

## Call to support Paws4Kids campaign to provide therapy dogs for children

[MacKillop Education](#) is calling for the public to support its Paws4Kids fundraiser to provide more therapy dogs to assist it to cater for students whose learning needs and social and emotional behaviours cannot be adequately addressed in a mainstream school setting.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Jim Miles says the three MacKillop special service Catholic schools fulfil a vital role in Victoria and urged the community to get behind the fundraising efforts.

‘For children who have experienced psychological trauma and may have every reason not to trust adults, a therapy dog can open doors and help them to regain a love of learning and succeed at school’, he said.

‘Many of MacKillop’s students find it hard because beyond the school gate they’re dealing with some tough issues such as family violence, neglect, living out of home, or social and emotional challenges.

‘To cater for these children, MacKillop provides an environment that empowers them to re-engage with education, and supports them academically and socially, so they can experience success in learning and either continue their education at MacKillop or return to their host school.

‘The therapy dog program has been shown to change the lives of these children and MacKillop wants to be able to maintain the program, but it needs significant additional resources’, Mr Miles said.

MacKillop Education is aiming to raise \$250,000 through the 2021 Paws4Kids campaign to continue and grow its use of therapy dogs to support its students.

You can help these vulnerable kids to connect with education and succeed at school by donating now at [paws4kids.org.au](https://paws4kids.org.au).

MacKillop Education operates three specialist schools in Victoria:

- the Geelong school is available to students aged 5–18 years (Foundation–VCAL)
- the Maidstone school (western metropolitan region) is available to students aged 8–12 years (Years 3–6)
- the Caulfield school was launched in April 2020 and is currently enrolling students aged 5–15 years (Foundation–Year 10).

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