

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Minister for Health Infrastructure



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FIRST LOOK AT NORTHCOTE EARLY PARENTING CENTRE

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring mums, dads and caregivers in Melbourne's inner northern suburbs get the specialised support they need, closer to home – with a first look revealed for the new Early Parenting Centre in Northcote.

Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne today unveiled an early design of the new \$20 million facility which will provide vital resources and care for families with young children during the critical early years.

Planning is underway for the new Northcote Early Parenting Centre, and the design shows a safe, welcoming and home-like environment for families and caregivers, with space for residential overnight stays and day programs.

It will support families with children up to four years old, offering expert care and advice on sleep, settling, feeding and developmental needs – including specialised care for babies and toddlers with additional needs.

Sleep and settling is one of the most common challenges for new parents, with around half of families attending Early Parenting Centres seeking support for sleep-related issues. Without the right support, sleep difficulties can contribute to post-natal depression in mothers, and stress and developmental concerns in young children.

Further design work is underway, led by the Victorian Health Building Authority in partnership with Brand Architects. Childcare experts, local community groups and Traditional Owners will be engaged as part of the design process to ensure the centre reflects the needs of the Northcote community. Nearby residents will be consulted as planning progresses.

The Labor Government is investing more than \$185 million to expand Victoria's network of 13 Early Parenting Centres, including a dedicated Aboriginal-led centre in Frankston, upgrades in Noble Park and Footscray, and six brand new centres in Wyndham, Whittlesea, Casey, Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong.

Once complete, these new and upgraded centres will support more than 5,000 families each year – giving more parents access to expert early parenting support close to home.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne

"We know the early months can be tough for some families, that's why we're investing in new and upgraded Early Parenting Centres across Victoria, including in Northcote, delivering free support when they need most."

Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"Every child deserves the best start in life, and this centre in Northcote will provide parents with the expert care, support and guidance they need to navigate the challenges of early childhood with confidence."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"Parenting is never smooth sailing and having access to great local services matters. The Northcote Early Parenting Centre will give new mums, dads and caregivers in the inner north access to free, expert support – close to home."