

Canine Comprehension

RETURNING to onsite learning, schools continue to have a huge task of managing students' educational outcomes and balancing mental health after the social deprivation and uncertainty that COVID 19 brought to their families. Schools are looking for new ways to support children who are struggling with disconnection, anxiety, depression and loneliness. Lockdowns may be over yet the challenges continue.

Canine Comprehension offers a unique approach to such challenges. Their dog-assisted therapy programs are delivered to support mental health and wellbeing. A facilitator and their happy, furry friend run sessions which explore strategies to improve organisation, better listening, team building and interpersonal skills.

CEO and Founder of Canine Comprehension, Sarah Macdonald says "We need to focus on facilitating emotional growth, confidence and healthy social responsiveness. As a society, we need to prepare our young people for the challenges they will face both inside and outside of the classroom." This is where Canine Comprehension's unique approach has been so successful in schools and homes throughout Victoria. "The ability dogs have to positively engage people is well documented. These sessions have the ability to improve behavioural

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responses, increase emotional wellbeing, ease anxiety and generally get students more excited about their education.”

The good news is programs run by Canine Comprehension therapy dogs are now funded by the Victorian Government. An investment of \$217.8 million over four years to support student mental health and wellbeing, which all government schools can access.

“Our Therapy Dogs are very important co-workers whom we could not do without. They are happy to visit their students' and it's wonderful to watch the kids develop confidence as they engage with them. All the dogs love the attention and can't wait to start their working day!”

