

Tuesday, 28 June 2022

PLANNING GRANTS AWARDED FOR NEW KINDERGARTEN PROJECTS

Fifteen future infrastructure projects that will help boost the rollout of three-year-old kindergarten across the state are set to share in a new round of planning grants, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt today announced 15 organisations will share in more than \$2 million in *Building Blocks Planning Grants* of up to \$150,000 each to put towards planning, design and pre-construction work on kindergarten building projects.

The Planning Grants program is designed to help cover costs incurred from pre-construction planning – including scope development, design, soil investigations and costing – of projects that help achieve capacity for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Reform.

Grants support applicants to prepare a project in readiness of seeking future Building Blocks Capacity Grant funding.

Building Blocks grants aim to streamline all pre-existing kindergarten infrastructure grants into one overarching program and provide increased state funding contributions for early childhood projects.

Funding supports early childhood providers to undertake projects that improve amenity or increase the capacity of their services.

From 2023, families with a three or four-year-old will pay nothing for kinder – 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
- 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 roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kinder, 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 Victorian Government is ensuring every new Victorian primary school set to open from 2021 will have a kindergarten on-site or next door - ditching the dreaded double drop-off.

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>

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

“We’ve just announced the biggest investment in early childhood education in a lifetime, something that I’m so proud to say will change lives and ensure that every Victorian child has the best possible start to life.”

“This latest round of planning grants will help successful organisations bring to life exciting plans for kindergartens across the state, ensuring we can provide better access and more places to our youngest learners and set them up for life.”

Media contact: Ben Ansell – 0488 777 170 | ben.ansell@minstaff.vic.gov.au