



# VICHANSARD

## Whole Speech

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Title **MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY (VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS) BILL**  
House **ASSEMBLY**  
Activity **Second Reading**  
Members **DIXON**  
Date **22 August 2006**  
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"22 August 2006 ASSEMBLY"

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## MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY (**VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS**) BILL

### Second reading

Debate resumed from 14 June; Ms KOSKY (Minister for Education and Training).

[Mr DIXON \(Nepean\)](#) -- The Liberal Party is supporting [the](#) Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill 2006. I wish to make a few points about this bill and what it proposes to do, [the](#) reaction to it and a bit [of the](#) history.

[The](#) bill will repeal [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) Act 1981. It will abolish [the Victorian College of the Arts](#), which I will refer to as [the](#) VCA. It will designate Melbourne University as [the college](#) successor in law and transfer all [of the](#) VCA's assets and liabilities to Melbourne University.

It will also ensure that any gifts and trusts for [the college](#) continue in favour [of](#) Melbourne University and will transfer [the](#) VCA staff to [the](#) university on terms and conditions that are in aggregate no less favourable than those they currently receive. It is very important that [the](#) staff are comfortable with this and that there is no disadvantage for them. It will also transfer [the](#) non-award students to [the](#) university and amend [the](#) Melbourne University Act 1958 to establish a faculty [of the](#) university called [the](#) faculty [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) -- in other words, [the](#) VCA will no longer exist as a separate entity. It will be integrated into Melbourne University, and quite cleverly, I think, integrated as a stand-alone faculty [of the](#) university. That is what this legislation aims to do.

Heads [of](#) agreement have been reached on [the](#) merger and [the college](#) will be represented on [the](#) university council.

One [of the](#) outgoing current members [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) council will be included on [the](#) university council, and [the](#) current director will become [the](#) dean [of the](#) new faculty -- another very neat fit. That will be Professor Andrea Hull, who is [the](#) current director [of the](#) VCA.

[The](#) legislation will come into place from [the](#) start [of](#) next year. [The](#) work going on behind [the](#) scenes will ensure that that happens from 1 January 2007. Any ongoing gifts and gifts which would have previously been donated to [the](#) VCA will now go on to and be able to be used by [the](#) Melbourne University faculty created by this bill.

There has been a lot [of](#) consultation not only with staff but also, importantly, with students

as well as former students, because [the](#) VCA has been quite an icon in Melbourne. Many people who gained qualifications from [the college](#) are proud [of](#) their qualifications and where they got them from.

It is important that staff and students are comfortable with and will not be disadvantaged by the change. Consultation has taken place and everyone has agreed that it is a good thing. Furthermore, the alumni of the VCA will transfer to the association of the university.

The VCA is partly on university land but also partly on Crown land. The Crown land on which it is situated is zoned for public purposes and not designated as education land. That might be worth pursuing in the future. Some of the land on which the VCA is situated is still used by the Victoria Barracks for police purposes. Once things settle down it may be worth looking at that and clearing up that small mess so far as zoning is concerned. There are also some beautiful heritage buildings as well as some heritage overlays on the land. Some of the beautiful buildings, of which many members would be aware, are certainly worth preserving. They are integral to the history of the arts in Melbourne, and Melbourne is renowned for its arts.

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As of last year the VCA had about 1000 students, of which 750 were undergraduates and 250 were taking postgraduate studies. Its overall budget for last year, the size of which I was surprised at, was in excess of \$23 million, which supported 98 academic staff, a number of administrative staff and also a significant number of sessional teaching staff. The nature of an arts college is that it has sessional teachers, particularly of musical instruments or other facets of the arts, who come in, take sessions and then move out. A lot of people have worked and are working at the VCA, and they will move across to be part of the Melbourne University staff.

In its current form the VCA consists of six schools -- in art, dance, drama, music, film and television, and production. It has two associated centres: the Centre for Ideas and the Willin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development. Within that environment the VCA offers both undergraduate and postgraduate course work and research degrees and diplomas.

[The](#) VCA is about [the arts](#) and as such a very comprehensive curriculum is being offered and will continue to be offered as part [of](#) Melbourne University.

[The college](#) was established back in 1972 with its own act [of](#) Parliament, which will no longer be on [the](#) books from 1 January next year. We have an unusual thing here in Victoria where each university has an act [of](#) Parliament which covers basically [the](#) governance [of](#) that university. That is about where [the Victorian](#) government's interaction with universities stops, because [the](#) majority [of the](#) funding and most other aspects associated with universities are really federal matters. But they are creatures [of the Victorian](#) Parliament and as such each has an act [of](#) Parliament. [The](#) VCA act, which was established in 1972, will finish at [the](#) end [of](#) this year.

[The](#) foundation school was [the](#) National Gallery [of](#) Victoria art school, which dates back to 1867, so it has a long history as being part [of the arts](#) in Melbourne. It was opened as [the](#) VCA School [of](#) Art in [the](#) first term [of](#) 1973 following [the](#) legislation in 1972. In 1992 [the](#) Swinburne School [of](#) Film and Television became part [of the](#) VCA. On Sunday I will attend [the](#) open day at [the](#) Swinburne campus with my son, who is looking at studying film and television. I am very interested in seeing what it has to offer.

[The Victorian College of the Arts](#) Secondary School is also formally associated with [the college](#). That has been a particularly exciting venture. [The](#) government has announced that that school will be enhanced with some new buildings and facilities. It is important that we have these specialist-type schools which expose our young people, who excel in every area [of the](#) curriculum, to excellent and intensive studies in their skill areas and that there be appropriate levels [of](#) staff and funding to support them.

They can then go on and share that in the wider community.

I will refer to some of the alumni of the VCA. Some of the names in my briefing notes do not mean a lot to me because I am a bit of a philistine as far as the arts are concerned, but the VCA is proud of these people and it is worthwhile reading their names into Hansard. There is Patricia Piccinini, who was at the school of art in 1991 and has won a number of awards. Padraic Savage, who was at the school of music in 1992, is co-principal of the Royal

Philharmonic Orchestra in London. That is worthy of mention. There is also Shannon Birchall, who attended the school of music in 2004 -- and I will not go any further, because there are complex band names and what have you and I would not like to get them wrong, other than to say that these people are alumni and very famous in their field.

Phillip Adams, from the school of dance -- not Phillip Adams the journalist: when I saw his name I thought, 'There's a name I know', but I do not know this one -- is well known on the New York scene. There is also Adrienne Chisholm from the school of production in 1996; Justin Kurzel and Tim Jolley, who have won awards for films in Australia; and also Andrew Bovell from the school of drama. He wrote the film *Lantana*, which even I know is one of the better films that has been produced in Victoria.

I think we all know about the Melbourne University. Established back in 1853, it was the first university in Victoria and the second in Australia. It is probably the leading research university in Australia and has an incredible and growing international reputation. It is consistently in the world's top 20 universities. It has had some wonderful leadership over the years, including that of its present vice-chancellor. It seems to be at the forefront of university development and research.

Looking at innovation, we see the Melbourne model that is being discussed at the moment, which is pretty exciting and certainly worth pursuing. It is indicative of Melbourne University and the work it does in this state.

The university is based at Parkville and has an enrolment of 42 000 students, of which 8000 are international students, and 6000 academic and general staff. One of the things Melbourne University is proud of is that each year it helps about 1000 students from disadvantaged backgrounds to undertake and complete their studies through its excellent special access program. The faculties of Melbourne University

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include architecture building and planning; arts, economics and commerce; education; engineering; land and food resources; law; music; medicine, dentistry and health sciences; science; veterinary science; a school of graduate studies and the Melbourne Business School. We now have a new faculty, with the VCA being added as one of the faculties of Melbourne University.

What I wish to illustrate in my next few remarks is the fact that there has been a close relationship between the VCA and Melbourne University for 15 years now; it is not something that has come about suddenly. Neither party is coming cold to the arrangement this bill is facilitating. In 1991 the VCA became an affiliated college of Melbourne University. Under that affiliation VCA courses and the awards it conferred were approved by the university's academic board. VCA students have been to all intents students of the university, and the degrees they have received have been conferred by Melbourne University, so a fairly close relationship has existed since 1991.

Since then the university has been receiving commonwealth funding that is specifically reserved for students of the VCA. The funding went directly from the federal government to the VCA, not via the university.

In 1999 the relevant federal department acknowledged that high costs were involved in providing these sorts of arts courses, and at the end of a review process there was a small increase in funding for the VCA and students at the college. However, the Higher Education Support Act 2003 changed the mechanism of funding for universities. Essentially the funding was based on a per capita type of grant and did not really recognise the differences and the more intensive costs associated with providing the sorts of courses the VCA had been offering and was offering at that time.

The VCA wanted Melbourne University to fill the gap, which amounted to \$6000 per student - quite a large amount when you look at the number of students who were part of the VCA. Melbourne University could not work with that model, and the VCA could not continue in that form without severely compromising itself. That really precipitated talks between the two bodies, resulting in the merger we are talking about today. They were forced into it, but both sides have recognised the benefits of the integration facilitated by this bill.

Firstly, it is going to provide the VCA with a secure future. It will know where it is and it will know where it is going, and the funding issue will be solved to a large degree through this

arrangement. It will also have a framework for moving forward.

The bill will create an expanded VCA because it will be a new faculty within the University of Melbourne, and being closely associated with that university will really be a plus for the VCA. It will expand the capacity of the university to provide broader based visual and performing arts training and education. It will be possible to provide those services to practitioners in other disciplines as well, so that rather than being a stand-alone college, as the VCA has been in the past, it will become an integral part of the university. It will build closer links with other faculties, and that is a positive not only for students of the VCA but also for students of other disciplines. This arrangement will also enhance the international standing of the University of Melbourne, because it is offering something else which is special, which is longstanding and which is world class. It will bring a whole new area to Melbourne University on which it can further build its international reputation.

The integration of these two bodies also fulfils the potential of the VCA's Southbank site to become an internationally recognised precinct for training, education and research in the visual and performing arts. That is a great thing that is happening at Southbank, and it has taken a long while. A lot of people still do not recognise Southbank as an arts precinct. They are fixated on St Kilda Road, with the National Gallery, the Arts Centre spire and the theatres, but there is a lot more going on behind the scenes in the side streets and main roads in Southbank. It is a wonderful precinct, and a lot more people in Melbourne need to discover that. It is not pedestrian friendly, and it is not an easy area to walk around because of its narrow footpaths and busy roads, but it is an area of which Melbourne can be very proud and an area that is worth expanding. In the end there will be savings to be made by this integration, and one area in which this should happen is administration. This should help both parties to the agreement.

Finally I want to quote from the joint media release issued by the University of Melbourne and the VCA in November last year when they announced the integration introduced by this bill we are debating today. The second paragraph of the media release says:

This decision has been taken to ensure the long-term financial viability of the VCA -- one of only three institutions in the world with all major art forms under one roof -- and will enable the college to continue and enhance its role as Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training and education.

Professor Glyn Davis, AC, the vice-chancellor of Melbourne University, said in the media release:

The VCA is an internationally significant arts education body and the university is proud to have it as a faculty. The university now has the exciting prospect of developing and growing its visual and performing arts areas and of pursuing synergistic teaching and research activities between VCA

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disciplines and university areas such as music, creative arts, cinema studies and arts education.

In the same release VCA director Professor Andrea Hull, AO, is quoted as saying:

Most importantly, the university and the VCA share a commitment and a joint vision to protect the VCA's staff and students and our totally unique artistic educational offering. While we initially came to this process as a consequence of federal government policy, both institutions are totally committed to developing a framework that enhances and protects the strengths of both institutions.

Their words summarise the feelings of both bodies, the staff, the students and former students of both entities and anyone who has an interest in the importance of the arts within Victoria.

[The](#) Liberal Party supports this legislation and wishes [the](#) bill a speedy passage, and it certainly wishes this new faculty [of](#) Melbourne University all [the](#) best for [the](#) future.

[Mr MAUGHAN \(Rodney\)](#) -- I am pleased to speak on the Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill and to indicate that [The](#) Nationals will also be supporting it. [The Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA), as members will be well aware, is a highly respected educational institution in this state. We are very proud [of](#) our [arts](#) scene in Melbourne in particular, and [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) has been a very important part [of](#) that going back a long, long way -- I think going back to 1867 when it first started.

Certainly it has had some very distinguished graduates in [the arts](#) scene itself. In painting,

people like McCubbin, Roberts and Arthur Boyd were all graduates [of the college](#) in its very early days.

As has already been indicated there are other very notable graduates from [the school of music, arts, dancing and production](#). It has really made a great contribution to [the cultural diversity of Melbourne and Victoria of which we are so proud](#). I support [the notion that the VCA is Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training in this country, and it is widely acknowledged as such](#).

[The bill that is before the house essentially does two things, and I read from clause 1, where its purposes are listed:](#)

(a) to provide for [the integration of the Victorian College of the Arts with the University of Melbourne](#); and

(b) to establish a faculty [of the University of Melbourne to be called the --Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts--](#).

I have no problem with that, except to argue that it need not have happened this way. It is a good solution to the funding problem that has beset the VCA, where essentially it has been underwritten by the University of Melbourne for some time now. I commend the University of Melbourne council for being prepared to underwrite the VCA so that it could continue providing its excellent service. But clearly that has been at a cost to some of the other functions of the university -- in research and teaching in other faculties and so on.

It is easy to say, and some people will put the argument, that the problem was that the commonwealth reduced funding to the VCA and that has triggered the difficulties. I accept that, except that I would put the argument that the Victorian government should well have stepped in and filled the bill. As I say, the government is proud, as we all are, to trumpet the achievements of the arts scene here in Melbourne.

We have a wide diversity in terms [of music, dance, theatre and the arts generally](#); there is a very vibrant [arts scene here in Melbourne](#). If we are going to talk about [the importance of the arts](#), as we do from time to time in this house when we say how proud we are [of the arts in Melbourne](#), then I think it behoves [the government of the day to follow that up with some funding](#). It was not a huge amount [of funding that would have been required to fill the gap to allow the Victorian College of the Arts to continue as it was, as essentially a separate entity down in Southbank](#).

I agree with [the opposition spokesman on this issue that we have a very vibrant arts centre in St Kilda Road and at Southbank, and I agree with him that many people just do not realise the activities that are going on in that area](#). It is a pity that to some degree [the VCA is losing that autonomy because the Victorian government was not prepared to fill that gap that was left by the commonwealth](#).

Be that as it may, this is an excellent solution to the problem. There has been a close relationship between the VCA and Melbourne University that goes back to 1991 or thereabouts. Under the terms of an agreement between the VCA and the university, the college essentially maintained its identity but the college students were deemed to be students of Melbourne University.

In terms of the funding, as I have already indicated, representations were certainly made to the commonwealth government by the college, the university and others to alter the funding allocation, but they were unsuccessful. Again, I compliment Melbourne University, which has been putting in something of the order of \$4.5 million per annum to

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enable [the Victorian College of the Arts to continue to do the great work it was doing](#). That has been at a cost to some [of the faculties](#); there is absolutely no question about that. [The college of the arts really did have to sort out what it was going to do](#). There has been this very amicable relationship between [the college and the university so that the college could become a faculty of the university along with all the other faculties, like law, engineering, science and so on](#). That has been a very positive outcome.

[The governing councils of both the VCA and the university, as I understand it, have requested the government introduce this legislation to make the necessary legislative changes](#). We have certainly spoken with both [the university and the college](#). My colleague in

the upper house the Honourable Peter Hall, a member for Gippsland Province, contacted the university and received correspondence back from Professor John McKenzie, who at that time was the deputy vice-chancellor, in which he said:

Thank you for your letter to Professor Glyn Davis dated 26 June seeking the views of the university council with regard to the Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Bill recently introduced in the Victorian Parliament for debate. I respond on the vice-chancellor's behalf.

The University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts have been fully consulted throughout the process of drafting the bill. I have sought the views of the chancellor and chair of the university council, Mr Ian Reynard, who advises the council fully supports the legislation in its current form.

Likewise with the VCA. My colleague in the upper house has spoken with Professor Andrea Hull, who has indicated that this is a necessary step, that other states have supported arts training institutions, that it would have been nice to receive some state support in this case but that under the circumstances it is not forthcoming, and that therefore the VCA is quite prepared to go ahead and supports this arrangement.

It is a relatively simple piece of legislation. It goes one step further to formalising the arrangements that have been in place for some time. It will ensure the long-term viability of the VCA. It is great for the University of Melbourne. It will extend its influence into the arts, extend the number of faculties that it now has, and will certainly extend the breadth and diversity of the University of Melbourne, which is not only a pre-eminent university in Australia but highly regarded around the world. It will provide a secure future for the Victorian College of the Arts.

Because of that, and because of the importance of the arts to Victoria and to the Victorian economy, The Nationals will be supporting this legislation that has been introduced by the government.

Ms BARKER (Oakleigh) -- I am very pleased to speak on the Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Bill of 2006. As has been indicated, the bill formalises an agreement between the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne, enabling these two great institutions to integrate. The bill was drafted at the request of the college and the university, and the decision to integrate was taken to address the college's funding shortfall, which resulted from changes to the commonwealth government's funding arrangements for the tertiary sector. The integration will ensure the long-term financial viability of the college and ensure that the very important contribution that it has made to the arts in Victoria will continue.

As the member for Nepean indicated, the Victorian College of the Arts was created on 30 November 1972, and initially comprised the school of art, which was formerly the National Gallery of Victoria art school. The values of what was the national gallery art school, which was established in 1867, were preserved in the objects of the college when it was constituted under an act of the Victorian Parliament in 1981. They can be best summarised as the provision of intensive, specialist, studio-based training and education for outstanding and emerging artists. There has, of course, been considerable growth in the operation of the college over the years, and now it has all disciplines of the creative and performing arts, which makes it unique in the world.

At present the college comprises the schools of art, dance, drama, film and television, music and production. The college also houses the Centre for Ideas and the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development.

The members of the teaching faculty of the college are outstanding artists in their own right. There have of course been many successful students of the college, some of which the Minister for Education and Training mentioned in her second-reading speech, including Adam Elliot, the winner of an Oscar in 2004. Other outstanding students have been Sarah Watt, the award-winning writer, director, producer and animator; actor Vince Colosimo, who is well known to all of us; and the 2004 winner of the Australian dance award for outstanding performance by a female dancer, Larissa McGowan -- and they are just a few of them. I note also that in the second-reading speech the minister highlighted the members of the fantastic Melbourne band the Cat Empire, which of course featured at the Commonwealth Games.

This bill ensures that future generations of Victorian artists will continue to benefit from the high-quality teaching programs which are offered by the Victorian College of the Arts. As many members know, there

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have been a series of major changes in the tertiary education sector in recent years. Despite those changes -- which are in some ways challenges -- to the Victorian College of the Arts, the uniqueness and independence of the college have been preserved.

In 1991 the college entered into an affiliation agreement with the University of Melbourne that preserved the independent status of the college. Under that affiliation the college has maintained its special principles, some of which we are all aware of -- namely, the talent-based entry policy and the means by which the college maintains its teaching quality, which is the high teacher-student ratio. However, recent changes to the commonwealth funding arrangements, which were touched upon by the member for Nepean, have threatened the survival of the college of the arts. The college has worked in partnership with the University of Melbourne to address those funding issues for the long-term while preserving its core mission.

It is important to outline the responsibilities of the commonwealth and the states in regard to tertiary education, because as I have said they have had an impact on the college of the arts. In 1974 the commonwealth government assumed full funding responsibility for tertiary education. While the state and territory governments retained the legislative and regulatory responsibilities, the responsibility for financially supporting universities was transferred to the commonwealth. By 2004 only 31 per cent of the revenue of Victorian universities was provided by the commonwealth government, and in recent years there have of course been further negative revisions of funding for the very important tertiary education sector.

In 2003 the commonwealth government enacted new arrangements which cancelled six specific funding agreements that the college had previously negotiated with it. These arrangements recognised the high costs associated with the specialised training in visual and performing arts which the college provides.

As has been mentioned, the revised funding guidelines resulted in a shortfall of more than \$6000 for every student of the college. The commonwealth government instructed the University of Melbourne to make up this funding shortfall, which in 2005 resulted in the university having to divert \$4.6 million of its funds to the college.

Although the college and the university had been affiliated since 1991, it was not until the commonwealth government issued that directive that the university had any financial responsibility for the college. After the commonwealth made it clear that the university would have to continue to make up any shortfall for an indefinite period, the college and university -- to their credit -- set about developing a long-term strategy that would ensure the college's financial viability.

In late 2005 a heads of agreement was signed which proposed that the college be integrated as a faculty of the university with secure funding arrangements to ensure that the commitment which the university and the college shared to provide quality education in the creative and performing arts could continue. The heads of agreement recognises the status, uniqueness and reputation of the college and retains its important components, such as the talent-based entry policy for students.

The identity of the Victorian College of the Arts and its objects are enshrined in this legislation, which will enable the college, as a faculty of the university, to continue to provide high-quality education and training to young artists. Importantly the legislation will also ensure that the Victorian College of the Arts will continue to contribute to our dynamic and vibrant arts community in Victoria. This is a piece of legislation which is supported by both sides.

Regrettably the commonwealth government had a severe impact on the college by changing its funding arrangements, but I am sure the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts will continue their excellent provision of education to the arts community -- in particular to our emerging artists and to students and teachers of the arts in Victoria. I commend the bill to the house.

[Ms ASHER \(Brighton\)](#) -- I too wish to make a couple of observations about the Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Bill, which the Liberal Party supports. I am interested in speaking on this simply because I am a former member of the Victorian College of the Arts Council -- I held that position in my first term of Parliament as the then local member -- and I have a great degree of respect for the work the college does. The bill sets

up a new regime for [the college](#) and [the university](#) from 1 January 2007. [The bill](#), in essence, allows [the integration of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) as a faculty [of the University of Melbourne](#).

I draw the attention of the house to a number of useful web sites, which also cover the desire of the college, the government and the university to integrate -- that is, for the college to be a faculty of the University of Melbourne. Members may be interested to refer to [www.vca.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.vca.unimelb.edu.au) and the history and integration sections of that web site.

I also want to make reference to the second-reading speech. I refer in the first instance to a statement that appears at page 1:

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This bill has been prepared at the request of the college and the university and will ensure the long-term financial viability of the college. In addition, the integration will guarantee that the college's role as Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training and education can continue.

Indeed other members of the house have referred to that aspect of the second-reading speech. The VCA University of Melbourne web site expresses a similar view. It states:

This decision was taken in late 2005 to ensure the long-term financial viability of the VCA ... Integration will enable the college to continue and enhance its role as Australia's pre-eminent provider of visual and performing arts training and education

[The](#) second-reading speech then goes on to give a bit [of](#) history about [the college](#):

[The](#) origins [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) date back to 1867 when [the](#) first students were admitted into [the](#) college's foundation school, [the](#) school [of](#) art. Throughout its early years [the](#) school [of](#) art produced many famous and celebrated artists, including Fred McCubbin, Tom Roberts, Arthur Boyd, Clara Southern and Joy Hester.

Indeed [the](#) web site to which I have just referred makes [the](#) same point:

... foundation school, [the](#) school [of](#) art, was originally [the](#) National Gallery [of](#) Victoria Art School, which admitted its first students in 1867.

The school's graduates went on to become some of Australia's most significant artists and include Fred McCubbin, Tom Roberts, Rupert Bunny, Arthur Boyd, Clara Southern, Margaret Preston, Joy Hester ...

I note the member for Oakleigh picked up on this reference in the second-reading speech as well:

In recent years a number of graduates of the college have been internationally recognised for excellence in their fields. Honourable members will recall that in 2004 Adam Elliot won the Oscar for best short animation for his film Harvie Krumpet. Musicians Harry Angus, Carlo Barbaro, Kieran Conreau, Ross Irwin and Ryan Munro feature in the hugely successful Melbourne band The Cat Empire ...

Oddly enough the web site makes reference to that as well:

The catalogue of national and international successes by VCA graduates is extensive and covers every area of artistic endeavour in Australia. In 2004 Adam Elliot won the Oscar for best short animation for his film Harvie Krumpet ... Musicians Ross Irwin, Ryan Munro --

and the others are then named --

feature in the hugely successful Melbourne band The Cat Empire.

I think we are beginning to get the point here. Again the Minister for Education and Training said in the second-reading speech:

On 1 July 1991 the college became affiliated with the university.

Under the terms of the affiliation agreement the college maintained its unique character and mission; however, the college's award courses were approved by the university's academic board, the college's award students were classed as students of the university and their degrees were conferred by the university.

The minister went on to say:

As a consequence of the affiliation arrangement, the university received a discrete amount of funding from the commonwealth which was identified specifically for students of the college and was channelled directly to the college.

The web site carries a similar sentiment. It states:

On 1 July 1991 [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) became an affiliated [college of the](#) University of Melbourne. This affiliation preserved [the](#) distinctive character and mission [of the](#) VCA whilst extending its capacity to fulfil [the](#) special role that it has within Australian higher education.

Under [the](#) affiliation agreement VCA award courses were approved by [the](#) university's academic board, VCA students are students [of the](#) university and their degrees conferred by [the](#) university.

And I continue quoting [the](#) web site:

Since then [the](#) university received a discrete amount [of](#) funding from [the](#) commonwealth identified specifically for VCA students, which it channelled directly to [the](#) VCA.

There is an amazing unanimity on the role of the commonwealth. The second-reading speech states:

In 1999 the commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs recognised the high costs associated with providing the specialist training offered by the college. Accordingly the commonwealth approved a reduction in the student load for students of the college from 2000 to 2002 without decreasing their operating grant. Had this arrangement continued, the 2004 level of commonwealth funding for the college would have been \$19 000 per student.

The web site states:

In 1999, following discussions with the university and the VCA, DETYA acknowledged the high costs involved in the provision of intensive, specialist training at the VCA ... and approved a reduction in the VCA component of the university's student load over the period 2000-02 without a decrease in the operating grant. Under a continuation of these arrangements the 2004 level of commonwealth funding for the VCA would have been \$19 028.00 per student.

Again we go on and see that the second-reading speech states:

Representations by the college, the university, the Victorian government, the opposition and minor parties urging the

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commonwealth government to alter the funding allocation were unsuccessful. Instead the then federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, instructed the university to top up the college funding from its own resources. It was estimated that approximately \$4.6 million of university funds were diverted from teaching and research to the college in 2005, with future years requiring at least equivalent amounts to be diverted from university activities.

The web site states:

Despite representations to the commonwealth by the university, the VCA, the Victorian government, the opposition and the minor parties, the commonwealth maintained the new funding basis for VCA students.

In late 2004 [the](#) federal minister for education instructed [the](#) University of Melbourne to make up [the](#) shortfall [of](#) funding to [the](#) VCA from its own funds for an indefinite number [of](#) years ...

[The](#) result was that approximately \$4.6 million [of](#) university funds were diverted from teaching and research to [the](#) VCA in 2005 with at least equivalent amounts to be diverted in future years.

There are other examples. I make [the](#) point in [the](#) course [of](#) this debate that [the](#) second-reading speech is three pages long. [The](#) first two pages [of the](#) education minister's second-reading speech have been plagiarised from [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) University of Melbourne web site. This is [the](#) minister for education. [The](#) third page outlines clauses in [the](#) bill which is legitimate. There are two explanations for this.

[The](#) first one is that [the](#) minister for education has plagiarised [the](#) University of Melbourne; [the](#) second one is that [the](#) University of Melbourne and [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) have plagiarised [the](#) minister's second-reading speech.

[The](#) problem for [the](#) minister is that there is a document called Integration [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) with [the](#) University of Melbourne dated 15 November 2005 where [the](#) authorship is very clearly [the](#) University of Melbourne and [the Victorian College of the Arts](#). [The](#) web site is clearly based on that particular document. [The](#) minister [of](#) course did not make her second-reading speech until 14 June 2006 in [the](#) Legislative Assembly.

I make this point: [the](#) minister for education has special responsibility for [the Victorian](#)

certificate [of](#) education and for plagiarism and ensuring that students do not cheat.

This minister has plagiarised a web site for her second-reading speech on this bill. A second-reading speech is one of the most important speeches ministers ever make before the Parliament. Quite frankly, I do not think that is acceptable conduct for an education minister. We have seen ministers in this government reading wrong second-reading speeches; we now have a case of an education minister, of all ministers, providing a plagiarised piece of work to this Parliament when she herself has responsibility for ensuring plagiarism does not occur in Victorian schools.

I conclude by referring to an item, again on a web site, about the Minister for Education and Training, the Honourable Lynne Kosky, opening an information and communications technology building at the University of Melbourne. It is a \$60 million information and communication technology building in University Square. She was shown research projects on plagiarism detection. I am more than happy to let this minister know that we on this side of the house can detect -- --

[The](#) ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Plowman) -- Order! [The](#) member's time has expired.

[Ms BEATTIE \(Yuroke\)](#) -- I am pleased to rise in support of this bill which formalises [the](#) agreement for [the](#) integration [of](#) [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) and [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne, both great institutions.

[The](#) bill was drafted at [the](#) request [of](#) [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) and [the](#) university and it provides for [the college](#) to be integrated as a faculty [of](#) [the](#) university. [The](#) bill will ensure [the](#) long-term financial viability [of](#) [the college](#) in an environment that has changed in recent times because [of](#) [the](#) commonwealth funding arrangements. By way [of](#) background I will briefly outline some [of](#) those funding arrangements that have changed. I will talk about [the](#) responsibilities [of](#) [the](#) commonwealth and [the](#) states in relation to tertiary education and its funding.

Honourable members may recall that in 1974 -- besides recalling that we were all a lot younger -- the commonwealth government assumed full funding responsibility for tertiary education. State and territory governments retained legislative and regulatory responsibilities but responsibility for financial support of universities was transferred to the commonwealth. By 2004 only 31 per cent of the revenue of Victoria universities was funded by the commonwealth.

Continuing in this disgraceful and shameful pattern, in recent years the commonwealth has further revised funding arrangements for the tertiary education sector in what I feel is a very negative manner. In 2003 the Howard government enacted new arrangements which cancelled six specific funding agreements that the college had previously negotiated with the commonwealth government. These agreements recognised the high costs associated with providing specialist training in visual and performing arts. We all know it is a very specialised area.

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The revised funding guidelines resulted in a funding shortfall of more than \$6000 for every student of the college. The commonwealth government then asked the university to make up this funding shortfall. That was after the commonwealth made it clear that the university would indeed have to make up that shortfall for an indefinite period. The college and university together set about developing a strategy to ensure the college's financial viability in the long term, and that leads us to where we are with this bill.

The college and university have been affiliated since 1991. Prior to this directive the university had no financial responsibility for the college. In late 2005 the college and university signed a heads of agreement proposing that the college be integrated as a faculty. The college and university have a shared commitment to quality arts education and indeed have achieved that. I have been to some of their concerts and they are amazing. They have a shared commitment to quality arts education, as does the Bracks government.

This history is good ground for [the](#) performing [arts](#).

[The](#) university's faculty [of](#) music, which was established in 1891, is [the](#) oldest and one [of](#) [the](#) two largest music schools in Australia. [The](#) faculty has a highly selective entry policy and is highly competitive. Currently it encompasses about 700 students, including more than 120 graduate students, and more than 100 specialist staff. [The](#) university's school [of](#) creative [arts](#),

established in 1995, offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programs in academic and professional [arts](#) studies.

We have seen many terrific entertainers, performers and artists come out [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#). Some [of](#) those have been named previously. I want to talk a little bit about Adam Elliot, who won an Oscar in 2004 for his animated film Harvie Krumpet, which most members would have seen. I was a guest at a function at which Adam was [the](#) speaker.

As well as showing us his famous film, Harvie Krumpet, he regaled us with stories about being prepared for [the](#) Oscars -- having to have his teeth whitened and his skin tanned so that he would look good on [the](#) night. Not only was he obviously a very talented man but he is a great comedian in [the](#) making as well, regaling us with those stories.

[The](#) integration [of the Victorian College of the Arts](#) and Melbourne University is a happy marriage. I am told that there are no issues about [the](#) land on which [the](#) VCA is located although I understand that some police horses are stabled on [the](#) grounds. One [of the](#) reasons that they are is so that they can make a speedy dash to Government House, should [the](#) Governor be under any threat at all. Nobody wishes to see our new Governor, Professor David de Kretser, harmed, but should somebody take that view, those horses are out there within a short speedy gallop [of](#) Government House.

This is a good bill. It suits all [the](#) stakeholders and all [the](#) parties concerned. I wish [the](#) bill a speedy passage.

[Mr HONEYWOOD \(Warrandyte\)](#) -- In rising to make a brief contribution to the debate on [the](#) bill, I point out that all members can play [the](#) blame game when it comes to funding for tertiary institutions. I do not intend to belabour [the](#) point, but it would be fair to say that if one looks at [the](#) support on a per student and capital funding basis given by [the](#) previous Keating federal government for [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA) vis-a-vis its support for [the](#) National Institute [of Dramatic Arts](#), one can see that [the](#) previous federal Labor government was very Sydney-centric. I am sure that members opposite will recall that [the](#) former Prime Minister, Paul Keating, saw Sydney as [the arts](#) capital [of](#) Australia and treated Victoria as a very poor second cousin.

Ms Allan -- You should have been at [the](#) history conference!

This is revisionism!

Mr HONEYWOOD -- I take up the minister's interjection. It is not revisionism; it is actually pointing out the facts. Too often members on the other side claim a mortgage on the arts in terms of both funding and emotional support. However, when one looks to what was achieved by the previous Kennett government one sees that great contributions were made not only by the member for Brighton, who was a member of the board of the VCA, but by others. I recall that when I was the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training I appointed Lorraine Elliott, the then member for Mooroolbark, as one of my representatives on the board of the VCA. She made an outstanding contribution and was a great advocate to the Premier at the time, Jeff Kennett, in ensuring that the VCA got some special support where that was required.

Through all of this, of course, Andrea Hull has done a magnificent job as the director. When I was the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training Andrea travelled with me to Vietnam. Despite severe funding restraints she went out of her way to offer two scholarships, as I recall, to young Vietnamese ballet dancers to try to give a real boost to their careers. At that time Vietnam was only just coming into the whole area of dance training, including ballet. Andrea went above and beyond the call of duty by not only having me sign a memorandum of understanding with the national Vietnamese ballet company but also actually

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offering financial support, even though she really did not have the wherewithal from the college at the time to do as much as we would have liked.

It behoves members to consider how the chronology of events has probably affected the VCA to the point that we are at. Interestingly enough, if one looks at the National Institute of Dramatic Art web site and compares it with the VCA web site, one can see that NIDA, which is based in Sydney, has come out of an interesting arrangement. The Old Tote Theatre, as I

recall, was established at the University of New South Wales and operated by NIDA. Very early in NIDA's history, which dates back to 1959, the people at NIDA very clearly identified themselves as a separate, independent organisation. By ensuring that they were out on a limb, almost, they were able to assist their lobbying exercise to federal and state governments to gain financial support.

In Victoria, where we like to think we administer things well and on a comprehensive basis, the chronology of events that have led us to the situation we now have with VCA governance was quite the opposite. An act of this Parliament created the VCA. It is interesting to note that we really tried to nurture the VCA from day one back in 1972. There was a foundation school, the National Gallery of Victoria Art School, which dated back to 1867, but that very quickly transformed itself into the VCA school of art at the beginning of its first term in 1973. The school of music was formed a year later, the school of drama followed in 1975 and the school of dance in 1979, and the Swinburne school of film and television became part of the VCA in 1992. I was a member of the governing council back then, and I recall how much aggrieved we at Swinburne were to lose the wonderful school of film and television to the VCA. Swinburne lost part of its culture as a result but it made sense to try to bring all the different arts together under the one umbrella.

I think, though, we were the victims of trying to do the right thing because in effect we did not leave the VCA in the same situation as NIDA was perhaps left in, where the federal government had to intervene and had to set up a separate funding stream. So fairly early in its development NIDA was able to beg, borrow or steal enough funds from the commonwealth to create a precedent whereby it now receives direct funding from the commonwealth. In Victoria we have allowed the VCA, as part of its evolution, to finish up not being reliant on direct funding from the commonwealth but having to get its funding through other mechanisms, including what this bill involves -- that is, through the University of Melbourne. It seems to me that we have been the victims of trying to go a different way from NIDA. I guess some would argue that there can be only one national institute of arts. I think some in Victoria would argue that there can be two.

I believe strongly that, for example, the recent development in the world of opera, where now we have wonderful support for our own renewed state opera company, the Victorian Opera Company, is just one example of how people in this state can, when they get together, do wonderful things -- whether it be Jeannie Pratt or others who have done a great job in bringing our own opera company back to the fore. Of course, we still benefit from having Opera Australia come to Melbourne and regional Victoria, and my wife and I thoroughly enjoy their productions. The recent development of having our own opera company is indicative of the fact that Victorians are able to do their own thing. I would like to think that the passage of the bill will ensure that even though we are sort of officially passing the VCA on to the much larger University of Melbourne there will be opportunities for philanthropists and the wider community to support the VCA as a quasi-independent organisation.

Notwithstanding all that, I think all members would agree that [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne has [the](#) runs on [the](#) board when it comes to [arts](#) administration. There could not be a better mentor or sponsor organisation than [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne, whether it be its wonderful faculty [of](#) music or [the](#) Melbourne Theatre Company, which [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne has done a fantastic job [of](#) nurturing over [the](#) years.

We hope that with [the](#) passage [of](#) this legislation there can be far more [of](#) a nexus between [the](#) Melbourne Theatre Company and [the](#) school [of](#) dramatic [arts](#) at [the](#) Victorian College [of](#) the Arts. I have been to a number [of](#) performances by [the](#) graduating students [of](#) [the](#) school [of](#) drama at [the](#) VCA premises. They do an outstanding job for their profession as young actors. Hopefully, auspicing [of](#) [the](#) Melbourne Theatre Company by [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne can have some wonderful spin-offs for [the](#) school [of](#) drama associated with [the](#) VCA as well.

So to Andrea Hull, who has given long and very good service to this outstanding organisation, I say, 'All power to you, Andrea'. I also thank the current board. Board members come and go, but some have made wonderful voluntary contributions over the years. Regardless of which party has been in government at the federal level, unfortunately there has been a bias towards Sydney. There was not just the recurrent funding that former Prime Minister Paul Keating provided with a special deal for the National Institute of Dramatic Art in his home town but also the capital

works money [the](#) Keating government put into NIDA, ignoring [the](#) needs [of](#) Melbourne and [the](#) VCA in [the](#) process.

[Ms BEARD \(Kilsyth\)](#) -- It is a great pleasure to join the debate on [the](#) Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill 2006, which I am pleased to say has [the](#) support [of](#) all members [of](#) [the](#) house. [The](#) bill enables [the](#) integration [of](#) [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA) with [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne as a faculty [of](#) [the](#) university to be known as [the](#) faculty [of](#) [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#). [The](#) bill will repeal [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) Bill 1981 and amend [the](#) Melbourne University Act 1958. It will transfer all assets, liabilities, functions and responsibilities [of](#) [the](#) VCA to [the](#) university. [The](#) bill makes provision to ensure that [the](#) staff [of](#) [the](#) college become staff [of](#) [the](#) university on terms and conditions which are no less favourable in aggregate than those they currently have, which is great news for [the](#) staff.

In 1974 [the](#) federal government took responsibility for funding tertiary institutions. However, in 2003 [the](#) commonwealth government introduced [the](#) Higher Education Support Act, which revised [the](#) funding guidelines for our tertiary institutions. As a result [of](#) [the](#) 2003 legislation [the](#) college [of](#) [the](#) arts has experienced a shortfall [of](#) funds [of](#) \$6000 per student. [The](#) commonwealth government advised [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne that it should make up this shortfall. [The](#) college [of](#) [the](#) arts and [the](#) university have agreed on [the](#) basis for this transfer [of](#) responsibility. [The](#) governing councils [of](#) [the](#) college [of](#) [the](#) arts and [the](#) university contacted this government in November last year requesting [the](#) necessary legislative provisions to facilitate [the](#) integration.

It is always heartening to hear about [the](#) esteemed graduates [of](#) [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#). On a personal level Melbourne University is thought [of](#) very fondly by my family because it is where my husband Ted received his bachelor [of](#) commerce degree many years ago.

It was also interesting to read in [the](#) papers recently that Melbourne University is one [of](#) only two Australian universities to be ranked among [the](#) world's leading universities. I commend [the](#) bill to [the](#) house.

[Mr LIM \(Clayton\)](#) -- I rise to join with other members to support this bill. It is pleasing to hear that [the](#) opposition also supports it. It is one [of](#) [the](#) many happy bills [the](#) government brings into this chamber from time to time that all [the](#) affected parties agree upon. It follows a long period [of](#) negotiation and discussion with [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA), Melbourne University, staff, students and other concerned parties. [The](#) Bracks government has come up with a bill that gives all those involved exactly what they wished for.

[The](#) purpose [of](#) [the](#) bill is to effect [the](#) amalgamation [of](#) [the](#) college [of](#) [the](#) arts with Melbourne University.

In this respect it is rather like a marriage taking place between a couple who have already been cohabiting for a number [of](#) years, as [the](#) college has been a de facto part [of](#) [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne since [the](#) 1990s. Indeed since 1991 most students [of](#) [the](#) college have also been students [of](#) [the](#) university.

[The](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) has a long and distinguished history, as [the](#) minister pointed out in her second-reading speech. Some [of](#) our most respected and popular entertainers, directors and theatrical administrators trained there, and [the](#) college has a reputation for excellence that extends far beyond this state. [The](#) University [of](#) Melbourne also has a long and distinguished history and a reputation for being one [of](#) [the](#) finest academic institutions in [the](#) world. May I remind [the](#) house that Melbourne University stands at no. 19 on [the](#) list [of](#) [the](#) best universities in [the](#) world. Being no. 19 means it is no. 1 when compared to [the](#) other universities in Australia. Members [of](#) this chamber are very proud [of](#) [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne.

I cannot imagine more compatible prospects for amalgamation than these two institutions.

This bill makes a number [of](#) amendments to [the](#) Melbourne University Act 1958 to facilitate [the](#) integration, and it repeals [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) Act 1981. [The](#) college will therefore cease to exist and its council will be abolished. In place [of](#) [the](#) college [of](#) [the](#) arts [the](#) bill establishes a new faculty [of](#) [the](#) university, [the](#) faculty [of](#) [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#). In a similar manner to [the](#) old college [the](#) new faculty will provide for education in [the](#) creative, performing and other arts, and will also organise and conduct public performances,

exhibitions, conferences, lectures and [the](#) like. Incidentally, if any members should be so moved, I would highly recommend going to see some [of the](#) student productions that [the](#) VCA puts on at [the](#) Grant Street Theatre -- they have a reputation both for excellence and for daring innovation.

Once the bill becomes law Melbourne University will become the VCA's successor in law and all assets, rights, liabilities and obligations of the college will be transferred to the university. Non-award students of the college will also be transferred to the university. The VCA's staff will become staff of the university and their terms and conditions will be preserved or become more favourable than those they currently enjoy. This is indeed a very worthwhile bill that will bring about real

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benefits to education in Victoria, and I commend it to [the](#) house.

[Mr THOMPSON \(Sandringham\)](#) -- The purpose [of the](#) bill before [the](#) house is to provide for [the](#) integration [of the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA) with [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne and also to establish a faculty [of the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne to be called [the](#) faculty [of the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#). Melbourne has a very rich tradition and history in [the arts](#) which goes back well over 100 years. In [the](#) 1870s and 1880s Melbourne was referred to as 'marvellous Melbourne' and one particular aspect that earned that description was [the](#) city's vibrant [arts](#) regime. Mark Twain was a traveller who visited [the](#) city [of](#) Melbourne and marvelled at seeing such a great city unfold before his eyes. He eloquently conveyed his insights in written form.

Likewise, [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne has an extraordinarily rich history and tradition that underpins [the](#) intellectual life [of](#) Melbourne and Australia.

Its researchers have made significant contributions in myriad fields [of](#) development. Victoria has a pre-eminent role in a range [of](#) fields including pharmaceuticals, biomedical research and food technology and food production. [The](#) University [of](#) Melbourne has produced numbers [of](#) graduates who have made outstanding contributions to various fields [of](#) research both in Australia and overseas.

[The](#) Sandringham electorate also has a very rich tradition. Sandringham Secondary [College](#) has contributed to a number [of](#) casts and productions, with its graduates having moved through both to [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) and directly into actual fields [of](#) performance and production.

I pay tribute to those staff in [the](#) state system who conscientiously and diligently over several decades contributed to [the](#) development [of](#) outstanding programs.

[The](#) Sandringham Secondary [College](#) has recruited students not only from around [the](#) state but also from interstate because [of the](#) vibrancy [of](#) its [arts](#) program. A former teacher at [the](#) school for some 20 years or thereabouts was Charles Slucki who was [Victorian](#) teacher [of the](#) year in 1995. Charles Slucki headed [the](#) drama program and, along with Dr David Taylor and a number [of](#) other teachers at [the](#) school, contributed to a very rich experience for students. They undertook tours to South Australia, [the](#) United States [of](#) America and also to England to enrich [the](#) development and [the](#) experience [of](#) students at [the college](#).

At [the](#) present time [the](#) school is actively preparing for [the](#) production [of](#) South Pacific and it is expecting some outstanding results. [The](#) school is also [the](#) beneficiary [of](#) some very wise minds. A member [of the](#) current school council, John Paxinos, has a key role as an [arts](#) administrator in Melbourne.

He has been active along with Heather Fehring, who is [the](#) principal [of the](#) Highett campus, and other people on [the](#) council in developing [the](#) performance facilities at Sandringham [college](#). In terms [of](#) human movement and performance there are also other outstanding programs, and students at Sandringham [college](#) would regularly be judged among [the](#) best in [the](#) state for their contributions.

Schools such as those within my electorate and some from further afield provide a feeder for [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#). Through its creation as a centre [of](#) excellence students have had [the](#) opportunity to perform with their peers and develop their skill sets. I also understand, although I stand to be corrected, there are some secondary programs that have been conducted out [of the](#) VCA which have enabled young secondary students with

outstanding aptitude in a particular field [of](#) endeavour to continue their secondary education with an increased or enhanced emphasis on [the arts](#).

[The](#) opposition supports [the](#) bill. I would like to join with [the](#) member for Warrandyte in paying tribute to Andrea Hull and other people who have guided [the](#) destiny [of](#) [the](#) VCA during its distinguished history. We wish [the](#) bill a speedy passage.

[Ms MUNT \(Mordialloc\)](#) -- I also rise to speak in support of [the](#) Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill. I will give some background on how [the](#) bill came about. In 2003 [the](#) commonwealth government introduced [the](#) federal Higher Education Support Act which established revised funding guidelines for tertiary institutions. With [the](#) introduction [of](#) [the](#) Higher Education Support Act in 2003, [the](#) specific funding agreements [of](#) [the](#) college were cancelled and therefore, as has been mentioned by other speakers, in 2004 there was a funding shortfall [of](#) more than \$6000 for every student at [the](#) college.

Petitions from the college, the university, the state government and other parties were presented to the commonwealth government asking for it to reconsider cutting the level of funding for the college, but those petitions were unsuccessful. The university was instructed by the commonwealth government to top up the college funding from its own resources at a cost of \$4.6 million, which is a lot of top up to come from the university's own resources.

Strategies to address the funding shortfall in the long term had to be looked at. Late last year the college and the university signed a heads of agreement enabling the

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college to be integrated as a faculty [of](#) [the](#) university so as to overcome those funding difficulties. In November 2005 [the](#) director [of](#) [the](#) college and [the](#) vice-chancellor [of](#) [the](#) university wrote to [the](#) government requesting [the](#) necessary legislative provisions be made to facilitate [the](#) integration, and that is why we are here this evening speaking on this bill. Extensive consultation has taken place with [the](#) college, [the](#) university and all state government departments, including [Arts](#) Victoria and Industrial Relations Victoria. It is also pleasing to see that [the](#) bill has bipartisan support in [the](#) house.

Other speakers have mentioned [the](#) withdrawal by [the](#) federal government [of](#) education funding. By 2004 only 31 per cent [of](#) [the](#) revenue [of](#) [Victorian](#) universities was funded by [the](#) commonwealth. I am a member [of](#) [the](#) parliamentary Education and Training Committee which has looked extensively at funding arrangements and [the](#) provision [of](#) tertiary institution places in Victoria and which has seen how difficult it has been for Victoria.

We are very focused on education and there are a lot [of](#) young people who want to continue their tertiary education. We are finding it increasingly difficult as a result [of](#) [the](#) withdrawal [of](#) support by [the](#) federal government. One [of](#) [the](#) opposition members mentioned before that it seems to be Sydney-centric and it is causing difficulty for our educational institutions.

I also mention [the](#) contrast between [the](#) federal government and [the](#) state government in its support for education. Part [of](#) that support is [the](#) recently funded \$21 million [Victorian College of the Arts](#) secondary school which will be built in South Melbourne. That will be a new school with a few hundred students that will hopefully feed through to [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) and provide our next generation [of](#) performers and artists, which I think is truly wonderful.

I particularly mention that [the](#) state government has provided record levels [of](#) funding for education in Victoria and will continue to do so. One [of](#) [the](#) most important functions [of](#) a state government is to provide funds so that young people get a great education. I fully support that. I also support [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) and [the](#) new [Victorian College of the Arts](#) secondary school, which will be a wonderful innovation for Victoria.

I also particularly mention [the](#) Monk family in my electorate, which included some wonderfully artistic children. They attended our local schools and were very good at playing instruments, drama and dancing. Two [of](#) those children subsequently went through to [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) secondary school and then on to [the](#) [Victorian College of the Arts](#) tertiary institution. That shows that this institution provides a wonderful pathway for our talented young people to follow so they can do things [of](#) interest to them and excel at what they do best.

I am very pleased that quite a few [of](#) those pathways are being provided by [the](#) state

government through [the](#) different forms [of](#) education that are being made available to them.

This bill will provide certainty in [the](#) funding for [the Victorian College of the Arts](#). It is a way forward, and it is a good fit. It has broad support from all [the](#) institutions and from both sides [of](#) this house. I believe it is a really good bill, and I have no hesitation in commending it to [the](#) house.

[Ms MARSHALL \(Forest Hill\)](#) -- I rise to support the Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill, which dissolves [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) (VCA) and its council and provides for [the](#) integration [of the college](#) as a faculty [of the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne. This bill has been prepared at [the](#) request [of the college of the arts](#) and [the](#) university and will obviously ensure [the](#) long-term viability [of the college](#).

It will also guarantee [the](#) continuation [of the](#) college's role as Australia's pre-eminent provider [of](#) visual and performing [arts](#) training and education.

[The history of the Victorian College of the Arts](#), or [the](#) VCA, as it is known to many, dates back to 1867. In its early years [the college](#) produced many famous and celebrated artists, one [of](#) whom was one [of the](#) most well-known -- Arthur Boyd. In recent years a number [of](#) graduates [of the college](#) have been internationally recognised for excellence in their fields. Perhaps [the](#) most notable recent graduate [of](#) those is Adam Elliot. We have heard many members speak [of](#) their admiration for his short animation film, Harvie Krumpet, in 2004, and for [the](#) character and personality that Adam is. I am very lucky that I know Adam personally. He is probably one [of](#) Haileybury College's most famous and celebrated ex-students, and being from [the arts](#), that is very unusual.

Adam and his partner, Dan, are well known for their support [of the arts](#), and Adam is terrific for [the](#) work he continues to do in acknowledging [the](#) roles that past supporters have played.

[The Victorian College of the Arts](#) and [the](#) University [of](#) Melbourne became affiliated on 1 July 1991. Following discussions between [the college of the arts](#) and [the](#) university over [the](#) past six years it was resolved that [the](#) integration [of the college](#) as a faculty [of the](#) university was [the](#) best long-term strategy to ensure that it had a secure, certain and sustainable framework in which to operate. [The](#) governing councils [of the college](#) and [the](#) university asked [the](#) government to make [the](#)

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legislative changes necessary to effect the integration, and the government agreed to do so. The bill was prepared in consultation with the college and the university, and both have expressed their support of the bill.

A member of the opposition who spoke earlier mentioned that he considered \$6000, which was the funding shortfall for every student at the college following the introduction of the federal Higher Education Support Act in 2003, which negated the funding agreements with the college previously instigated by the commonwealth government, was not a significant amount of money. I am really not sure on what planet he resides, but here on planet Earth we actually consider \$6000 to be a significant amount of money. If the member ventures outside and speaks to some of his constituents, he will realise that they too consider \$6000 to be a significant amount of money. I hope the information that he gains by talking to people, possibly for the first time, will not prevent him from wishing to live here on Earth with the rest of us.

That having been said, I commend [the](#) bill to [the](#) house.

[Mr DONNELLAN \(Narre Warren North\)](#) -- It is an honour to speak briefly on the Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill 2006, which gives [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) a strong and sustainable future. I think above all else that Melbourne University is probably [the](#) appropriate institution to assist with [the](#) management [of](#) and work with [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) in taking over its role, so I commend [the](#) bill to [the](#) house.

[Ms ALLAN \(Minister for Education Services\)](#) -- I am pleased to sum up the debate on [the](#) Melbourne University ([Victorian College of the Arts](#)) Bill and to thank [the](#) members for Oakleigh, Yuroke, Kilsyth, Clayton, Mordialloc, Forest Hill, Narre Warren North, Nepean, Brighton, Warrandyte, Sandringham and Rodney for their contributions.

As can be seen, it is a bill that is supported by all sides [of the](#) house. Every member has spoken quite glowingly [of the](#) role that [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) plays in developing

and nurturing young talent in [the](#) state. This bill provides for [the](#) practical, operational matters that need to be dealt with in integrating [the Victorian College of the Arts](#) with Melbourne University. I commend [the](#) bill to [the](#) house.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

Sitting suspended 6.30 p.m. until 8.01 p.m.

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