

Media Release

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



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20 MILLION REASONS TO CELEBRATE SCHOOL BREAKFAST CLUBS

Hundreds of thousands of Victorian students are now starting the school day with full stomachs, clearer minds and better moods, with the Andrews Labor Government's School Breakfast Clubs program celebrating more than 20 million meals served.

Minister for Education James Merlino today visited Leopold Primary School in Geelong, which has provided more than 10,500 meals, to celebrate the program's huge milestone.

Leopold Primary School's Breakfast Club has been running since Term 3, 2020 – and in less than two years, students have benefitted from almost 6,000 breakfasts and more than 3,600 snack items.

The School Breakfast Club program, which began in 2016, is part of the Labor Government's \$58 million investment – delivered in partnership with Foodbank Victoria – to provide free, healthy food for students at 1,000 government schools.

Feedback from schools has shown the program has had benefits beyond making students happier and healthier – it has led to greater social outcomes for students and the school community, improved student engagement and concentration, strengthened staff-student relationships, enhanced social skills and better academic performance.

Since being established, the program has not only delivered more than 20 million nutritious meals, but has continued supporting students with access to healthy food despite periods of remote learning during the pandemic.

Smaller breakfast clubs were run at school for students who were permitted to learn onsite, as well as 'grab and go' meal options for students to take home, food provided for families to collect from school sites to keep kids fed at home, and supplies even delivered to the homes of vulnerable students.

In addition to delivering healthy breakfasts to students in 1,000 primary, secondary and specialist schools, the program provides nutritious lunches and holiday food supplies to students in need – and delivers cooking classes for families from around 100 schools across the state.

School Holiday Supply packs are also available for schools to order over the summer school holiday period for families who need support.

Nearly 40,000 packs have been distributed since the program began, with the 14-day food packs expanded last year to include lunch items in addition to healthy breakfasts and snacks.

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Kids just can't learn well on an empty stomach – and this program has made such a difference in the lives of many thousands of students who need a bit of extra support to have a nutritious, delicious meal every morning."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"The pandemic was profoundly challenging for many Victorian families – but we're proud that our School Breakfast Clubs were able to step in to ease the pressure on families and make sure nobody is at school hungry."

Media contact: Matilda Edwards Jézéquel 0447 422 464 | matilda.edwards-jezequel@minstaff.vic.gov.au