



## **Microsoft Australia launches education assistance programme for Australian Schools**

***Partners in Learning* programme - designed to support greater access to  
technology skills training for Australian teachers and improve educational  
outcomes for students**

**Sydney, Australia – 23 September 2004** – Microsoft Australia today launched the first in a series of national roll outs of the *Partners in Learning* programme aimed at supporting a number of information and communication technology (ICT) educational projects throughout Australia.

Western Australia is the first state to join *Partners in Learning*, a worldwide, five-year, \$US 250 million initiative demonstrating Microsoft's commitment to assisting students and teachers to realise their potential by broadening exposure to and use of information technology (IT) within schools.

The programme was launched today in Perth in partnership with the Western Australian Department of Education and will see more than 13,000 teachers in Western Australia participate in a professional development initiative, over the next five years, aimed at increasing their knowledge of, and their ability to teach, ICT.

The WA announcement is the first initiative of the national *Partners in Learning* programme in Australia, and will see Microsoft Australia invest more than AU \$10 million in cash and resources nationally over the next five years as similar joint initiatives are rolled out across Australia's states and territories.

The *Partners in Learning* programmes consist of key investments, software and training and works through the partnership between Microsoft with state and territory education departments, and seeks to reward outstanding teachers as well as provide professional development to teachers who act as technology and educational change agents at their school.

The *Partners in Learning* programme is chaired in Australia by an independent local Advisory Council of industry experts whose role is to determine which specific projects receive funding and to make the most of the opportunities the programme offers.

The *Partners in Learning* Advisory Council members include: internationally recognised educator and consultant, Bruce Dixon; President of the Australian Council of Deans Education, Mary Kalantzis; Secretary (Chief Executive) of the Department of Education in Tasmania, Martyn Forrest; Member of the Advisory Board of the faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University and a Fellow of the Australian Principals' Centre, Ken Rowe; Manager of Enterprise and Vocational education (K-12) at Swan Education District Office, Sandra Robinson; and National President of the Australian Council for Education Leaders, Jenny Lewis.

According to Ms Lewis, "The big winners in the *Partners in Learning* programme are Australian teachers and students. This is a major educational initiative being undertaken by Microsoft Australia and I fully support the programme. Most importantly, I look forward to the many success stories that are bound to come out of the programme."

*Partners in Learning* is Microsoft's second major community initiative undertaken in the Australian community. Earlier this year, Microsoft Chairman and Chief Software Architect, Bill Gates and Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard jointly announced the *Unlimited Potential* programme aimed at providing access and training in technology for members of the Australian community to help sections of society overcome the "digital divide" through providing access to technology in community centres. *Partners in Learning* is the second major community initiative that is targeted at assisting educational outcomes in Australian schools through providing technology assistance to teachers and students.

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**About *Partners in Learning***

*Partners in Learning* is a worldwide initiative in which Microsoft is partnering with Federal and State governments to provide investment into education. In Australia, Microsoft is committing \$10 million in cash and resources over the next five years. Through a series of programmes, key investments, software and training, Microsoft seeks to reward outstanding teachers as well as provide professional development to teachers who act as technology and educational change agents at their school.

**About Microsoft**

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential.

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