



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

MEDIA RELEASE

18 May 2009

Australia to donate 4250 Lapdesks to local Maputo school

The Australian High Commissioner Designate to Mozambique, Ms Ann Harrap, will present, on behalf of the Australian Government, 4250 Lapdesks to a school in Maputo at a handover ceremony at 10.30am on Tuesday 19 May.

Media are welcome to attend the ceremony, which will take place at Escola Primária Completa da Machava Sede, Maputo.

Lapdesks are light-weight, portable writing surfaces, ergonomically designed to fit comfortably on a student's lap, whether seated on a chair, on a bench, or under a tree. Lapdesks were created to help increase literacy and directly improve the quality and outcome of Mozambican and African Education by addressing the shortage of learning infrastructure.

The handover ceremony follows the recent visit by Australia's Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, to Mozambique, which helped strengthen Australia's engagement with Mozambique – a relationship which is growing rapidly.

This assistance for education in Mozambique also comes at a time when Australia is expanding its development assistance program in Africa, as part of a commitment to broaden its engagement with Africa.

The Australian Government will provide an estimated A\$163.9 million in development assistance to Africa in 2009-10, a substantial increase on the previous year. Despite the international economic downturn, Australia's commitment to increasing its development cooperation efforts on the continent remains strong.

The Australian Government has already committed to increase, within four years, by up to ten-fold scholarships and fellowships offered to students from across Africa. This will see up to 1,000 scholarships and fellowships available to Africans.

As a committed partner in Africa's development, Australia seeks to support Africa's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in areas such as human resource capacity building, food security, maternal and child health, and water and sanitation.

Australia's strengthened engagement with Africa is designed to support Africa's efforts to promote economic growth and prosperity through investment and trade, to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and to address peace and security challenges.

For further information, please contact William Blomfield on +27 83 409 3619 or william.blomfield@dfat.gov.au.