



ELAA acknowledges the Vic Government’s commitment to the ECEC sector amid workforce challenges, calls for continued collaboration

8 May, 2024

The Victorian Labor Government's 24-25 Budget reaffirms its commitment to the *Best Start, Best Life* kindergarten reforms. Simultaneously, the government acknowledges the pressing need for quality staff and infrastructure development in Early Childhood Education and Care. These factors have led to adjustments in the program rollout timeline.

The gradual rollout of the *Best Start, Best Life* reforms is delayed due to the extensive workforce shortages in the sector, with an additional 11,000 Early Childhood Professionals required for the program implementation.

The reform will be adjusted to be completed over a 15-year timeframe. By 2036, children in all locations across Victoria will have access to up to 30 hours of Pre-Prep.

- Families in Ararat Rural City, Gannawarra Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Northern Grampians Shire and Yarriambiack Shire can now start enrolling for up to 30 hours of Pre-Prep a week in 2025.
- In 2026, children in an additional 12 local government areas will have access to 16 to 20 hours per week of Pre-Prep.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services – no matter where they live in Victoria – will have access to up to 25 hours per week of Pre-Prep in 2026.

ELAA’s CEO Andrew Cameron said: “We appreciate the government moving to address the workforce shortages and acknowledge the impact this will have on the reform’s timeline.

“We understand that there will be a diverse set of responses to this change from our members. For some, there may be a level of disappointment. ELAA will continue to proactively advise the Department of Education on how the reforms impact our members, highlighting insights we have collated. We strongly encourage our members to continue to engage with us, expressing their voices more effectively, and actively contributing to ELAA’s advocacy efforts.”

Media Release



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ELAA also welcomes further investment of \$128.6 million into the reforms over the next 12 months. The budget also includes a dedicated \$19 million for new Building Blocks Improvement and Inclusion grants, which will enable kindergarten services to renovate and upgrade existing early learning facilities.

To arrange an interview with ELAA CEO, Andrew Cameron, please contact ELAA's Marketing and Engagement Manager, Kine Asgautsen, at kasgautsen@elaa.org.au or (03) 9411 4126.

ENDS

ELAA is the national peak body for not-for-profit providers of early childhood education and care. Our vision is Excellence and Equity in Early Childhood Education and Care. www.elaa.org.au