

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety

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NEW CHILDREN'S HUB FOR ONE-STOP SUPPORT IN THE WIMMERA

An innovative early years project in the Wimmera supported by the Victorian Government is bringing key service providers, experts and community groups together to collaborate on new ways to enhance learning outcomes for local children.

The By Five Early Years Innovation Hub will receive \$2.8 million over four years from the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to help test new ideas and map a more streamlined system for children as they move from parent to child health services, childcare and kinder.

By Five is a place-based initiative that focuses on the six local government areas of Horsham, Northern Grampians, Buloke, Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh and West Wimmera.

The initiative was first put forward by the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership, after local communities identified a need to improve early years' service delivery in communities that are often small and dispersed.

The Victorian Government's support has enabled the project to transition to an Early Years Innovation Hub with the support of the Wimmera Development Association – bringing together health, education and social services including early years, education and community health.

The Department of Education has been working closely with the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership since 2018, along with the Department of Health and Regional Development Victoria to support By Five.

More than \$1 million has been previously provided to help coordinate the project and to engage the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

To find out more visit rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships/wimmera-southern-mallee

Quote attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"We know how important the early years are for our children's education, particularly our most vulnerable kids – that's why we're proud to be investing in our young people."

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"This investment backs our ongoing work to help children and families across the region by connecting them with services and support at an early years learning hub."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"By Five is the best example I can think of where a local community has identified a complex problem, designed a solution and then worked with the Government to make real change happen. I congratulate everyone involved in its success."