



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health

The Hon Luke Donnellan

Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Tuesday 24 November 2020

HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED: SUPPORTING VICTORIANS WITH DISABILITY

As our state recovers stronger and fairer, we need to make sure every Victorian has the support they need.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will invest an unprecedented extra \$1.9 billion to make sure Victorians with disability are supported – including our youngest Victorians.

A nearly \$1.6 billion record investment will transform support for students with disability in Victorian government schools – doubling the number of students receiving extra support in the classroom to 55,000 – and is expected to create up to 1,730 jobs across the state by 2025.

All schools will benefit from the change, providing access to students who may have previously been ineligible for targeted support – such as those with autism, dyslexia or complex behaviours.

A world-leading pilot successfully run in more than 100 schools will now be rolled out across the state, providing an innovative approach to identify and respond to the needs of students with disability.

This new approach puts the needs of the student at the heart of our response – shifting away from current practices and focusing on what a child can achieve, rather than what they can't. A new facilitator role will be established to help schools and families work through this new approach.

This investment also includes \$102.8 million to deliver new resources and support to build the skills and knowledge of our incredible school staff in delivering inclusive education for every student.

In addition to this, the Andrews Labor Government will invest an extra \$223.3 million over the next four years to support Victorians with a disability who are not eligible for the NDIS.

As part of this, \$5 million has been allocated to provide coordination supports for Victorians with complex needs including continuing the Government's Intensive Support Team for a further two years, which has already helped more than 1,300 Victorians with complex needs who have found difficulty in navigating the NDIS or receiving an appropriate plan.

Younger people living with disability who are ineligible for the NDIS will also be afforded the independence they deserve with another \$41.9 million through our Home and Community Care Program for Younger People.

A strong, inclusive and fair future for our state depends on achieving a strong, inclusive and fair future for people with disability, which is why we will work the sector, community organisations and Victorians with disability to develop Victoria's new Disability Plan.

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As part of this, more than \$7 million has been allocated for 3,150 extra publicly-funded autism assessments over the next four years, to improve access to early intervention and support. This also builds on the important work being done through the Labor Government's *Victorian Autism Plan*, released last year.

The Government has already made significant investments in the sector in response to the pandemic with \$17 million to ensure all Victorians with disability get the help they need, when they need it. This includes \$2.9 million allocated for infection control training for disability service providers.

Another \$2.7 million will continue the work of COVID-19 Disability Liaison Officers in our health services, assisting with access and support to testing and treatment for people with disability.

On top of this, \$850,000 will continue the COVID-19 Disability Advocacy Outreach Initiative to provide greater outreach support to diverse and hard to reach groups for a further six months.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"This is the biggest change in disability support in our schools Victoria has ever seen, and it will make a difference in classrooms and to kids across the state."

"Because every student – including those with the most complex of needs – deserves a great education."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability Luke Donnellan

"We're making sure Victorians with a disability and the dedicated people who care for them have the support they need."

"Building a fairer Victoria means looking after our most vulnerable and making sure they have the independence, care and support they deserve."