

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

Minister for Medical Research



Thursday, 28 May 2026

LABOR BRINGS MORE FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO KIDS

Every primary school student deserves to feel safe and supported at school.

That's why Labor is making the biggest investment in student mental health in Australia's history.

More than 500 non-government schools across the state are now funded to have a staff member dedicated to student mental health.

The \$200 million Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS) initiative has finished its four-year rollout.

1,396 public primary and 501 low-fee non-government schools, including 402 Catholic schools, have now joined.

Mental health leaders drive school-wide strategies and connect children to specialist support when needed.

The Murdoch Children's Research Institute said the program makes phenomenal progress in student mental health.

The Institute found the program improved the mental health of students in 80 per cent of participating schools.

It also improved emotional literacy, gave students confidence to seek help and improved attendance.

Labor has also funded every secondary public and specialist school to employ a mental health practitioner.

Onsite professionals provide counselling and coordinate complex care for older students.

Labor is promoting positive mental health for students at more schools across Victoria, at no cost to families.

When Jess Wilson's Liberals were last in power, they cut psychologists and social workers from public schools.

They also cut \$1 billion from education and now have a plan for \$40 billion in cuts.

They have cut before and Victorians know they will cut again.

For further information, go to education.vic.gov.au/pal/mental-health-schools/policy

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"As parents we do everything we can for our children, but we aren't mental health professionals – that's why Labor is embedding mental health support for kids in our schools."

"Our investment in student mental health is the biggest in Australia's history, promoting children's positive mental health in school and in life."

Quote attributable to Member for Footscray Katie Hall

"Schools like St Monica's here in Footscray are leading the way in mental health support for our little ones – thanks to Labor's record investment."

Media contact: Maria Wright de Pedro 0408 390 555 | maria.wrightdepedro@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to St Monica's Catholic Primary School Principal Andrea Wilberger

"Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of primary-aged children is not an 'extra' - it is essential to helping every child thrive socially, emotionally and academically."

"By investing in student wellbeing early, we are helping children develop the resilience, confidence and sense of belonging they need to learn and to flourish both at school and in life."

"Having a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader like Stephanie means we are not only able to provide additional support for students and families but also build the awareness and confidence of all our teachers to identify and support students who may be experiencing mental health challenges."

Quote attributable to Prof Frank Oberklaid, MCRI

"Teachers are the most consistent and trusted adults outside the family who are able to notice changes in behaviour, provide support, and connect children to help early. These factors make schools best placed for identifying and responding to emerging mental health concerns in students."