

iTwire

May 27, 2009

Pages: 1,2

URL: <http://www.itwire.com/content/view/25265/1231/>



## **OLPC arrives in remote Australian schools**

**The Northern Territory has seen the formal launch of One Laptop Per Child deployments in Australia.**

OLPC XO systems have been deployed at Shepherdson College and Newcastle Waters School in the Northern Territory, and at Rawa Community School in Western Australia.

"As a remote, Indigenous primary school, we face many unique challenges from getting the kids to even come to school," said Bryan Hughes, principal of Shepherdson College.

"OLPC's program has lifted attendance and added a valuable teaching tool. It is making life easier for the teachers, and more enjoyable for the students," he added.

One Laptop Per Child Australia (OLPCA) has - with the assistance of the Commonwealth Bank - been training teachers and installing servers since March so that schools can make the best use of the XOs. The bank is also funding an Australian Council for Educational Research study of the initial deployments that will help guide rollouts in other locations.

"We are committed to ensuring the sustainability of this initiative and to having a long-term impact on the education opportunities of these children," said Michael Harte, CBA's CIO and group executive for enterprise services.

And there are more XO deployments to come. A further 5000 XOs are expected to be deployed this year, and the project has the goal of distributing up to 400,000 units to all the primary students in remote Australia.

This will be supported by professional development workshops for teachers, which are being developed by James Cook University, The Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Darwin University and Edith Cowan University.

"To ensure the success of the program we need teachers who know how to use the devices and integrate them in to the curriculum, communities which want to help their children and want to play an active role in sustaining their own culture, and state and federal governments who have the foresight to enable us deliver on the promises of the program," said Rangan Srikhanta, executive director of OLPC Australia.

"The One Laptop Per Child Australia program is an important initiative to provide better opportunities for young Indigenous Australians to learn skills that will benefit their whole lives," said Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

"The laptops provided by the One Laptop Per Child Australia program will enable young remote Indigenous students to participate in collaborative learning and provide them with opportunities they may not have otherwise had to connect to each other and the world," he added.

OLPCA has also assisted with deployments in Niue, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Kiribati, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Tuvalu.

The XO is designed specifically for children, especially those living in remote areas. Features include low power consumption, wireless mesh networking, and a screen that's readable in direct sunlight.