

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 7 November 2024

HELPING BUSY FAMILIES WITH 50 MILLION FREE SCHOOL MEALS

More students can enjoy a free breakfast alongside their classmates, and more busy families have one thing less to worry about, with the Allan Labor Government's School Breakfast Clubs serving up their 50 millionth meal today.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Education Ben Carroll today joined Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines at Olympic Village Primary School in Heidelberg West to mark the big milestone.

Unlike the Liberals, who cut Free Fruit Fridays, the Government is dedicated to making sure students start their day on a full stomach.

More than 1,000 schools already participate in the School Breakfast Clubs program, which provides healthy breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and take-home food packs for students and families in need.

The Government invested \$21.1 million in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* to expand the program to every government school, bringing total investment in the program since 2016 to \$162.3 million.

Since the expanded investment, more than 40 additional schools have joined up to the program. In total, 150 additional schools will join the program by June 2025.

By June 2026, all government schools in the state will have had the chance to opt in – with the program set to support up to 200,000 students. The program is delivered in partnership with Foodbank Victoria.

Schools are also supporting families to plan and prepare healthy and affordable meals at home, with 140 schools hosting cooking classes for families.

Food provided through the program meets healthy eating guidelines, prioritises fresh and locally produced foods and caters for different preferences, with menu options including cereals, fresh fruit, soups and rice dishes.

The School Breakfast Clubs Program is part of a \$287 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* to help ease cost-of-living pressures for school families.

Families have started receiving letters from the Premier with their \$400 School Saving Bonus.

The bonus supports government school students and concession card holders to help with back-to-school costs, and covers uniforms, camps, excursions, textbooks and other extracurricular activities through the year.

The Labor Government has also expanded the Glasses for Kids program into more than 400 extra schools, providing free vision screening to children in Prep to Year 3 and free glasses for students who need them.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We know how tough it is for families right now."

"We're helping busy families with the cost of living and the cost of learning – serving up 50 million meals so no child goes to school hungry and helping with back-to-school costs with our \$400 School Saving Bonus."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

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“While Liberals cut free fruit Fridays, the Labor Government has served up 50 million free meals and is expanding the program across the whole state – because we believe that kids shouldn’t learn on an empty stomach.”

“I congratulate everyone who helped achieve this milestone – you have given countless children a nutritious meal every morning, and helped their families put affordable, healthy food on the table at home.”

Quote attributable to Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines

“The Breakfast Club at Olympic Village Primary School supports so many local students and families every day, and it’s made such an incredible difference.”