APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR DOCTORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Students at 100 Victorian government secondary schools will have regular access to a doctor and the healthcare they need.

Minister for Education James Merlino today invited almost 200 secondary schools across Victoria to apply to participate in the Doctors in Secondary Schools program, which will commence from the start of 2017.

The program will be targeted at schools facing disadvantage and specific health concerns, including mental health and wellbeing.

Students will be able to get referrals to specialists and get the help they need before it affects their studies.

Through the program, participating schools will partner with local doctors, who will visit the schools for up to one day a week.

The program is based on Wellington Secondary College’s ‘Wellbeing Centre’, where a local doctor attends the school one day a week at no cost to students.

To be selected eligible secondary schools will need to demonstrate a need for the service and an ability to build local partnerships with their community.

The Victorian Budget 2016/17 provided $43.8 million for Doctors in Secondary Schools, which allows students to make appointments with a doctor located on school grounds.

Under the program $25.8 million will go to recruiting and training GPs as well as staffing and operational costs, while a further $18 million will build examination rooms on school grounds.

Doctors in Secondary Schools will make an invaluable contribution towards achieving the Education State targets of ‘happy, healthy and resilient kids’ by improving access to health services for young people.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“It can be hard for some kids to access healthcare for all sorts of reasons, so we’re making sure they get the help they need.”

“A health issue can get in the way of a student’s ability to learn and a doctor on school grounds will mean they can get help sooner. Happy, healthy students do better in school.”

Quotes attributable to Doctors in Secondary Schools Ambassador and Parliamentary Secretary for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“This program brings healthcare to those young people who need it most.”

“Building a relationship with a local GP is important for all young people, our program means kids from disadvantaged areas won’t miss out.”