) education to assist students develop their English language proficiency. In 2014, 91,401 students received EALD support. Over 5,000 students received intensive English support through the New Arrivals Program, intensive English centres and the Intensive English High School.

In 2014, 1,406 refugee primary and secondary students in 82 schools were assisted through the provision of targeted support programs and specialist teaching support. Over 1,700 teachers and leaders participated in professional learning programs to help them cater for culturally diverse classrooms. A new professional learning program provided training to 54 experienced EALD teachers in whole-school approaches to support the language and settlement needs of English language learners.
Supporting students from rural, remote and disadvantaged communities

In 2014, the department commenced implementation of Rural and Remote Education: A blueprint for action, released by the Minister for Education in November 2013. We established Aurora College, the state’s first virtual school, to provide the opportunity for students in rural and remote areas to remain in their local school and community whilst studying specialist subjects that their home school cannot consistently offer. From 2015, the school will offer classes for Year 7 to Year 11 students. In 2016, the school will also offer Year 12 classes.

The department has also developed a series of master classes for students from rural and remote communities to enrich their study of mathematics, science and agriculture. These master classes include stand-alone videos and recorded video-conferences.

To support teachers to build leadership capacity in literacy and secondary curriculum, we have initiated a state-wide Secondary Literacy Leaders Network. With a membership of over 200 teachers, local networks of expert teachers are working together through peer mentoring and developing and sharing resources.

In 2014, the department introduced new teach. Rural scholarships, internships and cadetships to attract the best and brightest into teaching in rural and remote schools. We awarded 15 teach. Rural scholarships, three cadetships and seven internships with applicants placed in schools from Term 1, 2014.

From 2014, schools are able to progressively access a state-wide network of specialist assistance through a single local point of contact known as networked specialist centres. The initiative coordinates inter-agency health and wellbeing services through the expertise of specialist departmental staff collaborating with other government and non-government agencies to offer schools specialist assistance for students with complex needs. Four centres were established in Broken Hill, Dubbo, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. A further 11 will be established in rural and regional NSW in 2015.

In 2014, a specialist preschool centre provided ongoing professional learning and mentor support for distance education preschool teachers. Using video conferencing, the teachers observed quality face-to-face preschool classrooms that demonstrated practice reflecting the National Early Years Learning Framework. In 2015, this project will be extended to include face-to-face preschool teachers from a range of rural and remote locations across the state. New enrolment guidelines were also introduced to provide isolated preschool-aged children access to a distance-education preschool class regardless of their intent to enrol in distance education.

The department is working towards meeting the 26 recommendations from the Review into Agricultural Education and Training in New South Wales. These include actions to review and promote education, teaching and pathways to careers in agriculture for the benefit of rural, remote and disadvantaged students wishing to study agriculture or gain employment in the industry. Substantial progress has been made in meeting many of the recommendations, including a pilot for an agriculture and food week in two learning communities in 2015; and the selection, through an expression of interest process, of the first lighthouse school for teaching agriculture.
Improving basic literacy and numeracy standards

The Early Action for Success strategy is helping to improve the literacy and numeracy performance of students in the early years of school. In 2014, the number of schools taking part in the strategy increased from 92 to 199, supported by 140 instructional leaders. The schools regularly collect data and monitor student progress against the literacy and numeracy continuums that map the learning development of students. For each student achieving substantially below expected standards, teachers and instructional leaders work together to tailor programs of learning to address student needs.

For the 92 schools that have been involved with the initiative for over 12 months, the proportion of Kindergarten students at the lowest level for reading, comprehension and writing reduced from 57.0 per cent to 1.2 per cent by the end of the school year. For early number learning, the percentage of Kindergarten students not able to count to 10, identify numbers or count objects reduced from 25.0 per cent to less than 1.0 per cent over the same period.

Encouraging students to stay in school and transition to further education, training and employment

In 2014, the department allocated $8.7 million to 54 providers to provide Links to Learning (L2L) support programs in over 260 schools. L2L is a practical program for students at risk of leaving school early and for young people who have left school but are not in education or training.

The program was reviewed in 2014 and a new community grants application process was launched for 2015. This new approach involves partner schools determining a service delivery plan to be followed by the funded organisations, which will add value to the work of schools and help develop innovative ways to keep students engaged in the later years of school and move successfully into further education, training and employment. In 2014, we also supported the seven schools within NSW juvenile justice centres to help young people make a transition back into school or other post-school options.

To ensure that students have access to different avenues for education and training, the department allocated more than $2.7 million for students in Years 9 and 10 to undertake vocational education and training (VET) courses. In 2014, there were 410 school-based apprentices and 3,553 school-based trainees in public schools across NSW. Trade schools, industry training centres and trade training centres in over 300 schools provided students with access to industry-standard training facilities. This encouraged more students to complete their schooling and helped to fill local skills shortages.

To further support VET in our schools, we funded approximately 2.2 million hours of work placement. Around $8 million of funding enabled service providers across NSW to broker up to 65,000 work placements for students enrolled in VET courses as part of their Higher School Certificate (HSC).

In 2014, we trained 34 teachers as transition advisers. Since 2005, we have trained a total of 322 secondary teachers. These teachers help at-risk students engage with learning, plan their long-term goals and prepare for their transition from school. The department also allocated $2.9 million to support school-to-work activities and innovative, whole-school initiatives to ensure that students are able to establish the foundations for a future career.
TAFE NSW partners with secondary schools to deliver VET programs and help students transition to further study and employment.

The Trade Readiness Program aims to reduce apprentice attrition and target young people at risk of disengaging with education. South Western Sydney Institute piloted 10 programs, with the NSW Government subsequently providing $650,000 to support implementation across all TAFE NSW institutes. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW had 849 enrolments in areas including carpentry, plumbing, painting and decorating, wall and floor tiling, electrical, shopfitting, boilermaking and welding, light automotive vehicle mechanics and panel beating.

Through the Participation Phase Initiative, a partnership between TAFE NSW and public and non-government schools, TAFE NSW has delivered training in employability, language, literacy and numeracy and vocational skills to participants aged 15 to 17 years to enhance their access to further education or employment pathways. Between January and June 2014, TAFE NSW enrolled over 1,700 students in this initiative.

**Improving student attendance**

To help develop the skills needed for work and life, all children are required to attend school (or be registered for home schooling) until they turn 17 years old. To help principals deal with cases of poor school attendance, the department’s attendance conference convenors bring parents, schools and agencies together to solve issues impacting on a child’s attendance. An additional 73 convenors were trained in 2014, bringing the total number trained since 2010 to more than 570.

We work closely with local communities to address the practical issues that impact on children’s ability to attend school. One such concern in the Walgett area is that wet weather often leads to buses getting bogged and, as a result, students are not able to attend either school or the Walgett Community College. To help overcome this issue, the department worked with the community college, the Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Federal Remote School Attendance Strategy, on a project to construct bus turnarounds and shelters.

At the state level, the attendance rate for students at public schools increased from 92.6 per cent in 2013 to 92.9 per cent in 2014. There was also a reduction in the gap in school attendance rates for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students, down 0.2 per cent in 2014 from 2013. While still unacceptably high, overall the gap has reduced by 0.4 per cent since 2011.
Quality teaching and leadership

Attracting and recruiting the highest quality teachers

In 2014, 6,729 new applicants were approved to teach in NSW public schools and we filled 3,171 classroom teacher positions. After incentive transfers and Aboriginal employment applicants were appointed, 57 per cent of classroom teacher positions were filled through a method chosen by schools.

Since the introduction of the Teacher Education Scholarship program in 2002, 1,666 high-quality teachers (including 314 Aboriginal teachers) have been appointed to areas of workforce need. In 2014, 300 new applicants (including 84 Aboriginal students) were awarded a scholarship.

Incentive scholarships were introduced in 2008 to attract high-quality graduates in their final year of study. In 2014, we appointed 11 mathematics, four science (physics), five technological and applied studies and seven special education teachers to NSW public schools.

In 2014, 45 teachers completed their retraining in mathematics, physics, school counselling, special education and teacher librarianship.

We also offered incentives to attract and retain teachers in remote regional schools. These included:

- priority transfers after service commitments had been met
- subsidised housing and rental accommodation
- retention benefits
- additional vacation and leave periods
- additional professional development days.

Under the Rural and Remote Education initiative, the NSW Government will offer further incentives to attract and retain teachers and school leaders in hard-to-staff schools. In 2014, we appointed 57 classroom teachers, 17 executive staff and five principals through incentive transfers.

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning

In 2014, the department continued to implement Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, the NSW Government’s plan to improve the quality of teaching in the state’s schools.

The department, through the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, published the first Workforce Profile of the NSW Teaching Profession report in 2014. The report, to be produced annually, provides a profile of the NSW teaching workforce from entry into initial teacher education to exit from the profession. Data covers both public and non-government school teachers.

We strengthened induction support by publishing Strong Start, Great Teachers, an online resource to support beginning teachers.

2014 saw the introduction of a new and expanded model of support for permanent beginning teachers in the first two years of their teaching career. The initiative provides teachers with the equivalent of two hours per week release in their first year, and the equivalent of one hour per week release in their second year. Schools are also provided with the equivalent of one hour per week to release experienced teachers to provide mentor support during the beginning teacher’s first year of teaching.
In 2014, this initiative supported 2,100 beginning teachers in over 1,000 public schools through first-year resource funding. In addition, eight teacher mentor positions were established across the state to specifically support communities of schools employing significant numbers of temporary teachers in the early stages of their career. These positions were located in four rural and four metropolitan locations and supported beginning temporary teachers in up to 40 schools.

Revised processes for teacher, executive and principal performance management and development are a feature of the 2014 Teachers Award. The Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools was published at the end of 2014. New procedures for managing performance issues commenced mid-2014, with training and support materials developed by the department in consultation with the NSW Teachers Federation.

An integrated leadership strategy including a new leadership credential was developed in 2014. A series of online coaching modules were prepared and trialled in a number of schools in Terms 3 and 4. To better support school leaders, we created the role of Principal, School Leadership, with 26 full-time and 36 part-time positions appointed in 2014. These positions actively mentor principals to help them develop high-quality school planning processes and conduct a variety of professional learning and mentoring opportunities.

To provide teachers with the opportunity to learn through observing the practice of others, the department has entered a partnership with the University of Newcastle to conduct research on Quality Teaching Rounds in a number of NSW public schools. In 2014, during Terms 3 and 4, 16 schools participated in the research project.

We have also contracted a documentary company to support schools to video their classroom practice to share with others. The department’s ClassMovies website was launched in March 2014 and ClassMovies TV in November 2014. Over 180 NSW public schools registered to participate during the year, with 65 DVDs produced and another 30 in production.

**Accreditation and professional development for our school teachers and principals**

The department is committed to improving the status of the teaching profession and the quality of teaching and learning in all NSW public schools. In 2014, legislation was introduced that will require all teachers in NSW schools to acquire and maintain accreditation with BOSTES against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers by the beginning of 2018.

The implementation of the Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools from 2015 will support all teachers to develop their understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and to achieve and maintain their teaching accreditation.

In 2014, under Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, beginning teachers received targeted support to develop their professional practice. In addition, the Classroom Teacher Program provided more than 100 hours of registered online standards-based professional learning. The introduction of the 62 Principal, School Leadership positions also supported leadership capacity-building for principals across the state. This professional development particularly focuses on school planning.
Recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching

Professional teaching standards are seen as crucial in promoting quality teaching and the attainment of these standards will be recognised through an increase in teacher salaries from 2016. We are working towards implementing a new award for our teachers, negotiated in December 2013, which includes a new standards-based salary structure. Under the new remuneration structure, to be implemented from 1 January 2016, teachers achieving accreditation at the Highly Accomplished level will be paid an annual salary in excess of $100,000.

To support teachers in rural and remote areas gain the higher levels of accreditation, teachers working in rural and remote areas who achieve accreditation at the higher career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher, are eligible to have their accreditation fees reimbursed.

The 229 schools that participated in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership now have the flexibility within their budgets to recognise and reward excellence in teaching by creating additional executive positions as required, or engaging Highly Accomplished teachers to support the needs of students in their local schools.

Ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of our students

The department provided a range of services to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students during 2014.

We continue to build the capacity of schools to respond to child protection issues. In 2013/14, the Child Wellbeing unit responded to over 12,600 contacts, an increase of about five per cent from the previous year. We worked in partnership with health, police, community services and non-government organisations to identify students most at risk and coordinated responses across agencies.

Under the NSW Government’s Supporting Students plan, 50 student support officers worked in areas of greatest need to help young people manage issues such as bullying, cyberbullying and social media. Student support officers provide valuable support to schools by linking with other agencies and working with their local community to support secondary school students. Examples include:

- hosting breakfast clubs on school grounds before school
- running transition-to-high-school programs
- working with students to develop resilience, self-esteem and positive relationships with peers
- assisting in the development of evidence-based student wellbeing and anti-bullying strategies.

During 2014, an independent review of the student support officer initiative was conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The review showed the initiative is highly regarded in schools and has overwhelming support from all stakeholder groups. Feedback from principals, school staff, students and external organisations highlighted the value of the officers and their important contribution to the wellbeing of students. This initiative will continue into 2015.

We continue to support student participation and leadership. In 2014, over 250 primary and secondary students took part in state-led initiatives that involved students in planning about their learning, discussion about key contemporary issues impacting on young people, and in developing their leadership skills and experience. Initiatives included the Australia Day Lunch, Secretary for a Day, Y20 Summit, student forums, LEAPS (Law Firms Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students) and PenPal mentoring programs.
Live Life Well @ School is a collaboration between the department and the NSW Ministry of Health and aims to embed nutrition and physical education within the personal development, health and physical education curriculum in NSW primary schools. It supports the NSW Government’s work to reduce the rate of obesity in children and young people.

In 2014, 678 teachers from 428 primary schools attended 31 professional learning workshops on how to promote whole-of-school physical activity and healthy eating.

In addition, four Kindergarten to Year 6 conferences on physical activity and healthy eating were delivered as a joint initiative between the department, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, the NSW Office of Preventative Health and Live Life Well @ School. The conferences were attended by 471 teachers from 423 schools.

We also completed a review of evidence and best practice about teaching healthy eating to primary school students and continue to implement the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

This year, 714 teachers from 697 schools attended a professional learning program developed in partnership with Transport NSW on how to teach road safety in NSW public schools.

The department’s Anti-Racism Policy outlines a commitment to eliminating all forms of racial discrimination in NSW public schools. Under the policy, every school is required to have a trained anti-racism contact officer to promote anti-racism education and assist with complaints of racism in schools.

In 2014, more than 270 teachers across the state completed anti-racism professional learning programs. New resources to support anti-racism education and the integration of intercultural understanding across the curriculum were published on the department’s Racism. No way! and Cultural Exchange NSW websites. The Strengthening Community Harmony resource was updated to assist schools in building community harmony and in supporting students and their families in the event of community disharmony.

**Implementing the Australian curriculum**

The department extended the range of resources and registered professional learning courses to help schools implement the new NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history.

We assist teachers and schools to implement each of the new syllabuses through face-to-face professional learning workshops with networks of schools and SyllabusPLUS webinars. These live and recorded modules focus on literacy and the use of the literacy continuum, life skills, pedagogy, changes in the new syllabuses and accommodating the different needs of each student in the classroom. The sessions are being accessed by an increasing number of teachers, both during and after school hours.
New and better ways of doing business

National Education Reform Agreement

The National Education Reform Agreement commenced in NSW in 2014. Additional funding has been distributed to both public and non-government schools via a new needs-based funding approach. Under the agreement, an additional $5 billion will be provided to NSW schools between 2014 and 2019.

The additional investment by the NSW and Commonwealth governments will allow the department to extend and accelerate the innovative reforms already underway throughout the state. These reforms include Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan; Local Schools, Local Decisions; the Rural and Remote Education blueprint; and the Connected Communities initiative.

Increasing local decision-making and reforming the way we finance and staff our schools

The NSW Government’s Local Schools, Local Decisions reform is designed to improve teaching and learning by increasing the level of local decision-making by schools. It recognises that school staff and the school community are best placed to choose how to meet the needs of their particular students.

One of the key reforms is the phased implementation of the new, needs-based RAM for allocating funding to public schools. Based on identified student and school need, the model is both fairer and more transparent. When fully implemented, the RAM will consist of:

- a base school allocation, providing operational funding to support all students
- four equity loadings, providing additional resources to address student need in schools, including support for Aboriginal students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with low-level disability and students learning English as an additional language or dialect
- targeted funding for individual students who require moderate to high adjustments for disability and for new arrivals and refugees.

The implementation of the RAM began in 2014, with targeted funding and two equity loadings. In 2015, schools will receive the remaining equity loadings. Geographically remote or isolated schools will also receive a location loading in recognition of the additional support needed. To support staff with this change, the department is providing professional learning in leadership, financial management and consultative decision-making.

Improving our school facilities and infrastructure

We continued to improve our teaching and learning environments through our capital works and asset acquisition programs. In 2013/14 the department completed 14 public school major works projects, 10 major public school projects are ongoing and a further seven have started. We also allocated over $10.3 million for 182 projects in 166 schools from the Public School Upgrade program.
The department completed 28 projects under the Commonwealth's Trade Training Centres Program, with 39 projects starting. We also completed a $94 million program of capital works in 19 schools for specific purposes, to improve the learning environments of students with special needs. The department’s procurement strategy enabled us to deliver these projects for significantly less than the Commonwealth’s Building the Education Revolution program.

We also entered into our first school partnership agreement working collaboratively with the City of Canada Bay Council to provide the new Victoria Avenue Public School in Concord NSW, which is due to open for the beginning of the 2015 school year. Partnership agreements can provide substantial savings to government and the department is investigating similar agreements for future schools.

As part of the review of the School Facilities Standards the department created the online Educational Facilities Standards and Guidelines. These will provide more flexibility in the way our school facilities can be constructed and used.

The principles of the Thermal Comfort and Energy Efficiency Framework have been applied to energy efficiency projects to provide a cost-effective and sustainable approach to making classrooms and learning spaces more comfortable in summer and winter. The department has also begun detailed energy audits of 15 schools, which will provide recommendations for improving the energy efficiency of schools.

**Supporting technology and innovation in learning**

We recognise that innovative approaches to learning are required for students to meet the challenges of life and work in the 21st century.

Working closely with Education Services Australia, the department has made digital teaching and learning resources available and accessible through NSW DEC Scootle. We continue to work with a range of vendors to make innovative learning tools available to schools in a safe, managed environment.

The department has also produced and published digital resources to support priority projects, including online resources to support NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum, the national MoneySmart project and an expanding suite of resources supporting the Centenary of World War I.

In order to position our school libraries as a central point for delivering relevant and advanced information and learning skills, the department has begun to implement a new school library system. Due for completion by the end of 2016, all schools will have an Oliver online library system. This will allow schools to manage their physical and digital resources and access commercial and departmental resources, including e-books.

An online science resource, linking all the department’s digital resources in the Teaching and Learning Exchange to the Science Kindergarten to Year 10 syllabus, will help develop teachers’ skills in science teaching. In addition, the department has collaborated with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) to deliver online master classes and virtual excursions to science students in western NSW. A partnership with the Australian Research Council’s Centre of Excellence for All-sky Astrophysics (CAASTRO) has also produced science webinars for senior high school students.
Improving administrative and information management systems

The Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) program is modernising the way the department manages and delivers student enrolment and administration, learning and support, finance, human resources and technology services. The program’s core objectives are to support the NSW Government’s broader reform program, deliver improved educational outcomes and provide better services to staff, students and parents.

The deployment to the initial 229 pilot schools in 2013 presented a number of challenges, as contemporary solutions replaced an operating environment developed 25 years ago. The pilot provided valuable lessons that have helped shape the development and structure of a further rollout to the remaining schools. A considerable amount of work occurred during 2014 to stabilise and enhance the solutions developed for schools. Feedback and engagement from the pilot schools has resulted in the development of an enhanced training and support model for the future phased rollout to all schools.