

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Families and Children
Minister for Early Childhood Education
Minister for Youth Affairs



Wednesday, 7 November 2018

KINDER FOR EVERY THREE-YEAR-OLD IN MELTON

Every Victorian child born under a re-elected Andrews Labor Government will start kindergarten a year earlier, giving them the skills and experience they need to be ready for school.

Minister for Early Childhood Education Jenny Mikakos today visited the Cambrian Preschool in Melton West to herald this almost \$5 billion reform, which will see three-year-old kinder rolled out across the state for every Victorian child beginning in 2020.

It includes \$1.68 billion over the next decade to build 785 new kinders and expand 170 more across the state, in what will be the largest social, economic and educational reform ever undertaken in early childhood learning in Victoria's history.

Already home to around 2,400 services providing kindergarten programs, this investment represents a nearly 40 per cent bump in services across our state and is expected to create around 5000 construction jobs.

It will build on the Andrews Labor Government's track record over the past four years of delivering, expanding and improving early years infrastructure across Victoria so local families can continue to access great local kindergartens.

Kids at Cambrian Preschool will also be among the first to benefit from the Labor Government's Australian-first school readiness funding, which taps into the expertise of speech and occupational therapists, language and literacy experts and child psychologists so that children start school on track.

The funding will roll out to all kinders statewide by 2021, with 25 local government areas – including Melton – to start from 2019.

Cambrian Preschool received \$10,000 to upgrade their veranda as part of the 2018-19 Children's Facilities Capital Program Minor Grants.

Labor's commitment to three-year-old kinder is good news for families struggling with the cost of living. Right now, many are forced to scrimp and save to cover the costs of three-year-old kinder – around \$5000 a year for 15 hours – while the vast majority see their kids miss out.

Under Labor's plan, every Victorian child will have access to at least five hours of subsidised three-year-old kinder by 2022, progressively scaled up to 15 hours per week over the next decade.

Under the plan, around a quarter of Victorian families will pay nothing at all. For families with a higher income, the Labor Government will cover 65 per cent of their child's kindergarten costs, consistent with the current subsidy for four-year-old kinder. This is a saving of at least \$3,500 for families with children at a standalone kinder.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Education Jenny Mikakos

"Universal access to three-year-old kinder is an Australian-first and make no mistake, this will change lives."

"We've promised to roll out three-year-old kinder if re-elected and we're backing it up, undertaking the biggest early education build our state has ever seen. Only Labor will make sure local kids get the opportunities they deserve."

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