

Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools

Supplementary Funding Pathway

Bank First – Teaching Initiatives Program

Grant Information: <https://www.bankfirst.com.au/teaching-initiatives-program>

The **Bank First Teaching Initiatives Program** is the **Supplementary** pathway for Victorian schools. This program is dedicated to supporting Victorian educators who wish to implement creative and innovative projects that enhance the learning experience. In 2026, the program is particularly interested in projects that address **student mental health and social-emotional learning**, making it an ideal fit for sensory-focused acoustic equipment. Grants of up to **\$4,000** are available for individual initiatives, which can be used to "seed" a larger project or fund a specific phase of a sensory garden.

Project Positioning

Position the project as an **"Active Regulation Innovation"** that supports the school's **Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit**. Frame the instruments not as "play equipment," but as "pedagogical tools" that help students develop self-regulation skills through rhythmic, non-verbal expression. This aligns with the Victorian Department of Education's focus on the **Whole-School Approach to Mental Health**, positioning your school as a leader in innovative, neurodiversity-affirming practices.

Avoid positioning the project as:

Standard playground "noise-makers" or general outdoor furniture. Avoid focusing on the "durability" of the equipment; instead, focus on the **creative and emotional outcomes** for the students. The Bank First committee is looking for projects that "spark joy" and provide a tangible improvement to the daily lives of Victorian teachers and their students.

Project Title

[Insert School Name] The Resonance Project: Innovative Tools for Sensory Regulation and Harmony

Service Overview

[Insert School Name] is a vibrant learning community dedicated to fostering the creative and emotional potential of every student. We pride ourselves on adopting innovative teaching strategies that cater to the diverse needs of our cohort. Supported by our staff and School Council, this project seeks to introduce a specialized "Resonance Zone" that provides students with a unique, self-directed way to manage their sensory wellbeing throughout the school day.

Project Description

This initiative involves the installation of a "**Resonance Zone**" featuring precision-tuned, architectural-grade acoustic instruments. These instruments are designed to provide a "Low-Arousal" sensory experience, allowing students to engage in tactile, rhythmic play that facilitates "**Active Resets**" during high-stress periods. The zone will serve as a permanent wellbeing asset, integrated into our school's sensory break protocols and outdoor learning curriculum to support students with a wide range of needs.

Community Need

Following the implementation of the **Schools Mental Health Fund** in Victoria, we have identified a clear need for physical infrastructure that supports student regulation outside the classroom. Many of our students, particularly those with Autism or ADHD, find traditional playground environments overwhelming, leading to increased anxiety and classroom disengagement. This project addresses the urgent need for a "quiet retreat" that empowers students to proactively manage their sensory load before it escalates into behavioral distress.

Community Benefit

The Resonance Project helps our students thrive by providing a safe, inclusive space where they can discover their own rhythm and voice. It demonstrates to our local [Insert Suburb/Region] community that our school is at the forefront of **inclusive education design**. By investing in high-quality, long-lasting materials like **316L stainless steel**, we are creating a permanent legacy that will benefit the social and emotional health of Victorian students for decades to come.

Outcomes

We aim to achieve a measurable improvement in student "ready to learn" states following outdoor breaks and a reduction in sensory-related playground conflict. The project will also provide a unique professional development opportunity for staff to explore "**Acoustic Pedagogy**" as a tool for de-escalation. Success will be tracked through student wellbeing surveys and documented in our school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

Project Delivery

The project will be delivered by the Wellbeing Team in consultation with the School Council. We will procure three specialized "Zero-Surfacing" instruments (Explorer and Composer models) to be installed in a quiet garden area of the school. The project will conclude with a "Harmony Launch" where students and families can experience the new sensory space together, fostering a sense of community belonging and shared pride in our school's inclusive environment.

Budget

| Item | Quantity | Total (Ex. GST) |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Explorer & Composer Instruments | 3 | \$12,050 |
| In-ground Post Mounts | 3 | \$900 |
| Freight (indicative to VIC) | 1 | \$550 |
| Installation & Site Prep | 1 | \$1,800 |
| Total Project Cost | | \$15,300 |
| Funding Requested (Bank First) | | \$4,000 |
| School/Community Contribution | | \$11,300 |

Pricing Note

Costs provided are indicative to support funding applications. Final pricing, including freight and installation, may vary depending on location and site requirements. Schools are encouraged to obtain a formal quote to confirm project costs.

Budget Justification

This budget prioritises high-quality, maintenance-free assets that offer the lowest "Total Cost of Ownership" for the school. By selecting "**Zero-Surfacing**" instruments, we eliminate the need for expensive soft-fall rubber, ensuring that the Bank First grant and school funds are spent entirely on the therapeutic equipment. This represents a highly efficient use of funds for a permanent, 25-year infrastructure project.

Sustainability

The instruments are crafted from marine-grade stainless steel with a **25-year structural warranty**, making them a highly sustainable investment for the school. They require no electricity, no batteries, and zero ongoing maintenance, ensuring they remain a functional wellbeing asset for the next quarter-century. This "one-off" capital cost avoids the need for recurrent funding, aligning with the school's commitment to sustainable resource management.

Evaluation

Success will be measured through "Learning Stories" and staff observations of student engagement in the Resonance Zone. We will monitor the impact of the space on student de-escalation and use the findings to inform our future **Mental Health Menu** selections and school-wide inclusion strategies.

Application Considerations

Bank First values **teacher-led innovation**. When completing the application, emphasize how this project was a collaborative idea from the staff and how it directly supports the "Resilience and Wellbeing" goals of your current school charter.