

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MLC**

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep  
Minister for Workplace Safety



Tuesday, 28 June 2022

## MORE KINDERGARTEN PLACES FOR KIDS AT ATHERTON GARDENS

Children in Melbourne's inner north will get the best start to their early learning thanks to an Andrews Labor Government boost that will see the refurbishment of a Fitzroy kindergarten.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt and Member for Richmond Richard Wynne today announced Atherton Gardens Kindergarten on Napier Street would receive a grant of more than \$1 million through the *Building Blocks Capacity Building* stream to overhaul its existing building.

The upgrade works will allow for 44 extra licensed kindergarten places and offer kindergarten opportunities to three- and four-year-old children from the local community, including those in the Fitzroy housing estate.

The facility will also provide opportunities for children to attend vocational care and after school programs.

This follows the announcement of a nation-leading overhaul of early childhood education and care, with a massive \$9 billion investment over the next decade to save families money and support women to return to the workforce.

From 2023, three and four-year-old kindergarten will be free – a saving of up to \$2,500 per child every year. The Labor Government has expanded the *Best Start, Best Life* program with three major new initiatives:

- Making kinder free across the state
- Delivering a new year of universal Pre-Prep for 4-year-olds, beginning from 2025 and full implementation in 2032
- Establishing 50 government operated childcare centres

Over the next decade, Four-Year-Old Kinder will transition to Pre-Prep – increasing to a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning for every four-year-old child in Victoria.

As part of the initiative to deliver universal three-year-old kindergarten, the Labor Government is expanding infrastructure through a \$1.68 billion commitment to co-invest with the early childhood sector in new and expanded kindergarten facilities across the state.

This investment includes the delivery of several new kindergartens on existing school sites to support the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, providing benefits through co-location of facilities and convenience for families.

The government is ensuring every new Victorian primary school set to open from 2021 will have a kindergarten on-site or next door to reduce the burden on parents and help build the Education State.

This includes all six new primary schools which opened this year. For more information on Building Block capacity grants, visit - <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/building-blocks-grants-capacity-building>

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

*"This latest round of grants will help kinders like Atherton Gardens bring to life exciting plans for early learning across the state, ensuring we can provide better access to our youngest learners and set them up for life."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Richmond Richard Wynne

*"This funding for Atherton Gardens is an example of the Labor Government's unprecedented investment into ensuring quality kindergarten access and facilities for families across the state."*

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