



Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood

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Cr Kathy Majdlik
Mayor
City of Melton
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Dear Ms Majdlik

Thank you for your email of 1 February 2021 regarding the local council's 2021–22 State Government Budget Submission.

I appreciate you providing me with this document. I am pleased to see that early learning has been so prominently included in the strategic infrastructure planning.

I note with pleasure the commitment of the local council to the Andrews Labor Government's Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform, and was pleased to hear that the local council has reached an agreement with the Department of Education and Training regarding the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Melton.

To ensure quality early-childhood infrastructure is in place to meet demand across the reform, we have committed \$1.68 billion in funding over 10 years. This is the largest investment in early-childhood infrastructure in Victoria's history. It will enable strong partnerships with local governments and providers to co-invest in early-childhood infrastructure.

As you are aware, a critical partnership opportunity with key local governments is provided by the Building Blocks grant program. This program features significant increases to maximum State Government grant contributions, on top of substantial increases already provided in 2019. The 2020–21 State Budget also provides an additional \$38.5 million to the Building Blocks grants program towards building, expanding, improving, and creating more inclusive early-learning facilities. This boost is expected to create up to 1,500 additional kindergarten places, build more inclusive facilities for young Victorians of all abilities, and provide services with IT grants.

The Building Blocks program also includes Building Blocks Partnerships, which are linked to the KISPs and provide the opportunity for long-term, in-principle agreements between the Department and local governments or not-for-profit providers for co-investment in multi-site project schedules.

I understand that the Department has contacted Council officers with an invitation to engage in discussions regarding a Building Blocks Partnership agreement. I encourage Council to take up this

opportunity and I look forward to the Department potentially partnering with Council to co-invest in much needed kindergarten infrastructure in Melton City.

As you are also aware, our infrastructure investment also includes funding to support the development of kindergartens on school sites. The program will see new kindergartens co-located with a number of existing primary schools every year from 2022 to 2029, delivering additional capacity to support the reform. Proposed school sites will also be included in the Building Blocks Partnerships, where applicable.

Teachers and educators are at the heart of the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform. This is why the Victorian Government has invested substantially in measures to attract and retain a high-quality early-childhood workforce. This includes financial support packages for those looking to study early-childhood teaching or upskill, incentive payments for qualified early-childhood teachers who take up positions in kindergarten services delivering Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, and professional support for existing teachers and educators to deliver high-quality programs.

If you would like further information regarding the Building Blocks program, you may contact Ms Dyanna Leslie, Acting Manager, Three Year Old Kindergarten Infrastructure Unit, Victorian School Building Authority, Department of Education and Training, on (03) 7022 2692, or by email: dyanna.leslie@education.vic.gov.au, or Ms Anita Siassios, Acting Manager, Early Childhood Improvement Branch Brimbank/Melton, South Western Victoria Region, Department of Education and Training, on (03) 9084 9026 or by email: anita.siassios@education.vic.gov.au.

Thank you for your continued partnership with the Andrews Labor Government on the roll-out of the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Early Childhood