

8 February 2012

## Wodonga Senior Secondary College in good stead for retaining students

Wodonga can expect a graduating class of bright, well-prepared and enthusiastic Year 12 students from Wodonga Senior Secondary College this year thanks to today's announcement the school has received a \$113,000 grant to encourage students to complete secondary school.

Wodonga Senior Secondary College received the grant under the Victorian Coalition Government's \$5 million *Local Solutions Year 12 Retention Fund* awarded to the school as a result of its commendable proposal for retaining students through to Year 12.

"Wodonga Senior Secondary College will provide coordination to a number of programs currently in operation in Wodonga that cater for small groups of students who are not in mainstream education including High Water Theatre, Literacy Outreach and Virtual School." Member for Benambra, Mr Bill Tilley said.

"The aim of the initiative being the re-engagement of high risk students back into main stream senior level schooling", said Mr Tilley.

Minister for Education Martin Dixon said while the number of metropolitan students finishing school was going up, the government was committed to ensuring the same opportunities were available to rural and regional students.

"We know when a student completes school, the likelihood of them going on to achieve, succeed and become a skilled and valued contributor to society dramatically increases," Mr Dixon said.

"Almost nine out of 10 metropolitan students are finishing school, but nearly a third of country students are leaving school early, and these new grants are a step toward addressing this issue."

The *Local Solutions Year 12 Retention Fund* was created upon advice from the Rural Education Reference Group; a cross-sectoral group established by Minister Dixon to advise the government on initiatives specifically designed to support rural and regional schools.

"I am really keen to see the success of these retention programs as they are rolled out across Victoria," Mr Dixon said.

"It is this government's belief that schools are the ones best placed to determine what measures will be most effective for their students and I think the community will agree as graduating students become active members of the community and valuable contributors to the local economy."

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