

Strangio reflected on the hallmarks of the Kennett era, the flavour of the government in the lead-up to its 1999 defeat, the electoral revolt of regional and rural areas and speculated on how Kennett might reflect upon the defeat today.

His article was on the mark, and is highly relevant with the 2010 state election 14 months away. In the 10 years since Victoria's last Liberal government, many new voters have enrolled. Strangio's article served to enlighten as well as remind constituents about a 20th century political era and political giant.

Claire Cameron, Beaumaris

Can't take criticism

I WAS astounded to read of acting vice-chancellor Susan Elliott's insolent letter to MPs regarding the University of Melbourne's restructure of the VCA ("University tells MPs to butt out", *The Age*, 15/9).

Despite its best efforts to the contrary, the university remains a public institution that is ultimately answerable to the Victorian people. The objections to its proposed changes at the VCA are resounding and bipartisan. Rather than accept the wisdom of these assessments, however, the university continues to attack its critics.

If this is the way the university responds to criticism from members of Parliament, I shudder to think how it will respond to criticism during the "consultation" regarding the restructure to which it constantly refers.

Drew Pettifer, VCA student, North Melbourne

An issue for us all

ACTING vice-chancellor Sue Elliott is correct that the suggestion of government intervention in the Victoria College of the Arts debacle is highly unusual. It has been born out of the increasing public awareness that the proposed changes to VCA are not just about staff or curriculum - they have a broad-reaching impact on Victoria's arts and arts tourism industry, and hence our state's economic bottom line.

When the university is "suspending" full-degree programs like VCA music theatre in Australia's arts capital, how could the acting vice-chancellor possibly think the Government (and Opposition) could ignore this?

Scott Dawkins, Jersey Boys production co-ordinator, St Kilda

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/letters/its-not-racism-hes-simply-been-a-disappointment-20090915-fplx.html>