

# Media Release

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



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## HELPING NEW VICTORIAN KIDS SETTLE INTO SCHOOL

Children arriving in Victoria with low levels of English will be supported to learn the language and integrate into mainstream schools, with the Victorian Government supporting English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers and multicultural education aides to help new arrivals feel at home.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the EAL Teaching and Curriculum Support Initiative will be extended into the first half of 2022, allowing these specialist teachers and multicultural education aides to redirect their expertise from English-language schools to mainstream schools.

After the pandemic led to a drop in the number of enrolments of school-aged children in external English-language schools, the Government's New Arrivals Program supported staff to work in mainstream schools, enhancing schools' EAL programs and ensuring new Victorian children still receive support to learn English and thrive at school.

The program includes additional classes and programs, in-class support and support for specific students, curriculum support to help develop teaching programs and build mainstream teachers' understanding of English language acquisition, and building engagement with parents and families who are new to Victoria.

Through the New Arrivals Program, students are also supported to work collaboratively with other schools on EAL-focused curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and receive extra support with the transition of students from English language schools to mainstream settings.

Among the schools to benefit from the placements is Albany Rise Primary School, which sees an EAL teacher at the school almost every day, supporting around one-third of the school's students who are in an EAL program, and Dandenong South Primary School, which welcomed an EAL teacher from Noble Park English Language School.

Great Ryrie Primary School in Heathmont, where one-fifth of the school community is Burmese, was supported to employ a multicultural education aide from Blackburn English Language School who can speak three dialects, enabling further communication and improved connections with families and more in-class support.

Alongside placements in mainstream schools, EAL staff have also had the opportunity to work on a professional development program, helping with the development and implementation of programs benefitting both EAL students and teachers.

Across the government school system, newly arrived EAL students can access intensive English language programs provided by an English language school or centre or the Victorian School of Languages through the New Arrivals Program, before being transitioned into mainstream schools.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invested \$25.2 million in continued support for government students who do not speak English at home to ensure they have the same opportunities as native English speakers.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"Our EAL teachers and multicultural education aides can be a lifeline for newly arrived students – providing the specialist support they need to learn English, take the same opportunities as native English-speaking children and feel at home in Victoria."*

*"Having specialised EAL staff in government schools means we can provide targeted support for the students who need it most, and helps our schools build on the support already in place for EAL students."*

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