

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19

Minister for Education



Tuesday, 9 June 2020

ALL STUDENTS BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Schools across Victoria are today welcoming back around 618,000 students in Years 3 to 10 as part of the final step of returning to face-to-face teaching and learning.

Around 389,000 government school students are returning to school today, along with approximately 229,000 students from independent and Catholic schools.

The staged return to school has allowed the Chief Health Officer to monitor the effects on the increased movement of people and transmission of coronavirus within the community.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced schools that will be able to apply for a new \$20 million Minor Capital Works Fund which will fund shovel-ready projects at government schools across Victoria.

Schools can now apply for grants of up to \$500,000 to modernise and improve learning spaces and boost the condition and character of the school.

Examples of eligible projects include upgrades to classrooms, sports ovals and toilets as well as the installation of new playground equipment, bike sheds, fencing and basketball and netball rings.

The fund is part of the more than \$2.7 billion *Building Works* package recently announced by the Victorian Government which included \$1.18 billion for the education infrastructure construction and will create jobs for Victorians.

With face-to-face learning resuming, schools have implemented staggered drop-off and pick-ups to reduce the number of adults around school grounds at any one time, as well as staggered break times to manage the number of students mixing across year levels.

All schools will implement physical distancing measures for their staff, and school staff have been prioritised for voluntary coronavirus testing in the lead-up to today's return to on-site schooling.

The Victorian Government is also investing up to \$45 million for increased daily cleaning at every government school for the rest of Term 2 and 3.

The Victorian Government recently announced that a summit will be held to discuss lessons learnt and investigate what improvements can be made to the education system after the experience of remote and flexible learning.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Going back to the classroom will be a welcome change for students, teachers and families who have all done an excellent job while students learnt from home."

"Having students learning from home has made a significant contribution to slowing the spread of coronavirus in our community and helped save lives."

"This extra infrastructure funding will mean even more local schools will share in the largest investment in school infrastructure in Victoria's history."

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