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Tax relief to push laptop program

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DONATIONS to the One Laptop Per Child program will now become tax-deductible in an effort to help bring digital technology to Australia's most remote communities.

Making the announcement last night at a gala dinner at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, Kevin Rudd said more than 1500 of the laptops had already been rolled out under the OLPC program.

News Limited, publisher of *The Australian*, has been an OLPC corporate sponsor since 2005, alongside Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank.

The Prime Minister last night

said the program hopes to deliver up to 20,000 laptops by 2012, "so all kids have the chance of reaching their full potential, no matter where they live or go to school".

The education gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians remained too high, Mr Rudd said.

"When we look at the figures, they are troubling figures.

"In Year 5 reading, just 63 per cent of indigenous children were at or above the national minimum standard compared with 92 per cent of non-indigenous children.

"In Year 3 numeracy, 96 per cent of non-indigenous children met or exceeded the standard, while 78 per cent of indigenous students did.

"These figures are unacceptable," he said.

"Part of being honest about this as a nation is to be honest about how big the gap is.

"We can do better. We must do better. And we are committed to doing better."

Mr Rudd said the decision to make donations of more than \$2 tax-deductible would be effective from today.