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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Vice-Chancellor says new funds for VCA bring new responsibility

The University of Melbourne's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Glyn Davis, has welcomed announcements by the Federal and State governments of plans for more than \$10 million in assistance to the Victorian College of the Arts.

Professor Davis said Federal Labor's election pledge to provide an additional \$5.1 million in recurrent funding from 2012, and to match the State's contribution of \$2 million to a VCA Foundation was a bold proposal in an environment where Commonwealth university support is regulated by a formula.

"We would of course welcome an increase in Federal Government funding to secure a more sustainable future for our arts courses," Professor Davis said, adding that any special funding would bring great responsibility.

"It would place upon us the challenge to ensure the VCA responded in a visionary way, to face the challenges of a highly competitive, globalised environment in which such schools now operate."

Referring to the State's grant of \$3 million for a VCA Foundation and new equipment, he said: "For several years now we have sought to stimulate donors to help us grow our endowment, as such funds provide permanent benefits to the faculties they are intended for.

"The establishment of a VCA Foundation with government seed funding will help us decisively in persuading the VCA's many supporters to invest in its future."

The \$1 million for VCA equipment and the commitment to work at development of the Southbank precinct was also welcome news. "There is no doubt that Melbourne's Southbank precinct holds the possibility of becoming one of the world's front-rank arts destinations, and we are ready to work with others in realising such a vision," Professor Davis said.

"This week the University begins a Curriculum Review process at the Faculty of the VCA and Music, to examine new options such as a series of VET courses and industry partnerships that would better sustain music theatre and puppetry courses.

"It is of course gratifying to hear the State is prepared to support us in these new directions," he said.

The University's five-year agreement to make up a shortfall in Commonwealth funding of more than \$5 million annually ceases at the end of 2011, but on the issue of whether the University would commit to extending the subsidy, Professor Davis said it had been significantly larger than required by the Commonwealth and would continue beyond 2011.