

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP

Minister for Veterans

Minister for Small Business and Employment

Minister for Youth



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LIVING LEARNING PROGRAM OPENS DOORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young Victorians living with mental health challenges will get the support they need to re-engage with education and build a future through an Australian-first program backed by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman and Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll have opened Hester Hornbrook Academy's new purpose-built campus in Melbourne's CBD where students will take part in the Living Learning program, made possible by a \$7.5 million investment from the Labor Government.

Living Learning supports young people aged 15 to 24 who are disengaged from education and living with mental health conditions. It connects them with education, youth workers and intervention specialists so they get the wraparound support they need for their learning and wellbeing.

Many Victorian families are doing it tough, so Living Learning also provides free daily meals and public transport support to all students – ensuring no one misses out on an education because of financial stress.

Many students in the program have experienced significant barriers to education including family violence, homelessness, trauma and mental ill-health – making traditional schooling inaccessible.

The new campus has calm, inclusive and flexible learning spaces including quiet breakout areas and wellbeing hubs providing access to therapeutic care, family engagement services and health support.

Since launching in 2021, Living Learning has supported more than 216 young people to re-engage with education and transition into training and employment opportunities.

The \$7.5 million in funding is part of the Labor Government's work to improve outcomes for young people, through a \$30 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2025/26*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman

"The Living Learning program is a powerful example of what's possible when we focus education around mental health and wellbeing – giving every young person the chance to succeed no matter their background or the challenges they face."

"Our investment means more young Victorians are supported, allowing them to build their confidence and reconnect with education in a nurturing environment."

Quote attributable to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Congratulations to Hester Hornbrook Academy on the opening of their new City Campus. It is fantastic to see the care, thought and creativity that's gone into making it such a welcoming place for students."

Quote attributable to Melbourne City Mission Chief Executive Officer Vicki Sutton

"Extending funding for these vital programs is a vote of confidence for a brighter future and opens opportunities for young people to hope for a life lived their way."

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