

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Sunday, 24 January 2021

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO HELP STOP VIOLENCE

Victorian school students will learn about the impact of violence and coward punches through a series of *Be Wise Education* presentations, supported by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced a \$150,000 investment to support the Pat Cronin Foundation to expand its *Be Wise Education* program.

The funding will help deliver 200 presentations to government and non-government schools in 2021.

The Pat Cronin Foundation was established by Matt and Robyn Cronin in memory of their 19-year-old son who died from a coward punch on a night out in Diamond Creek in 2016.

The Pat Cronin Foundation and the *Be Wise Education* program were established to help end the coward punch by helping young people to make wise decisions.

The program complements the Victorian Curriculum F–10 delivery of personal and social capability curriculum, and provides students with resources and presentations to raise awareness about the drivers and consequences of social violence and how their actions could impact on other people.

Ambassadors of the Pat Cronin Foundation include sporting heroes Matthew Richardson, Kevin Sheedy and Andrew Gaze.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"It is vital to educate Victorian students that violence is never the solution and just a single punch could take a life."

"We're helping our students make wise decisions – for their sake, and to make our community safer."

Quotes attributable to Founder and Chair of the Pat Cronin Foundation Matt Cronin

"The government's investment in the Be Wise Education program helps us with our core mission to stop social violence and end the coward punch."

"Our presentations help empower students by giving them an understanding of Pat's story and fostering discussion about anger, aggression and strategies to deal with these issues."