

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 28 February 2019

BOOSTING KINDERGARTEN SERVICES IN BALLARAT

Work is now underway to upgrade the Girrabanya Children's Centre due to investment by the Andrews Labor Government. This expansion will see Ballarat families have access to more kindergarten and childcare places.

Minister for Education James Merlino today visited the centre to tour the construction site of the \$1.25 million upgrade, which will help meet the demand for long-day care and kindergarten programs in Ballarat.

The project includes refiguring the kindergarten so that occasional care services will be rehoused on-site, providing greatly improved facilities targeted to families.

The upgraded centre will offer increased flexibility for local parents through integrated long-day and short-term care, with the option to move between the two as needed within a single facility.

Construction is expected to finish in June, and will provide local families with young children access to an additional kinder places.

The state's biggest early education build will continue over the coming years, with almost 1,000 new and upgraded kinders to come.

The Government will invest more than \$1.68 billion over the next decade to build approximately 785 new kinders and expand 170 existing services.

This is part of the Government's \$5 billion commitment to deliver a full 15 hours of three-year-old kinder to every Victorian child over the next decade, with the rollout beginning in 2020.

This is about ensuring Ballarat families have access to stronger support in early childhood, so kids are ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for life.

The Labor Government provided the City of Ballarat funding towards the centre through a Children's Facilities Capital Program grant.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Making Victoria the Education State starts with the early years, which is why we're delivering unprecedented investment in early childhood services."

"This project will give Ballarat families access to a first-rate early years facility that is targeted to their needs."

Quote attributable to the Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"Ballarat families – and our youngest residents – will benefit from these upgrades, so they can get the best head start for their education."