

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep  
Minister for Environment



Tuesday, 22 August 2023

## **MORE LITTLE LEARNERS GETTING OUTDOORS WITH BUSH KINDER**

More of Victoria's littlest learners are getting the chance to explore and play in nature, with the Andrews Labor Government delivering more Bush Kinder programs across the state.

Bush Kinder gives children the chance to learn while expanding their curiosity and independence in a natural environment, putting them in touch with nature through outdoor activities and creative play.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today visited Keele Street Children's Centre in Yarra Bend to announce a \$3.6 million investment in 600 bush kinder programs state-wide over the next four years.

Grants for Bush Kinder programs starting next year are now open, which will support 150 kindergarten providers across Victoria to take children's learning outdoors.

The \$6,000 grants will help kindergartens purchase necessary equipment to set up programs that focus on getting outside, playing with natural materials and learning through activities like climbing trees and watching wildlife.

Bush Kinder programs are educational as well as exciting for children, giving them a supervised place to play in a natural environment – with significant positive impact on their development, as well as on their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Labor Government is making it easier for more early childhood service providers to bring outdoor education into kinder through a new free online portal – providing staff with professional learning and case studies to ensure all children get the full range of benefits of learning in nature.

Through our nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms over the next decade, the Labor Government is transforming kindergartens to give every Victorian child the best start to life, save families time and money, and support parents – especially women – to return to work or study if they choose.

Kindergarten services can find out more about the Bush Kinder Grants Program at [vic.gov.au/bush-kindergartens](https://vic.gov.au/bush-kindergartens).

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

*"I am delighted that Bush Kinder programs will be supported and expanded over the coming years – helping the curiosity, creativity and independence of our littlest learners to grow."*

*"Giving our children opportunities to get outside, get active and connect with nature has never been so important, and we're providing better health and development benefits for them through innovative programs like Bush Kinder."*

### **Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Katie Hall MP**

*"Children gain so much through being creative and getting active outdoors, which is why we're so thrilled to announce the expansion of our Bush Kinder program to more services across Victoria."*