

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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MAKING VICTORIAN SCHOOLS INCLUSIVE FOR ALL STUDENTS

Schools across Victoria will receive a funding boost to build inclusive play areas, sensory gardens and outdoor learning areas to support students with disabilities and additional needs, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today announced more than 40 schools will share in \$7.89 million to build facilities suitable for all students, as part of Round 8 of the Inclusive Schools Fund.

The Fund will see improvements made to play areas – with stimulating and accessible equipment – as well as outdoor learning spaces that provide opportunities for sensory experiences and peer socialisation. Indoor spaces will also be upgraded to promote more inclusive classroom organisation and teaching practices.

Some of the schools to receive the funding includes Briagolong Primary School, which has been allocated \$200,000 for a new inclusive playground.

Ripponlea Primary School will also receive \$177,834 for a dedicated outdoor inclusive learning space and Stawell West Primary School will use \$67,519 in funding to upgrade an indoor area with new sensory learning equipment.

The Labor Government launched the Inclusive Schools Fund in 2015 after the Liberals spent four years neglecting students with additional needs, helping Victorian schools support students who require extra facilities to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed.

Since the fund was established, more than 340 creative projects to build inclusive learning spaces and inclusive playgrounds have been announced.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* includes a further \$10 million to the Inclusive Schools Fund, bringing the total investment to \$70 million.

The Labor Government is also investing \$1.6 billion to transform support for students with disability in Victorian government schools – doubling the number of students receiving extra support in the classroom to 55,000.

In the past eight years, the Government has invested \$12.8 billion in building new schools and more than 1,850 school upgrades, creating around 17,400 jobs in construction and associated industries.

Further funding allocated in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* for upgrades to special schools will mean that every government special school will have had a major upgrade since the Labor Government was elected.

The Government is now also ahead of schedule in opening 100 new schools by 2026, with 75 new schools opening between 2019 and 2024.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

“We’re ensuring every child and young person in Victoria can meet their potential and access great education – regardless of their background, abilities or differences.”

“That’s why we’re continuing to invest in the Inclusive Schools Fund – giving schools the infrastructure they need to enable more students to fully participate and succeed in their years of schooling and beyond.”

Media contact: Sarah Vanin 0410 982 745 | sarah.vanin@minstaff.vic.gov.au