



ACT Government

2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

\$11 MILLION IN ICT PACKAGE FOR ACT SCHOOLS

The Stanhope Government has allocated more than \$11 million over four years to improve information technology and communications services to students and schools.

“Enhancing information technology in schools reflects the Government’s commitment to creating a community of learning and innovation,” said Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services, Ms Katy Gallagher MLA.

“Through these initiatives, the Government is delivering our commitment in the Social Plan to ensure that government schools are resourced to deliver ICT skills to students, irrespective of school size and financial capacity. We are also providing significant resources to non government schools to assist them to provide increased levels of ICT resources to their students.”

“We want to ensure that ACT students are able to develop the skills necessary to participate fully in the community, now and in the future.”

Technical support for student computing

New funding of \$4 million over four years will assist government schools by providing more reliable technical support for student and teacher computers in classrooms and IT laboratories.

“This initiative will provide 20 new technical staff to work across the ACT’s schools. These professionals will provide the technical support required to ensure that the ICT capacities in our schools are enhanced and maintained for our teachers and students,” said Ms Gallagher.

The new program will provide support to schools that are currently using teachers or administrative staff for technical support, and especially to primary and special schools. In particular, those schools that currently use teaching staff to maintain school IT networks will benefit by being able to divert those staff back to the classroom.

This new program of technical support will make a significant addition to the numbers of existing school based technical staff. As part of the program, additional technical training will be offered to the existing pool of school based technicians.

Schools IT Infrastructure Fund

A Schools IT Infrastructure Fund (more than \$3.6 million over four years) will provide government schools with an increased capacity to purchase and upgrade IT resources including hardware, software and communications and related facilities. The fund will provide



schools, teachers and students with information and communications technology that is of a high and consistent quality.

Student Digital Passkey

Student Digital Passkeys (\$490,000 over three years) will provide students with a unique electronic identity that will give them secure access to student IT networks and to information that is appropriate to their age group and learning program.

“This initiative will permit students and their parents to securely and conveniently access a growing number of online services provided by government schools and the education department,” said Ms Gallagher.

School Websites Enhancement

Parents and students will have easier access to information through an allocation of \$209,000 to create user-friendly school websites.

“This initiative will greatly extend the existing Canberra Schools on the Net service and help schools to provide high quality school websites that have current and vital information to the school community including students, parents and teachers,” said Ms Gallagher.

Non Government Schools ICT

The government has allocated \$2,491,000 over four years to fund information technology in the non government school sector. This initiative will increase the level of resources that non government schools have to deliver information and communication technology to their students.

Broadband for non government schools

The Budget also allocates \$200,000 to connect non government schools to broadband internet services. Up to \$5,000 will be available for those schools not currently connected.

“Broadband is an important element in providing students and teachers with high-speed access to information and educational tools on the internet,” said Ms Gallagher.

“All ACT Government schools are expected to be connected to the TransACT broadband service by 2005, so this initiative provides equity for non government schools.”

“Investment in information and communication technology is a clear reflection of this government’s commitment to build a highly skilled and innovative community.”

“Focussing on knowledge and innovation will allow the ACT to be competitive in the global economy,” Ms Gallagher concluded.

Statement Ends.