

8a FROM THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION SERVICES, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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\$196 MILLION BOOST FOR REGIONAL SCHOOLS AND TAFE

Regional and rural students will have access to new and modern schools and world-class technology under a **\$196 million** boost to the education system.

The Education and Training Minister, Lynne Kosky, and Education Services Minister, Jacinta Allan, said the regional education package was part of an \$868 million investment in education announced in the 2005-06 State Budget.

“The Bracks Government was elected in 1999 and again in 2002 to turn around the education system and ensure Victoria remains the best place to raise a family,” Ms Allan said.

“We want all Victorian children, no matter where they live, to get the best possible start in life through a world class education system.

“Since 1999, \$358.6 million has been invested at 162 schools in regional and rural Victoria.”

Ms Allan said the centrepiece of the education budget for regional students was an **\$89 million** high speed, fibre optic broadband upgrade for every Government school in Victoria.

“No other education system in the country has fibre optic technology connected to every school,” Ms Allan said.

“Every school will be upgraded to the same standard, removing the inequality between regional and metropolitan schools, and all schools will be able to affordably increase their bandwidth capacity if they chose to.

“This initiative will benefit not only students, but will also benefit local businesses, families and whole communities in regional and remote areas.”

The Budget also allocated **\$28 million** for the construction and completion of eight new and replacement rural schools, including:

- \$5.2 million for the relocation of the Bendigo Special Developmental School;
- \$3 million for Wallan Secondary College (Stage 2);
- \$5.5 million for Nichols Point Primary School, Mildura;
- \$4.1 million for Traralgon Secondary College (East Campus);
- \$3.6 million for Barwon Valley School, Geelong (Stage 2);
- \$3.3 million for Newcomb Secondary College, (science/technology), Geelong;
- \$2.6 million for replacement school at Woady Yaloak Primary; and
- \$1 million for a new campus at Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College, Geelong.

...2

A further **\$55 million** has been allocated for building works at 17 rural and regional schools to improve facilities such as art, technology, music and general classrooms, including:

- \$1.3 million for the Flying Fruit Fly Circus school, Wodonga;
- \$1 million for Flora Hill Secondary College, Bendigo (planning);
- \$1.5 million for Mount Clear College, Ballarat;
- \$3.7 million for Chaffey Secondary College, Mildura;
- \$3.5 million for South Gippsland Secondary College, Foster;
- \$5.2 million for Belmont High School, Geelong;
- \$4 million for Kyabram Secondary College;
- \$3.3 million for Drouin Secondary College;
- \$1.9 million for Darley Primary School, Bacchus Marsh;
- \$2.1 million for Murtoa P-12 College;
- \$3.1 million for Wodonga Primary School;
- \$16.6 million for Maryborough Education Precinct;
- \$2.4 million for Colac Primary School;
- \$2.2 million for Castlemaine Primary School;
- \$1.7 million for Lorne P-12 (Aireys Inlet Campus);
- \$1.1 million for Grovedale Primary School; and
- \$500,000 for planning for Echuca schools merger.

Geelong's Gordon Institute of TAFE will receive **\$9 million** for new facilities and equipment.

The third rural residential campus for Year 9 students will be built at a site yet to be determined at a cost of **\$2.8 million**.

A further program to benefit rural and regional students is the **\$1.9 million** expansion across the State of the *It's Not OK To Be Away* campaign to reduce truancy rates.

Regional and rural students and teachers will also share in the allocation of **\$9.6 million** for new specialist facilities for schools under the Leading Schools Fund. Schools to benefit include:

• Ballarat Specialist School	• Wodonga High School
• Timboon P-12 College	• Ararat Community College
• Corio Bay Senior College, Flinders Peak Secondary College, Norlane High School	• Mitchell Secondary College, Talangatta Secondary College, Wodonga West Secondary College
• Kangaroo Flat Secondary College	• Mooropna Secondary College.
• Belmont High School, Geelong	• Mansfield Secondary College
• Chaffey Secondary College, Mildura	• Mirboo North Secondary College
• Dimboola Memorial Secondary College; Rainbow Secondary College, Goroke P-12	• Wycheproof P-12 College, Boort Secondary College, Charlton P-12, Donald High School, Pyramid Hill College, Wedderburn P-12
• St Arnaud Secondary College	• Mt Beauty Secondary College
• Portland Secondary College	• Benalla College
• Oberon High School, Belmont	

Ms Kosky said regional schools and TAFEs would also share in \$151 million for non-government schools, \$43.3 million to boost vocational skills and equipment, \$299 million to target equity, class sizes, literacy and numeracy, and \$28.7 million for disabled students.

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