

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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MOVING TOWARDS BETTER PRINCIPAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

An independent report has found that the mental health and wellbeing of Victorian school principals is improving thanks to a new Strategy and suite of support initiatives undertaken by the Andrews Labor Government.

The Labor Government has invested \$51 million over four years to extend and expand initiatives adopted as part of its Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy into ongoing services for principals.

An independent evaluation by Nous Group found that the initiatives were working effectively to protect, promote and address mental and physical health of principals since its launch in May 2018.

Key findings from the report indicate that the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

- Is effectively supporting current principals as well as new and aspiring principals
- Has been broadly endorsed by Victorian principals, who have taken up the initiatives
- Has been well adopted and supported by the Department of Education and Training.

The findings are consistent with the results of the *Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2018* released in February – which shows that Victoria is the only state to report improvements in all eight health and wellbeing areas for principals, including reduced levels of stress and burnout.

The initiatives within the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy include:

- **Principal Health Checks:** voluntary, free and confidential health checks (almost 400 completed)
- **Principal Mentor Program:** connects principals with an experienced retired principal mentor (more than 60 mentee/mentor relationships)
- **Early Intervention Program:** access to case management and health and wellbeing services, including psychological support, physical therapy and dietetics (more than 300 principals supported)
- **Complex Matter Support Team:** access to a lead professional to support principals (used almost 200 times)
- **Proactive Wellbeing Supervision:** bi-annual debriefing sessions with an experienced psychologist (more than 40 per cent of principals used this service)
- **School Policy Templates Portal:** a comprehensive portal of school policy templates (228,000 page views)

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“We know our principals work incredibly hard to give Victorian kids a great education, but the job has its own unique set of demands, so we’re focussed on supporting principals to stay healthy and happy in the job.”

“The independent evaluation shows that principals are not only using the range of support services on offer, but their health and wellbeing is already benefiting.”

“With our \$51 million investment, Victoria is leading the way in supporting principals through record investment and new initiatives. We are the first state to offer proactive wellbeing sessions with an experienced psychologist for principals across our state.”

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