

Media Release

For Immediate Release: 3 March 2009

New ASG Cranbourne Centre Envisions An Educated Future For The City Of Casey

The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG), the not-for-profit friendly society specialising in children's education plans for more than 30 years, has opened a new centre in Cranbourne to assist the parents of the City of Casey's 16,800 children under four years plan for their children's education just as they would plan for other important events during their families' lives.

One of the biggest expenses facing new parents is education. Although post-secondary studies and schooling loom a long way in the distance when a baby arrives, it is at this time that parents and grandparents need to be thinking about education according to ASG.

ASG's General Manager Development, Ms Michelle Hunder said the City of Casey was a natural choice for ASG's new centre because it is one of Victoria's largest and fastest growing municipalities.

"Planning for education as soon as possible is becoming more and more important, especially as education has risen at almost twice the rate of inflation over the past 15 years. Planning helps to reduce the effects of spiralling education costs on families, which can limit children's future education opportunities," Ms Hunder explained.

"There's no such thing as free education now, irrespective of parents' education choices," Ms Hunder added, "so planning early for education enables young parents and grandparents to gain the powerful long-term benefits of compounding, which may lessen the pressure on families to provide for education from their income."

Education gives children a major foundation in life. It enables young people to pursue their dreams, fulfil their potential, and prepare for success. Research indicates that each year, more than 80,000¹ young people leave school and 50,000¹ of these never complete their secondary schooling or equivalent vocational training.

Encouraging young people to pursue further education benefits both the individual and the community. For the individual, the research¹ found that children who had completed post-secondary qualifications were more likely to experience higher wages, better working conditions, and had less chance of being unemployed. The community also benefits from greater productivity, participation and skilling of young people when they enter the workforce, and this results in the greater prosperity of all within the community.

"ASG is committed to supporting education and looks forward to working with the residents and community of the City of Casey to help develop improved education outcomes for young people," Ms Hunder said.

ASG offers a range of education support initiatives that it invites the community of the City of Casey to participate in and reap the benefits of, including the NEiTA Teaching Awards, parenting information resources – KidsLife and Parent Briefings, You Can Do It! Education – an education program to build the foundations of achievement, Marcom Projects' multimedia educational products, and education journals for the teaching profession at the early childhood and primary levels (visit www.asg.com.au – Community tab).

Ms Hunder says, "ASG really has the runs on the board. Currently ASG is helping more than 176,000 Australian Member parents plan for the costs of their children's education. Last year almost 45,000 students had their secondary or post-secondary education costs supported by ASG benefits. In addition, ASG has paid out more than \$867 million in benefits to its members since its inception."

ASG offers a unique, convenient, and proven way to plan for education based on three simple principles:

- long periods of regular, small contributions – from as little as \$11 a week;
- a tax-advantaged savings environment; and
- prudent investment of members' contributions by professional fund managers.

ASG Cranbourne Centre Manager, Mr John Coughlin welcomes contact from City of Casey community representatives, parents, and grandparents. People can contact John at the ASG Cranbourne Centre by: phone: 1800 648 945 or email: jcoughlin@asg.com.au or visit the centre at: Suite 13, 33 High Street, Cranbourne. City of Casey residents can learn more about ASG and access free education tips and planning tools, including ASG's education costs calculators and a range of guides from ASG's website – www.asg.com.au.

Reference:

1. Access Economics, *Locking in or losing prosperity: Australia's Choice*, Business Council of Australia, July 2005 available at the website address:
<http://www.accesseconomics.com.au/publicationsreports/showreport.php?id=8&searchfor=2005&searchby=year>

**** ends ****

For more information, please contact:

Janet Thomas, Public Relations, Australian Scholarships Group
Ph: 03-9276 7758 Mobile: 0402 837 758
Email: publicrelations@asg.com.au Web: www.asg.com.au

Australian Scholarships Group Friendly Society Limited ABN 21 087 648 879
Registered Office: 23-35 Hanover Street, Oakleigh, Victoria 3166
Phone: (03) 9276 7777 Fax: (03) 9563 2780 Website: www.asg.com.au