Record $14.7 billion investment in schools and TAFE

A record $14.7 billion will be invested in school education and vocational training across NSW.

Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said this investment is an indication of the Government’s commitment to give our state’s students the greatest opportunity in reaching their potential,” the Minister said.

“This budget reinforces our commitment to provide students and staff with cutting-edge learning technology, to deliver better services and more investment in infrastructure.

“We are equipping our students for the future with a broad range of education and training opportunities to prepare them for the workforce or further study,” Ms Firth said.

“From 2009-10, the Rees Government will be supporting the increase in the school leaving age with an additional $25 million over five years for new capital infrastructure, such as new classrooms, plus additional staff and other recurrent costs rising to around $100 million in 2012-13.

$1.6 billion - including $1.34 billion of State and $234 million of Commonwealth funding, will be directed to equity initiatives including programs for students with disabilities, indigenous students and students in rural areas, schools serving low SES communities and students speaking English as a second language.

Highlights of the 2009-10 state budget include:

- More than $560 million in State Government funding for the construction or upgrading of school and TAFE facilities, including the start of 17 major new building projects in schools, 13 in the TAFE sector and increased investment in information technology.
- Continuation of major building projects at 38 schools and 26 TAFE colleges
- Ongoing installation of interactive whiteboards and videoconferencing facilities in schools as part of our Connected Classrooms initiative.
- $440 million on public school and TAFE maintenance including the Principals’ Priority Building Program, with more than $1 billion scheduled over the next four years.

“The roll-out of our Connected Classrooms initiative will continue in 2009-10 with $47 million in capital and recurrent funding to be provided,” Ms Firth said.
“During the next four years, $108 million will be committed to ensure every NSW public school has interactive whiteboards, videoconferencing facilities and on-line learning tools that enable the sharing of information.

“The Rees Government's commitment to TAFE and other vocational education and training programs will be further boosted in 2009-10 with almost $2 billion in recurrent funding – an increase of $104 million on the previous financial year.

“Our Learn or Earn initiative receives $86 million over the next four years - including $21 million in 2009-10 in recurrent and capital funding to provide:

- an extra 5,850 training places at TAFE NSW;
- the establishment of 15 additional trade schools across schools and TAFE; and
- an expansion of the Group Training Program to employ an extra 3,500 apprentices.

“In addition, NSW will deliver the Commonwealth’s $1.98 billion Building the Education Revolution program in 2009-10, providing new halls, classrooms, libraries, science laboratories and language centres cross the state.”

Vocational Education National Partnerships will also receiving recurrent funding of almost $90 million in 2009-10.