

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
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MORE CHILDREN SET FOR KINDER IN MELBOURNE'S INNER NORTH

More of our littlest Victorians will experience the benefits of a local kindergarten, thanks to a partnership between the Andrews Labor Government and Merri-bek City Council.

Construction works to expand Doris Blackburn Preschool in Pascoe Vale South have now been completed, with the expansion made possible through a \$1.35 million Building Blocks Capacity grant from the Labor Government.

Works include the installation of a new kindergarten building and outdoor play area at the preschool, creating more than 40 extra kindergarten places for local children.

A further \$2.25 million has been allocated to expand three other kindergartens in Merri-bek – Lorne Street Kindergarten in Fawkner, Turner Street Kindergarten in Pascoe Vale South, and the Pascoe Vale Community Centre kindergarten – together creating around 100 new kindergarten places for local families.

Lorne Street Kindergarten will undergo a \$1.35 million expansion to install a new kindergarten building – giving children more space to learn, grow and thrive, with works commencing July 2023 and finishing by Term 1, 2024.

A grant of \$500,000 will upgrade Turner Street Kindergarten through the installation of a new kitchen, lunchroom and bathroom – offering 8 new places by the start of 2024.

A further \$400,000 supports the expansion of Pascoe Vale Community Centre kindergarten – with project works to deliver more than 40 new kindergarten places by early 2025 so Merri-bek families have more kinder choices close to home.

Funding for these projects is provided as part of the Labor Government's Building Blocks Partnership with Merri-bek Council, with an investment of up to \$10.7 million for a 11 new and expanded kindergarten projects across the community.

By 2026, the partnership will deliver more than 320 extra kindergarten places for local families to ensure children in the area get the best start in life – and parents have a convenient, high-quality Early Learning centre nearby.

Since 2021, the Labor Government has entered Building Blocks partnerships with 10 local councils to build 68 new and expanded kindergartens and create more than 9,250 new kinder places across the state.

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

"We're delivering more than 320 new kindergarten places for children and families in Merri-bek – to make sure high quality early years education sets our children up for the future."

"Our nation-leading early childhood reforms are creating more kindergarten places and delivering more modern facilities for early learners across the state to learn, thrive and build relationships in."

Quote attributable to Member for Pascoe Vale Anthony Cianflone

"We're building and upgrading kinder facilities for families in Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South – making sure that children have access to the best facilities to grow, learn and thrive in their local community."

Quote attributable to Member for Broadmeadows Kathleen Matthews-Ward

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“We’re investing in the best start for children in Fawkner by bringing kinder closer to home and making sure families have access to local world-class Early Learning options.”

Quote attributable to Merri-bek City Council Mayor Cr Angelica Panopoulos

“These projects are creating opportunities for all Merri-bek children to participate in early childhood programs and enhance their development, education and interactions with their peers.”