

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



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## HELPING AT-RISK STUDENTS TO NAVIGATE SCHOOL

More Victorian students at risk of disengaging from education will be supported through the Navigator as part of the Andrews Labor Government's significant expansion of the program.

Navigator currently supports young people aged 12 to 17 years old and the new funding includes a pilot for expanding the program to support students aged 10 to 11, to enable earlier intervention and support through the transition from primary school to secondary school.

The program provides case management support to the most severely disengaged learners to help create a pathway back to education. Since the program's inception in 2016, Navigator has supported more than 5,500 young people, of whom 3,700 have re-engaged with education.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* delivers an additional \$37 million investment so the program can support an additional 1,400 young people each year. From 2023 onwards, the program will be able to support 3000 students across Victoria each year.

The pilot will commence in 2023 in the Bayside Peninsula, Western Melbourne, Loddon Campaspe and Hume Moreland areas before being rolled out across the remainder of the state.

Navigator staff work one-on-one with young people and their families and schools to provide students with the specific and tailored support they need, as well as with schools to support each young person's pathway back to regular attendance and engagement in learning.

The support helps students address underlying barriers to learning like mental health issues, substance abuse, insecure home environments and contact with the youth justice system.

The investment also provides for four new regional practice lead positions and a central data scientist position, to support schools to intervene early with at risk students and draw upon the broader system of supports to prevent disengagement.

This builds on the Labor Government's investment of \$258.4 million to further extend the Tutor Learning Initiative – allowing Victorian schools to keep the tutors that supported students throughout 2021 and 2022.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

*"Navigator provides support to Victorian students who have been doing it tough and encourages them to reconnect with education."*

*"Thousands of young Victorians have returned to learning through this program, improving their career options and setting them up for the future – that's why we're expanding this Navigator to give every Victorian child the best chance in life."*