

Tuesday May 4, 2004

## REGIONAL SCHOOLS BIG BUDGET WINNERS

Students in provincial Victoria will benefit from a massive **\$86.1 million** investment in school and TAFE facilities as well as faster internet connections and rural teacher retraining as part of the 2004-05 State Budget.

The Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky, and the Minister for Education Services, Jacinta Allan, said the Bracks Government was continuing to build a better future for families through investment in the state education system.

“The Bracks Government is building a better future for Victorian families by making education its number one priority,” Ms Allan said.

“The *Putting Families First* Budget continues our strong investment in education, which includes an investment of \$184.2 million in 117 regional schools since 1999.

“This Budget allocates a further \$55.6 million for 24 regional schools.”

The regional education package is part of a \$1 billion funding boost for regional Victoria outlined in the 2004-05 Budget.

Ms Kosky said the massive investment in school buildings and facilities reflected the Government’s commitment to education as its number one priority.

“The Bracks Government believes that schools and other community assets are just as important as major projects in Melbourne. That is why we’ve invested a record amount in school building since we came to office,” Ms Kosky said.

The \$55.6 million, four-year building program at regional schools includes:

- **\$5.1 million** for a new Wallan School;
- **\$4.6 million** to replace the Barwon Valley School;
- **\$3.4 million** to replace the Warragul and District Specialist School;
- **\$3.6 million** for upgraded facilities at Wangaratta High;
- **\$2.1 million** for technology and arts facilities and classrooms at Nhill P-12;
- **\$2.9 million** for new buildings at Numurkah Secondary;
- **\$1.8 million** to reinstate the fire damaged Cowes Primary;
- **\$2 million** for the modernisation of Lara Primary;
- **\$1.8 million** to plan the second stage of the Maryborough Education Precinct;
- **\$1.7 million** for new classrooms at Campbells Creek Primary;
- **\$969,000** for new classrooms at Darley Primary;

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- **\$2.4 million** for classrooms and other facilities at New Gisborne Primary;
- **\$2.1 million** for science and technology at Apollo Bay P-12 College;
- **\$3 million** to upgrade Traralgon Secondary College – West;
- **\$1.1 million** for Bellbrae Primary;
- **\$1.5 million** for new classrooms at Delacombe Primary;
- **\$1.3 million** for classrooms and staff space at Specimen Hill Primary;
- **\$876,000** for new classrooms at Grovedale Primary;
- **\$1.2 million** for an upgrade of facilities at Alfredton Primary;
- **\$2.6 million** to music and staff rooms at Yarrunga Primary;
- **\$2 million** for arts, music and staff rooms at Bright P-12; and
- **\$2.5 million** for a rural learning campus for Year 9 students.

Other education initiatives to benefit provincial Victoria include:

- **\$2.5 million** over three years to encourage rural teachers to re-train in schools facing challenges in particular curriculum/subject areas;
- **\$16 million** over four years to significantly upgrade the speed of school computer internet connections, many in country and regional areas; and
- **\$12 million** over three years to allow the consolidation and upgrading of Building Studies facilities at the University of Ballarat.

The Ministers said over the next four years regional Victoria would also share in:

- \$78.1 million to increase Education Maintenance Allowance payments for needy families and to link future payments to indexation;
- \$116.8 million extra in Adult Education and TAFE building, equipment and courses;
- \$61.9 million for 250 more teachers in schools needing improvement in student results;
- \$29.5 million to jointly fund, with local communities, shared facilities such as community halls, sporting facilities, libraries and information technology facilities under the Community Facilities Fund;
- \$60 million for maintenance of school facilities;
- \$10 million for the Schoolyard Blitz program, which encourages community participation in school improvement programs;
- \$50 million to build new relocatables, creating 600 classrooms; and
- \$2 million for refresher courses for teachers seeking to re-enter the workforce.