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Classroom Teachers to be provided with Laptops

The NT Government will provide every classroom teacher working in Government schools in the Territory with a laptop computer at a cost of $4.8 million over the next three years, Employment, Education and Training Minister Syd Stirling announced today.

Mr Stirling said the 2004-05 Budget contained an initial $1.4 million for the program, which will see around 2200 teachers gain access to a laptop, as well as training, helpdesk services and support infrastructure.

The funding commitment will then rise to $1.7 million a year from 2005-06.

“While Territory students have ready access to information technology services in the classroom, teachers often have to compete with their students for access to the same resources,” Mr Stirling said.

“In our information age, computers have become a crucial teaching and learning tool. We need to ensure that our teachers have access to IT resources both in the classroom and at home.

“The computers will be progressively rolled out starting in Term 3 this year. They will be replaced every three to four years, with the replaced laptops remaining in schools.

“They will feature cutting edge technology, including wireless technology, extended battery life, a 15-inch screen, 512MB of memory and a combination DVD reader/CD read-writer.

“Teachers will be able to use the computers to develop programs, prepare class material and gain access to a wide range of e-learning software. They will also be able to use the computers for professional development, to access the Internet and for home use.”

Mr Stirling said as part of the last teachers' EBA, Government had initially given a commitment to examine the feasibility of teachers acquiring laptops through a salary sacrificing scheme. That is now available through the NT Public Service.

“This new initiative comes on top of that commitment. Teachers will now be given a computer without having to contribute through salary sacrificing,” he said.