

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep
Minister for Environment



Wednesday, 20 September 2023

MORE KINDER PLACES IN MONASH AND HOBSONS BAY

As families start planning for 2024, the Andrews Labor Government is delivering more world-class kindergarten facilities close to home, with three new projects underway through the nation-leading Building Blocks Partnerships.

The Labor Government is building brand-new kindergartens across Monash and Hobsons Bay – giving families more choice of outstanding early childhood education as these areas grow.

Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep Ingrid Stitt today announced up to \$6.2 million to expand three kinders, creating up to 176 kindergarten places in the two rapidly growing parts of Melbourne.

The Ashwood Memorial Kindergarten will be completely refreshed, with a brand-new facility supporting up to 90 kindergarten places. The \$3.47 million project will welcome early learners in Term 1, 2025 with a \$1.59 million government grant helping build the centre.

Also in Monash, up to 50 more kindergarten places are coming to the Ward Avenue Kindergarten in Oakleigh South, with a \$1.64 million grant from the Government for the \$4.28 million brand-new service – catering for up to 90 kindergarten places when it opens at the start of 2025.

While construction is under way at Ashwood Memorial and Ward Avenue, kindergarten programs for children enrolled at the new services will run from the state-of-the-art Oakleigh South Child and Family Hub to ensure all children get the benefits of two years of free kindergarten.

In Hobsons Bay, the Emma McLean Kindergarten & Daycare in Spotswood will be replaced by a three-room modular kindergarten, expanding the service's overall capacity by up to 75 kindergarten places – with children to start their education journey there in January 2024.

Since 2021, the Labor Government has entered Building Blocks partnerships with 11 councils to build 71 new and expanded kindergartens and create up to 9,440 new kindergarten places across the state – creating a pipeline of modern, world-class kinders for our youngest Victorians to thrive in as the state grows.

Ensuring families have convenient and quality kindergarten close to home, the \$14.1 million Building Blocks Partnership with the City of Monash will deliver up to 363 kindergarten places across the council, while the \$9.95 million Partnership with Hobsons Bay City Council will provide up to 379 kindergarten places.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invests an additional \$1.2 billion to build or expand kindergartens state-wide, supporting the delivery of 15 hours of free Three-Year-Old Kindergarten each week by 2029 and 30 hours of free Pre-Prep each week by 2032.

Through our nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, we are transforming early childhood education to help children thrive, save families money and support parents – especially women – to return to work or study.

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 services – no matter where they live."

"Our Building Blocks partnerships are giving local families more kindergarten options and ensuring every child can attend a great kinder close to home as the state grows."

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