

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC



Thursday, 27 March 2025

BUILDING RESPECT AT MORE VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

The Allan Labor Government's Respectful Relationships program is being expanded to even more non-government schools to help embed a culture of respect and gender equality — delivering on commitments made in the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll today visited Kardinia International College to announce a further 81 new Catholic and independent schools are ready to roll out the Respectful Relationships initiative.

More than 2,000 government, Catholic and independent schools are now signed up, including more than 450 non-government schools. Expression of interests for non-government schools to join are open until 15 May.

Schools signing up to the program will be supported with startup funding of up to \$20,000 over two years for eligible schools to implement Respectful Relationships in 2025.

Findings from a Respectful Relationships evaluation identified the most significant impact for students was improved social and emotional skills. Students reported having a better understanding of their feelings and emotions, improved coping strategies and their ability to articulate needs.

Since 2016, the Labor Government has invested \$129 million to deliver training and support to roll out the Respectful Relationships program.

Respectful Relationships is part of a broader community approach to primary prevention of family violence. For more information please visit www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships.

Quote attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Victoria is leading the nation through our Respectful Relationship initiative which is supporting schools to embed a culture of respect and equality across their entire school community."

"Respectful Relationships has been a success thanks to the commitment of government, independent and Catholics sectors schools to ensure students are given the resources they need to thrive."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara Ella George

"Our young people should feel safe at school and in the community. This program plays an important part in creating cultural change to ensure young people, especially young women, are respected and supported."

Quote attributable to Kardinia International College Principal Catherine Lockhart

"The Victorian Department of Education's Respectful Relationships program is a brilliant initiative that aligns seamlessly with our school motto of Wisdom, Respect and Friendship."

"By embedding a culture of respect and equality across our entire community, it creates a consistent, positive and supportive environment that significantly improves students' academic outcomes, mental health, behaviour, and relationships."

Media contact: Grace Cramer 0447 913 851 | grace.cramer@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Victorian Catholic Education Authority CEO Professor Elizabeth Labone

“We welcome the Victorian Government’s announcement on Respectful Relationships funding. This will support schools to further promote respect and equality, recognising the dignity of the human person which is central to the mission of Catholic Education.”

Quote attributable to Independent Schools Victoria Chief Executive Rachel Holthouse

“Independent Schools Victoria is delighted to participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative. It is ISV’s firm conviction that all young people deserve to participate in explicit social emotional learning that prioritises personal safety, valuing all humans with equity, dignity, and compassion. As an independent body that champions choice and diversity, ISV seeks to support member schools in implementing Respectful Relationships that aligns with their values and culture.”