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FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION SERVICES

Tuesday May 1, 2007

REGIONAL AND RURAL SCHOOLS WIN IN BUDGET

Students in rural and regional Victoria will be major beneficiaries of the Bracks Government's unprecedented school rebuilding program with **\$123 million** to replace, modernise and rebuild their schools.

The Education Minister, John Lenders, and Education Services Minister Jacinta Allan said the 2007-08 State Budget delivered on the Bracks Government's commitment to meet the challenges of the future and invest in services in regional Victoria that matter to families.

"We have lifted literacy and numeracy rates, reduced average class sizes, and employed an extra 7300 teachers and staff, but we said more needed to be done," Mr Lenders said.

"We promised to modernise or rebuild every school as part of the *Victorian Schools Plan* over 10 years, invest in new technology for schools and upgrade tech wings, and today we begin delivering throughout Victoria."

Mr Lenders said **\$58 million** would modernise 18 schools in regional Victoria with **\$8.3 million** to build replacement schools at Grevillea Park Primary School, Ballarat (Stage 2) and Skene Street Special School, Stawell.

Mr Lenders said **\$13.5 million** would secure the future of six regional schools, replacing relocatable facilities with new, permanent buildings.

Harcourt Valley Primary School, Lethbridge Primary School, Drouin Primary School, Toora Primary School, Mooropna North Primary School, and Trentham District Primary School will be rebuilt under this program.

Mr Lenders said **\$43 million** would commence regeneration programs in Bendigo, Wangaratta, Western Heights in Geelong, and Colac.

"Some exciting work is being planned by school leaders and communities in these areas to regenerate education and provide the best outcomes for local students," Mr Lenders said.

"These funds will see these significant projects progress to provide regional Victoria with curriculum and facilities needed for education into the 21st century."

Ms Allan said regional schools would also benefit from additional statewide programs, including the new statewide online system, the Ultranet.

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"This leading edge technology will link students, parents and teachers to a single, instant information point," Ms Allan said.

“This initiative will particularly benefit students in remote schools to access specialised curriculum and podcast classes from other schools.

“Primary schools across regional Victoria will continue to get the support of Primary Welfare Officers, with funding for the continuation of the successful initiative across Victoria.”

Mr Lenders said regional Victoria would also benefit from funding to train 200 specialist teachers.

“We will provide 150 scholarships at a cost of \$1.4 million over six years, to encourage maths and science graduates to undertake further training in education and teach in Government schools,” Mr Lenders said.

“The successful Career Change Program will also be continued, with \$1.8 million over six years to encourage 50 experts in their field to train as teachers.”

Five Victorian School of Languages centres will also receive ongoing support to continue their work teaching languages to students in regional Victoria.

“These centres at Warrnambool College, Horsham College, Leongatha Secondary College, Wodonga West College and Gisborne Secondary College provide greater access and choice for students in regional Victoria,” Mr Lenders said.

Regional students will also benefit from statewide programs including:

- 300 teacher assistants – one for every government secondary school by 2010 – to provide administrative support to teachers will enable them to focus on teaching in the classroom;
- Improved access to computers in government schools;
- \$32 million over two years for the Bracks Government’s Teaching and Learning Innovation fund;
- \$47 million to continue the Schools for Innovation and Excellence program.

Attachment: *Further details of the Victorian Schools Plan.*

LIST OF RURAL SCHOOLS

Two replacement schools

Grevillea Park Primary School
Skene Street Special School, Stawell

Media contact: Licardo Prince on 9651 5799/ 0439 333 153
www.vic.gov.au www.budget.vic.gov.au

18 Named Modernisations

Ballarat Secondary College
Beechworth Secondary College
Black Hill Primary School
Brauer Secondary College
Echuca College
Euroa Secondary College
Inverleigh Primary School
Kinglake West Primary School
Kurnai College
New Gisborne Primary School
Oberon High School
Point Lonsdale Primary School
Sale College
Torquay Primary School
Drouin Secondary College
Geelong South Primary School
North Shore Primary School
Tate Street Primary School Geelong

Six Rural Relocatable Replacements

Harcourt Valley Primary School
Lethbridge Primary School
Drouin Primary School
Toora Primary School
Mooroopna North Primary School
Trentham District Primary School

10 Schools affected by regenerations

Bendigo Education Plan – Flora Hill, Golden Square, and Kangaroo Flat
Secondary Colleges
Colac Regeneration - Colac College and Colac High School
Wangaratta Regeneration - Wangaratta High School and Ovens College
Western Heights Regeneration - Western Heights Secondary College
(three campuses)