



Media release

From the Minister for Information and Communication
Technology

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DIGITAL DIVAS SWITCHING ON TO HIGH-TECH CAREERS

Young people in Melbourne's east will hear the real story about future careers in ICT at Box Hill TAFE today as part of the Brumby Government's *ICT: Start Here. Go Anywhere* campaign the Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Theo Theophanous said today.

"The Brumby Government wants Victorian students to gain a genuine insight on just how far study and a career in ICT can take them. So we are working with industry and the education sector to better inform our young people through a targeted campaign," Mr Theophanous said.

"The interactive *Upload Your Future* sessions provide students with the opportunity to hear recent graduates and young professionals explain exactly what is involved in technology courses and careers, so they can get the facts first-hand from the people in the field.

"Our research study revealed that many teenagers continue to hold limited and stereotypical views about working in ICT, and these ideas tend to act as a barrier to students, and particularly girls, choosing tertiary-level ICT courses.

"But these perceptions also seem ripe for change, with 40 per cent of the 14-19 year olds surveyed admitting they have little understanding about what working in ICT actually entails, suggesting better ICT career information might be exactly what young people need."

More than 2300 Victorian students have attended the *Upload Your Future* sessions over the past 12 months. Almost 90 per cent of students providing feedback in 2006 responded that they would consider a career in ICT after having heard what was on offer.

Eastern Metropolitan Region MP Shaun Leane attended today's Box Hill TAFE session, which is one of more than 20 events held across Melbourne and regional Victoria since last year.

"At each session school students hear from recent graduates and young professionals, so they can get the facts on ICT first-hand from the people in the field," Mr Leane said.

"Women continue to be vastly under-represented in the ICT workforce, so we are also looking at new ways to attract more girls to technology careers.

"Digital Divas is a new cutting-edge multimedia program, designed specifically for girls aged between 10 and 14, which we have just begun trialing, at local Brentwood Secondary College, Glen Waverley – and it's proving extremely popular.

"By delving into the girls' existing interests in things like fashion, dance and music, the web-based courseware builds students' ICT skills, while they have fun with the technology.

"Girls are missing out on great career opportunities by neglecting to seriously consider a future in ICT – and its creative programs like this that can show young women how interesting technology can be."

For more information on the Victorian Government's ICT skills programs go to:
www.mmv.vic.gov.au/ICTSkillsandCareers

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