

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Women



Sunday, 23 October 2022

## MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring kids have access to the mental health support they need to thrive at school and in life – thanks to the biggest investment in student mental health in Australian history.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today announced the Mental Health in Primary Schools program – which received \$200 million to be expanded to every single government and low-fee non-government primary school in Victoria – will be scaled up across the state from next year.

It means by 2026, every school will employ a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader to implement a whole-school approach to wellbeing. This will support individual students, help teachers better identify and support at-risk students, and build relationships and referral pathways to local mental health services.

The program builds on a successful pilot with 100 primary schools across the state. More than 95 per cent of Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders involved in the pilot said the program improved their school's capacity to support students' mental health and wellbeing needs.

The program will be rolled out in stages in the coming years:

- Term 1, 2023: Barwon, Brimbank Melton, Hume Moreland, Goulburn, and Outer Gippsland.
- Term 2, 2024: Western Melbourne, Mallee, Ovens Murray, and Southern Melbourne.
- Term 1, 2025: Wimmera South West, Loddon Campaspe, Outer East Melbourne, and Inner Gippsland.
- Term 1, 2026: Central Highlands, North East Melbourne, Inner East Melbourne, and Bayside Peninsula.

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.

It includes \$200 million to establish the Schools Mental Health Fund, which provides all government schools with flexible funding for programs, training and additional staff and delivers on a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

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.

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

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

*"We are leading the nation when it comes to mental health in schools – with our investment being the biggest in Australia's history – to ensure every student has access to the support they need to thrive at school and in life."*

*"Not only are we rolling out mental health and wellbeing leaders in schools – we're also putting thousands of extra mental health workers in every school and making sure kids have access to a full suite of mental health tools to thrive."*

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