**MEDIA RELEASE**

 **Wednesday 8 May 2019**

**AEU WELCOMES ANDREWS GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS**

The Andrews Government has announced the next steps for the Mental Health Practitioners in Schools initiative today.

Meredith Peace, President of AEU Victoria has welcomed this announcement saying that, “there is a definite need for this kind of support in schools”.

“Teachers and schools are often the first place where mental health issues are diagnosed or picked up in students.

“We’re glad to see that the Andrews Government is investing in specialised support in schools for students dealing with mental health issues.

“Teachers should also be properly trained to monitor and support the mental wellbeing of the students in their classrooms and be able to direct them to specialist support where required.

“It’s important that we ensure any that mental health specialists placed in schools are embedded into the existing specialist support system and the wider school community.

“We know that mental health can be a barrier to learning. When kids are unwell, they are less likely to be focused on their learning.

“We hope that this mental health specialist support will also be extended in the future to primary schools and early childhood, as support is needed at all levels of our education system,” said Ms Peace.

According to the announcement, every government secondary school will receive between one and five days a week of support from a mental health practitioner depending on its size, requirements and existing welfare programs.

AEU Victoria is currently drafting a submission for the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System later this year.

**MEDIA CONTACT: ALIYA AHMAD 0428 684 307**