



Leadership for the West

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## **SCHOOLS FUNDING BOOST WELCOMED BUT ISSUE OF EQUITY REMAINS**

The Federal Government's \$14.7 billion plan to upgrade schools, and in turn stimulate the economy through subsequent job creation, is welcomed and timely, however it fails to address the investment gap that exists between our public and private education systems.

Under the "Building the Education Revolution" scheme, the Government plans to roll out billions of dollars for schools to build new libraries, multi-purpose halls and upgraded classrooms that will in turn stimulate the economy.

LeadWest CEO Anton Mayer said that the issue remains over the equity of the \$14.7 billion program to tighten the gap between public and private schools.

"I welcome this investment in schools and it's particularly timely given the current economic climate, however there is more that can be done to focus funds to the schools that need it most – public primary and secondary schools," Mr Mayer said.

Under the Government's plan all schools are entitled to money irrespective of the resources at their disposal, as opposed to money being allocated on the basis of a school's size, location and demographics. This is a significant weakness of the Federal Government's Program.

"It is regrettable that no apparent distinction has been made between schools that already have large capital expenditure programs, and the ones that do not," Mr Mayer said.

LeadWest acknowledges that the Rudd Government's education support program is the single biggest school modernisation program Australia has witnessed and that it will support the local economy and support jobs in a tough economic climate.

However, in the longer term LeadWest would welcome a review of school infrastructure funding so that schools that already have large capital expenditure programs in place were accorded proportionally a smaller share of the pool thus achieving a more equitable outcome as more money available for poorer schools.

LeadWest is a peak advocacy body that was formed to provide leadership to the West in addressing its challenges and capitalising on its advantages, to be a representative voice for the West, especially to State and Federal Government. LeadWest's goal is to help the West realise its great potential as a dynamic and enjoyable place in which to live, work and visit.

### **For further information please contact:**

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