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MEDIA RELEASE

Computers in schools continues to flounder

The Labor Government's promise to deliver laptops and high speed internet to students continues to flounder after reports today fewer than 20 per cent of computers have been installed, Christopher Pyne, Shadow Minister for Education said today.

The *Australian* newspaper quotes a school principal comparing the Computers in Schools program to the insulation program and Building the Education Revolution program. Both were poorly conceived, hastily put together, rushed in delivery, resulting in disastrous consequences.

Since its inception the Computers in schools program has been dogged with problems.

- The Government's original election promise was \$1 billion to give a computer to every student in Australia between year nine and year twelve.
- At the 2008 Budget that became \$1.2 billion and the Government started using weasel words like "access to a computer."
- In its first year computers were allocated to less than 10% of public schools in Australia. Many schools that were promised computers mid-year had still not received them when students left for Christmas.
- Freedom of Information applications and Estimates hearings forced the Government to reveal that the program was significantly under funded because it didn't include software, networking or IT support.
- New South Wales withdrew from round two of the program altogether, and other states threatened to follow suit.
- Finally at COAG Minister Gillard was forced to offer an extra \$800 million, bringing total costs to \$2 billion.
- Reports emerged that some schools were charging parents for use of the computers, which the Prime Minister has condemned.

This Government is incapable of delivering on its promises, and unable to manage taxpayer's funds. Everyday further examples emerge of systemic waste, money that could be put to better use. A Coalition Government will ensure value for every education dollar.

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