

Focused On What Matters Most

Victorian Budget 2025/26

Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Minister for Children

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COST OF LIVING HELP FOR FAMILIES & A GREAT EDUCATION FOR KIDS

The Allan Labor Government is focused on what matters most: delivering real help with the cost of living for families and making sure that every young Victorian gets a great education.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* invests more than \$4.9 billion to make sure every child gets a great start in life, with more help for families, building new classrooms and supporting the important learning that happens inside them.

Real cost of living help when it matters most

No parent wants their kid to miss out on the things that make school fun – like the camp that everyone looks forward to and the excursions that bring learning to life.

But with families under pressure, the cost of camps, school sports and excursions can be a real strain for some. That's why we're increasing payments through the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, delivering targeted support for families – and making sure kids don't miss out.

Currently, eligible primary school students receive \$154 per year, while eligible secondary students receive \$256. With an investment of \$152.3 million, all payments will be increased to \$400 from Term 1, 2026 – helping students to join camps, go on excursions and play on a team with their friends.

This real cost of living help is on top of the ongoing support delivered by the Labor Government – with free school breakfasts, free vision screening and glasses through Glasses for Kids, free dental checkups with Smile Squad, free swimming lessons and free pads and tampons in government schools.

Our nation-leading reforms in early childhood education help give young Victorians the best start in life and parents the opportunity to go back to work if and when they choose. Free Kinder alone puts up to \$2,600 back into parents' pockets every year.

It's why this Budget continues our investment with close to \$2 billion, easing the cost of living for 160,000 families with Free Kinder every year, continuing Three-Year-Old Kinder, increasing the amount of time at kindergarten for four-year-old children with Pre-Prep, and supporting the operation of 50 government owned and run early learning and childcare centres where they are needed most.

We're also investing \$15 million in Building Blocks grants to upgrade kindergartens across the state and make early learning classrooms bigger, better, more engaging and inclusive for children of all abilities.

Building new and better schools

And because we know the difference it makes to kids and their families – we're continuing to build, expand, upgrade and maintain schools across our growing state, thanks to a \$1.5 billion investment to create more than 13,300 extra places for students.

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

This includes \$411 million to fund new schools in Aintree and Officer so that they are ready for students in 2027, and expanded facilities, such as new classrooms and sports ovals, at seven recently opened schools in the growing communities of Aintree, Cranbourne, Tarneit, Truganina and Werribee.

Victoria has the largest school building program in the country and continues to build for the future – with a record 19 new schools opening next year. This means we'll have delivered on our commitment to open 100 new schools, ready for students by 2026.

And because we want every family to have a great local school – we're investing \$237 million to acquire land for new schools, \$1 million to fund a feasibility study for a maths and science school in Melbourne's north-west, and \$1.4 million to open up more after-hours recreational facilities at schools in Melbourne's west.

We're also investing \$321.7 million to upgrade 35 schools across Victoria, \$342 million for school maintenance to make sure classrooms are at their best, and \$25 million for small-scale projects via the Capital Works Fund.

This includes the final \$312 million for all 29 of the remaining school upgrades from our 2022 election commitment to upgrade and modernise 96 schools, ensuring every child has access to world-class facilities.

A further \$10 million will go towards planning future upgrades at 20 schools across the state.

Excellence in every classroom

Victoria is topping the nation in NAPLAN, thanks to the hard work of students, teachers and schools. It's why with this Budget, not only are we building schools – we're investing in the learning that happens inside them.

That includes \$133.3 million to improve learning outcomes for students, including \$81.1 million to ensure excellence in every classroom in teaching literacy and numeracy.

Already, we've mandated systematic synthetic phonics instruction. This Budget continues that work, with \$12.9 million to support schools with the rollout of mandated phonics and the Year 1 Phonics Check.

We also know we have more work to do to help more students develop a love of numbers. It's why this Budget delivers \$46.6 million to help build kids' confidence in maths in every classroom.

This funding includes \$16.3 million to develop a new Numeracy Check that will be rolled out across Year 1 in every Victorian government school from next year, helping identify kids who need extra support early.

This investment will also upskill existing maths teachers across Victorian secondary schools through micro-credentialling.

A further \$2.4 million will deliver free advanced maths camps. Run by specialists, these camps will give nearly 1,000 students in Years 9 and 10 the opportunity to engage in real-world problem solving and team-based activities.

First, Victoria led the nation by banning mobile phones in schools. Then, we worked with the Commonwealth to set a minimum age limit for young people on social media – because we could see the harm it was doing.

Now, we're investing \$10.4 million to support positive student behaviour and expand the School-wide Positive Behaviour Support program into an additional 408 schools, almost doubling the reach of the program. Working with dedicated specialist coaches, the program helps schools instil positive student behaviour, increase academic success and deliver targeted support for kids needing extra help. A further \$9.3 million will keep school staff safe from violence, including increased support and case management.

Students in Dandenong and Warrnambool will learn the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills of tomorrow, thanks to \$9.2 million for local Tech Schools.

This funding complements ongoing investment provided to Hume, Brimbank, Wangaratta and Frankston Tech Schools in last year's Budget, ensuring every young Victorian can choose the best career pathway for them.

We're boosting literacy and numeracy outcomes for First Nations students – with \$18.5 million to continue the Koorie Literacy and Numeracy Program and help close the gap in education.

Help for every young Victorian

The Labor Government is delivering the biggest reform to disability support in our schools – providing better support for families and helping more students succeed in the classroom and beyond.

A \$319.8 million investment will complete the rollout of our landmark Disability Inclusion reforms, which delivers extra funding for schools to recruit and train specialist staff and provide tailored support for students. This builds on our record \$1.6 billion investment in Disability Inclusion since 2020.

We're supporting families juggling busy schedules by making it easier for students to get to school, continuing to deliver the Students with Disabilities Transport Program, thanks to a \$33.4 million investment that includes the introduction of six new bus services for specialist schools.

No matter where you grow up in Victoria, you deserve a bright future. We're investing a further \$1.8 million to help regional and rural students access programs that expand their future career and educational pathways.

More Victorian students at risk of disengaging from education will be supported through our \$25.6 million investment in the Navigator program and resources to address chronic absenteeism. The program provides case management support to the most severely disengaged learners to help create a pathway back to education.

Children and young people living in out-of-home care are at greater risk of poorer educational outcomes. We are supporting these students through an additional \$30.8 million to continue individual tutoring and maintain the expanded LOOKOUT program, which is already having a huge impact.

We're delivering additional support for teaching English as an Additional Language in mainstream schools and English Language Schools and Centres through a \$56.6 million investment.

This Budget also delivers more than \$5 million in funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver locally responsive kinder programs and support kids to grow up with a strong connection to culture.

Backing teachers

While teacher shortages are a national challenge, Victoria is leading the way – with our investments helping to grow the number of registered teachers by more than 12,000 since 2020.

This Budget invests \$158.7 million to continue supporting and retaining our outstanding teachers – including \$29.1 million for the Career Start Program. Originally piloted in three local areas, this funding will deliver support for graduate teachers across the state, with dedicated mentoring and advanced professional learning.

Our investment includes \$29 million to continue the *Teach Today* and *Teach Tomorrow* programs, supporting up to 1,200 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students to work in schools while studying, and \$15.2 million to continue attracting teachers to hard-to-staff roles including in rural and regional government schools.

This is a Budget that is focused on what matters most – delivering real cost of living help for families and making sure their kids have access to great local schools, modern classrooms and the support they need to succeed.

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

“We’re providing real cost of living relief to families in need – helping them cover the cost of camps, sporting activities and excursions to make sure no child is missing out.”

“We’re making sure that every Victorian child, no matter where they live, can rely on a great public education – building new classrooms, but also supporting the learning that happens inside them.”

“Getting the fundamentals right is absolutely crucial, and that’s why we’re making best practice common practice in every classroom and setting students up for success.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“We know families are doing it tough, that’s why Free Kinder puts up to \$2,600 back in parents’ pockets every year. At the same time, our reforms in kinder and early childhood education are making sure every child gets the best start in life.”