

Tuesday 15 September 2009

PARLIAMENT DEBATES FUTURE OF VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Parliament's Legislative Council will tomorrow (Wednesday) debate the future of the Victorian College of the Arts, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council David Davis said today.

Liberal Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, Bruce Atkinson, will lead the debate which is scheduled to begin mid-morning.

A number of VCA students, lecturers and alumni are expected to be in the Legislative Council chamber to listen to the debate from 10am.

Of particular concern is that the University of Melbourne has limited and cut courses on offer through the Victorian College of the Arts and has abandoned various commitments that led to the Parliament agreeing to the *Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Act 2006*.

The motion calls on the Premier to make representations to the University's Vice-Chancellor and its Council to ensure the continuation of the specialist performing arts degree courses and practical training under the Victorian College of the Arts.

"Interested Victorians and in particular students affected by the University's changes are welcome to attend Parliament to witness the debate," Mr Davis said.

The motion, to be moved by Mr Atkinson, reads:

"That this House —

- (1) expresses its concern about the proposed changes to the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts curriculum and budget cuts by the University of Melbourne and calls on the Premier to make representations to the Vice-Chancellor and the University Council to ensure the continuation of the specialist performing arts degree courses and practical training under the Victorian College of the Arts;
- (2) notes Melbourne's pre-eminent position in the performing arts and the substantial contribution of the musical theatre and other performing arts to the Victorian economy and recognises the significant role the Victorian College of the Arts has played in teaching performance skills and developing successful performers for Australian and international theatre, film, television and musical productions;
- (3) further notes the support of former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett and other former Ministers of the Arts, including Mary Delahunty and Race Matthews, as well as the commitment of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ted Baillieu, to the continuation of the specialist courses and function of the Victorian College of the Arts;
- (4) notes that the University of Melbourne has limited and cut courses on offer through the Victorian College of the Arts and has abandoned various commitments made in agreements that led to the Parliament agreeing to the *Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Act 2006*; and
- (5) expresses its concern that the actions of the University of Melbourne, with limited consultation, have not been consistent with the assurance of the State Minister for Finance in the second reading debate of the *Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Bill* in 2006 that the integration would "guarantee that the College's role as Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training and education can continue."