BUDGET 2002  2003

SCHOOLS

In 2002/2003, the State Government will continue to build on its commitment to help young people to improve their lives and secure their futures through record investments in quality education and training. This State Budget provides a record $8.1 billion in recurrent and capital funding for the Education and Training portfolio. Total recurrent and capital funding for schools is $6,473.8 million, up by 7.1 percent on last year’s Budget. Government school student enrolments are estimated at over 757,000 for 2002/2003.

The key priorities for school education in 2002/2003 will be to:

• expand current programs and introduce new technology strategies, including the upgrading of Network Bandwidth in schools and TAFE colleges, and the provision of email accounts and Internet access for Government school and TAFE students and teachers;

• provide extra funding to enhance the quality of teaching in Government schools and ensure an adequate supply of teachers in key learning areas across the State;

• provide additional global funding allocations to targeted Government schools which have specific needs in meeting service delivery requirements at the local level;

• introduce a pilot of reduced class sizes in designated schools, in Kindergarten to Year 3, to be independently monitored and evaluated;

• undertake a trial of a “priority action schools” program, to provide intensive support to specifically targeted primary, central and high schools;

• provide a wider range of placement and support options for students with disruptive behaviour;

• improve the amenity of schools through the Schools Improvement Package of capital works;

• continue the focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills; and

• provide quality employment-related training through schools, TAFE NSW and adult and community education colleges

Administrative costs in NSW Education remain the lowest in Australia according to the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2002, at $308 per student, compared with $510 in the Australian Capital Territory, $502 in South Australia, and well below the national average of $395.

The State Government is making a major commitment to improving education facilities through increased funding for capital works and school maintenance. In 2002/2003, $300 million will be provided for capital works funding for schools. There will be in the order of $600 million provided over the next four years for school maintenance, including $179 million in 2002/2003.

The Government is providing a substantial injection of funds to improve the amenity of schools through the Schools Improvement Package of capital works. The $1.1 billion Package over the next four years will provide a significant upgrade of school accommodation and the expansion of Internet services for staff and students.

In 2002/2003, $300 million will be spent on school capital works projects as part of this Package, an increase of $42.4 million (16.5%) on last year’s allocation.

The 2002/2003 budget will provide for the commencement of 41 major new building projects including the first stages of the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes Secondary Colleges and the second stages of the Northern Beaches and Callaghan Secondary Colleges. Work will also commence on the second stages of the new or redeveloped schools at Jerrabomberra, Alforts Point, Auburn West, Denistone East, Rockdale (St George school relocation) Seven Hills (North Rocks school relocation) and Blue Haven.

$140 million will be spent over the next three years on increasing the capacity of the communications network to support online learning and teaching programs in schools and TAFE colleges.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The Government will continue to build on its achievements during its first term by expanding the State Literacy and Numeracy Plan.

Almost $500 million will be provided over four years for literacy and numeracy strategies. In 2002/03, a total of $124.6 million will be provided.

In addition to the comprehensive strategies already in place, the State Literacy and Numeracy Plan is providing:

• approximately $25 million to support the Reading Recovery program. In 2002, the program is available in 840 schools and is taught by 932 teachers. The highly
successful program will continue with some 8,000 students expected to participate in the program in 2002; • regular statewide testing will continue through the Basic Skills Testing in Years 3 and 5, the English Language and Literacy Assessment in Years 7 and 8, the New School Certificate in Year 10 and the New Higher School Certificate at the end of Year 12; and • the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program, which became compulsory for all Year 7 students in Government schools from 2001.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS

The Government is continuing its focus on ensuring that teachers and students in New South Wales Government schools have access to and are proficient in using, the most up to date technology. The Department’s budget includes $963 million in recurrent and capital funding over the next four years for technology initiatives. These strategies include:
• continuing technology in schools initiatives. Over $566.5 million will be provided over the next four years to fund new computers, Internet services and technology support in schools;
• Additional recurrent and capital funding of $247 million over the next four years for Network Bandwidth. This initiative will progressively upgrade bandwidth in schools and TAFE colleges, using available technology including government owned infrastructure and a range of telecommunication carriers; • $24 million extra, over four years, will be spent on school-based technical support and training with experts sent to all NSW public schools to improve local area networks;
• E-learning accounts for staff and students in schools and TAFE. This project will provide E-mail accounts to teachers and students, filtered access to the Internet, discussion forums and Web hosting facilities to all schools and colleges. Remote access will also be available from locations such as home or libraries. The Government is providing $82.3 million over the next four years; and • Technology in Learning and Teacher Training. This program is continuing to provide teacher training in schools in the use of the latest computer technology with the Government providing $17.1 million over the next four years.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Increasing opportunities for young people to study vocational subjects and develop workplace skills while at school is one of the Government’s highest priorities. As part of the Ready for Work Plan:
• $21.6 million will be provided over four years for individual School to Work plans for students in Years 9 to 12 to help them direct their study and career paths, including $5.4 million in 2002/2003;
• an expanded work education program to improve knowledge of young people on how to get a job, where the jobs are and the personal qualities and other skills needed to succeed;
• accredited industry-based courses as part of the New Higher School Certificate. These courses will count towards university entrance;
• $11.6 million will be provided over four years for scholarships to encourage school students to continue their studies full-time at TAFE NSW, including $2.9 million in 2002/2003;
• $7.3 million will be provided over four years to expand programs for young people at risk, including $1.8 million in 2002/2003; and • stronger links between schools, TAFE NSW and employers.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ALLOWANCE

Parents and guardians of over 1.1 million children in NSW government and non-government schools will continue to benefit from the Back-to-School Allowance. The allowance provides $50 per student to assist with meeting the costs of uniforms, shoes, books and other school basics. The Government will provide $56 million in 2002/2003 for the Back-to-School Allowance.

SCHOOLS’ GLOBAL FUNDING

In 2002/2003, $259.3 million, an increase of over $14 million on last year’s budget, is being provided to schools for such items as reading materials, utilities, minor maintenance, stores, short term relief, training and development and other educational resources. This includes additional targeted funding of $10 million for schools which have specific needs in meeting service delivery requirements at the local level.

TARGETING EQUITY

Equity programs target particular areas of need to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

In 2002/2003, the Government is providing record levels of funding to support school equity programs. Recurrent payments for these targeted programs will increase by $50 million from 2001/2002 budget levels to $775.4 million in 2002/2003. This is 6.9 percent greater than last year’s funding and represents an increase of $228.5 million on 1995/96 expenditure levels.

Funds for 2002/2003 include:
• $51.51 million for special education;
• $59.4 million for socio-economically disadvantaged students;
• $72.4 million for rural education;
• $37.9 million for Aboriginal education program services; and
• $85.6 million for services to students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Funding for special education programs will be $515.1 million in 2002/2003, an increase of $37.5 million on the 2001/2002 Budget.

SOCIO ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

In 2002/2003, funding of $59.4 million will be provided for socio-economically disadvantaged students. Funding will support:
• the Priority Schools Funding Program
(PSFP). The program assists school communities with the greatest degree and concentration of socio-economic disadvantage. The major focus of the PSFP is to improve literacy learning outcomes as the key to overall educational achievement; and

- the Student Assistance Scheme. The Scheme which complements the Back-to-School Allowance is designed to assist needy students with education costs and can cover items such as textbooks, stationery, excursions, uniforms, and footwear.

**RURAL EDUCATION**

The Government continues its commitment to ensuring students in regional and rural NSW have access to the highest quality education. In 2002/2003, dedicated funds of $72.4 million will provide:

- Distance Education Centre Support for 2,800 students through 8 secondary and 11 primary centres;
- Living Away From Home Allowance-Funding of over $0.8 million has been provided for students in both government and non-government schools. The allowance in 2002 is $1,028 per student;
- Access and Boarding Scholarships for Students funding of $0.4 million will be provided to support around 180 students;
- Isolated School Grants funding of over $1.1 million will be provided in 2002/2003 to support over 17,100 students in 186 schools;
- Students in country schools continue to benefit from computers, Internet access and teacher training.

**ABORIGINAL EDUCATION**

In 2002/2003, $37.9 million will be provided to support Aboriginal services for over 30,000 students. This includes over 300 Aboriginal Education Assistants employed in public schools across the State. This initiative recognises Aboriginal people working effectively with teachers in classrooms and liaising with Aboriginal parents. The Government is giving high priority to programs designed to strengthen Aboriginal literacy and numeracy within the context of the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy and State Literacy and Numeracy Plan, starting from the earliest years of schooling.

**NON ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS**

In 2002/2003, $85.6 million will be provided for services to students from non-English speaking backgrounds. With enrolments expected to exceed 194,000 in 2003, over 25 percent of all students enrolled in NSW government schools are from language backgrounds other than English.

**STUDENT WELFARE**

A total of $47.8 million will be provided for targeted welfare and anti-violence programs. These funds will support activities such as:

- an enhanced drug education strategy, focusing on drugs identified as causing the most harm to young people;
- home school liaison and specialist support to students with behaviour problems;
- targeted child protection activities;
- programs to combat violence;
- peer mediation and peer support;
- a series of initiatives to address disruptive student behaviour.

In 2002/2003, over $11.8 million will be provided towards this program which provides a wide range of placement and support options for students with difficult behaviour;

- $16.1 million, over two years, to undertake a trial of a "priority action schools" program, to provide intensive support to specifically targeted primary, central and high schools; and
- $5 million, over two years, to introduce a pilot of reduced class sizes in designated schools, in Kindergarten to Year 3, to be independently monitored and evaluated.

**NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

In 2002/2003 non-government schools will receive $542.9 million. This funding includes provision for student per capita grants, interest subsidy scheme payments and secondary textbook funding.

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**BUDGET 2002–2003**

**SCHOOL EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS: $6,473.8 million**

- $6,128.8 million in total recurrent funding.
- $229.4 million in recurrent and capital funding for technology and computers in schools ($963 million over the next four years).
- $88.5 million in extra funding over the next four years ($15 million in 2002–2003) to enhance the quality of teaching in Government schools and ensure an adequate supply of teachers in key learning areas across the State.
- $300 million for school capital works projects, as part of a four year $1.1 billion Schools Improvement Package.
- $179 million for school maintenance.
- $124.6 million to target literacy and numeracy (almost $500 million over the next four years).
- $259.3 million for grants to schools under global funding.
- $515.1 million for special education.
- $72.4 million for dedicated rural education programs.
- $59.4 million for socio-economically disadvantaged students.
- $37.9 million for Aboriginal education.
- $85.6 million for students from non English speaking backgrounds.
- $56 million for the Back-to-School Allowance.
- $542.9 million to support students in non-government schools.
- $16.1 million, over two years, to undertake a trial of a "priority action schools" program, to provide intensive support to specifically targeted primary, central and high schools; and
- $5 million, over two years, to introduce a pilot of reduced class sizes in designated schools, in Kindergarten to Year 3, to be independently monitored and evaluated.