

02 June 2010

ADJOURNMENT

Computers in Schools Program

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (7.35PM) — I rise to express my anger at the proposal from the opposition to rip away funding that has been allocated for computers for schools in relation to the digital education revolution—the computers in schools program. This has been a wonderful program. In my community this has delivered enormous benefits to local students. The first round of computers that were allocated under this program went to those schools which had less than one computer for every eight students. They were the first round of students that received funding under this program. They were given priority because they were the schools that were in greatest need. There were a large number of schools in my electorate that received funding under that first round, which meant that in their schools there was, on a ratio basis, less than one computer for every eight students. As a consequence of the Rudd government's efforts in relation to this policy, we have reduced that ratio right across my electorate to one computer for every two students and we are determined to go all the way to achieve a 1:1 ratio for all students from years 9 to 12 in the various schools in my electorate. I was outraged to see that the opposition has come forward with a proposal to rip away the heart of the digital education revolution, the computers in schools program. This will mean some 120,000 kids across Australia will be robbed of their opportunity to have a computer. It will be ripped away before they even have the opportunity to log on.

That is a retrograde step. It will rip away the opportunities that this government has worked so hard to provide. What will that mean in my local community? I think it is important that each and every school in my community which is to be robbed of these computers knows exactly how many computers it is going to miss out on. Penrith Christian School will miss out on 23 computers; St Paul's Grammar School, 60 computers; Nepean District Christian School, five computers; Penrith Anglican College, 44 computers; Wollemi College, three computers; St Dominic's College, 82 computers; Caroline Chisholm College, 72 computers; McCarthy Catholic College, 64 computers; Xavier College, 57 computers; Colyton High School, 60 computers; Chifley College Dunheved, 28 Computers; St Mary's Senior High School, 102 computers; Cambridge Park High, 40 computers; Kingswood High, 58 computers; Nepean High, 41 computers; Penrith High, 72 computers; Cranebrook High, 62 computers; Kurrambee School, seven computers or their equivalent—Kurumbbee is a special school; Glenmore Park High, 54 computers; Jamison High School, 73 computers; and Putland School, six computers.

After 3,000 computers have been delivered in my electorate, we now have a situation where every one of those schools I have just listed will have those computers taken away. The funding will be taken away before the students even get the opportunity to log on. This is a disgrace. I do not yet have an opponent running against me in my electorate, but I am determined to make sure that every parent and student at these schools knows what a travesty they are being subjected to. Money that has already been allocated to provide funding for computers in their school will be ripped away if there is a change of government, as those on the other side propose, and that would be a backward step.

As I said, we have already made such great gains in my local community. There were so many schools that could not even meet that ratio of one computer to eight students, and we have made the massive improvement of now achieving a ratio of at least one computer for every two students. We need to go further. We need to make sure that every student between years 9 and 12 has a computer. That is the commitment that we made at the last election. I hear a lot from those on the other side about the failure of the government to deliver on its commitments. We have delivered on this commitment, and we will deliver on it in full by the time that we set. But the most significant threat to that is the intervention of an election and the possibility that people might be left with an Abbott government, which will rip away that funding and deprive people in my electorate.