

# Media Release

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



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## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: MAKING SURE OUR KIDS CAN BE THEIR BEST**

As our state recovers stronger and fairer, we need to make sure every Victorian has the support they need.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will invest an unprecedented nearly \$1.6 billion to make sure students with disability are supported in the classroom through an Australian first *Disability Inclusion* package.

The record investment will transform support for students with disability in Victorian government schools – doubling the number of students receiving extra support in the classroom to 55,000 – and is expected to create up to 1,730 jobs across the state by 2025.

All schools will benefit from the change, enabling them to better support students who may have previously been ineligible for targeted support – such as those with autism, dyslexia or complex behaviours.

A world-leading pilot in more than 100 schools will now be rolled out across the state, to identify and respond to the needs of students with disability.

This new approach puts the needs of the student at the heart of our response – shifting away from current practices and focusing on what a child can achieve, rather than what they can't.

For students, this will mean more opportunities to promote their own strengths, interests and learning needs, and the support they need at school. With additional funding, schools will be able to better plan and adjust support for students throughout all stages of their schooling.

New facilitator roles will be established to help schools and families work together through this new approach. Facilitators will bring their expertise and knowledge into classrooms to support students and schools – which will be critical in the move towards the new approach.

This investment also includes \$102.8 million to deliver new resources and support to build the skills and knowledge of our incredible school staff in delivering inclusive education for every student. This will include more than 100 extra staff to provide on-the-ground implementation support and program delivery for schools.

The *Disability Inclusion* package will transform support for students with a disability in Victorian government schools, to ensure every student at every ability can thrive as we continue to build the Education State.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino**

*“Our kids are far more than their diagnosis. This will completely change the way we support children in our schools – focussing on what they can achieve, rather than what they can't.”*

*“We will work with schools and families through each step, making sure students are at the heart of every decision that is made. This is the biggest change in disability support in our schools Victoria has ever seen, and it will make a difference in classrooms and to kids across the state.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan**

*“This package will mean so much to Victorian students with a disability, their schools and their families – ensuring they get the support they deserve.”*