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For Families



The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

Tuesday, 5 May, 2015

BUDGET DELIVERS BIGGEST EVER INCREASE TO SCHOOL FUNDING

The Andrews Labor Government is fixing our schools, supporting our kids and giving families the help they need during the most important years of their child's life.

The 2015-16 Victorian Budget invests almost \$3.3 billion in Victoria's education system for its 900,000 students – the single biggest boost of additional funding in Victoria's history. For the first time, the Budget will meet Gonski funding levels in 2015, 2016 and 2017, because all kids deserve the best start, no matter their background.

The Abbott Government has failed to commit to its share of school funding for the 2018 and 2019 school years, but the Andrews Labor Government will keep fighting for our state and our schools.

Through this Budget, the Labor Government reconfirms its commitment to the Gonski agreement, the principles of which are central to making Victoria the Education State.

The Budget also helps families who are struggling to afford the extra costs of education, providing \$180 million to provide the things that students need to fit in and thrive.

Prep to Grade 3 students in 250 disadvantaged schools will get free eye tests and glasses if they need them, and Breakfast Clubs at disadvantaged schools will serve up the most important meal of the day to 25,000 students.

The \$148.3 million Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund will also help over 200,000 disadvantaged families afford these expensive but essential parts of a child's education.

The Budget also expands a free uniform, shoes and books program run by State Schools' Relief, so it can assist three times as many students every year.

Music should be part of a modern curriculum, and the Budget provides \$2 million to establish quality music programs in all government schools and help students buy musical instruments.

High-achieving tertiary students will mentor secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds and receive scholarship grants, under a \$1.6 million initiative.

The Budget also provides \$1 million to support same-sex attracted and gender diverse students, expanding Safe Schools Coalition Victoria into all Victorian government secondary schools to combat homophobia.

Children need to learn in classrooms that are safe, modern and comfortable, but too many school buildings in Victoria have passed their use by date, and they're holding us back.

That's why the Labor Government is investing \$730 million to rebuild, upgrade and maintain school buildings across the state and build new local schools and classrooms for kids in fast growing suburbs and regional cities.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education, James Merlino

"This is the single biggest increase in school funding in Victoria's history."

"We're giving families the help they need to cover the expensive but essential parts of their child's education."

"This is about fairness. Breaking the cycle of disadvantage starts in the schoolyard. All kids deserve the best start, no matter their background."

"We're making Victoria the Education State, because every child deserves every chance."

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