



FREE LAP TOPS ON THE WAY

4 December 2008

Just days after securing an extra \$180 million from the Commonwealth for computers for schools, the NSW Government has called for tenders to deliver 200,000 lap tops to our senior students.

NSW Premier Nathan Rees said the Government was wasting no time in working to deliver this technology to our students.

Mr Rees said Expressions of Interest for the delivery of student lap tops went live on the Department of Commerce website yesterday and ads will appear in the media on Monday.

“We’re seeking experts who can custom build and deliver these lap tops to almost 200,000 students and can wirelessly connect more than 570 of the state’s high schools,” Mr Rees said.

Mr Rees said IT experts had designed a plan to deliver a lap top to every Year 9-12 student wirelessly connected to the internet, that they could take with them with they leave school.

“This will revolutionise education and equip our young people with the skills they need in our increasingly IT dependent workplaces.

“The plan is designed to deliver robust, teenage-friendly and compact lap tops.

“The lap tops must be safe and secure.

“They will be in a Department of Education encoded network so they are worthless if stolen and safe from inappropriate or harmful material over the internet. “

Mr Rees said they will also be designed for educational purposes – not social networking on MySpace and FaceBook.

The computers will cost around \$500 per unit with running costs bringing the cost per student to \$2245.

This includes installing wireless in school classrooms; all relevant software and additional hardware; provision of IT support; training for class teachers; and, a ten per cent contingency for lost, damaged or stolen machines.

At least 400 extra full-time IT staff will be employed across the state to support this program.

Mr Rees said the plan had been designed in consultation with the Secondary Principals’ Council and was supported by the majority of principals.

Mr Jim McAlpine, President of the Secondary Principals’ Council, said:

***“We have worked closely with the Department on the proposal to have wireless digital next generation laptops with the proper wireless systems in all our high schools.*”**

“That’s the proposal we’ve been supporting all along and it is the most appropriate one for the vast majority of our schools.”

Mr Geoff Hastings – Principal of Bathurst High said:

“I think it’s fantastic, I’m really committed to it – I think it’s an opportunity to fundamentally change the way we teach and the way students learn.

“It presents challenges for schools – but the opportunities are so exciting – we can overcome the challenges for the benefit of our students.

“I think it’s an opportunity to reduce the divide between county and city students’ learning opportunities.”

Expressions of Interest close on January 14 and can be found at www.commerce.nsw.gov.au