

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



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HELPING KIDS SEE CLEARLY WITH GLASSES MILESTONE

One thousand more Victorian students can now see more clearly and concentrate better at school, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's free Glasses for Kids program.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the 1000th pair of free glasses have been prescribed to a student at Rochester Primary School in the Shire of Campaspe.

One of 16 students at his school to receive free vision screening and testing at school, Grade 2 student Charlie Holland received his new glasses alongside six classmates.

Children with undiagnosed vision problems often find it hard to concentrate at school, which presents challenges when it comes to actively engaging in their learning – but too many Victorian families avoid eye testing due to the prohibitive cost of glasses.

The Victorian-first program, which is managed and delivered by State Schools' Relief, has helped more than 22,000 Prep to Year 3 students at 395 schools across Victoria have their eyes screened and, if needed, receive free glasses.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* invested \$1.6 million to deliver the second round of the Glasses for Kids program – supporting students with undiagnosed vision impairments, regardless of their background, to achieve their best at school and beyond.

This builds on the \$800,000 the Labor Government has already provided to this initiative since coming to government, ensuring a child's education isn't disadvantaged by easily treated issues like vision impairment.

The second phase of the program means the program will visit an extra 340 schools – testing around 40,000 more Prep to Grade 3 students.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Giving every Victorian child the opportunity to thrive at school goes beyond providing great education programs – it's about making sure nobody is left behind because of easily treatable issues like vision impairment."

"It's fantastic to see an extra thousand Victorian students seeing more clearly and concentrating better thanks to Glasses for Kids – and that's exactly why we'll continue to invest in this vital program, and in our kids' health."