NSW public high schools go wireless

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, today announced IBM Australia Limited has been awarded the $70 million contract to install wireless access to support the Digital Education Revolution in 463 NSW public high and central schools.

Ms Firth said the state-of-the-art wireless network runs at 300 Mega bits per second, and will support access to learning resources, school resources and the internet.

“We will be using the latest wireless network technology, the 802.11n standard.

“This project is also good for the economy, with IBM Australia using more than 100 IT professionals to rollout the wireless networks to high schools.”

This contract has been funded by the Commonwealth Government’s National Secondary Schools Computer Fund.

Ms Firth said that by installing wireless we are avoiding tying students and teachers to their desks – learning activities using online resources including the internet can take place in classrooms or the library.

“The way kids learn is going to be transformed by these laptops, wireless networking and the extensive productivity and multimedia software being provided,” said Ms Firth.

“Using the Adobe and Microsoft software on the laptops, students will be able to create documents, photos and videos which can be published and shared.

“Students can take the laptops home and use their own internet connection to continue their school work or complete homework.

“Students using the wireless network will still use the Department of Education and Training’s internet filters, which block inappropriate material.”

Ms Firth said the roll-out of laptops will begin in Term 3 with Year 9 students and their teachers the first to receive them.

“The laptops are currently being built by Lenovo (Australia and New Zealand) Pty Ltd,” she said.

“On top of the $150 million contract for the laptops, the Rees Government is spending $25.5 million on software, including world-first agreements with Adobe and Microsoft for a suite of programs.

“The 293 government schools that received funding for laptops in round one of the Rudd Government’s National Secondary School Computer Fund Program will be the first to receive the wireless network.

“By the end of July 2009, these schools will have wireless networks to support the rollout of laptops to Year 9 students. The remaining 170 schools will receive their wireless network over the remainder of Term 3.

“The complete school network installation will be completed by February 2010 with over 120 IBM experts working throughout NSW for the next 10 months on the installation.”

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