

Media Release

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NEW PARTNERSHIPS CREATING MORE FREE KINDER PLACES FOR FAMILIES

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring that families right across Victoria can access free, high-quality kindergarten services no matter where they live, enabling children to dream even bigger while helping slash the cost of living for families.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt and Member for Southern Metropolitan Region Nina Taylor today visited Eildon Road Kindergarten to announce the Labor Government will invest more than \$50 million in new *Building Blocks Partnerships* to deliver almost 1,500 Free Kinder places and create 25 new, expanded or upgraded facilities where they're needed most.

The Labor Government has also worked with families at three local kindergarten services in the City of Port Phillip to save their beloved kinders – investing \$12.6 million into a partnership with the local council to provide 271 kinder places, upgrade the three centres, and deliver three additional major kindergarten projects across the municipality.

The partnership will ensure families attending Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten, The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten and Elwood Children's Centre will be able to continue their early learning – saving the services after the council had originally planned to sell the services off and close the kinders earlier in the year.

These newest *Building Block Partnerships* bring the total number to nine, after the first agreement was signed with Wyndham City Council in 2021, creating more than 3,600 kinder places in Melbourne's growing west.

The other new *Building Block Partnerships* include;

- The City of Whittlesea (\$9.2 million) commits to the construction of two new early-learning centres, creating more than 310 kinder places.
- The Mitchell Shire (\$7.4 million) partnership will provide more than 210 free kinder places for local families.
- The Monash City (\$13.3 million) partnership will deliver six major infrastructure projects and provide over 360 free kinder places.
- The Brimbank City Council (\$9.3 million) to develop four early-learning centres and provide more than 250 free kinder places in the municipality.

The Government is delivering a comprehensive overhaul of early childhood education and care through the nation-leading *Best Start, Best Life* reforms – a massive \$9 billion investment over the next decade to save families up to \$2500 per child per year, and support women to return to the workforce.

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

"Our Building Blocks Partnerships will provide almost 1,500 kinder places, so that more Victorian families can access high-quality, free kinder services – giving their children the best start to life."

"We are undertaking the most ambitious roll-out of free kinder anywhere in the country, and will deliver a pipeline of new and expanded kindergartens right across Victoria."

Quote attributable to Member for Southern Metropolitan Region Nina Taylor

“This latest round of partnerships not only secure the future of kindergartens in the City of Port Phillip, but also 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.”