

# Media Release

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



Wednesday, 29 March 2023

## PRIMARY SCHOOL GARDENS PROGRAM READY TO BLOOM

The Andrews Labor Government is encouraging more kids to get active and grubby in school gardens, with the Victorian Schools Garden Program providing rich outdoor learning experiences for students across the state.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today announced an increase in the Labor Government's annual grant to the Victorian Schools Garden Program, from \$95,000 a year to \$145,000 a year – ensuring the thriving program continues to nurture more primary school students.

The announcement was made at the opening day of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, where student garden projects and a sustainable scarecrow competition were showcased from schools across the state.

Now in its 46<sup>th</sup> year, the Victorian Schools Garden Program has provided rewarding outdoor education initiatives to generations of Victorians, with this latest funding representing a major funding boost to a bountiful scheme.

The Department of Education and Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria have worked closely together to cultivate the program and grow its student engagement, with the additional funding to deliver school-based activities and on-site learning at 35 participating primary schools – benefiting an estimated 3,500 students.

The program includes grants to encourage schools to start new gardens or improve existing ones, an awards scheme that recognises and rewards the achievements of students and school communities, and professional development workshops for teachers and volunteers to learn the basics of running a school garden.

The program also connects schools with horticulture industry experts to help with large-scale garden projects.

The awards and grants programs are open to all Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools. For more information visit [vsgp.org.au](https://vsgp.org.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

*"I've seen first-hand how school gardens offer great opportunities for primary school students to learn in an outdoor setting, providing a tremendous boost to their health and wellbeing."*

*"Sharing the importance of sustainable living and fostering a love of gardening is vital to ensuring that the next generation takes a hands-on approach to caring for the environment."*