EMBARGOED UNTIL 5AM, 17 MARCH 2009

Sydney regions show increased enrolments

Minister for Education and Training Ms Verity Firth today announced February 2009 enrolment figures for New South Wales public schools.

Ms Firth said kindergarten enrolments have increased to 62,088 this year - up from 61,017 in 2008 and 60,887 in 2007.

Enrolments have also increased in three metropolitan Sydney regions – Northern Sydney, Sydney and Western Sydney.

“Primary school enrolments in Northern Sydney have increased by 1,111 students, in the Sydney area which runs from the city to Sutherland there are an additional 828 students and Western Sydney has 658 extra enrolments,” said Ms Firth.

High school enrolments have increased in all four metropolitan Sydney regions – with an additional 373 students in the Northern Sydney region and 141 students in Western Sydney.

Metropolitan Sydney enrolments have increased by 3,088 to 405,259 primary and high school students. Rural enrolments have dropped slightly.

“There are a range of factors impacting on regional enrolments, including demographic changes and the effects of drought,” the Minister said.

“Numbers have remained stable on last year with only a small decrease of 395 students bringing the total enrolment to 746,552 students state-wide.”

A survey of new students enrolling in government schools shows 5,174 students have moved from interstate; 2,748 from overseas and 3,996 from non-government schools.

“Although enrolments in the Sydney area are up, we are seeing minimal increase due to the current economic situation, with no significant net movement from the non-government sector,” said Ms Firth.

“New South Wales public education has been seeing a gradual increase of enrolments in a number of areas over the past five years and these figures support this trend.

“Principals report that enrolment increases in metropolitan Sydney are driven by the recognition of the great work being done in public schools.

“Our government’s increased investment in our state’s public schools is starting to have an impact with parents trusting the system to provide their children with the highest quality of education.

“We are doing so through increased investment in literacy programs such as Best Start and Reading Recovery; reducing class sizes with kindergarten now staffed on a state-
wide average of just 20 students per class, and with additional funding of $615 million to employ 1,800 extra teachers over this term of Government,” said Ms Firth.

*February census data is collected at the beginning of each school year for the purpose of school staffing and therefore may vary to the ABS data collected annually in August.

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