

Monday, 19 November, 2007

## **CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTIONISED FOR STUDENTS**

An education revolution is on the mind of technology teachers over the next three days, as the use of iPods and digital video use across the school curriculum is debated at this year's annual Victorian IT Teachers Association (VITTA) conference in Flemington.

The Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Theo Theophanous, said the Brumby Government was keen to keep Victoria ahead of the game by exploring how today's generation of 'digital natives' will keep pace with the technological revolution around them.

"Schools are being kept at the cutting edge of ICT and it's by working with agencies such as VITTA that we are ensuring our young people are literate in the high-tech skills businesses need," Mr Theophanous said.

"Our work with VITTA extends beyond the conference today to support for student awards in programming, web-design and multimedia and an achievers work-experience program – as well as this year's inaugural ICT week and careers expo.

"The Brumby Government has provided \$80,000 to support these programs, which really help kids pick-up fantastic skills at school and encourage them to delve further into this exciting and challenging field.

"We keep hearing from industry that they need more people with ICT skills – and that's across diverse areas such as finance, security, web design and making games.

"The numbers speak for themselves; almost 84,000 people are now employed in Victoria's ICT industry alone, and this number has grown by almost 24,000 jobs in just the last three years.

"Yet this massive growth in job opportunities has yet to be matched by a comparable surge in young people taking up ICT study at school and beyond. It's a situation we're working to remedy, through our *ICT: Start Here. Go Anywhere* campaign.

"Bringing together industry associations, business and all our Victorian universities, it is the first collaboration of its kind in the country to boost skills – and it's already bearing fruit.

"Since the campaign began mid last year, Victorian ICT course preferences bucked the national trend, registering a 1.8 per cent rise, where other states remained in decline.

"Already more than 3600 students have attended the campaign's Upload Your Future sessions, listening to young, passionate professionals talk about their rewarding careers in ICT.

"Held throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria, the 23 sessions to date have proved a real eye-opener for many students with more than 90 per cent of those providing feedback saying they would now be considering a technology career."

This campaign complements a \$2.3 million suite of education and scholarship programs set up by the Victorian Government to boost ICT skills.