



Additional school psychologists and a crisis response team

Independent candidate for Yerrabi David Pollard has announced a commitment to improve the mental health response in our schools. The number of professional psychologists available to students is woefully low and will be increased beginning in the next school year in 2021.

In addition, the Education Directorate will establish a dedicated crisis response team available to all public schools needing to draw on expertise that is already demanded of schools.

“Teachers and Principals are expected to wear many hats, but professional psychologist can’t be one of them,” Mr Pollard said.

“If 1 in 10 students need to see a school psychologist, that gives only 15 minutes per child per week for the psychologist to review case files, spend time with the student, write a report, and liaise with parents and teachers.

“The wait list for a student to have an initial meeting with a psychologist is 20 weeks. Half a year is too long for our children to have to wait to make sure their education can stay on track, or in some cases get on track at all.

“As well as assessing learning difficulties, students rely on school psychologist for addressing sensitive matters such as schoolyard bullying, anxiety, and even domestic violence.”

A dedicated crisis response team established by the Education Directorate will allow individual schools to focus on the day to day wellbeing of students, while being able to draw on experts in the event of traumatic and extraordinary situations.

“We trust the wellbeing of our children to our schools every day, so we must properly equip them to deliver on that.” Mr Pollard said.

“In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more vital than ever that we support our students, teachers, principals, staff, and families.”

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