

Media Release

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



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GETTING KIDS OUTDOORS AT 150 MORE BUSH KINDERS

The Allan Labor Government is helping 150 more kindergartens take kids outdoors to learn in nature with new funding doubling the number of bush kinder grants across the state.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced at Bundoora Park, with a group of young explorers from Wood Street Childcare Centre, \$900,000 to deliver the new round of bush kinder, a program designed to increase the amount of time children spend playing and learning in nature.

Bush kinder is run in parks, bushland and beaches, giving children the opportunity to explore and develop curiosities through activities such as climbing trees, playing with natural materials and watching wildlife.

One-off \$6,000 grants help kindergartens buy the items and equipment they need to run programs. The Labor Government is investing \$3.6 million over four years to expand bush kinder programs in up to 600 kinder services across Victoria.

The educational program builds on findings that regular outdoor play delivers significant benefits for a child's learning and development, including their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Children who experience bush kinder develop greater confidence and capabilities while learning how to recognise and manage risks in new environments. They also gain a deeper understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts in a hands-on way.

The Bush Kinder Grants Program funds kindergartens to establish or enhance a bush kinder program in a local natural space. Kindergartens without access to a suitable off-site location can use their grant funding to improve the biodiversity of their existing outdoor environment.

Funding in this round of grants is allowing bush kinder programs to be established at 43 regional kindergartens and 107 metropolitan kindergartens across 53 local government areas.

Visit vic.gov.au/bush-kinder-grants-program to find out which kinders will be starting a bush kinder program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"We all want the best for our kids and teaching them about the great outdoors is good for their wellbeing, physical development and connection to nature."

"Kids have so much to learn from regular bush, beach and park-based kinder programs, where each visit offers new opportunities to learn about and discover our great outdoors."

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Nathan Lambert

"The team at Wood Street Childcare Centre run a rich, culturally responsive program that encourages environmental stewardship in a fun and engaging setting. I am really pleased that kinders across the state will have the opportunity to expand or establish their own bush kinder programs."

Quote attributable to Member for Bundoora Colin Brooks

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“Programs like bush kinder are a fantastic way to connect our youngest learners with nature. These grants mean more local kindergartens can take learning outside, helping our kids grow in confidence and curiosity.”