

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Children
Minister for Disability



Thursday, 15 February 2024

MORE KIDS TO EMBRACE NATURE WITH EXPANDED BUSH KINDERS

Thousands of Victorian children will have the chance to learn and play in the great outdoors, thanks to an expansion of bush kinder programs by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn yesterday announced 150 kindergartens across the state will receive one-off grants of \$6,000 to offer a bush kinder program in 2024.

Bush kinder programs are delivered outdoors at places including parks, bushland and beaches - giving children a unique opportunity and freedom to learn through play with natural materials in outdoors.

The programs are educational and exciting – with a significant positive impact on a child’s development, as well as on their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The \$6,000 grants will help kindergartens buy the equipment they need to run programs that focus on getting outside, playing with natural materials, and learning through activities such as climbing trees and watching wildlife.

Kindergartens without access to a suitable off-site location can use their grant funding to enhance the biodiversity of their existing outdoor environment.

The Labor Government is investing \$3.6 million over four years to expand bush kinder programs in up to 600 kindergarten services across Victoria.

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 to return to work or study if they choose.

The 2024 expansion will see new bush kinder programs established in 52 local government areas, including 25 regional locations. Of the 150 kinders receiving one-off grants, 100 are in Melbourne.

Applications for the 2025 round of another 150 bush kinder grants will open in the second half of 2024. To find out which kindergartens are receiving a bush kinder grant, visit vic.gov.au/bush-kinder-grants-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

“We’re supporting up to 150 kindergartens each year to start bush kinder programs, providing more children with opportunities to get outdoors and learn in a natural environment.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Melton Steve McGhie

“I am delighted the Bush Kinder programs will be supported and expanded, helping local children to learn and develop in a creative and hands-on way.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

“The Bush Kinder program gets kids out into the great outdoors, and it’s fantastic that Mount Helen kids are getting the chance to learn through nature.”

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