

Media Release – 6 May 2026

Victoria's public schools – on the slow track?

Victoria's peak body for public schools has welcomed elements of today's State Budget, while warning that many government schools will continue to face significant pressure.

"This budget is framed around making life easier, safer and more affordable—and we recognise that many Victorian families are doing it tough and need that support," said Parents Victoria CEO Gail McHardy.

"Budgets are about choices—what governments invest in now and what has to wait. Supporting families is essential, but so is fully funding public education to give every child the best chance."

The budget includes important investment in new schools and targeted support for students with additional needs, but falls short of delivering the funding certainty public schools have been waiting for.

Public schools educate the majority of Victoria's most disadvantaged students, including those from low-income families, students with disability and newly arrived learners.

"Public schools take every child, and they should be funded accordingly," McHardy said.

The organisation said that while all school sectors play an important role, funding must reflect the level of need within each system.

"This isn't about sectors competing—it's about fairness."

Transparency matters

Parents Victoria also expressed concern about measures in the budget that fast-track payroll tax relief for parts of the non-government sector without clear transparency.

"At a time when public schools are still waiting to be fully funded, this raises serious questions about priorities," Gail McHardy said.

"Public schools carry the greatest share of complex need, yet they continue to miss out on the funding certainty they deserve.

"If budget relief can be fast-tracked elsewhere, it can be done for public schools."

Investing in school staff

Parents Victoria also warned that investment in infrastructure must be matched with investment in people.

“New buildings are welcome—but what matters most is what happens inside classrooms.

“Without enough teachers, support staff and resources, students will continue to miss out.”

The organisation is calling on the Victorian Government to:

- Commit to a clear and accelerated timeline to fully fund public schools
- Invest in teacher workforce sustainability and student support
- Ensure funding is directed to where student need is greatest

“If we want Victoria to be truly easier, safer and more affordable for families, we must invest in the public schools those families rely on every day,” Gail McHardy said.

“Every child deserves a fully funded public school, regardless of their postcode or background.”

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