

# Media Release

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



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## MARKING 150 YEARS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VICTORIA

While the Andrews Labor Government is getting on with building the schools of the future, 2022 marks a massive milestone – the 150th anniversary of the Victoria’s world-class public education system.

Minister for Education James Merlino visited Essendon Primary School, Melbourne’s oldest continuously-operating government school, to mark the anniversary of the *Education Act 1872* and announce the next milestone in the state’s schools of the future – with all builders appointed to construct the 13 new Victorian schools opening in 2023.

Victoria was the first state in Australia – and one of the first in the world – to make education free, secular and compulsory to all children aged 6-15. Around 600 schools opened across the state in the five years following the passing of the *Education Act* – setting Victoria up for its future as the Education State.

The milestone will be marked with a range of activities across the year designed to commemorate the past, celebrate the present and imagine the future of education.

A dedicated Victorian Government website will feature the 483 original government schools from 1872 alongside every other government school established since, displaying a selection of digitally preserved historical records from the past 150 years including school history summaries, enrolment registers and photos.

There are undoubtedly thousands more historical gems yet to be uncovered to tell Victoria’s long and proud education history – and anyone with photos, documents or other vintage school treasures that can be added to the website is encouraged to email them to [150years@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:150years@education.vic.gov.au) to help build this digital time capsule.

More than 6,500 archive boxes have already been collected and digitised from schools around Victoria, including Essendon Primary School, Bacchus Marsh Primary School and Wallan Primary School, which are all still open – as well as Carlton Primary School and Sutton Grange Primary School which have now closed.

Essendon Primary School was founded as Pascoevale National School No. 483 in July 1850, with the school originally situated on the banks of the Moonee Ponds Creek near the junction of Five Mile Creek. The original school bell still stands in the grounds, having been presented to the school in 1933.

The Labor Government is delivering on the state’s 150-year record of being a leader in education, having invested more than \$10.9 billion in building new schools and more than 1,700 school upgrades in just seven years – creating around 13,500 jobs in construction and associated industries.

Work to open 100 new schools by 2026 is ahead of schedule, with 62 new schools opening between 2019 and 2024.

For more information on the 150 Years of Public Education milestone, visit [www.vic.gov.au/150years](http://www.vic.gov.au/150years).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*“This is a really special milestone for Victorian education – celebrating 150 years of our pioneering education system, while looking towards the future to continue giving our students the very best opportunities in life.”*

*“While many aspects of Victoria’s education may have changed, the idea that every child should have access to a free, secular, high-quality education, regardless of their background, will never change.”*

*“I encourage all Victorians and Victorian schools to share their educational history via the 150 Years website, and help commemorate the integral role government schools have played in the educational fabric of our state.”*

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**2023 new schools:**

<b>Interim New School Name</b>	<b>Builder</b>
Holyoake Parade Primary School	Hutchinson Builders
Lollypop Creek Primary School	Hutchinson Builders
Riverdale East Primary School	Hutchinson Builders
Rockbank Murray Road Primary School	Hutchinson Builders
Tarneit Missen House Primary School	Hutchinson Builders
Camms Road Primary School	Kane Constructions
Hayes Hill Primary School	Kane Constructions
Merrifield West Primary School	Kane Constructions
Officer Rix Road Primary School	Kane Constructions
Wollert West Primary School	Kane Constructions
Mount Ridley Special School	Ireland Brown Construction
North Melbourne Primary School (new campus)	Hansen Yuncken
Wollert East Secondary College	ADCO Construction