

Hillside

NEWSPIX



KEY TO SUCCESS: *Learning benefit through laptops*

Laptop access delivers results

A SMALL school in the outback town of Doomadgee has been praised in the House of Representatives for impressive NAPLAN results achieved by its largely Indigenous student population.

In last year's nationwide testing, the Doomadgee State School in north-west Queensland saw only 30 per cent of its Year 3 students at or above the national minimum standards.

This year, that figure has soared to 95 per cent of Year 3 students at or above national minimum standards in numeracy.

Member for Lyne (NSW) Rob Oakeshott said the school is using a range of clever strategies to achieve these results, including technology through the One Laptop per Child Australia program.

Mr Oakeshott told the House of Representatives around 5,000 students are engaged in the charity's program which is achieving impressive results in

closing the gap and lifting access and participation rates in education.

"Climate change is not the moral challenge of our time; access and participation rates in education is," Mr Oakeshott said.

"We have a shameful entrenched policy failure in Australia where poorer students, Indigenous students and regional and rural students are now 30 per cent less likely to engage in higher learning compared to their richer, metropolitan, non-Indigenous peers."

Mr Oakeshott said the One Laptop per Child Australia program has corporate support in Australia and "deserves more attention from the government".

He said greater trust and engagement with the private sector is consistent with the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 8 which calls for private sector partnerships in new information and communication technologies.

Brain centre boosts research

AUSTRALIAN research into neurological disorders has been enhanced by the opening in Melbourne of the largest brain research centre in the southern hemisphere.

The Melbourne Brain Centre will provide state of the art facilities for more than 700 staff working to shed new light on common degenerative brain disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

Member for Melbourne Ports (Vic) Michael Danby helped open the last of the three faculties that make up the brain centre, later telling parliament it was a great step forward for brain research in Australia.

"For the first time, neuroscientists and neurologists from across Melbourne and around Australia will be able to join forces to improve diagnosis and treatment for people with brain disorders," Mr Danby said.

"As Australia's population ages, the need to combat these terrible diseases will become more and more pressing. The brain centre will achieve this goal, translating more rapid advances in knowledge into better patient care and better health outcomes."

The centre was jointly funded by the Victorian and federal governments and private donations, with Mr Danby praising the dedication of all involved to keep Melbourne at the forefront of medical research.

"The massive investment by state and federal governments, together with this generosity through private philanthropy, keeps that edge in Victoria in medical research which so distinguishes our city.

"It is one of the leading cities for medical research, and I think this national brain centre is going to make a very valuable contribution towards that."