

# Media Release

**The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP**

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Children

Minister for Disability



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## GROWING AND VALUING VICTORIA'S KINDERGARTEN WORKFORCE

Early childhood teachers and educators are central to the success of Victoria's *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, and the Allan Labor Government is taking further steps to grow and retain this skilled and vital workforce.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today released the *Best Start, Best Life Workforce Strategy*, developed in consultation with the Early Childhood sector. It sets out how the Labor Government are growing the kindergarten workforce through partnerships and support for teachers and educators.

The expansion of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten in 2023 has already seen more than 60,000 children benefit from five to 15 hours of kinder each week. This would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of Victoria's early childhood professionals, delivering two years of quality play-based learning.

Since 2019 the Labor Government has invested almost \$370 million to grow, support and retain the early childhood workforce, increasing early childhood teacher and educator roles in kindergarten programs by more than 50 per cent.

The *Best Start, Best Life Workforce Strategy* builds on the programs already in place and introduces new and expanded initiatives to continue improving workforce attraction, retention and quality.

More than 4,000 scholarships have already been awarded, removing financial barriers and supporting more Victorians as they become early childhood teachers. At the same time up to 1,700 educators are being supported to upskill as teachers through the Innovative Initial Teacher Education program.

Almost 2,000 grants have been awarded to assist early career teachers to progress to full registration, and over 1,200 experienced teachers have participated in the Effective Mentoring program, ensuring their knowledge and expertise are shared with early career teachers.

More than 4,000 early childhood professionals have also accessed the Three-Year-Old Teaching Toolkit to support the delivery of high-quality kindergarten programs across the state.

These achievements are a strong base for our latest workforce strategy. With six areas of action, this will encourage greater workforce diversity, improve access to quality pre-service training, and help students make a smooth transition to the workforce, while driving long-term career development, effective leadership and practice quality.

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

To find out more about the Workforce Strategy, visit [vic.gov.au/shaping-the-best-start-best-life-reforms](https://vic.gov.au/shaping-the-best-start-best-life-reforms).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

*"We're backing the next generation of our early childhood workforce with greater career pathways and providing them with the support they need to grow their skills – giving children the early education they deserve."*

*"A quality early childhood education starts with dedicated staff. Consultation with the sector has shown that our workforce initiatives, training and upskilling opportunities and mentoring programmes are supporting early childhood workers to be their best."*

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