

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Thursday, 25 February 2021

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN STUDENTS

Secondary students in Ovens Murray and Mallee will have better access to the school-based mental health support they need, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced that the roll out of mental health practitioners at 31 schools in the Ovens Murray and Mallee Areas will soon begin.

The Mental Health Practitioners initiative is a \$51.2 million program which began in July 2019 and provides funding to schools to recruit a mental health practitioner.

It will see qualified mental health professionals in every government secondary school campus across the state, including psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and mental health nurses.

Recruitment for mental health practitioners at schools in Ovens Murray and Mallee is now underway, with on-site roles to begin in Term 2. A mental health coordinator will also be employed for each region to help oversee the recruitment and implementation process.

Mental health practitioners offer counselling and early intervention services, and coordinate support for students with complex needs, linking them with broader allied and community health services.

All government secondary schools will receive between one and five days a week of support from a mental health practitioner depending on its size and requirements.

In addition, all specialist schools with secondary aged students have received funding to recruit a school-based mental health practitioner, who will build provide wrap-around support to students and families.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* is investing \$28.5 million for student mental health support as a boost to services in response to COVID-19.

This is in addition to the \$65.5 million investment in student health and wellbeing initiatives in schools, including the Victorian Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Initiative, the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support program, as well as increased investment in allied health and nursing services.

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We know many young Victorians are experiencing mental health challenges and this initiative will make it easier for them to access the support they need at school."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"This will ensure kids in regional Victoria will get access to the mental health support they need."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"We know our students are at their most productive when they are happy and well supported and can focus on their learning."

Media contact: Harry Adam 0448 505 876 | harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Secondary schools included in the initiative:

Ovens Murray

Beechworth Secondary College

Benalla P-12 College

Blackburn English Language School

Bright P-12 College

Corryong College

Mansfield Secondary College

Mount Beauty Secondary College

Myrtleford P-12 College

Rutherglen High School

Tallangatta Secondary College

Wangaratta High School

Wodonga Middle Years College (3 campuses)

Wodonga Senior Secondary College

Mallee

Chaffey Secondary College

Charlton College

Cohuna Secondary College

Irymple Secondary College

Kerang Technical High School

Manangatang P-12 College

Merbein P-10 College

Mildura Senior College

Murrayville Community College

Ouyen P-12 College

Red Cliffs Secondary College

Robinvale College

Swan Hill College

Tyrrell College

Werrimull P-12 School

Wycheproof P-12 College

Media contact: Harry Adam 0448 505 876 | harry.adam@minstaff.vic.gov.au