

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 2 May 2024

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE

The Allan Labor Government is giving thousands of Victorian students the free, confidential wellbeing support they deserve – with nation-leading mental health initiatives now rolled out across government secondary and specialist schools and at the halfway mark across government primary and low-fee non-government primary schools.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Education Ben Carroll today visited Wurun Senior Campus – a joint school for senior students from Collingwood College and Fitzroy High School – to meet some of the dedicated mental health practitioners who support more than 9,300 Victorian secondary students with their mental health each year.

Mental health practitioner Anna Nissen is one of 400 secondary school mental health practitioners who delivered more than 70,000 support sessions last year across the state – giving students the safe, judgment-free care they need without the expense of an external mental health provider.

Since 2023, every Victorian government secondary school has been funded to employ a dedicated mental health practitioner to offer counselling and early intervention services, coordinate support for students, and to refer them for specialist treatment where needed.

Half of all government primary and low-fee non-government primary schools are now funded to employ a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, with the remaining half on track to join them progressively by 2026.

As of this year, all government schools also have access to the Labor Government's dedicated Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu, enabling them to provide programs, training and additional staff to intervene early to support students and provide targeted and individualised support.

The Labor Government's \$600 million investment in student mental health is the largest in Australian history and will ensure Victorian students can access the mental health and wellbeing support they need, when they need it.

The world-class Wurun Senior Campus was funded in the *Victorian Budget 2019/20* – and opened as part of the Labor Government's redeveloped Gasworks precinct to give local families a great new school, close to home.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We're making sure every child has the support they need to thrive at school, without the added expense for families."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Not only are we putting thousands of mental health workers and leaders in every Victorian school, we're also making sure kids have access to a full suite of mental health tools right through their time at school."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"This program is about intervening early to ensure better outcomes for everyone, and delivering comprehensive care in environments where students feel most comfortable."

Quote attributable to Wurun Senior Campus Principal Chris Millard

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“We are proud of the wellbeing strategies that have been formulated through student voice and with the support of Mental Health Fund and Mental Health Practitioner. We are striving to have high impact wellbeing strategies in all our classrooms.”

Quotes attributable to Wurun Senior Campus Mental Health Practitioner Anna Nissen

“The MHP initiative has been an exciting space to work in. I’ve been impressed with the scaffolding of the initiative through the Mental Health Fund, which we have used to train staff and deliver the Study Without Stress Program.”