

ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO GET TECH WING UPGRADE

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks has announced a major upgrade of tech wings in all Government secondary schools to ensure students have the best possible choices for their future.

Mr Bracks said the \$50 million initiative would give students access to the latest equipment and skills training in Government schools.

“We will build new tech wings in 30 schools and modernise equipment in all others, in what is the largest once off rejuvenation of this area ever undertaken,” Mr Bracks said.

“This Government has already invested strongly in giving our children the strong academic skills they need, but there is still more to be done to encourage the take up of apprenticeships and trades.

“We must offer students a broad choice in our schools. Not every student wants to go to university, but we must ensure every child has the skills needed for the jobs of the future.

“Over the last seven years the number of Year 10, 11 and 12 students undertaking vocational subjects has doubled. We want students to learn in modern classrooms and on the latest trade equipment so they can make informed choices about their best career path.

“We need to give secondary students wider opportunities to specialise in areas leading directly to good jobs. Exposure to excellent facilities in traditional trades and the best training is one of the keys to addressing skills needs.

“This is a vital step to address Victoria’s skills shortages, promote the future economic growth of Victoria and open up well paid and fulfilling jobs for our young people.”

Mr Bracks said the upgrade of tech wings included:

- \$35 million for new state of the art trade wings at 30 government secondary colleges; and
- \$15 million for equipment upgrades to all other government secondary schools to modernise trade equipment and facilities. Grants of up to \$100,000 will be available, depending on the size of the school and age of equipment.

The Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky, said the upgrade was in addition to the construction of four new Technical Education Centres (TECs) valued at \$36 million, which will be up and running at Ballarat and Wangaratta next year, and operating from Heidelberg and Berwick in 2008.

She said equipment grants could include the purchase of: computer aided drafting and computer assisted manufacturing equipment and software (metals and engineering); robotics equipment (metals and engineering); car hoists and computer tuning equipment (automotive); machining equipment (building) and; digital lathes (manufacturing).