

# Media Release

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



Monday, 17 May 2021

## **GIVING MORE REGIONAL STUDENTS DANCE AND DRAMA OPPORTUNITIES**

More primary school students in rural and regional Victoria are getting the chance to learn dance and drama skills, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Acting Premier and Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the first schools taking part in the Blended Arts Education Program (Dance and Drama) in Terms 2 and 3 this year, to be delivered by AusDance Victoria and Drama Victoria.

Data shows that dance and drama are under-represented as arts disciplines in rural and regional Victoria. This program will provide virtual lessons as well as onsite incursions to students in Years 3-6 at 30 schools, with 15 schools to take part in dance and 15 to take part in drama.

The program pairs rural and regional schools that have an identified need to initiate or support a dance or drama program at their school with industry experts to lift teacher capability in planning, teaching, knowledge and in delivering the dance and drama curriculum.

The program will run for three years, with new schools and students getting the chance to experience a high-quality arts program each year.

It's part of the Labor Government's more than \$37 million investment in a range of initiatives to improve educational outcomes for rural and regional students, and address the disparity between regional and metropolitan schools.

The Labor Government has been working to deliver on its Education State target of having 20 per cent more Year 10 students achieving excellence in the Arts by 2025.

### **Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Education James Merlino**

*"We know kids thrive intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically when studying the arts, and that it can also help build confidence, resilience, self-esteem and a sense of belonging in communities and cultures."*

*"We're investing in programs like this that our rural and regional schools need, because every child deserves a great education no matter where they live."*