

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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MORE EARLY LEARNING FACILITIES TO OPEN IN NORTHERN VICTORIA

Thanks to the Labor Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms, families in the northern Campaspe towns of Lockington and Rochester will have more access to local childcare and kindergarten.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn announced today that Lockington will be the new location for one of 50 government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres, a major boost to childcare services in the area.

The service was originally planned for Rochester but will now be built in Lockington following recommendations from Campaspe Shire Council.

Recommendations were based on changing community needs in Rochester following the 2022 floods. The change means more communities in the Shire will have access to childcare and kindergarten where these services are needed most.

The Labor Government will also replace the temporary kindergarten at Rochester Secondary College with a brand-new, purpose-built facility on school grounds, so families in Rochester will also benefit from brand-new kindergarten facilities.

Shine Bright Rochester Kindergarten will remain open while the permanent building is under construction, ensuring no child misses out on vital early learning before they start school.

In January 2023, Campaspe Shire Council moved its long-term daycare service in Rochester to a newly refurbished kindergarten building on Fraser Street, increasing the number of childcare places available to local families and meeting the town's demand for childcare.

The Government has responded to this increase in places by committing to establish an ELCC in Lockington, which will support local families and bring childcare to the town for the first time.

Victoria's first four ELCCs will open in 2025, and 14 others will open in 2026 at government schools across the state. These 18 centres will collectively deliver more than 1,800 licensed places for local children and families.

A further 12 ELCCs will open over 2027 and 2028, with the remaining 20 centres opening by 2032.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"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 and carers to return to work or study if they choose."

"We're investing in our littlest learners and delivering new early learning facilities where they are needed most."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"We're helping meet the demand for these vital services across the wider Campaspe community by bringing quality early education and childcare to Lockington."

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