

Sunday, 8 May 2022

MAJOR UPGRADES FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS ACROSS VICTORIA

Students with special needs should have the same opportunities as every other student in Victoria – and it’s only the Andrews Labor Government that’s investing to give every student in Victoria the great education they deserve.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Education James Merlino today visited Ashwood School to announce it is one of 36 special schools sharing in \$326 million of major upgrades through the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

This investment means that since the Labor Government was elected in 2014, every single one of the 82 special schools in every corner of Victoria has received funding for a major upgrade.

These upgrades are delivering the fit-for-purpose classrooms and amenities, accessible sporting facilities, assembly spaces, music rooms and sensory areas every student deserves.

Ashwood School will receive \$9.7 million to upgrade the school – replacing outdated portable classrooms with permanent facilities and modernising the school’s sporting facilities, including an upgrade to the oval.

The Labor Government has repeatedly stepped in to give Victorians with disability the support they deserve after being left behind by the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth’s neglect has ranged from NDIS plans shrinking by an average of \$1,800, to a huge increase in Victorians forced to take their plans through the long and costly Administrative Appeals Tribunal, to a lack of support to get vaccinated or access RATs during the pandemic.

This year’s Budget delivers an investment of more than \$700 million to support people with disability right across the state – building a community that works for every Victorian, no matter what their needs are.

That support includes better special schools, more accessible public transport, courses in Auslan at Free TAFE, more support for the Victorian Disability Plan and an investment of \$135 million for tailored support for Victorians who aren’t eligible for the NDIS.

The Labor Government’s \$1.8 billion investment in new schools and school upgrades in this year’s Budget will create almost 3,900 additional jobs in construction and related industries – with more than 3,100 jobs in metropolitan Melbourne and 750 in regional Victoria.

The Government is well ahead of schedule in its work to deliver 100 new schools by 2026 – with 75 new schools opening between 2019 and 2024, including Endeavour Hills Specialist School which opened this year, and Mount Ridley Special School in Craigieburn – opening its doors in 2023.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“We owe it to every Victorian child to give them the very best opportunities in life – and that starts with making sure every student has the facilities they need to learn and grow, no matter what school they attend.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“Our approach is all about giving families with special needs children the choice of what works best for them. By upgrading every single special school in Victoria alongside our huge mainstream school improvements, we’re making that choice one that is based on the wellbeing of every child – not the condition of the classrooms.”