

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



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MORE SUPPORT FOR SWIMMING LESSONS IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

Victorian schools will get even more support to improve the delivery of life-saving swimming and water safety programs thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the introduction of swimming coordinators across every Victorian education area to support schools to offer swimming programs and award Victorian Water Safety Certificates.

The 17 swimming coordinators will also support the delivery of new resources and training for teachers developed by Life Saving Victoria as part of a \$4 million 2018-19 Budget investment in swimming and water safety education.

The Labor Government has increased funding across the previous two Victorian Budgets to give schools further support and ensure there is no financial burden on parents.

This \$19 million investment in the Swimming in Schools program has seen the number of Victorian government schools offering swimming lessons jump from 91 to 97 per cent last year.

However, this has not been reflected in the number of schools using the Victorian Water Safety Certificates, with many students receiving alternative certificates.

The swimming coordinators will take a proactive role in supporting schools and swimming lesson providers to use Life Saving Victoria's new online system to award certificates to students who demonstrate the required swimming abilities in 2019.

The Labor Government made swimming compulsory in the curriculum in November 2016.

The Victorian Curriculum expects students will achieve the equivalent of the swimming and water safety skills set out by the Victorian School Water Safety Certificate, which includes being able to swim 50m continuously, before leaving primary school.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Every drowning death is one too many and nothing is more important than ensuring our kids are being taught this life saving skill. We are leading the nation when it comes to delivering swimming in schools but we still want to do more."

"We know we have thousands of kids learning to swim at the level required to obtain the certificate but not receiving it because schools and swim schools are not aware of how to obtain it or are providing alternative certificates."

"To further support our schools to deliver this program we will introduce swimming coordinators across the state. This will ensure there is an even greater focus on teaching our kids to swim, providing further support to teachers and schools."

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