

# Media Release

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



Thursday, 27 March 2025

## BACKING TEACHERS FOR A STRONGER KINDER WORKFORCE

The Allan Labor Government is delivering better outcomes for Victorian children by supporting teachers to stay in the industry through innovative ideas.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today announced the 11 recipients of the Innovation Grants Program – which will share in \$580,000 to run programs aimed at building a more experienced early education workforce and improving retention.

Among this year's recipients is Eureka Community Kindergarten Association where 29 services will join in an Early Career Growth Program, completing four-week rotations with a mentor where staff can connect with early-career educators at other sites for career guidance, professional development and wellbeing resources online.

Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC), Shine Bright EYM and Bendigo TAFE will offer Aboriginal Victorians a culturally safe and supportive pathway to work in the field. Trainees will start their career at BDAC Kindergarten and move to a Shine Bright service, receiving support along the way.

Westcare will lead a group of providers giving up to 35 teachers and educators in Ararat access to short courses covering mental health and wellbeing, adaptability and teamwork. Career development and leadership are key pillars of the courses, with backfill support helping staff attend.

Latrobe City Council will launch an onboarding and career-development program across 25 services, supported by mentoring partnerships. Early-career teachers and educators will benefit from regular professional development workshops, peer collaboration, observation and feedback sessions, and wellbeing support.

Other projects include opportunities for early childhood teachers to contribute to improving operations in their service, and training to equip educators with evidence-based strategies to support children with additional needs.

The Innovation Grants Program is part of a suite of free professional learning and career supports available to early childhood professionals.

To find out more about the Innovation Grants projects, visit [vic.gov.au/innovation-grants-program](https://vic.gov.au/innovation-grants-program). Information on training and career support is available from [vic.gov.au/training](https://vic.gov.au/training).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

*“By supporting our teachers, we’re giving every child the best start in life – and enabling Victorian families to access high-quality early childhood education.”*

*“Helping the educators that work with our children during some of their most pivotal years will mean better outcomes for kids, keeping our workforce strong as demand across Victoria grows.”*

### Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

*“Supporting educators in the early years of their careers is crucial. We’re doing just that with extra funding and support, on top of the rollout of more Free Kinder hours for Victorian kids.”*

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## **2024–25 Innovation Grants Program recipients**

- Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.
- Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative Inc. with Shine Bright EYM and Bendigo TAFE
- Alpine Children’s Services Ltd
- Corangamite Shire Council
- Westcare Pty Ltd with J C Corp Pty Ltd, Ararat Early Learning, Young Men’s Christian Association of Ballarat Inc., Ararat Rural City Council and Federation University Australia
- Greater Bendigo City Council
- Lilydale Community Child Care Inc.
- Children’s Protection Society Inc.
- Horsham and District Kindergarten Association Inc.
- Latrobe City Council
- The Lady Gowrie Child Centre (Melbourne) Inc.