$14.4 billion investment in schools and TAFE

The Keneally Government will invest $14.4 billion in school education and vocational training across the state as part of its 2010-11 budget.

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said the investment continued the Keneally Government’s commitment to giving NSW students the greatest opportunity to reach their potential.

“We are equipping our students with a broad range of academic and practical skills to prepare them for the workforce or further study.

“In 2010-11 the Keneally Government is providing support for the increase in the school leaving age with an additional $12.5 million over five years for new capital infrastructure, such as new classrooms, plus additional staff and other recurrent costs rising to around $100 million in 2012-13.

“We are also providing $4 million in recurrent funding per year as our commitment to the new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) headquarters which will be based in Sydney,” Ms Firth said.

“The Board of Studies will receive an initial $3 million to fund its work in the early stages of implementing the Australian curriculum.

“This work includes collaborating with ACARA in designing the national curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history, and developing curriculum support materials to help schools and systems prepare teaching materials.

“More than $2 million is being provided over the next four years for the new Bilingual Schools Program providing intensive primary school teaching in Asian Languages.

“Over $1.6 billion will be directed to equity initiatives including programs for students with disabilities, indigenous students and students in rural areas, schools serving low Socio-Economic Status communities and students speaking English as a second language,” Ms Firth said.

More than $2 billion will be invested in 2010-11 to upgrade our schools and TAFEs including:

- $46 million for eight major new building projects in schools and three new information technology projects;
- Around $22 million to complete work on 12 school halls and 7 school gyms;
- $37 million for 44 science lab upgrades;
• More than $26 million for school roof and stormwater upgrades;
• More than $24 million for school toilet block upgrades; and
• $5 million for around 9000 laptops for high school teachers, funded by the NSW Government to complement the laptops for students.

“The roll-out of our Connected Classrooms initiative will continue in 2010-11 with $42 million in capital and recurrent funding to be provided,” Ms Firth said.

“During the next four years, $78 million will be committed to ensure every NSW public school has interactive whiteboards, videoconferencing facilities and on-line learning tools that enable information to be shared.

“We are also continuing our Best Start literacy and numeracy initiative for kindergarten students with $124 million in recurrent funding to be provided over the next four years.

“In line with our election commitment, $16 million will be spent over the next four years on the Community Service Begins at School program.

“To meet another election commitment, $18 million in capital grants for sporting and fitness equipment will be distributed to schools in 2010-11 as part of the Premier’s Sporting Challenge.

“The Keneally Government’s commitment to vocational education and training will be further boosted in 2010-11 with over $2 billion in recurrent funding – an increase of over $110 million on the previous financial year.

“Our Learn or Earn initiative receives $88 million over the next four years - including $27 million in 2010-11 for recurrent and capital funding to provide:
• an extra 5,850 training places at TAFE NSW;
• 5 additional trade schools in schools and TAFE; and
• an expansion of the Group Training Program to employ an extra 3,500 apprentices.

“The Vocational Education Productivity Places National Partnership will receive almost $192 million in recurrent funding in 2010-11, putting both existing workers and job seekers into traineeships and priority skills training.”

In addition, NSW will continue to deliver the Commonwealth’s Building the Education Revolution program in 2010-11, providing new halls, classrooms, libraries, science laboratories and language centres across the state.