

KIDS ARE VICTIMS OF CUTS
Ranges Trader Mail
Tuesday 22 January 2013

Like thousands of parents in our community and tens of thousands of parents across Victoria, Meagan and I are getting set for a big change in our family. Our eldest child is about to start school!

Uniforms have been fitted and purchased, transition days have taken place, parent information nights have been attended - we are all set for day one of Prep. And we certainly have a very excited daughter looking forward to that day.

I'm not sure if there will be tears or smiles of relief on that day from Mum and Dad, but I do know that we have all entered a new, exciting and important stage in our lives.

As parents we want our children to be loved, happy and safe. When we entrust our precious children to school we want them to receive the best possible education.

What does that mean? When I think about what I want my children to gain from their school life, I think of words such as - knowledge, skills, self-esteem, friendship, fun, experiences, resilience, empathy.

When you think about it, it is an awesome responsibility. That is why education is in my view one of the most noble of professions; and why the work of our school councils, parent's groups and the broader community in supporting our schools is so important.

And we are indeed fortunate to have great schools - government, catholic and independent - and wonderful educators in our community.

It is however getting harder, not easier, to deliver for our children; the very best education that they deserve, and we as parents demand.

We all work hard to give our kids the best opportunities in life. A strong education system provides this. That's why it just doesn't make sense that Premier Ted Baillieu would choose to **cut** funding for our schools.

In the last two years, Ted Baillieu has slashed \$555 million from education and a further \$290 million from TAFE. This includes cuts to VCAL and VET, the Education Maintenance Allowance and the Conveyance Allowance, and scrapping the School Start Bonus.

Ted Baillieu has shut the door on our local secondary school students. With cuts to VCAL and VET, and the forced closure of Swinburne Lilydale, local students will lose so many career opportunities. For schools in Monbulk, Boronia, Upwey, Emerald, Sassafra and Lilydale, it's simply not fair.

Our children shouldn't be victims of Ted Baillieu's attacks on education.

When he hands down the next State Budget in May, Ted Baillieu must not make further cuts to school funding. Victorian families and students deserve better.