

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for WorkSafe and TAC



Wednesday, 9 July 2025

KIDS GO FREE: SCHOOL HOLIDAY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

From exhibitions to elephants, dinosaurs to dancefloors, there are plenty of free and affordable activities for families this school holidays – thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Acting Premier Ben Carroll and Acting Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio today visited Werribee Open Range Zoo to remind families that children under 16 can visit for free during the holidays – and see the herd of nine Asian elephants in their new home.

After three months of splashing, playing and stretching out in their new habitat, the herd is now settled in – attracting a record-breaking crowd of more than 316,000 visitors through the Zoo's gates.

Visitors can view the elephants from a new boardwalk and raised platforms, offering an up-close look at the herd's daily activities.

The 21-hectare sanctuary, backed by the Labor Government, has seen visitation between March and June up 41 per cent on the same period last year – an increase of more than 92,000 guests.

With school holidays underway it's the perfect time for families to visit the Elephant Trail, with free entry for kids under 16 at zoos across Victorian school holidays, public holidays and weekends.

It's just one of many fun-filled and budget-friendly activities on offer for families and kids across our state.

That includes casting a line at more than 70 lakes across Victoria, with around 35,000 rainbow trout stocked for the holidays – offering a fun and affordable way to enjoy the outdoors.

Families can also explore our world-class museums and galleries these holidays, with kids under 16 always going free to Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and the Immigration Museum.

Kids can get hands-on at the NGV's *Plans for the Planet: Olaf Breuning for Kids* exhibition, explore miniature worlds in *Little Landscapes* at Melbourne Museum, build and invent at *Tinkertown* at Scienceworks or explore films, TV, videogames and art at *The Story of the Moving Image* at ACMI.

Playbound Festival returns in 2025 to celebrate the power of play with free and low-cost performances, workshops and activities at much-loved Melbourne venues including Melbourne Museum, State Library Victoria, the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and The Wheeler Centre.

Young creatives can write, draw and make at State Library Victoria's school holiday program, while the Koorie Heritage Trust will host a Kids' Culture Day of Painting with Barkindji and Ngiyampaa Elder Uncle Col Clark.

In regional Victoria, families can enjoy free and low-cost activities at Bendigo Art Gallery, Hamilton Gallery's interactive Children's Sensorium, and a two-day opera workshop with Opera Australia at Geelong Arts Centre.

The Labor Government is focused on what matters most – delivering real help for families. From free school holiday activities to help with camps, sports and excursions, and free public transport for kids and teens from 1 January next year – we're making sure no young Victorian misses out.

Media Contact: Bodil Droga 0413 701 929 | bodil.droga@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Acting Premier Ben Carroll

“School holidays are the perfect time for families to get out and enjoy free activities – from exploring our amazing zoos to discovering our world-class museums, there’s something for everyone.”

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Environment Lily D’Ambrosio

“With free entry to our zoos, we’re making sure no young Victorian misses out – and helping families spend some quality time together.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

“Victoria is the cultural capital of Australia, and there’s no better way to enjoy the school holidays than exploring our museums and galleries or expressing your creativity at a free workshop.”

Quote attributable to Member for Point Cook Mathew Hilakari

“The Asian elephant herd have settled into their new home – bringing thousands more visitors to Werribee Open Range Zoo. That’s good for local jobs and local families.”