

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Thursday, 14 October 2021

## TAILORED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

Schools will be able to pick the mental health tools that best match the needs of their students, with the Victorian Government's *Schools Mental Health Fund* providing a suite of options to give students tailored support.

Minister for Education James Merlino today revealed the interim menu of resources and initiatives to be available to government schools as part of the \$200 million Fund, designed to better support students' mental health.

The move delivers on a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, which called for a fund to support schools with evidence-informed initiatives for students' mental health and wellbeing.

Schools will be able to select evidence-based programs and initiatives from the online menu across three tiers of intervention:

- Tier One: positive mental health promotion, including initiatives like Active Schools, mental health first aid, anti-bullying programs and therapy dogs as whole-school investments to help create a positive, inclusive environment, as well as mental health literacy training to ensure mental health issues are addressed early
- Tier Two: early intervention and cohort-specific initiatives including cross-cultural responsiveness training, Arts Therapy or trauma informed care, ensuring programs cater to all students
- Tier Three: targeted support for those experiencing mental health issues such as additional mental health professionals, additional Headspace counselling, or suicide related support

As per the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the Fund will be implemented in all government schools across regional Victoria from mid-2022 and will be in every state school by 2024.

This comes on top of the Government's completed rollout of a mental health practitioner in every government secondary school. Further, an additional 74 primary schools across Victoria will join the Mental Health in Primary Schools Pilot in 2022 – bringing the total number of schools in the pilot to 100.

A partnership with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Mental Health in Primary Schools Pilot provides schools with funding for a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead to implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing aimed at younger children.

Work to reform the state's mental health services is well underway, with a record \$3.8 billion allocated in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to deliver every single recommendation of the Royal Commission and build a system that works for every Victorian.

To access the menu, visit <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/mental-health-menu-for-schools>.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"Now more than ever, our kids need support both at home and at school to make sure their wellbeing is on track. These tailored initiatives will help keep Victorian students happy and healthy, so they can focus on succeeding in their learning as we emerge from the pandemic."*

*"Our schools play a central role in the development of every young Victorian – that's why it is so important they take a leadership role in supporting student mental health."*