

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 4 April 2019

HELPING MILDURA KIDS GET THE MOST OUT OF KINDERGARTEN

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Mildura children can attend a first-rate kindergarten, with high-quality facilities and better learning support.

Minister for Education James Merlino today visited De Garis Kindergarten in Mildura, which has received \$230,000 in school readiness funding and where construction of a new \$189,400 inclusive playground is underway.

The kindergarten's existing playground is being upgraded to be more engaging, interactive and meet the needs of all the children at the centre.

The sensory garden will include a mud kitchen, play equipment, water play features, yarning circle, landscaping and new ramps and paths.

The service will use its school readiness funding to hire additional teaching staff, enrich children's language development and social and emotional wellbeing and run a breakfast club to provide free and healthy meals to children.

It will also help families by setting up a book lending library and provide training for staff to better support children who have experienced trauma.

Children at De Garis Kindergarten are among 20,000 attending kindergarten this year to benefit from the Labor Government's \$58.1 million school readiness funding initiative.

Funding has been provided this year to approximately 580 services in 25 local government areas and those run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

In an Australian-first, the Labor Government is investing almost \$5 billion over the next decade to ensure every Victorian three-year-old has access to a full 15 hours of kinder by 2022.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We know that quality early childhood services give children a better start in life and that's why we're making unprecedented investments in the early years."

"We're helping kindergartens upgrade their infrastructure and equipment to create welcoming environments for children of all abilities."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"This school readiness funding will provide extra support for local families and their kids at a crucial time in their lives."

"We're boosting support for kindergartens so that local kids get the best start to their education."

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