

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Education
Minister for Women



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LIGHTHOUSE BRINGS BRIGHTER FUTURE TO LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE

Feeling part of a community helps young people to grow and thrive, which is why the Andrews Labor Government is making sure school-aged children have the tools and support they need to meet their full potential.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* has delivered a further \$4 million in funding to the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project to continue helping the young people of Shepparton and Mooroopna through locally-tailored approaches to education, employment and community inclusion.

The funding of \$1 million per year over four years continues our support for the Lighthouse initiative, delivering the best local outcomes to the community through social and educational initiatives, while also helping students re-engage with education after time away.

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project was created to improve outcomes and overcome disadvantage for young people. The project makes the entire community a part of this process through collaboration, innovation and data to assist children at every step of their education journey.

Lighthouse operates a range of programs and services to support young people. These include:

- Family Haven – a primary prevention and early intervention initiative which empowers at-risk caregivers to access essential services and social supports
- OLLY (Opportunities and Life Links for Youth) – a service for young people to access positive social and learning experiences
- Industry Links – career industry tours for primary and secondary students to build interest in local employment
- Pit Stop – a re-engagement program offering young people the opportunity to learn small engine and automotive skills with industry professionals
- Laptops with Love – initiative linking students and families with donated and refurbished laptops for those with limited access to technological equipment

The Lighthouse program also collaborated to provide food, medicine and essential services to thousands of homes during the 2022 floods in Greater Shepparton. The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* further invests a total of \$19.3 million over four years to continue locally tailored education and employment initiatives across Victoria.

Quote attributable to Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins

“The Andrews Labor Government’s partnership with the Lighthouse program highlights our shared vision for improved education outcomes and life opportunities for the young people of Shepparton and Mooroopna, with the Shepparton Education Plan ensuring young people continue to meet their potential.”

Quote attributable to Adam Furphy, Board Chair, Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project

“Lighthouse thanks the Hon. Natalie Hutchins for this continued support and recognition of our work. Through our collaboration with the Department of Education, we have unlocked the potential of our local young people and built their resilience at school and work.”

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