

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19  
Minister for Education



Thursday, 25 June 2020

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MORE SECONDARY STUDENTS

Secondary school students in Melbourne's north-west and the Central Highlands will soon have access to the school-based mental health support they need, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced that more schools across Victoria will receive support under the Mental Health Practitioners initiative which is aimed at improving mental health outcomes for students in Victorian secondary schools.

The \$51.2 million initiative, which started in July last year, has so far provided funding for 120 secondary school campuses to recruit a suitably qualified mental health professional, with a further 32 secondary school campuses in Hume Moreland and Central Highlands to receive funding in Term 3 and 69 secondary school campuses in Melbourne's south and west in Term 4.

Once fully rolled out, the initiative will see suitably qualified mental health professionals in every government secondary school campus across the state, including psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and mental health nurses.

Mental health practitioners offer counselling and early intervention services, and act as coordinating support for students with complex needs, linking them with broader allied community and health services.

All government secondary schools will receive between one and five days a week of support from a mental health practitioner depending on its size and requirements.

This builds on the \$65.5 million investment in student health and wellbeing initiatives in schools, including the Victorian Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Initiative, the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support program, as well as increased investment in allied health and nursing services.

The Victorian Government established a landmark Royal Commission into Mental Health and will implement every one of its recommendations.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"Too many young people experience mental health challenges - this will make it easier for people to access the support they need."*

*"We know that when our kids are happy and well supported, they can focus on their learning and have the best opportunity to succeed in education and excel in life."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

*"We will implement every recommendation of the landmark Royal Commission into Mental Health and keep delivering practical support that Victorians need now."*

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