



Martin Pakula MP

State Member for Keysborough

Monday, 4 March 2019

HELPING LOCAL CHILDREN GET THE MOST OUT OF KINDERGARTEN

Children in Noble Park, Keysborough and Springvale will be among almost 20,000 heading to kindergarten this year who will benefit from the Andrews Labor Government's Australian-first school readiness funding.

All kindergartens in the City of Greater Dandenong will receive a funding boost to engage with professional support such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists and language and literacy experts, who can help children and build the capability of families and educators.

Today Member for Keysborough Martin Pakula MP visited the Springvale Service for Children and Darren Reserve Kindergarten, and said more than \$1.4 million has been allocated to kindergartens in the City of Greater Dandenong, allowing services to engage with experts and access a range of evidence-informed programs.

It is the first time in Australia such funding has been made available to kindergartens and will become a permanent part of Victoria's early childhood education funding.

Australian research shows that one in five Victorian children start school developmentally vulnerable and once behind, they tend to stay behind.

\$58.1 million of school readiness funding will be rolled out to all kinders statewide by 2021, with approximately 580 kinders part of the first tranche of 25 local government areas and all kinders run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to be rolled out this year.

This needs-based funding aims to reduce the impact of educational disadvantage on children's learning and development and improve outcomes in communication (language development), wellbeing (social and emotional regulation) and access and participation.

Making Victoria the Education State starts with the early years – which is why the Andrews Labor Government is also investing \$5 billion over a decade to deliver a 15 hour kindergarten program for all three-year-old children.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We're helping children very early in their education journey, so they can start their first day at school ready to learn."

"School readiness funding means investing in the things that will truly make a difference to a child's life."

Quote attributable to Member for Keysborough Martin Pakula

"Not every child has an equal chance to thrive at kindergarten and school readiness funding will mean that – regardless of their circumstances – more local children will benefit from the boost that quality early years learning provides."