

# Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 13 June 2019

## MAKING KINDERGARTENS MORE INCLUSIVE FOR ALL CHILDREN

The Andrews Labor Government is helping more kindergartens upgrade their playgrounds and buildings and buy new equipment to support children with additional needs.

Minister for Education James Merlino and the Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous today visited Annie Dennis Children's Centre in Northcote to launch the new round of the Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* included \$6 million for the Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program to help kindergartens across the state provide safe and inclusive environments for children with additional needs.

Applications are open for kindergartens to apply for up to \$200,000 to upgrade their buildings or playgrounds to become more inclusive for children of all abilities. Grants of up to \$10,000 are also available to buy equipment such as adjustable desks and chairs, moveable wheelchair ramps and soft padding for outdoor areas.

The Labor Government provided Annie Dennis Children's Centre more than \$68,000 to redevelop their playground, creating new natural and accessible learning spaces to support the needs of the centre's children. The design of the new areas includes natural features such as garden beds, boulders and logs.

The Labor Government has already helped more than 260 kindergarten services upgrade their buildings and playgrounds or provided inclusive equipment through the Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* included a record \$473.2 million investment in early childhood infrastructure over five years, which will support the sector to invest in new and expanded facilities.

Making Victoria the Education State starts with the early years. That's why, in an-Australian first, the Victorian Government will be rolling out subsidised kindergarten programs for all three-year-old children.

The roll-out of three-year-old kindergarten will start next year in six regional local government areas and will continue to rollout across the state progressively. From 2022, all Victorian three-year-olds will have access to five hours of kindergarten. This will be scaled up to a full 15-hour program by 2029.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"We're helping kinders to upgrade their buildings and playgrounds. Not only so they are more accessible, but also so their grounds encourage learning, curiosity and imagination."*

*"Every child deserves a great kinder in their local community. That's why we are working with the sector and making significant investments, so kinders meet the needs of all children."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

*"It's fantastic to see how Annie Dennis Children's Centre is providing such a welcoming and inclusive environment for their children and I'm delighted we'll be funding more kinders across the state to do the same."*