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Technology

# Media release

From the Minister for Information and Communication

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Wednesday August 16, 2005

## **BRACKS GOVERNMENT BRIDGING DIGITAL DIVIDE IN TORQUAY**

Information and Communication Technology, Marsha Thomson visited Torquay Primary school today to inspect the School's Public Internet Access project.

The school is one of 88 community organisations and sites across the State to be funded through the \$3.5 million Public Internet Access Program, established in 2005 to help provide Victorians with free or affordable internet access.

The funding boost provided by the Program means that the Torquay Primary School Public Access Internet Program has been able to set up computer access and Internet training opportunities for those who have little or no experience with computers or using the Internet.

It has proven particularly useful for older members of the community who make up a significant number of participants in the Program.

Ms Thomson visited the school with South Barwon MP Michael Crutchfield.

Ms Thomson said that by targeting disadvantaged groups such as senior Victorians, the program was making a major contribution in helping bridge the digital divide.

"The Public Internet Access Program is designed to bring all the benefits of the internet to a diverse range of people who perhaps may not have access to the internet," she said.

"Through this initiative the Victorian Government will be funding up to half a million hours of free or affordable internet access for Victorians over the next four years."

Mr Crutchfield said the Public Internet Access Project would be of great benefit to the local community.

"This \$5,000 grant to the Torquay Primary School has been used to set up computer access and Internet training for members of the community who otherwise may miss out on acquiring the knowledge and experience that many of us take for granted," he said.

Since 2001, the Victorian Government's *Connecting Communities* policy has successfully worked to reduce barriers for Victorians who face difficulties accessing the internet.

"The Bracks Government is also honouring its commitment to create A Fairer Victoria. We are working with local governments, communities and businesses to help remove barriers to opportunity, and provide access and choice for all Victorians," she said.

For more information on the Public Internet Access Program, contact Vicnet toll free on 1800 629 835 or visit [www.mmv.vic.gov.au/communities](http://www.mmv.vic.gov.au/communities)