

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Workplace Safety  
Minister for Early Childhood



Thursday, 6 May 2021

## VICTORIA LEADS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE LEARNING

More than 6,000 preschool children across Victoria are learning in different languages, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government delivering on its election commitment.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today announced that more than 160 Victorian kindergartens are now participating in the Labor Government's \$17.9 million *Early Childhood Language Program*.

This program provides early childhood services with funding to employ a suitably qualified teacher or educator to deliver part of their kindergarten program in another language.

The *Early Childhood Language Program* is an Australian-first state-funded program to be rolled out in kindergartens. It features 20 languages including Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish.

Qualified language teachers deliver the program in partnership with the other kindergarten staff. Languages are incorporated into everyday learning experiences to give children meaningful opportunities to use the language. The children learn in another language through play, art, music, singing, dancing and stories.

The long-term benefits of children attending kindergartens participating in the language program include better pre-reading and pre-writing skills, improved cognitive flexibility and deeper connections with different cultures.

These significant milestones exceed the Labor Government's 2018 election commitment to roll-out the program to more than 5,000 preschool children across 160 kindergartens in the state.

Making Victoria the Education State starts with the early years. That's why, in an Australian-first, the Victorian Government is also investing almost \$5 billion this decade to provide three-year-old children with access to 15 hours of a funded kindergarten program.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

*"Learning in another language has fantastic rewards for young children – improving brain function as well as helping them to read and write in English."*

*"Whether it's Spanish or Chinese, it's fantastic to be giving Victorian children the opportunity to learn in a language other than English at a young age and celebrate a different culture."*