



\$250,000 Scholarship to boost clever State

17 March 2009

Premier Nathan Rees today announced the NSW Government will invest \$250,000 to establish the first NSW Fulbright Scholarship.

While meeting with NSW university vice-chancellors the Premier said that the new Fulbright Scholarship will enable a talented young person from NSW to benefit from US study and travel.

"The Fullbright program supports people who excel in any discipline – from academia to business and the arts," Mr Rees said.

"The scholarship will be valued at \$50,000 with the first applications to be invited in June this year.

"The winner will be a postgraduate or postdoctoral student whose project is judged to have greatest potential benefit for NSW.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to strengthen the ties between the Government and the higher education sector in NSW at a time when governments around the world are looking increasingly to scientific research and higher learning to find solutions to our global problems.

"The Fullbright Program is the world's largest bi-national education program, operating in over 150 countries.

"The scholarship will be jointly funded by the NSW Government and NSW universities with further support to be raised from companies and individuals."

Australian-American Fulbright Commission Board Chair, Mr Tom Pascarella, congratulated the NSW Government and the NSW universities on the establishment of the Fulbright NSW Scholarship.

"This Fulbright NSW Scholarship will give talented young people from NSW special opportunities to participate in the prestigious Fulbright Program. It will promote professional and academic links between the U.S. and NSW, with research projects that will provide long term benefits to the state."

The Premier also announced an annual forum between the State Government, university vice-chancellors and business leaders to identify priority areas for research, business and education.

"NSW universities are critical to this State's economic, social and cultural well being," Mr Rees said.

"We want to tap into the skills and research knowledge they possess and explore how to make our educational institutions, our businesses and our industry more competitive on an international scale.

"The Commonwealth is adopting a renewed focus on developing the strengths and innovative capacities of our universities and it makes perfect sense for the NSW Government to join this commitment.

"This 21st century model for higher education will deliver a stronger, research-driven university sector and world-class business and industry competitiveness in NSW."

Minister for Education Verity Firth joined the Premier today and said the Government will also help NSW universities actively pursue Commonwealth funding.

"Minister for Science and Medical Research Jodi McKay and I will meet with each university prior to their funding discussions with the Federal Government," Ms Firth said.

"This process will help them better target Commonwealth funding programs and support from philanthropic organisations.

"We want to encourage innovation and continuous improvement from our universities and we will be doing everything we can to help achieve this."

Mr Rees said that the new scholarship, annual forum and the commonwealth grants support confirm the Government's commitment to become the clever state.

"Recently we announced \$30 million in additional funding to the Westmead Millennium Institute that will consolidate a major health research asset for the people of Western Sydney," Mr Rees said.

"We've also appointed Professor Mary O'Kane as NSW's first Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer who is working to help promote innovation and better harness the scientific knowledge and research expertise we possess in NSW."

The NSW Government provides significant funding and equivalent contributions to its universities for specific initiatives. Some recent examples include:

- \$50 million over four years from NSW Health for a joint medical program involving the Universities of Newcastle and New England, and Hunter–New England Health;
- \$1.2 million for the NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships Program, to encourage recruitment and retention of Allied Health clinicians across rural NSW
- \$4.4 million from the NSW Cancer Institute to fund four professional positions in radiation oncology at The University of Sydney (2), University of New South Wales (1) and the University of Wollongong (1)
- \$450,000 to establish the University of Technology, Sydney's 'Design Out Crime Research Centre' focusing on crime prevention through urban design
- \$20 million towards a new national HIV research institute involving the University of NSW
- \$15 million towards a medical research institute at the University of Wollongong
- \$250,000 for a new Chair of Engineering Innovation at the University of Sydney, which will facilitate the commercial application of science
- \$40 million through the NSW Government Science Leveraging Fund for industry accessible and partnered investment in research at universities and institutes under the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence, Cooperative Research Centre and National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy programs.