

Media Release

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



Friday, 25 June 2021

SUPPORTING VICTORIAN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

More Victorian students with disability will get the support they need to learn, contribute and participate in their schools and classrooms, thanks to the Victorian Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced that all government schools across the Barwon, Loddon Campaspe and Bayside Peninsula areas, and the five supported inclusion schools across Victoria, will receive further funding support to make their school more inclusive for all students, as part of the *Disability Inclusion* package.

These schools are in Year 1 of the five-year *Disability Inclusion* roll-out and will all receive a base level of funding from Term 3 this year, with additional funding provided depending on the individual school's characteristics.

This new funding support is ongoing and is in addition to support already provided through the current *Program for Students with Disabilities*.

Schools will use this funding to implement whole-school practices that support the inclusive education of students with diverse learning needs such as autism and learning difficulties.

This may include undertaking professional development for staff, employing new disability and inclusion staff, and purchasing programs, interventions or specific equipment and technology – depending on the needs of their students and the school.

For example, a school may choose to use this funding to employ a new inclusive practices leader to work in classrooms with teachers or an occupational therapist to develop sensory profiles.

Other schools may choose to use the funding to invest in the services of external professionals or coaches who can provide advice and training on equipment and technology to support learning for students with diverse learning needs, and implement consistent inclusive supports throughout the school.

Disability Inclusion will be rolled out progressively over the next five years, reaching all Victorian government schools by 2025.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* invested an unprecedented almost \$1.6 billion to make sure Victorian students with disability are supported at school through the *Disability Inclusion* package.

The 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.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and 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."

"This funding will enable schools to support more students with disability, so that they can get the great education they deserve."