

# David Koch

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### MEDIA RELEASE

*Wednesday, 19 September 2007*

#### **Koch supports new Special School for Horsham**

The Minister for Education, Bronwyn Pike, has been thrown the gauntlet to visit Horsham's Special School to see for herself the conditions students and staff are subjected to that are apparently "acceptable for education purposes".

David Koch, Member for Western Victoria, challenged the Minister in Parliament this week that she would be embarrassed if she ever visited Horsham's Special School to see children being taught in what some have suggested are third world conditions, especially when it's raining.

David Koch told Parliament that on a recent visit to Horsham he, along with his colleague John Vogels, personally inspected the Horsham Special School Junior Campus and was astonished that the Education Department should consider the state of the Junior Campus' leaking buildings as acceptable for educational purposes.

"I was shocked that these substandard buildings, lack of staff facilities, playground areas and provision for safe parent, taxi and bus drop-off and collection, meet acceptable Departmental standards and requirements.

"While staff do a wonderful job in teaching under such difficult conditions, I am sure that the Minister would be embarrassed if she ever visited the School to see students taught under these circumstances", he said.

"Horsham Special School operates on dual sites with a separate Junior Campus in the grounds of Horsham West Primary School and its Senior Campus beside Horsham College.

"For some time, concern has been expressed by staff, parents, carers, Horsham City Councillors and the wider community about the substandard condition of school buildings, lack of staff accommodation, playground and recreation space, inadequate car and bus parking, and the numerous difficulties caused by the dual site.

"While some improvements have been made to accommodate increased student numbers, including the relocation of two modular buildings used for class rooms, facilities are inadequate for the on-going delivery of the range of educational programs needed for students.

"One of the buildings, relocated from Port Melbourne in 2005, complete with asbestos ceiling, was initially to be used to overcome the absence of staff accommodation, but staff willingly gave up this space to overcome the classroom shortage. There is no doubt this building would never have been moved from Horsham to Port Melbourne!

"Although the Senior Campus moved into refurbished buildings formerly occupied by the Horsham College in 2000, Junior Campus buildings and the surrounding grounds were not purpose built and do not meet the needs of students.

"I have called on the Minister to urgently address conditions at Horsham's Special School by making it a priority to build a purpose-built Junior campus to accommodate these special children", said David Koch.

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