

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to invest in school mental health and wellbeing support – making it the biggest in Australia’s history – to ensure kids have access to the mental health tools they need to thrive at school and in life.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today announced the full Schools Mental Health Menu is officially available to schools as part of the Labor Government’s \$200 million Schools Mental Health Fund, which delivers on a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.

The Menu is an online list of more than 56 evidence-based programs and initiatives designed to give schools confidence to identify programs, staff and resources that improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes. It also enables schools to select the mental health tools that best match the unique needs of their student cohorts.

The programs and initiatives include disaster, grief and loss programs, counselling, mental health first aid training, arts and music therapy, as well as workshops and activities that are delivered by trained mental health and wellbeing professionals.

The full Menu builds on the interim version released last year – which featured positive mental health promotion items like wellbeing dogs and training for teachers in trauma-informed practices – and will be rolled out to all government schools by 2024.

Schools across regional and rural Victoria have already begun accessing the mental health tools across three tiers of intervention, including positive mental health promotion, early intervention and targeted support.

The Labor Government is delivering every single recommendation from the Royal Commission - which highlighted that schools play a critical role in identifying children with mental health and wellbeing challenges who can then be referred to treatment, care and support if needed.

Unlike the Liberals, who will refuse to properly fund our reformed mental health system by leaving a \$3.7 billion black hole in the mental health system, leaving facilities without the staff they need to care for Victorians, only a Labor Government will rebuild the wellbeing services our state deserves.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$600 million into mental health in schools alone, with a mental health practitioner already in every single government secondary and specialist school across the state – a year ahead of schedule – and mental health and wellbeing leaders being rolled out in all primary schools to support kids.

The State Budget 2022/23 also includes \$41.3 million to sustain mental health services for schools, including continuation of the LOOKOUT program and headspace initiative.

For more information about the Schools Mental Health Menu, visit <https://go.vic.gov.au/o6PWRO>

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

“Unlike the Liberals who have a track record of nothing but cuts and closures in our mental health services, we’re delivering thousands of extra mental health workers and putting them in every school to give Victorians the care they deserve.”

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“We’re making sure kids have access to a full suite of mental health tools to thrive at school through the Schools Mental Health Fund – part of our promise to deliver every single recommendation from the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.”