

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 8 December 2020

## GRANTS OPEN TO HELP BUILD INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

More Victorian schools will be able to build inclusive indoor and outdoor learning spaces as well as accessible playgrounds to support students with disabilities and additional needs, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today officially opened Round 6 of the Inclusive Schools Fund, for schools to create inclusive spaces.

An additional \$20 million was allocated for Round 6 and 7 of the Inclusive Schools Fund in the Budget, bringing the Andrews Labor Government's total investment in the Fund to \$60 million.

The Inclusive Schools Fund is helping government schools better cater for the social and educational needs of young people with a disability and additional needs.

A total of 53 projects were funded in Round 5, including \$200,000 to Mt Waverley North Primary School to create an inclusive outdoor accessible play space.

Other successful projects included accessible kitchen gardens, wheelchair-friendly playground surfaces, quiet musical areas, a bush playground and sensory zones with a range of tactile surfaces.

Since its inception in 2015, the Fund has supported 234 creative projects to build inclusive indoor and outdoor learning spaces as well as accessible playgrounds have been announced.

The Fund is ensuring that students with disabilities get the same opportunities as other students.

Inclusive education is about ensuring that all students, regardless of disabilities or other differences, can fully participate, learn, develop and succeed in Victorian government schools.

In the past five years, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$9 billion in more than 1,600 school upgrades – creating more than 10,000 construction jobs – and is now ahead of schedule its commitment to open 100 new schools by 2026, with 48 new schools opening between 2019 and 2022.

Applications for Round 6 of the program open on Tuesday, 8 December and close Friday, 19 February. For more details, go to <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/Pages/Inclusive-Schools-Fund.aspx>

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"We are supporting projects that are making a real difference to students, who will get the benefits of new inclusive spaces to cater for a wider range of options for teaching and learning."*

*"As we build the Education State, we're continuing to invest in schools to ensure students of all abilities can access a great education – no matter their circumstances."*