

Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu: Fact sheet for the Koorie Education Workforce and Schools 2023

This factsheet provides information for the Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) and schools on how the Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu can support the wellbeing and mental health needs of Koorie students.

The KEW, which includes Koorie Education Managers (KEM), Koorie Education Coordinators (KEC) and Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESO), play an important role in supporting schools with Koorie students. The Mental Health Fund and Menu (Fund and Menu) provides schools with a diverse range of options to access mental health supports for Koorie students.

About the Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu

The [Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu](#) is a new, ongoing and permanent source of funding to support the wellbeing and mental health of all students in Victorian government schools. The \$200 million Fund was created in response to Recommendation 17 of the [Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System](#).

All Victorian government schools will receive minimum base funding of \$25,000 each year, with further funding driven by student enrolment. Large schools will receive over \$200,000 per year. The average allocation per school per year is over \$50,000.

Schools must spend their Fund allocation from the Menu, which lists programs, training, staff, and other support. The Menu helps schools to select evidence-based programs and initiatives across the 3 tiers of intervention. These tiers include:

- positive mental health promotion items
- early intervention and cohort specific items
- more targeted and individualised support for students in need.

Schools in rural and regional locations across Victoria received the Fund from Term 3, 2022. This responds to the Royal Commission's findings that challenges exist in remote areas due to relatively limited access to mental health services and more complex mental health needs than in metropolitan areas.

Half of metropolitan schools will receive their Fund from Term 1, 2023 and the remaining half from Term 1, 2024, respectively. Schools are required to acquit their Fund in the calendar year it is received.

Important role of the Koorie Education Workforce

The KEW are part of an area-based, multi-disciplinary team and play a key role in supporting schools. While the KEW are neither qualified mental health practitioners or allied health professionals, they do play an important role in supporting schools to build relationships with Koorie students and families. The KEW are likely to have knowledge about local Koorie communities and existing services in the community that may be useful in guiding schools towards the best supports for Koorie students from the Menu.

The Fund and Menu does not require additional duties from the KEW; however, knowledge of the Fund and Menu may be useful to assist schools in accessing a greater number of high-quality supports for Koorie students.

Supports for Koorie students on the Menu

The Menu identifies existing department funded initiatives that schools should already be using to ensure a culturally safe and inclusive school climate, such as Community Understanding and Safety Training and engaging the KEW.

The Menu has been developed with a broad scope to allow schools a high degree of flexibility in accessing services. Schools may choose items from the Menu that will best meet the needs of Koorie students. This may include mainstream

service providers from the Menu or specific supports for Koorie students such as Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid courses for school staff by Mental Health First Aid Australia.

Having a wide array of options to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of Koorie students responds to the [Royal Commission's findings](#) that Koorie children and young people need access to well-resourced Aboriginal controlled health services as well as culturally safe mainstream mental health and wellbeing services.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) is the peak representative for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria.

VACCHO provides support to over 65,000 Koorie people across Victoria. It is made up of member organisations called Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO).

ACCHOs and ACCOs were founded and are governed by the local Koorie community to provide community members with holistic, comprehensive, and high-quality cultural and clinical care.

ACCHOs have clinical governance in place to provide medical services, and partner with the Victorian Department of Health.

Their priority work is providing physical and mental health services, and they support the social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of Koorie peoples, families, and communities. ACCOs provide general community services to Koorie people without a focus on health. This may also be beneficial to Koorie students for the culturally safe services and social and emotional programs on offer.

Some ACCOs may not have capacity to provide fee-based services or be able to service some schools due to their location.



Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations on the Menu

[ACCHOs and ACCOs have been included on the Menu](#) in recognition of the valuable role they play in providing Koorie students with access to culturally safe services and programs, led by Koorie people in line with self-determination. The KEW may have a good understanding of local ACCHO and ACCO services available to schools, or whether other supports might be more appropriate for Koorie students.

Schools can contact KECs as part of existing processes to request support for Koorie students. KECs can direct schools to the most appropriate supports for Koorie students depending on need and context. This may include contacting an ACCHO or ACCO, referral to Student Support Services or a KESO, or considering other mainstream or targeted providers for Koorie students on the Menu.

Leveraging the Fund and Menu to support Koorie students

Schools can leverage this new funding source to access greater services and professionals to support the wellbeing and mental health needs of Koorie students in Victorian government schools.

The department has developed a range of resources for schools to consider Koorie students' mental health needs when planning their use of the Fund.

SSS can direct schools to these resources, including the [Planning Tool](#) to reflect on Koorie student mental health needs and data sources, the [Skills Checklist](#) to review minimum qualifications required for mental health professionals, and the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#) for a wide range of mental health guidance.



Supports and resources

Department resources for student mental health and wellbeing

- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#)
- [Students Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#)
- [Tips on Building Mental Health](#)
- [Common Mental Health Concerns for Young People](#)
- [If you or a friend need help with mental health](#)
- [Quick Guide](#) for schools about student mental health and wellbeing
- [Amplify](#) and [Inclusive Student Voice Toolkit](#)

Information about the fund and menu

- [Fund and Menu on the department website](#)
- [Fund and Menu entry on the Policy and Advisory Library](#)
- [Fact sheet about the Fund and Menu](#)
- [Online interactive Menu where schools can select services, programs, and resources](#)
- [Skills Checklist to guide employment of mental health professionals](#)
- [Planning Tool](#) to guide strategic thinking and decisions about how schools can use their Fund
- [Professional learning sessions](#) about the Fund and Menu on our Arc page

Mental health supports for Koorie students

- [Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation](#): 03 9411 9411
- [Yarning Safe'n'Strong](#): 1800 959 563
- [13YARN](#): 13 92 76
- [Dardi Munwurro](#): 1800 435 799
- Local GPs can provide additional support or a mental health care plan
- Getting and using a mental health care plan ([ReachOut](#))
- eheadspace: 1800 650 890
- [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 551 800
- [Lifeline](#): 13 11 14
- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 224 636
- [Head to Health](#): 1800 595 212
- QLife: 1800 184 527

Self-harm and suicide prevention resources

- What you need to know about self-harm ([headspace](#))
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#): 1300 659 467
- How to help when someone is suicidal ([SANE Australia](#))