

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MLC**

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



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## **BIGGER AND BETTER KINDERS RIGHT ACROSS VICTORIA**

The Andrews Labor Government is giving families across the state access to bigger and better kindergarten services, with a new round of grants meaning more kinder places and upgraded services to give every Victorian child the best start in life.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today announced a Labor Government investment of \$31 million in the *Building Blocks* program will improve the facilities at more than 270 kindergarten services across the state and increase the number of places at seven centres where extra capacity is needed most.

Services to receive *Building Blocks: Capacity* grants – expanding services to increase kinder places – are Mount Waverley Kindergarten, Surrey Hills Baptist Children’s Centre, Auburn South Preschool, Horsham Uniting Early Learning, Scammell Child & Family Hub, Yarram Early Learning Centre, and St Mina & St Marina Childcare.

Under the *Building Blocks: Improvement* stream, 104 kindergartens will be supported to improve their services and deliver a better, brighter early education for children with \$17.7 million to renovate and refurbish centres.

In addition, 170 kindergartens will get *Building Blocks: Inclusivity* grants to help services support all children to enjoy their early childhood education, no matter their additional needs, through the construction of new classrooms, playgrounds and specialist accessible equipment.

The Labor Government is delivering a nation-leading overhaul of early childhood education and care, with a massive \$9 billion investment into *Best Start, Best Life* over the next decade to save families money and support women to return to the workforce.

Three-Year-Old Kinder is already rolling out across the state, expanding universal access to 15 hours of government-funded kinder every week – and from next year, it will be free.

Four-Year-Old Kinder will also be free from 2023 onwards, providing much-needed relief for family budgets and giving more women a choice to return to the workforce.

With 90 per cent of a child’s brain developing before the age of five, early education has a profound effect on the way children develop – and making sure there are no barriers to families accessing more early play-based learning for their children.

In addition to these nation-leading reforms, and to help address the current shortage of available childcare places, the Government will build 50 government-operated and affordable childcare centres in areas that need them most.

The Labor Government is also making sure every new Victorian primary school opening from 2021 will have a kindergarten on-site or next door – building coordinated education precincts in our communities and helping families avoid the dreaded double drop-off.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt**

*“We’re delivering unprecedented investment in early childhood services across Victoria to make sure our kids and their families can access the best kindergarten and childcare services.”*

*“We’re proud to be boosting early childhood services right across the state – because we know how important the early years are in setting our kids up for the rest of their lives.”*

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