

Media Release

The Hon Dan Andrews MP
Premier



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 5 September 2019

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN CITY AND COUNTRY SCHOOLS

The Andrews Labor Government has announced a huge funding boost that will double the internet speed of state schools across Victoria, better support country students and address the disparity between regional and metropolitan schools.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Education James Merlino visited Cowes Primary School today to announce an initial \$82.8 million funding package that will support recommendations from the Expert Advisory Panel into Rural and Regional Students.

The package provides \$45.2 million to address teacher supply issues outside Melbourne by attracting teachers and school leaders to state schools in rural and regional Victoria, and supporting them to stay.

More than \$37 million will go to a range of initiatives to improve educational outcomes for rural and regional students, including:

- \$13.2 million to enable rural and regional students to attend VCE revision lectures in Melbourne, saving students up to \$1,000 on registration, travel and accommodation costs
- \$7.8 million to expand professional development for teachers and leaders in rural and regional areas
- \$5.1 million to support rural and regional schools to work in clusters to strengthen curriculum delivery
- \$3.7 million for outreach and virtual programs – such as the John Monash Science School Rural Exchange Program – for regional and rural schools
- \$3.7 million to abolish the enrolment fees for Virtual School Victoria for all Victorian students, saving around 4,400 parents \$160 for the cost of their children accessing virtual learning
- \$2.5 million to increase access to mentoring, role models and information about post-school pathways
- \$1.4 million for Victoria’s Tech Schools to host and offer STEM programs for regional and rural students

In addition, the Labor Government will invest \$8.9 million in the STEM Catalyst initiative to provide teachers in regional in rural areas with further training in mathematics and science and up to \$2.1 million for employment-based programs to attract high-achieving graduates into the teaching profession in rural and regional areas.

On top of these initiatives, the Labor Government will also invest \$59.9 million to double internet speeds at government schools across Victoria.

The Labor Government will also help families experiencing financial hardship with an extra \$22.1 million for the *Affordable School Uniforms Program*, \$1.3 million for the *Glasses for Kids Program*, and \$160.9 million for the *Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund*. The expert panel’s executive summary is available:

<https://go.vic.gov.au/V97tlo>

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“We’re closing the gap between the country and the city – ensuring rural and regional schools have the people, facilities and funding they need to give every child a great education.”

“Rural and regional schools can struggle to attract teachers and give kids access to the opportunities they deserve – that’s what this funding will fix.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“These investments are the first steps in addressing the expert panel’s findings and recommendations. We’re investing in the teachers and programs regional schools need, because every child deserves a great education.”

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