

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Regional Development

Deputy Leader of the Government  
in the Legislative Council



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 25 October 2018

## EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO BALLARAT STUDENTS

Ballarat government secondary schools will soon have access to a mental health professional, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford today announced a new Mental Health in Schools program, which will ensure students are receiving quality mental health care when they need it most.

One in seven Victorians between the ages of four and 17 are estimated to have a mental health issue, with prevalence higher in secondary school.

This \$51.2 million program will allow schools across the state to employ over 190 qualified mental health professionals such as counsellors, youth workers or psychologists.

The Labor Government will also partner with the Orygen National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health to promote student wellbeing within secondary schools.

Schools will have access to expert advice online through a central web portal, which will support school-based health and wellbeing teams to deliver mental health plans and support to students, and receive advice on how schools should interact with allied community and health services.

Every government secondary school will receive between one and five days a week of support from a mental health professional, depending on their enrolment numbers.

It means every government secondary school student will be able to access mental health support at school, with the program to provide at least 385,000 hours of additional mental health support in schools over four years.

The mental health professionals will provide direct counselling support and other early intervention services for students that need it, as well as coordinating support for students with severe needs.

They will also lead prevention activities by giving school staff the skills they need to manage student mental health and help embed mental health promotion and prevention programs and strategies in schools.

This announcement builds on the Labor Government's \$65.5 million investment in student health and wellbeing initiatives in all schools. This includes the Victorian Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Initiative, targeted mental health programs delivered by headspace and the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support program, as well as increased investment in allied health and nursing services.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford**

*"This program will give students across Ballarat dealing with mental health issues the support they need, so they can stay healthy and well."*

*"This is about ensuring every student in Ballarat is able to fulfil all of their potential and get the very best education."*

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