$182 MILLION SCHOOL START BONUS

Victorian students will get the best start at school, through the Bracks Government’s $182 million ‘School Start Bonus’.

The School Start Bonus will help every parent of a child starting Prep or Year 7 at a government or non-government school.

Parents will receive a one-off payment of $300 to meet the costs of purchasing school and sporting uniforms, school bags and related equipment.

The payment will provide direct, immediate assistance to the families of approximately 63,000 students who start Prep each year and about 66,000 Year 7 students who make the transition to secondary school.

The payment will also help ensure children can begin their school lives from day one fully equipped with everything they need to get the best possible start to school.

A half payment of $150 will be made early in Term 3 to families of students currently in Prep and Year 7. Full payment will begin for the start of the 2007 school year.

The School Start Bonus is in addition to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which is provided to low-income families to help with education-related costs. The EMA is paid in two instalments – March and September each year.

Current EMA payments last year increased by 60 per cent and are now $205 for primary school students and $410 for secondary school students.