



## **FREE COMPUTER AND WEB ACCESS AND SKILLS TRAINING FOR SYDNEY'S UNPRIVILEGED**

Sydney's homeless youth, unemployed, and other disadvantaged members of the community can learn new computer skills and gain free access to the Internet and state-of-the-art computer equipment thanks to the "BootUp Internet Cafes" initiative - a partnership between the Australian Computer Society (ACS), The Rotary Club of Sydney Cove Rotary and the City of Sydney.

The new Woolloomooloo Café - the first café to roll out under the new partnership - has been introduced to the Juanita Nielsen Leisure Centre in Woolloomooloo and was officially opened by Lord Mayor, Clover Moore and ACS president, Mr Edward Mandla.

The brainchild of Sydney businessman and BootUp founder Mr Ed Ackman, BootUp Internet Café is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to lift the morale of the underprivileged members of the community by increasing their access to skills and job opportunities. The internet cafe also allows those without access to the internet in particular, older members of the community - to stay in contact with their family and friends via a free email service.

The ACS is providing funding and training resources for the program, including programs featuring the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL), a globally recognised program that certifies participants in the use of a personal computer and common computer applications.

This initiative supports the ACS focus on improving computer literacy standards throughout Australia. Overseas evidence has shown that the introduction of computer resources and skills training improves motivation and attitudes to learning, as well as improving a participant's chances of attaining and sustaining employment.

"The City is proud to assist our residents develop computer skills by providing BootUp cafes at the Abraham Mott Centre in Millers Point, at the Maybanke Youth Centre and now this one at the Juanita Nielsen Leisure Centre," Lord Mayor Clover Moore said. "This partnership with the ACS and Rotary is delivering much needed resources to disadvantaged members of our community, providing them with the tools and skills to break down the barriers to unemployment."

Edward Mandla, ACS President said: "We live in a world where technology influences almost every aspect of modern life how people live, work and play. Yet, socio-economic and geographical barriers continue to exist which prevent Australians from enjoying equitable access to computer equipment and computer skills they need to reach their potential. The BootUp Cafes are an important initiative which can help us continue to bridge this digital divide."

Ed Ackman, Founder BootUp Internet Café said: "BootUp Internet Cafes are a great example of the corporate community and government coming together to support the less privileged. Because this group always seem to get someone's worn out cast-offs we were determined to keep everything brand new, and to a standard they would find in the real corporate world. Everything has been purchased from private donation, which is fantastic, and provides companies with great opportunities to help fund the development of the BootUp project. Ed Ackman plans to install ten more BootUp internet cafes in inner Sydney in the coming year.