

State Schools' Relief Impact Report 2023



**STATE
SCHOOLS'
RELIEF**

SVA Consulting

This report has been prepared by Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting

Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with innovative partners to invest in social change. We help to create better education and employment outcomes for disadvantaged Australians by bringing the best of business to the social-purpose sector and by working with partners to strategically invest capital and expertise.

SVA Consulting is Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancy. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 10 years of working with not-for-profits, government and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and 'what works'.

Our team is passionate about what they do and use their diverse experience to work together to solve Australia's most pressing challenges.

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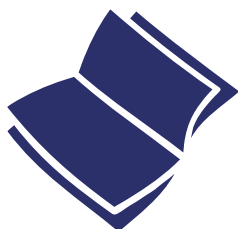
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About State Schools' Relief

State Schools' Relief is a not-for-profit organisation that supports thousands of disadvantaged Victorian students each year. Their assistance provides every student, regardless of their background, with the opportunity to participate fully in their education, without additional barriers.



Founded in 1930, State Schools' Relief provides students with the essential items needed to reach their full potential in the classroom. They offer a range of practical items and supports, and their approach has been honed through nearly 100 years of service and operational excellence.

State Schools' Relief is the only organisation providing state-wide support to Victorian government schools. Without State Schools' Relief, many students would continue to lack the basic essentials required to fully participate in school.

This Impact Report outlines the impact created by State Schools' Relief

It has been prepared by Social Ventures Australia, using a Theory of Change to understand where and how impact has been created. The report draws on relevant research and evaluations, and the [Social Value Principles](#) where applicable, to understand that impact.

Why we exist



Every student deserves to be fully prepared and ready to learn in the classroom – but many Victorian students experience barriers to participating.

These barriers are broad, but include financial hardship and poverty, neglect, domestic and family violence, health issues, bereavement, and coping with the impact of natural disasters. Many of these barriers overlap with socio-economic disadvantage, which has been found to have a greater impact on a child’s ability to engage in education, than any other factor.¹

Having access to essentials like clothing, eyesight testing and the provision of glasses, has been demonstrated to positively impact student engagement, wellbeing, and the ability to learn. Equipping students with the appropriate uniform has a direct impact on their emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing while other essentials materially impact student engagement.^{2,3}

But many students and their families can’t afford or access these essentials. In 2020, there were approximately 225,000 students of low socio-economic advantage in Victoria. The majority (77 percent) were at state government schools – some 177,000 students.⁴ For these students, accessing the basics can be tough, with many living in poverty.⁵



17%

of children in Victoria live in poverty, in 2021.

225,000

students of low socio-economic advantage in Victoria, in 2020.

177,000

of these students attend a Victorian state school.

1. Mitchell Institute (2020), [Educational Opportunity in Australia 2020 – Who Succeeds and Who Misses Out](#).

2. Allen & Clarke (2020), [Clothing and Wellbeing of Children and Young People: Evidence Brief](#).

3. Redmond (2017), [Material Deprivation and Capability Deprivation in the Midst of Affluence: The Case of Young People in Australia](#).

4. SVA analysis of [Productivity Commission \(2022\)’s Report on Government Services School Education data](#).

5. Victorian Council of Social Services (2023), [Mapping Poverty in Victoria](#).

Our approach

State Schools' Relief supports students at Victorian government schools by providing them with the essential items needed to engage in education.

Key to the organisation's effectiveness, is doing so in a manner consistent with the following principles.



Discrete – Provides items discreetly so that students' privacy is respected. This means essential items get delivered in plain packaging, or when testing students' vision, all students get tested – so no one is singled out.



Hassle free – Teachers in Victorian government schools are time poor so our supports are quick and easy for teachers to access, minimising paperwork. It is a trust-based process and no evidence or student identification is needed, enabling teachers to direct their time to other priorities.

"The application process was quick and easy, requiring minimal effort, time or documentation... [Further] the ability to scale up or down the number of applications... allows schools to respond to local needs."

– Evaluator, ACIL Allen evaluation of Affordable School Uniforms Program



Rapid – Items that are requested by teachers are delivered to the school within three to five days. Vision testing is done over one day with majority of students at once.

"The products turn up very fast, it's such a quick turn around."

– Teacher#



High-quality – All items supplied by State Schools’ Relief are brand new and high quality, supporting students to have pride and confidence in their appearance.

“When students are given the new uniforms, the smiles on their faces, the sense of belonging and being the same as other is priceless.”

– Teacher#



No Cost – Items are provided at no charge to the school or student’s families, helping to alleviate financial pressure for those experiencing financial hardship.

“Families with multiple students at the school really struggle with the costs of uniforms, books, and excursions on top of all the other mounting financial pressures they are experiencing at the moment... I think the families really value the items that we have been able to subsidise (thanks to this program).”

Teacher#

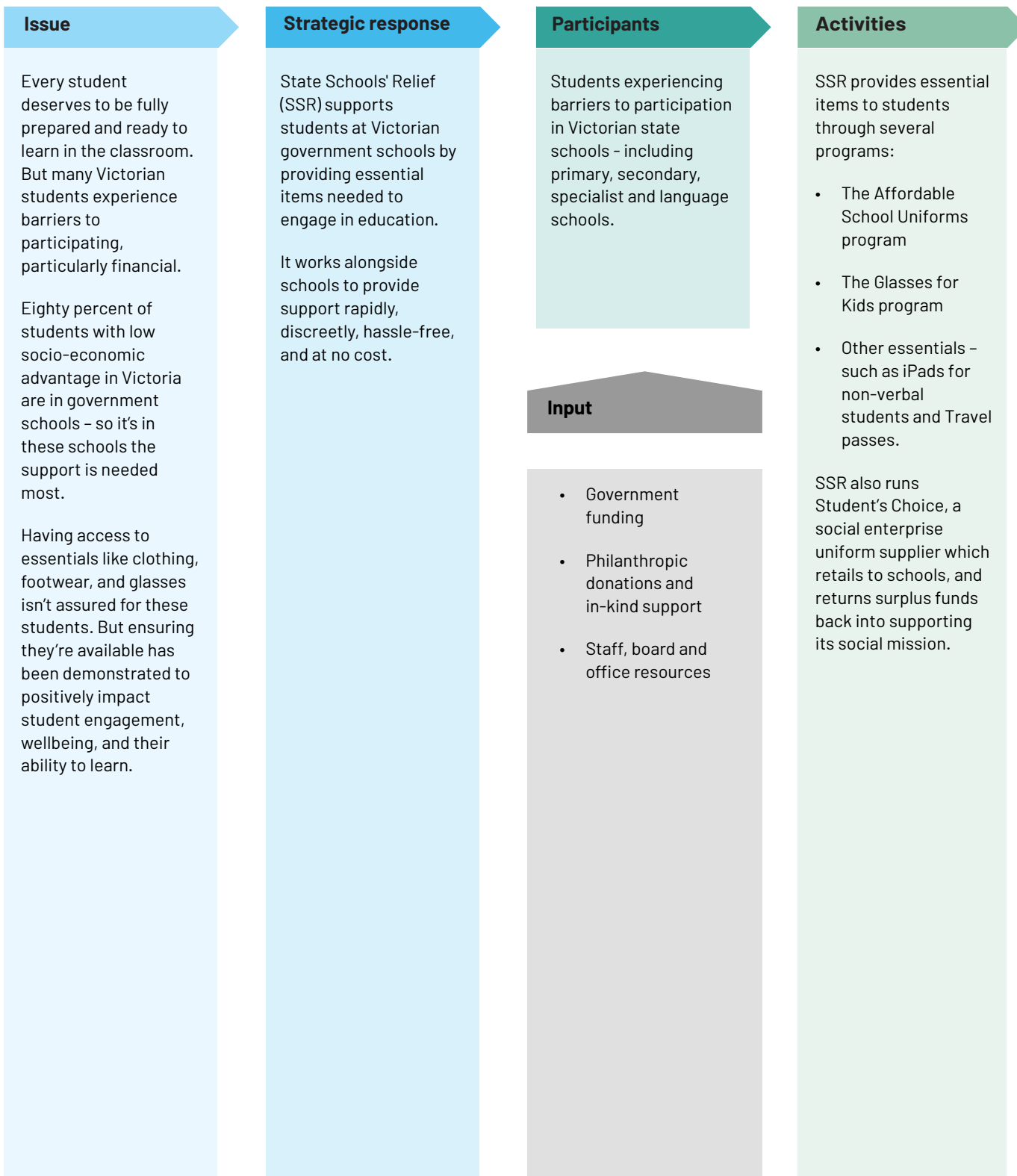


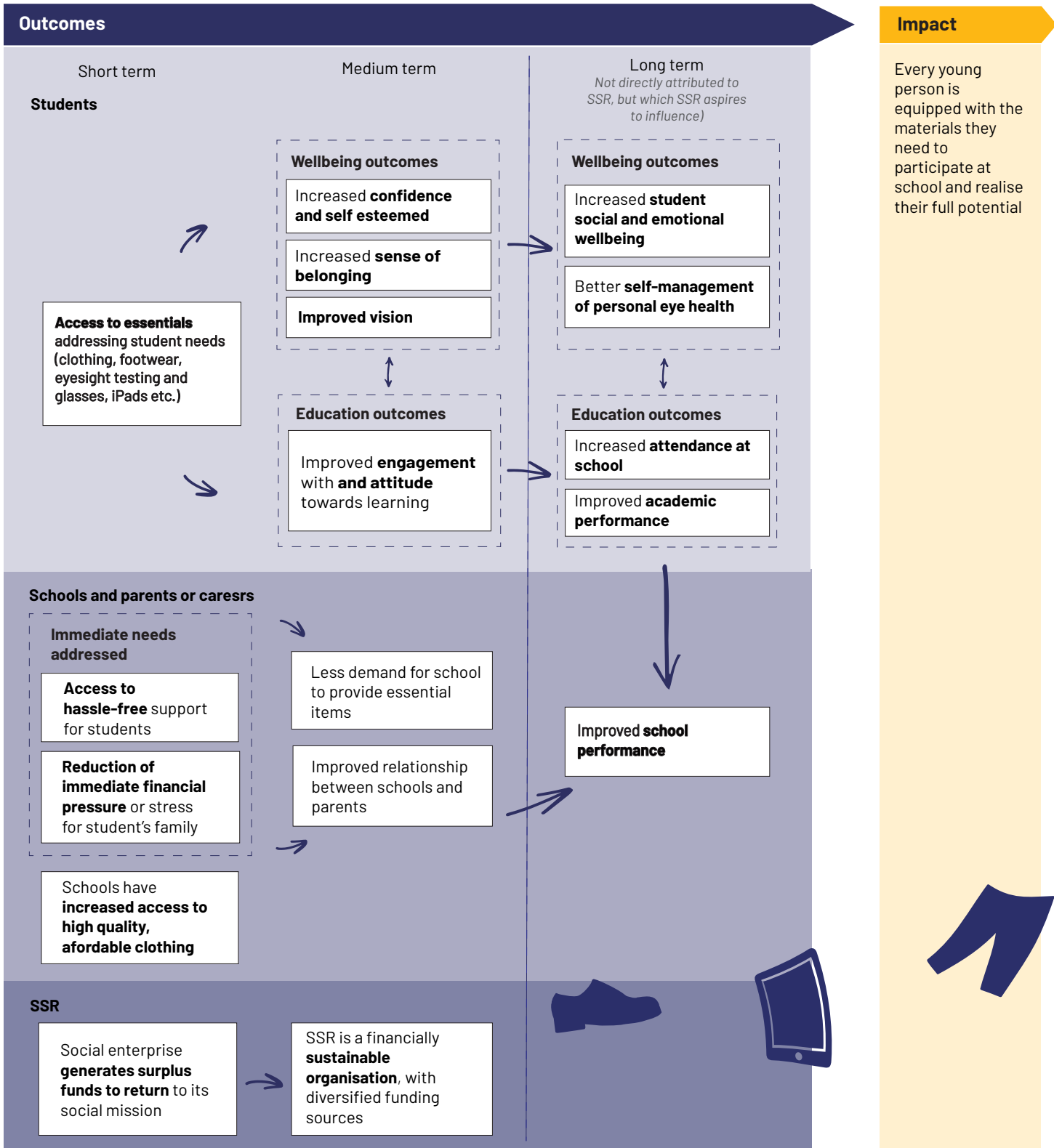
* ACIL Allen (2023), *Affordable School Uniforms Program – rapid evaluation*

Survey results collected for ACIL Allen evaluation (ibid)

Our Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change outlines the impact that State Schools' Relief strives to achieve, and the theory behind how we believe that will occur. The evidence which supports our progress towards that impact is outlined in this report.





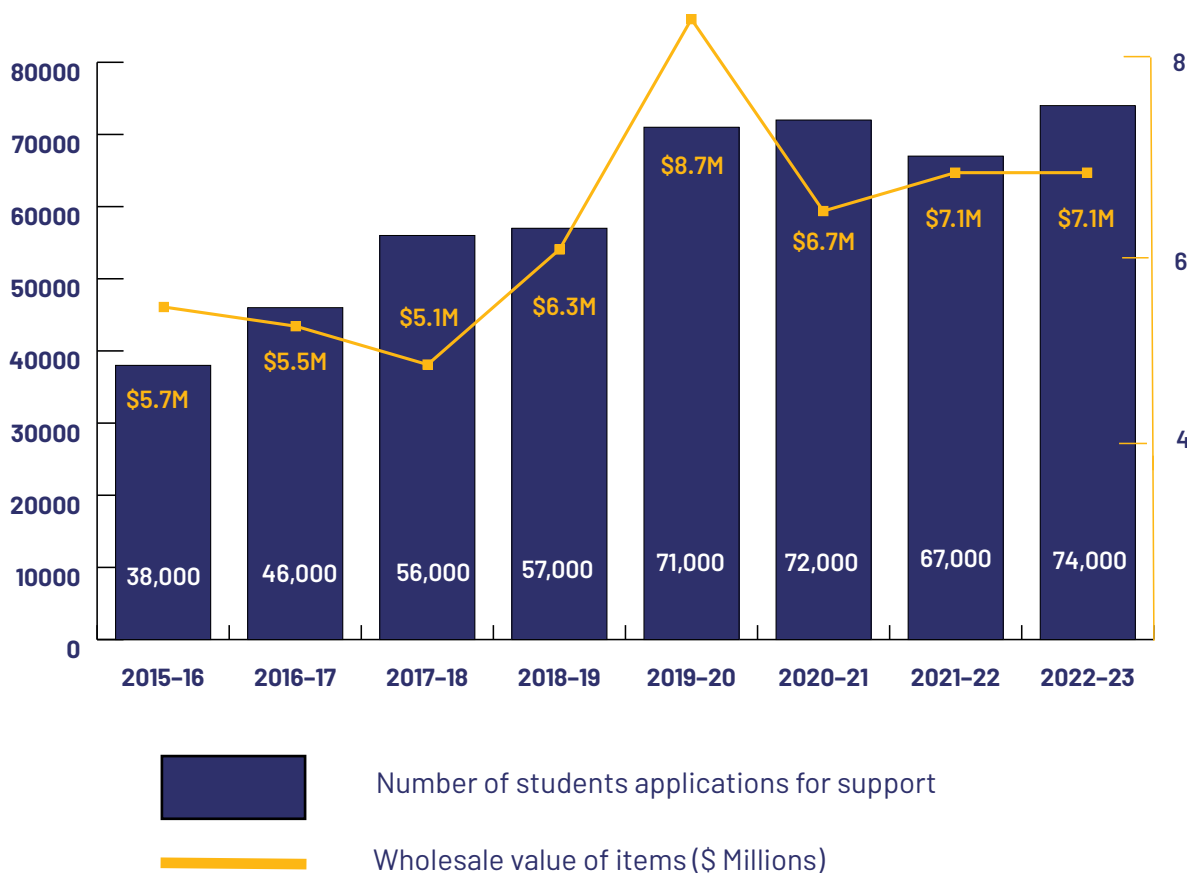
Our Impact

State Schools' Relief programs ensure that every student can be fully prepared and ready to learn in the classroom. The programs generate impact not just for students, but for the families and schools that support them.

State Schools' Relief meets a critical and consistent need for essential items for Victorian government school students through the organisation's flagship programs – the Affordable School Uniforms program and the Glasses for Kids program – and via the provision of other essentials through their iPad and Travel Passes programs. Since 2016, State Schools' Relief has serviced over 400,000 applications for support, supplied over 1.54 million individual items, and provided over \$45 million of essentials at a fraction of the retail price.

Key impact statistics are outlined here and explored by program over the following pages.

State Schools' Relief, key metrics, 2015-16 to 2022-23*



*This table does not include data for the Glasses for Kids program, outlined separately later in this report.



Our Impact

74,000

applications for student support in 2022-23

1,328

schools supported in 2022-23

\$7.1M+

worth of essential items distributed in 2022-23

\$45M+

worth of essential items distributed since 2016

~305,000

items distributed in 2022-23*

*Figure excludes items from Glasses for Kids program.

57%

average saving accessed by State Schools' Relief for essential items vs retail price.

\$3.8M+

savings to government in 2022-23 from accessing whole-sale price.#

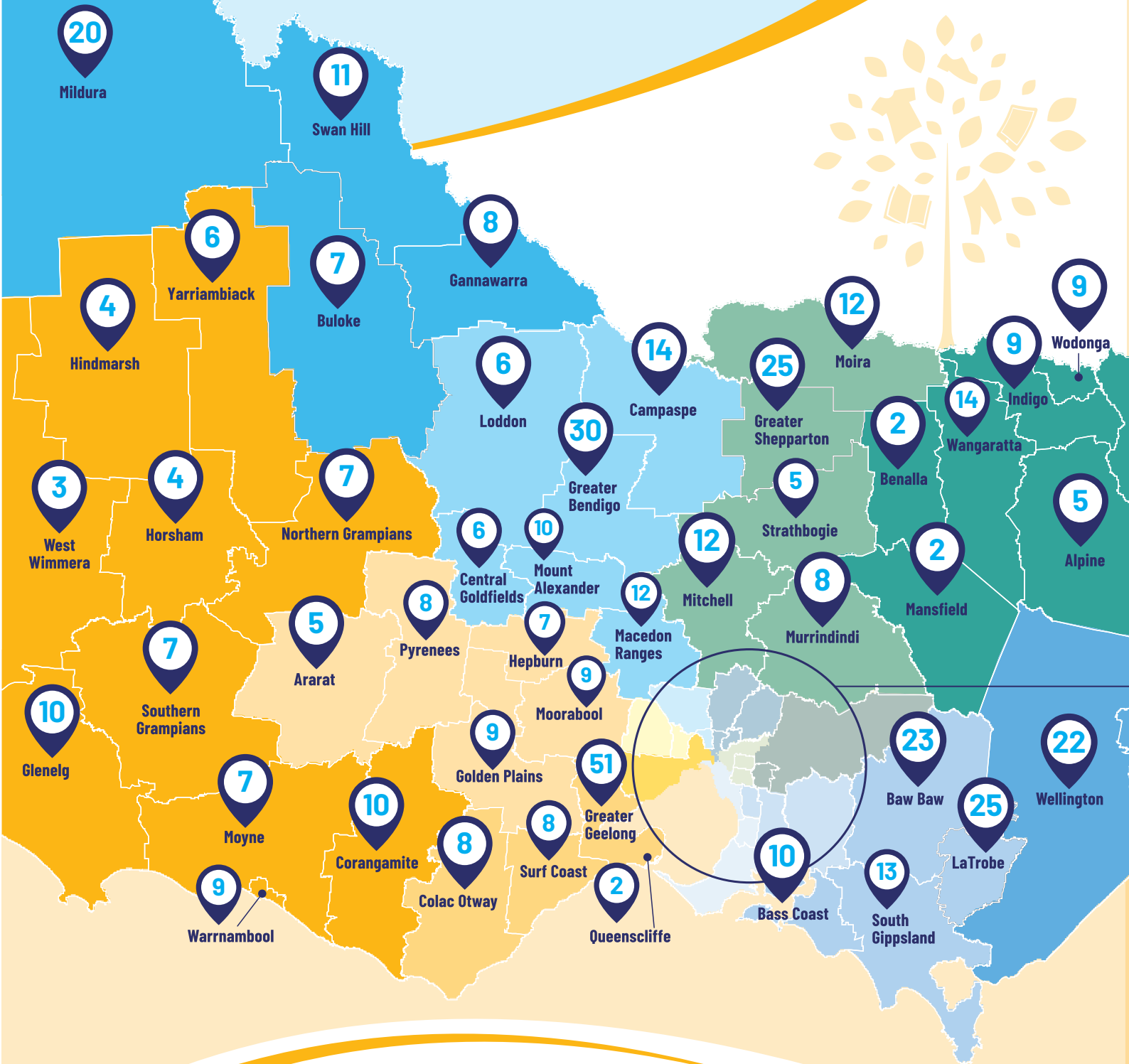
Savings to government – through the efficiency of State Schools' Relief model

A benefit to the Victorian Government of the State Schools' Relief model, is that it provides access to goods at wholesale prices. That provides a saving to government over the alternative of providing transfer payments or cash equivalents to families, that they could use to purchase items at retail prices. State Schools' Relief accesses goods at wholesale prices, far cheaper than families could access on their own.

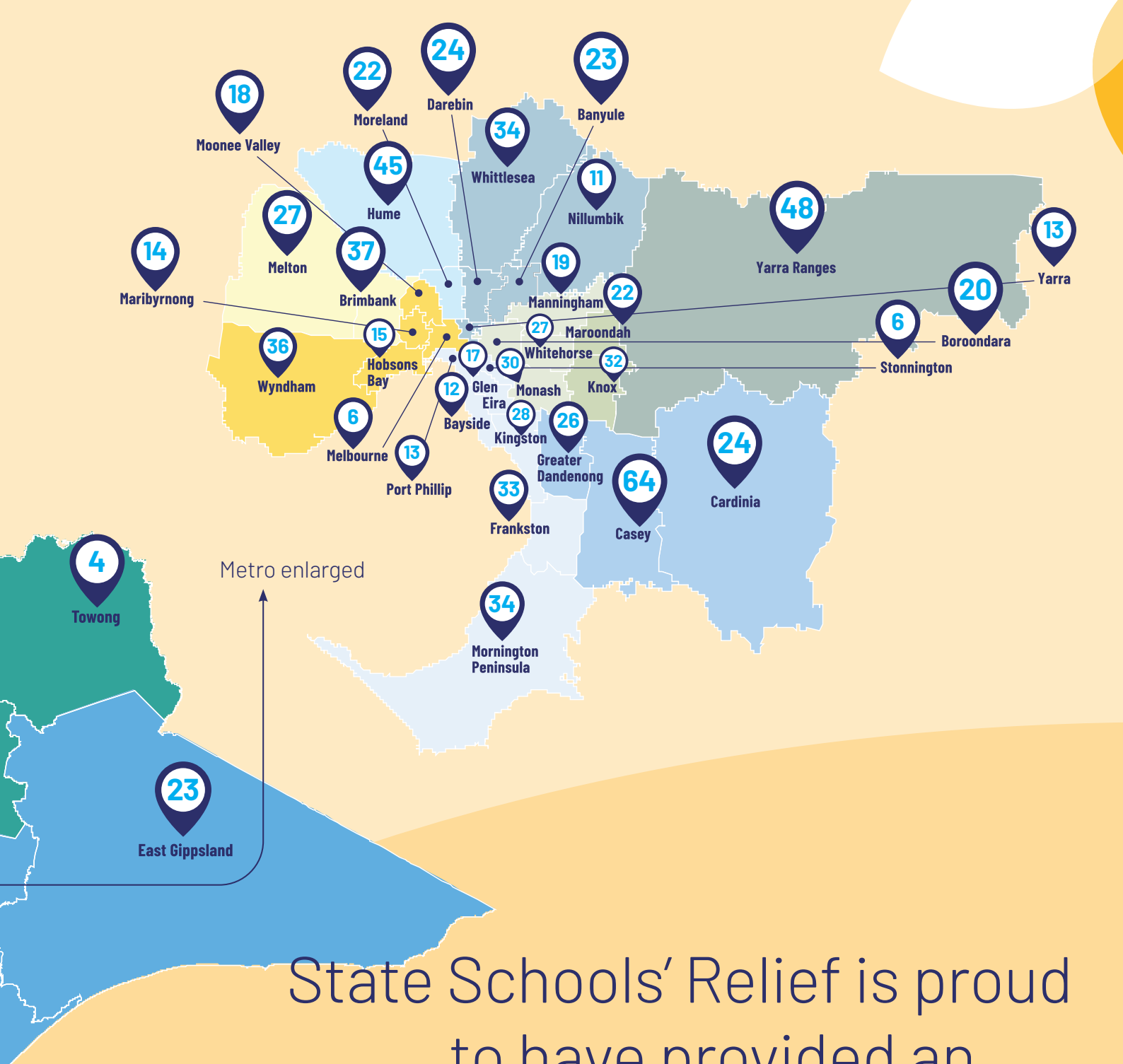
SVA analysis. Total savings figure calculated by comparing State Schools' Relief (SSR) wholesale purchase prices with the Recommended Retail Price (RRP) of items. The total wholesale value of items provided by SSR in 2022-23 was used as a base (\$7.1M total goods, minus \$4M SSR provided as vouchers, amounting to \$3.1M in wholesale purchases). The average savings proportion was then applied, to determine \$3.8M saved.

Support provided to Victorian Local Government Areas (LGAs)

Each number represents the number of schools that State Schools' Relief assisted in that area



- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Mallee | Ovens Murray | Outer Gippsland | Western District | Western Melbourne |
| Loddon | Goulburn | Inner Gippsland | Barwon | Brimbank Melton |
| Hume Moreland | Outer Eastern Melbourne | Southern Melbourne | Central Highlands | |
| North Eastern Melbourne | Inner Eastern Melbourne | Bayside Peninsula | | |



Metro enlarged

State Schools' Relief is proud to have provided an **outstanding** amount of support to **1328** schools throughout Victoria in 2022-23.



The Affordable School Uniforms Program

What is it?

The Affordable School Uniforms program equips Victorian government school students with uniforms and other essential clothing and stationery they need to fully participate in education.

Global research has shown that clothing is important to children and young people’s physical, social, and emotional wellbeing, as well as their ability to engage in education.⁶ But access to it is dependent on financial resources, and not all families can afford them.⁷ The program plays a critical role supporting these students and their families by providing these items. This includes (but is not limited to) uniform items, school shoes, underwear and socks, stationery items and STEM calculators and where items can’t be supplied directly, a voucher is provided.


The Affordable School Uniforms program is the largest program delivered by State Schools’ Relief and has grown to reach approximately 85 percent of Victorian government schools.

What is its impact?

The program has been shown to have positive impacts on students, families, teachers and schools alike.

In 2022-23 the program **distributed over 290,000 essential items**.⁸ The financial relief that this provides to families is significant. In addition, an evaluation of the program has found that providing these items also significantly **increased student self-esteem** and **student engagement** in the classroom.⁹ For teachers and schools, staff reported that the program has helped **improved relationships between parents/carers and teachers** and helps to improve school culture.

Key impact measures are outlined overleaf.



“We thank State Schools’ Relief for providing our students with affordable school uniforms, to allow the students to fit in with their peers... [and for] giving them a sense of belonging.”

– School teacher

6. Allen & Clarke (2020), *Clothing and Wellbeing of Children and Young People: Evidence Brief*; and Reidy (2021), *Reviewing School Uniform through a Public Health Lens: Evidence about the Impacts of School Uniform on Education and Health*.

7. Ibid.

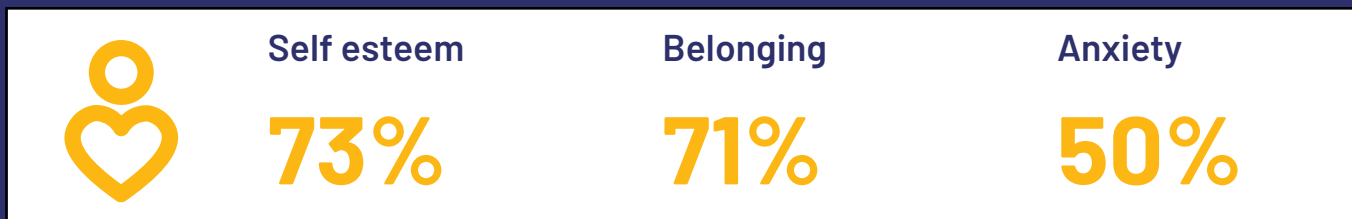
8. Figure is exclusive of iPads, iPad covers and travel passes.

9. ACIL Allen (2023), *Affordable School Uniforms Program – rapid evaluation*.

Survey data collected for a recent evaluation of the program demonstrated the impact it's had on participating students' wellbeing and educational outcomes.¹⁰

WELLBEING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The proportion of respondents who believed students wellbeing improved a moderate or large amount since receiving support through the program:



"When students are given the new uniforms, the smiles on their faces, the **sense of belonging** and being the same as other is priceless." - School staff member

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS



"I don't think the school can afford to provide uniforms. But we believe that uniforms **improve behaviour**, and we'd see a **drop in attendance** because students would not have uniforms. That could be the difference in students going to university." - School staff member

OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND CARERS



"We had a student at the beginning of enrolment who was already quite disengaged. Their family was having a lot of issues struggling financially and they didn't have a uniform. But because of SSR I was able to have a conversation with them and from that we had a positive relationship develop." - School staff member

10. ACIL Allen (2023), *Affordable School Uniforms Program - rapid evaluation*, (as reported by principals in a survey (n=470)).

Glasses for Kids



What is it?

The Glasses for Kids program aims to remove vision impairment as a barrier to educational engagement.

Good vision is important for a child's educational, physical and social development. Yet one in five children has an undetected eye problem.¹¹ For students who need glasses, not having them can set them behind from their peers in their school studies and education.¹²

The Glasses for Kids program provides free eyesight screening and testing to students at more than 300 socio-economically disadvantaged schools, with a focus on early years intervention. Students are subsequently provided with glasses, if required, at no cost. For these students, glasses give the gift of vision, reduce the risk of lifelong eye damage and enable a greater chance to engage in their education.

What is its impact?

The program is providing vision to thousands of students who would otherwise have no access to vision testing.

14,450

total vision tests since 2020

~2,900

vision tests conducted in 2022-23

~1,400

pairs of glasses in 2022-23

Research has demonstrated the benefits of this approach. A Randomised Control Trial in the United States of a similar program for disadvantaged students, found that students who received glasses were **two to four months** of additional education better off than those without glasses, and that those who struggled the most academically before receiving glasses had the most to gain.¹³

This research is consistent with early indicators of impact for Glasses for Kids, identified in an evaluation.¹⁴ The proportion of teachers surveyed who agreed the program had impacted students education and wellbeing.

Engagement

43%

reported classroom engagement had improved a great extent

Financial pressure

98%

reported the program made a difference to student wellbeing



"The Glasses for Kids program is amazing... we have seen a positive impact on our students' engagement in learning and behaviour." - **Teacher**

11. Optometry Australia (2023), 2022 [Vision Index Report Australia](#).

12. Johns Hopkins University (2021), [Eyeglasses for kids boosts academic performance study finds](#).

13. Ibid.

14. Deloitte Access Economics (2023), *Rapid Evaluation of the Glasses for Kids Program*, reported by teachers in a survey (n=110).

Other Essentials



State Schools' Relief also provides a range of other essential items through addressing identified needs at the time. Currently this includes the iPads for non-verbal students and Travel Passes.

iPads for non-verbal students program

WHAT IS IT?

The iPad program supports non-verbal students to overcome communication barriers within their home and school environment through the provision of a communication device. For many families facing adversity and with a child requiring this support, iPads can be financially unattainable, hindering a child's education and communication. To access an iPad through this program, allied health providers and school staff identify students within specialist schools who are in need of the device and whose families or carers face barriers to accessing them.

WHAT IS ITS IMPACT?

The program enables non-verbal students to participate in their learning and increase their ability to communicate. Research demonstrates that for non-verbal students, iPads can increase their learning potential, improve their ability to communicate and increase their social skills.¹⁵

452 students assisted in 2022-23



Travel Passes program

WHAT IS IT?

State Schools' Relief facilitates the supply of 30-day pre-paid travel passes to students in need, on behalf of the Department of Transport in Victoria. By facilitating the travel passes, State Schools' Relief ensures that students can access a needed service, at no cost.

WHAT IS ITS IMPACT?

By accessing this program, students facing financial barriers to purchasing a Myki and travelling to school are able to attend, so don't need to miss out on their education. Outright this travel cost for students for one month is \$90.

~15,000

passes distributed in 2022-23

\$1.3M

Savings in travel costs for students
their families in 2022-23



15. Canadian Centre of Science and Education (2019), *Use of iPads in the Education of Children with Autism-Spectrum Disorder*

Student's Choice social enterprise

What is it?

Student's Choice is a social enterprise which retails uniforms items and shoes to schools and returns any surplus back to the organisation, further supporting students who need it most.

State Schools' Relief's mission for the last 93 years has been to support Victorian state school students by removing barriers to education. Building on their knowledge and experience of school uniforms, State Schools' Relief launched their own label, Student's Choice in 2015. The Student's Choice brand provides affordable, high quality school uniforms and footwear to schools and families right across Victoria. It has steadily grown its range of items from uniforms to include workwear suited for VCE Vocational Major students.

The social enterprise also provides a means for State Schools' Relief to diversify their income streams, ensuring the organisation can continue to support Victorian students and their families for many years to come.

What is its impact?

Student's Choice has seen steady growth, with all profits returned back into the social purpose of State Schools' Relief.

The social enterprise now retails to over 50 schools and operates a purpose-built retail space in Dandenong South to sell directly to students and their families.



Our partners and your ongoing support

Our generous partners and supporters make the work of State Schools' Relief possible, ensuring every student can be fully prepared and ready to learn in the classroom.

State Schools' Relief is committed to breaking the link between disadvantage and learning outcomes. We offer our thanks to the individual donors, partner organisations, philanthropic foundations, the Victorian Government, and schools across the state who enable us to continue to provide Victorian state school students with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Principal Partner



Corporate Partner



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- Perpetual
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- The William Angliss Charitable Fund

In Kind Supporters

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- OneSight
- Optus

BUT THERE IS MORE WORK TO BE DONE

The cost-of-living crisis is exacerbating the challenges for families and carers, and ongoing support will ensure no child slips through the cracks. If you would like to support State Schools' Relief's work and make a difference to Victorian students in need, please visit www.stateschoolsrelief.org.au



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