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## VCA wins stay of execution in election gambit

WRITTEN BY ANDREW SHAW | 03 AUGUST 2010

Melbourne's Southbank could play host to an elite national arts training institution, along the lines of NIDA, following the merger of the current Faculty of the VCA and Music.

The Victorian College of the Arts, famous for producing professional dancers, musicians and artists, was amalgamated with the University of Melbourne in 2007 in a cost-cutting move.

But the changes made to the VCA have proved unpopular with students and have attracted criticism from the arts community.

The 'Melbourne Model' of tertiary education adopted by the university places emphasis on a broad general training, rather than the specialised training previously offered to VCA students.

Last week, the university committee's response to the review recommended "consultation with the community and development of a visionary proposal for a national multidisciplinary elite arts training and education institution."


The Dean hired to oversee the transition to the Melbourne Model, Sharman Pretty, resigned in response to the committee's recommendation among other things recommends delaying the introduction of the Melbourne Model.

Scott Dawkins of lobby group 'Save VCA' told MCV it was "amazing what a difference an election campaign makes".

"For the first time John Brumby and [federal Minister for Education] Simon Crean jointly said they were working towards securing Commonwealth funding for VCA, which is what we've always been fighting for."

Dawkins said he wanted Crean to produce the promised funding now, rather than after the election, and called on the government to: "The merger's gone badly; they must now take a caretaker approach to VCA."

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