



VICHANSARD

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House **ASSEMBLY**
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Members **VICTORIA**
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"28 July 2009 ASSEMBLY"

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University of Melbourne: performing arts courses

[Mrs VICTORIA \(Bayswater\)](#) -- I rise to ask the Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation to immediately make representations to the University of Melbourne and her ministerial colleagues on behalf of the performing arts community and all Victorians.

In June I asked the same question of the Minister for the Arts, who eventually replied to my request by stating:

While I am monitoring the situation as Minister for the Arts, the issue falls within the portfolio of my ministerial colleague ...

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If the Minister for the Arts cannot see that this is a joint responsibility, perhaps even adding in the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, I would question her understanding of and dedication to this portfolio. Do we or do we not want a thriving performing arts sector in this city?

The Premier, standing on the steps of Parliament just a week or so ago in yet another cheesy photo opportunity, said that Melbourne is the artistic capital of Australia. According to the Age on 14 July, Mr Brumby said:

The Mary Poppins musical builds on our track record of highly successful events which attract tourism, generate economic benefits and create jobs for Victorians.

Is the Premier aware of what damage will be done to this lucrative industry if the University of Melbourne refuses to give students who wish to work in the theatre a practical education?

Here is the heads-up: no more Mary Poppins, no more Wicked, no more Jersey Boys, Lion King or Spamalot -- no more investment in shows where artists and crew cannot be sourced locally. Bringing these people from interstate or overseas is just not financially viable.

I ask the minister to go in to bat to ensure the university complies with the intent of the 2006 Melbourne University (Victorian College of the Arts) Bill.

The second-reading speech was clear in stating:

...

***** DAILY HANSARD *** PROOF VERSION ONLY *** DO NOT QUOTE *****

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.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! The member for Albert Park and the member for Malvern!

Mrs VICTORIA -- Nowhere did the minister mention that a music theatre degree course would be established then axed within months of its inception. Nowhere did he mention that students would be forced to study interstate or overseas if they wanted practical training that made them workplace ready in three years. Nowhere did he mention that all performing arts degrees at Melbourne University will have up to 50 per cent of the curriculum outside the chosen discipline.

But now we have senior university academics saying, 'We are no longer a training institution but a research institution'. This is a disgrace and is directly contrary to the intention of the bill.

Many great opera singers, actors, TV stars and visual artists have learnt their craft at the Victorian College of the Arts ([VCA](#)). Their training was vocational. The idea that we must blindly follow the theory of just one overseas academic who says that an apprenticeship style of learning is no longer valid is a load of tripe. We do not want kids just writing about the arts; we want practitioners. Multidisciplined, specialist practical training must stay at the [VCA](#). I ask the minister to help.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! I call the member for South Barwon.

Honourable members interjecting.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! I think this is getting a little too much. Stop the clock for the member for South Barwon.

Ms Green -- On a point of order, the member for Bayswater has just used words which started with 'f' in referring to me and I ask her to withdraw because it is very unparliamentary and I take personal offence that any member in this chamber would be so undisciplined as to use words like that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! The member for Bayswater has been asked to withdraw.

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Mrs Victoria -- Considering the -- --

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! The member for Bayswater has been asked to withdraw. If I ask for a member to withdraw, I ask a member to withdraw.

Mrs Victoria -- I withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! The member for South Barwon.

Mrs Victoria interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER -- Order! The member for South Barwon has the call, and I ask members to respect that.

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