

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Children

Minister for Disability



Thursday, 8 August 2024

BUSH KINDER GRANTS TO GET KIDS INTO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Allan Labor Government is giving more children the chance to learn through play at the beach, in the park or in local bushland, with grants to expand the number of bush kinder programs now open.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced a new bush kinder grants program and encouraged kindergartens across the state to apply for one-off grants that will help them take their children's learning outdoors.

Bush kinder gives children the chance to explore and play in a natural environment while gaining independence, developing curiosity and learning through guided outdoor activities and creative play.

Up to 150 grants of \$6,000 are available to help eligible kindergartens establish bush kinder programs.

The Labor Government is investing \$3.6 million over four years to expand bush kinder programs in up to 600 kindergarten services across Victoria. In February, the first 150 Bush Kinder grants were awarded to recipients including Brentwood Preschool and Bethal Primary School Kindergarten.

Regular outdoor play is proven to support a child's learning and development and has significant benefits in a range of areas, including their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

By increasing the amount of time children spend outside and in natural environments, bush kinder programs can help improve children's co-ordination and endurance, build their interest in science, and extend their confidence and capabilities in new environments.

The Bush Kinder Grants Program supports kindergartens to establish or enhance a bush kinder program in a local natural space. Kindergartens without access to a suitable off-site location can use their grant funding to enhance the biodiversity of their existing outdoor environment.

Applications for the second round of bush kinder grants close on Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 5 pm. To apply for a grant or find out more, visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/bush-kinder-grants-program>.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"From staying active to connecting with nature, bush kinder has so many benefits for children. That's why we're expanding these programs across Victoria and helping our kids' curiosity, creativity and independence to grow."

"Our Bush Kinder grants will help 150 more kindergartens take their early learning programs into the great outdoors, giving children greater freedom to explore and learn through nature play."