

# Media Release

**The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP**  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Minister for Children  
Minister for Disability



Friday, 12 July 2024

## NEW PARTNERSHIP DELIVERS MORE KINDER PLACES IN DAREBIN

The Allan Labor Government is delivering more kindergarten places and modern early learning facilities for families in Melbourne's north, thanks to a new Building Blocks Partnership with the City of Darebin.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced funding of more than \$2.4 million to support the delivery of two kindergarten projects in the Darebin local government area that will create up to 97 new kindergarten places for local families.

The first of the projects to get underway will increase capacity at Merri Community Childcare & Kindergarten. The Labor Government is supporting the expansion through a Building Blocks Capacity Building Grant of more than \$227,000.

Darebin City Council is leading the project, which will extend the centre's Three-Year-Old Kindergarten room and allow more children to attend the early learning program. Building work has commenced and will finish later this year.

With the addition of the City of Darebin partnership, the Government has now entered 16 Building Blocks partnerships since 2021. Across the state, that means 101 new and expanded kindergartens and up to 13,385 new kinder places when and where they're needed most.

The Government is investing billions to build and expand hundreds of kindergartens across the state, supporting the delivery of 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten each week by 2029 and 30 hours of Pre-Prep each week by 2036.

Through our nation-leading \$14 billion *Best Start, Best Life* reforms, the Allan Labor Government is transforming early childhood education to help children thrive, save families money, and support parents and carers to return to work or study if they choose.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

*"Our Building Blocks partnerships are delivering more than 13,000 new kindergarten places in local government areas across Victoria, so more children can get the best start in life."*

*"An investment in kinder is an investment in our children's future. That is why we will continue to expand offerings to help our littlest learners thrive."*

### Quotes attributable Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

*"The inner north is growing and that means more families need kinder places. This partnership will expand our outstanding community kinders and give more local children the opportunity to gain the enormous benefits of two years of play based learning."*

### Quotes attributable to City of Darebin Mayor, Councillor Susanne Newton

*"We are excited to be working in partnership with the Victorian Government and investing in kindergarten programs and facilities in Darebin."*

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*“Having the right support available at the beginning of a child’s life is crucial to their development, wellbeing and overall health and as the mum of a 19-month-old myself, I know exactly how important these services are!”*