

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health



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A NEW WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT KIDS WITH DISABILITY AT SCHOOL

Victorian students with disability and their families are a step closer to receiving more support to learn, contribute and participate fully in their schools and classrooms, thanks to a new workforce for schools supported by the Andrews Labor Government.

Healthcare Associates has been appointed to provide the Disability Inclusion Facilitator Service as part of the Labor Government's *Disability Inclusion* reform, which will transform support for students with disability in our schools.

Australian Healthcare Associates manages a range of health, education and social services programs for governments across Australia – and through this new program, will provide trained facilitators to help schools and families work together to create a Disability Inclusion Profile to assist individual students with disability.

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

This new approach puts the needs of the student at the heart of our response – shifting away from outdated practices to focus on what a child can achieve, rather than what they can't.

Support from the Facilitator Service can be requested by all government schools in the Barwon, Loddon Campaspe and Bayside Peninsula areas, and the five supported inclusion schools across Victoria, from Term 4 this year.

These schools are in Year 1 of the five-year Disability Inclusion roll-out – with the program to reach all Victorian government schools progressively by 2025.

Facilitators will lead Student Support Group meetings to help schools and families identify the strengths, needs and educational adjustments schools can make to fully support all students.

For example, a student with a vision impairment in a mainstream school may benefit from accessible signage, printed materials in an alternative format, access to screen reader technology, or additional time provided for assessment tasks.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"The facilitator workforce will enable schools to take a strengths-based approach to supporting students with disability, making sure they can get the great education they deserve."

"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."