

MEDIA STATEMENT

23 June 2022

The Y Ballarat welcomes \$9billion investment in early childhood education

The Y Ballarat has welcomed the announcement by the Victorian Government to invest up to \$9billion dollars into the redevelopment of early childhood education across the state.

“There have been a number of reforms introduced over the last few years delivering significant value. These have included the introduction of 15 hours of funded kindergarten for 3 year old children and the provision of School Readiness Funding to support the successful transition of children from kindergarten to primary school with place-based solutions. There’s no doubt that this announcement leads to a sector-wide transformation,” said Executive Manager of Children’s Services, Vicki Dobson.

“All the research indicates that having greater access to quality education programs at younger ages for longer periods leads to much stronger outcomes for all children.”

The expansion of the “Best Start, Best Life” program announced on 16th June will see three major new initiatives:

- Making kinder free across the state
- Delivering a new year of universal Pre-Prep for 4-year-olds, rolling out from 2025
- Establishing 50 government operated childcare centres

This means from 2023, all families with three or four-year-old children will pay nothing for kinder – a saving of up to \$2,500 per child every year.

Y Kinders Early Years Management (the Y Ballarat), is the largest early years manager in Victoria with a current portfolio of 88 services right across the state. These include services in regional and rural Victoria, where there may be only one kindergarten, through to larger centres in Metropolitan Melbourne.

“We know that children experience more development in the first five years of their life than at any other time. Providing children and families with the ability to access a play-based education program prepared by qualified teachers will support this development immensely,” Ms Dobson said. “And we know that one of the biggest barriers to access services is the costs associated with delivering these programs. While the current funding model significantly reduces costs for families, it doesn’t address the rising costs of operating an educational program. To see early childhood education be funded to a point that almost completely removes these costs for all families of 3- and 4-year-old children is very rewarding.”

THE Y BALLARAT

Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street, Ballarat, VIC, 3350

p: 03 4311 1500 **e:** info@yballarat.org.au **w:** yballarat.org.au **f:** /BallaratYMCA



We believe in the power of
inspired young people

Ms Dobson noted that there is considerable detail to be worked through between government and early education providers. At this stage, further information on how the system will work or which areas will be priority as part of the roll out, has not been outlined.

Existing workforce shortages in qualified teachers and educators, as well as facilities that meet the contemporary needs of students and teachers will be high on the agenda, as well as supporting innovative ways to provide full services in regional areas.

“There’s a lot to do, and we are looking forward to working in partnerships with our families, communities, local and state partners to build a strong, sustainable model for the future,” said Kelly Rolfe, Finance Manager (Y Ballarat Acting CEO).

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About the Y Kinders’ Early Years Management & the Y

At the Y, we believe in the power of inspired young people. The Y Ballarat’s services include: Children’s Services (including Early Years Management, Long Day Care and OSHC), and Youth and Community Programs.

We currently manage 88 Kindergartens across the state, in 21 local government areas delivering high quality learning programs to over 4,500 children.

Across the country, each year the Y has over 1 million participations in our youth specific programs and 8 million participations in our children’s programs including kindergartens, early learning centres, outside school hours care and vacation care.

As a movement, we provide a wide range of programs and services in over 500 communities across Australia, including rural and remote communities. The Y is a community not-for-profit and the oldest youth organisation in the world.

For further details visit: yballarat.org.au.

Contact

Vicki Dobson
Executive Manager, Children’s Services
The Y, Ballarat (Y Kinders EYM)

P: (03) 4311 1500

E: vicki.dobson@yballarat.org.au

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