

EDUCATION WEEK 24 – 31 May 2009

MESSAGE FROM VERITY FIRTH MP

NSW MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Education Week 2009. This year's theme is '*NSW Public Schools leading the way*' – and will involve widespread celebrations of the excellence of public education.

The NSW public education system is second to none and our students are really leading the way– so this year's theme certainly reflects the great achievements of our public schools.

During the week, the state's 2,200 public schools will celebrate their values and achievements with local performances, assemblies and school open days.

This year, Education Week also has a special focus on the environment. Visit your local school to see the incredibly innovative environmental programs run by our students. I think we can all learn something from these inspirational students.

What's also special about this year's celebration is that it coincides with National Reconciliation Week from 27 May – 3 June. This year's theme is '*See the Person, not the Stereotype*', and schools across NSW will be celebrating the unique richness and diversity of Aboriginal cultures - the world's oldest living culture.

Education Week is a time to reflect on the position of public education – and I'm proud to say education in NSW is going from strength to strength.

This year, we are seeing unprecedented investment and activity in our schools. The Commonwealth Government is investing \$3.2 billion in NSW through the *Building the Education Revolution*. This is in addition to the NSW Government's \$2 billion *Building Better Schools* program, which will also see major infrastructure works across the state.

NSW students are achieving great success thanks to the strength of our curriculum and our increased focus in teaching literacy and numeracy – particularly in the early years of schooling.

Results from the most recent national and international tests indicate that many of our students are achieving the highest levels in mathematics and science.

Six years after we introduced significant changes to the Higher School Certificate, we are seeing record numbers of high achievers on the Board of Studies merit lists.

These are all achievements we can all be proud of. It's what's great about public education in NSW. I encourage the whole community to support our students, teachers and staff and become involved with this year's Education Week celebrations.

Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Women