

28 May, 2019

## Vic Budget delivers on early learning election promises

The 2019/20 Victorian State Budget brings few surprises for Victoria's early childhood education and care sector with the Government honouring its key election commitments with around \$1 billion in investment.

The big ticket items for the early childhood education and care sector in this year's budget include:

### Access and Equity

- \$882 million to initiate the rollout of three-year-old kinder for every Victorian child
- \$26.1 million to extend school readiness funding to three-year-olds at risk of being left behind
- \$3.4 million to support children with disability or development delay, including providing special education, therapy and assistance to access kindergarten and child care.
- \$1.6 million to help meet the needs of children with significant disability, as part of the [Kindergarten Inclusion Support program](#)

### Infrastructure

- \$316.5 million for early years infrastructure to create new and enhanced facilities
- \$33.6 million for local councils and eligible providers to build, expand and improve local kindergarten and other early childhood facilities

### Workforce

- \$28.5 million to add early childhood to the list of Victoria's [Free TAFE](#) courses
- \$92.4 million to support teachers and educators with more professional development, mentoring and scholarships

### Allied Services

- \$214 million for new parenting centres, more maternal child health nurses and around-the-clock sleep advice.

"Much of this does not come as a surprise given the Andrew's Government election commitments," said ELAA CEO, David Worland.

"This Budget reflects a genuine commitment to honour the Government's pre-election pledge to invest in our sector at record levels – specifically on the commitments to fund access to 3-year-old kindergarten for every Victorian child, commencing with five hours and with the ultimate goal being 15 hours a week for every child by 2029.



“To ensure our sector is ready for the expansion of three year old kindergarten, we are pleased to see funding being allocated to grow our workforce by 6,000 new teachers and educators, with the Diploma and Certificate III of Early Childhood Education and Care added to the free TAFE list from 2020 at a cost of 428.5 million.”

However, the Budget does not appear to directly address a number of pressing issues for the Victorian Early Childhood sector.

“We can’t see any direct funding for an integrated early years workforce strategy that would address the wages and conditions of the State’s early childhood educators and care workers. We are also concerned about the lack of clarity in the Budget regarding funding for early years sector regulatory systems beyond 2020,” added Mr Worland.

“ELAA is keen to have more dialogue with the Government on these matters over the short to medium term.”

For more information or to arrange an interview with ELAA CEO, David Worland, contact James Gardener 0413 483 182.

**ENDS**