

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Children

Minister for Disability



Friday, 22 December 2023

SAVING FAMILIES MONEY AND HELPING ENROL KIDS IN KINDER

The Allan Labor Government is relieving the financial burden on families and making it easier to find a kindergarten place by boosting funding for local council central enrolment systems.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced a significant increase in funding to expand the Central Registration and Enrolment Schemes (CRES) Administrative Support Grants program, building on existing funding of \$1.6 million to around \$4.8 million per year.

The funding increase will support operating costs to enable councils to provide registration and enrolment services at no cost to families – helping up to 140,000 children benefitting from this once-in-a-generation reform, saving families up to \$2,500 per child every year and making it easier to give our kids the very best start in life.

This extra funding recognises the crucial role councils play in supporting the nation-leading *Best Life, Best Life* reforms that provide all Victorian children with access to two years of free, quality kindergarten.

A CRES is a single point for families to apply for multiple services within a local government area, helping them secure a kindergarten place that best meets their needs.

As well as simplifying the registration and enrolment process, a CRES can work with other services such as Maternal and Child Health to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families who need more support.

In 2023, more councils delivered a CRES than ever before, with approximately 69,000 children enrolled through a CRES up from 63,000 enrolments in 2022.

This new investment will see all CRES councils offered an increase in their annual base funding. This will include extra supports for those councils with high numbers of enrolments and rural councils .

The Labor Government is investing more than \$14 billion in the *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, delivering Free Kinder across the state, a year of universal Pre-Prep, and establishing 50 government-operated childcare centres.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"We are proud to help to ease the cost-of-living pressures facing families, while also making it easier for them to find kindergarten places so more children can access the free, quality kindergarten programs they need."

"This funding boost is supporting partnerships that have immediate flow-on benefits to local communities, and are a key part of our ambitious Best Start, Best Life reforms - the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation."