

Tuesday 9 February 2010

COALITION TO FUND ROCK EISTEDDFOD

The Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition today announced it will give \$800,000 over the next four years to the music, dance and drama spectacular after the Brumby Government refused to adequately fund the event.

Thousands of Victorian school students are going to miss out on this year's Rock Eisteddfod because the Brumby Government won't come to the party.

Organisers asked the Brumby Government last September to increase funding to \$200,000 for this year's event but Youth Minister James Merlino refused.

As a result organisers have been forced to call curtains on the event, leaving about 7500 students – to say nothing of parents and teachers – in limbo.

Funding for the event had gone south under Labor, which had failed to adjust its funding contribution for inflation.

In 2004 the event was receiving \$136,000 from the Victorian Government. This year the Brumby Government is contributing about \$102,000.

The government has not only cut the event's budget, but it has also refused to adjust its contribution for CPI.

The government is also raising its fees for the use of Hisense Arena, one of the only venues large enough to stage the event.

While student participation remained strong last year, audience numbers had diminished after organisers raised ticket prices to compensate for the government's lack of support.

The reduced income has had a significant impact on the financial viability of the event.

Competition dates have been set for the year and schools have already put in many hours of work to prepare for the competition.

This event has been enthusiastically supported by students, teachers and the wider community for the past 30 years. The Brumby Government must demonstrate its support.