

**Bob Mancor, North Geelong**

## **More pain for poor**

I WORK in an industry that has a close relationship with Centrelink. Out of a caseload of fewer than 200 people, one to three of my clients have their benefits cut each week through clerical errors.

The Rudd Government's decision to double the reporting requirements for pensioners undertaking part-time work from 12 to 26 times a year (*The Age*, 18/9) will lead to a significant increase in hardship caused by this dysfunctional organisation.

**Hans Paas, Castlemaine**

## **A call for courtesy**

AS AN employee of a large TAFE, I believe there is a correlation between issues raised by Dimity Reed - "Rudeness will be the death of society" (*Insight*, 8/8) - and Farrah Tomazin's article on the rise of violence in primary schools (*The Age*, 15/9).

Students from primary to secondary schools, and beyond, seem to be unaware of how to behave in a respectful way. The F-word is so common that no one blinks an eye. I have led a far from sheltered life (including working as a welfare officer at Pentridge Prison) but am appalled by the foul language and lack of courtesy that surrounds me at work, on public transport and in the street.

How about educators get their act together and start banning rude, crude and revolting behaviour in schools? Violence should not be tolerated. Suspending students is a temporary measure. Surely it would be better to allocate funding for more special classes to assist troubled students deal with their aggression and learn to behave in ways beneficial to society.

**Lynne Lumsden, Blackburn South**

## **Our precious artists**

"MELBOURNE theatres set for big year" (*The Age*, 18/9) is great news for music-theatre lovers and practitioners. Sadly, Sharman Pretty, the new dean of the Victorian College of the Arts, does not seem to appreciate our pre-eminent position in this artform. She has "suspended" next year's intake to the fledgling VCA music theatre course just when the industry is crying out for more.

It is not too late to reverse this decision and develop our talented young singers and dancers in Melbourne rather than seeing them head interstate for intensive training in music theatre.

**Louise Connor, East St Kilda**

## **Crown says jump...**

HOW high will the State Government jump to secure gaming revenue and appease Crown Casino? Redefining the definition of "table games" (*The Age*, 17/9) and excluding the principal body on responsible gaming from consultation represents a gross failure in the Government's duty of care to Victorians.

It would be interesting to know how much of the \$132 million raised will be offset by funding additional anti-gambling initiatives.

**Kate Gascoigne, Prahran**

## **Deep-seated racism**

LESLIE Cannold (*Comment & Debate*, 18/9) is wrong to argue racism is not a factor in the right-wing criticism of