

# Computers....In Classrooms Education Revolution?

**As everyone heard during last year's election campaign, we have been promised an *Education Revolution*, by Prime Minister Rudd.**

So far, this has manifested itself in an announcement that Mr. Rudd's government will invest \$1 billion (over 4 years) to put a computer on the desk of every secondary student in Australia.

A key point is that Mr Rudd is not investing \$1 billion into this new venture – The government is scrapping the successful and popular 'Investing In Our Schools' (IIOS) scheme and using the money to fund the Computers in Classrooms program.

Under the IIOS scheme, schools could already apply for funding to put computers in their classrooms. So, it's the same money, to buy what you were already allowed to buy ... only now you don't have any choice.

Before, you could fund computers, or perhaps a building to put the computers in, or a range of initiatives – now it is just for IT.

Also, the IIOS scheme applied to all schools – whereas the Computers In Classrooms program is only for secondary schools.

**So, how will the program work?**

## **Time Schedule**

The newly created DEEWR (Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations) has promised that the programme will be up and running and committing funds before June 30 2008. At a recent briefing, Programme Manager, Ewan MacDonald indicated that need and readiness to provide a submission would be the guiding principles in terms of which schools were funded in that first round.

## **Guiding Principles**

Although guidelines have not yet been set, the principle of need and submission based funding would guide the process.

## **Process**

There will be a national audit to determine schools levels of existing IT resourcing. This would cover access to broadband, number of computers and degree of sophistication or state of repair. This will guide the process significantly.

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## **Definition of IT**

This will cover electronic white boards, lap tops and standing PC's and any other variants that might be necessary depending on the IT/geographical isolation of the school.

## **Funding Limit**

The limits for each school may well be much higher than the \$150,000 limit for IIOS.

## **Variations Between Schools**

This is a targeted programme aimed firstly at those schools which the national audit deems as disadvantaged.

## **Teacher Training and Resourcing**

This is under active consideration as DEEWR do not want to drop IT equipment on schools that are not ready or have no trained teachers or resources. IT without training, policy and curriculum relevance is a waste of money; hence the submission basis for applying for

computers; compelling schools to formalise their strategies for curriculum and resourcing.

The use of IT in homework centres is also under active consideration as there will be many students who will not have a computer at home. ■

