

# Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Women



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## NEW PROGRAM HELPING VICTORIAN STUDENT TEACHERS GO RURAL

The Andrews Labor Government is backing rural and regional communities, with an innovative program to bring hundreds of student teachers into government primary and secondary schools across the state.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today launched the Teach Rural pilot program, which will support up to 200 student teachers - or pre-service teachers (PSTs) - to undertake placements at government schools across rural and regional Victoria in 2023 and 2024.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* provided \$2.6 million for the Department of Education to partner with Country Education Partnership, which will deliver the Teach Rural pilot program.

The Teach Rural program involves coordinating and supporting groups of participating pre-service teachers to undertake placements in clusters of rural and regional schools, including in East Gippsland, Wimmera, Mallee and North-East Victoria.

Placements will benefit schools in St Arnaud, Bairnsdale, Wangaratta, Tallangatta, the Otways and Swan Hill.

The first placements for the Teach Rural program will start on 1 May, with groups of teaching students from the University of Melbourne commencing four-week placements at schools in Tallangatta and Wangaratta.

Teach Rural has been designed to remove barriers PSTs can face in doing their placements at rural and regional schools, while supporting rural schools through better access to pre-service teachers.

The initiative provides participants with a suite of supports to facilitate the placements and welcome them into the local school and community, addressing barriers that can include relocation, costs of accommodation and isolation during placement period.

Support for Teach Rural participants includes subsidised placement accommodation, a group welcome event, a welcome meal with the host school principal or mentor, welcome packs with community information, a cluster peer network and support for mentor teachers to induct their PSTs into the schools.

Since 2019, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$290 million in initiatives to attract, retain and place teachers to support all our schools, with nearly 5,000 more registered teachers in 2022 compared to 2020.

Student teachers interested in participating in the Teach Rural program should visit [cep.org.au/teach-rural](https://cep.org.au/teach-rural).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

*"Undertaking a placement at a rural or regional school is an important and valuable experience for teaching students and could also be the first step towards a rewarding career and life in rural and regional Victoria."*

*"We're providing pre-service teachers more opportunities to discover regional and rural communities, while delivering local schools extra support and local kids better educational experiences."*

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