

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Friday, 30 April 2021

LILYDALE SCHOOL HUB OPENS AS KOORIE STRATEGY LAUNCHES

Lilydale students are learning in world-class facilities as part of a \$56.3 million investment in local secondary students through the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino and Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing today visited Lilydale Heights College to tour the school's new sustainable learning hub, town square, gym, canteen and staff room completed as part of an \$8 million Stage 1 upgrade.

Mr Merlino also officially launched a four-year Collaborative Indigenous Strategy, which aims to ensure a culturally inclusive environment for Koorie students across the six schools involved in the Education Plan.

Created to align with the *Marrung, Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026*, the strategy provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for indigenous students, with Aboriginal cultures and histories celebrated across the schools.

The strategy also aims to address lower retention rates of Koorie students and support them to complete their Year 12 certificate. It will also provide greater pathway options toward further education, training and employment.

Under the strategy, First Nation Advocates have been appointed at each school, along with the running of a Yarning Circle – in which students provided feedback on what they wanted to see at the school and how they would like to connect with Aboriginal culture.

The strategy was developed collaboratively by principals at Healesville High School, Lilydale Heights College, Lilydale High School, Mooroolbark College, Upper Yarra Secondary College and Yarra Hills Secondary College and will be implemented across the six schools.

The Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan brings the six schools together to ensure every student has access to high quality secondary education, improved wellbeing and engagement services, and future focused pathway and learning opportunities.

The \$8 million upgrade at Lilydale Heights College is just one part of a massive investment across Lilydale District and Yarra Valley secondary schools as part of the Education Plan. A further \$16.65 million was allocated across 2020 for additional upgrades at the school, while \$31.7 million of upgrades are scheduled or underway at Lilydale High School and Upper Yarra Secondary College.

In the past five years, the Labor Government has invested more than \$9 billion in more than 1,600 school upgrades, creating more than 10,000 construction jobs.

Quote attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Education James Merlino

"These works are providing Lilydale students with the first-rate facilities they deserve to go about their learning. The Indigenous Strategy is about better supporting Koorie students across Lilydale and the Yarra Valley to stay in school and help them to connect with further opportunities for study or work."

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"The students, staff and teachers at Lilydale Heights College have a well-deserved reputation for being diverse, inclusive, innovative and high-achieving."

"It's been such a pleasure to see this project come to fruition, and I can't wait to see students enjoying these facilities and engaging with the Collaborative Indigenous Strategy."

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