

St Kilda Rd arts college future unclear

EDUCATION 4 JUN 10 @ 06:15AM BY JENNY LING



Despite protests, VCA students are still in the dark about the future of the college.

THE Victorian College of the Arts lobby group fears the troubled college will suffer "death by a thousand cuts" from funding shortfalls, cost cutting and political buck-passing.

A Melbourne University-commissioned review, released this month, found the VCA's financial future remained unclear and state and federal government funding was needed to ensure its survival.

Save VCA spokeswoman Zoe Boesen said the review "reinforced the desperate situation the college is in and the need for governments to step up".

"This year we've seen so many cuts all over the school, it's got more and more dire," Ms Boesen said.

"They have to step up or it will be death by a thousand cuts."

Hundreds of students protested last year over plans to restructure the Victorian College of the Arts and Music curriculum.

Since the VCA merged with Melbourne University in 2007 at least 12 casual jobs have been axed and puppetry and musical theatre courses dropped.

The review also recommends reforms be postponed until 2013.

Greens MP Sue Pennicuik said Arts Minister Peter Batchelor's recent assertion that the State Government would not offer financial support to the VCA was "extremely disappointing".

But Albert Park MP Martin Foley said the VCA's financial problems began when the Howard government cut funding.

"The VCA continues to be a Federal Government-supported facility," Mr Foley said.

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