National Secondary School Computer Fund

The Commonwealth Government has announced that it will invest $900 million through a National Secondary School Computer Fund to improve secondary school student access to information and communications technology (ICT). $100 million has been allocated for 2008 while the remaining funds will be available to schools in the following three years.

The Fund will provide grants for new or upgraded ICT for secondary students in Years 9 to 12. Schools will be able to apply for up to $1 million from the Fund dependent on enrolment and need; they will be able to purchase computers, interactive whiteboards, data projectors, digital cameras and other technologies.

All schools will be able to apply for financial assistance under the Fund during the period 2008 to 2011. However the first $100 million from the Fund will be directed to the most needy schools by June 2008.

In view of the extremely short timeline for the first round and to enable early identification of the most needy schools the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) are conducting an audit of computers in schools. The audit will provide a national benchmark based on a student:computer ratio. The survey instrument will collect very basic information.

AISSA agreed to conduct this audit in consultation with the Lutheran Education Office for Independent schools in South Australia. An on-line survey was sent to all member schools. The due date for return of the information was Tuesday 5 February. All schools returned the required information.

The application process will involve the Block Grant Authorities for the first round.