



## Building new kindergartens in growing communities

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) is proud to be partnering with the Victorian Government to build 12 early years education centres to meet the increasing demand from families in Melbourne's growing communities.

Today, Victorian Minister for Children, Lizzie Blandthorn, visited St Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Primary School, Weir Views, to announce that \$81 million will be provided for the construction of early years education centres at Catholic schools across the north and west of Melbourne.

MACS Executive Director, Dr Edward Simons, announced that this exciting initiative will be overseen by a new entity known as MACS Early Years Education (MACSEYE), responsible for the growing network of early years services across the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

'Victoria's Best Start, Best Life reforms are the biggest changes to the early childhood education sector in a generation and we are delighted to be partnering with the Victorian Government to support this program, which is so important for so many children and their families across Melbourne', Dr Simons said.

'We know that significant population growth in Melbourne's north and west is driving unmet need in these communities for early childhood education.

'These new centres, co-located on Catholic primary school sites, will be available to all families in these suburbs; they will now have a place where their children can learn and grow at kindergarten, and experience a seamless transition from kindergarten to school.'

The 12 new early years education centres will include three-year-old kindergarten and four-year-old pre-Prep rooms, plus a range of other services for school children and families in the broader community. They will provide thousands of additional kindergarten places in Wallan, Weir Views, Mickleham, Craigieburn, Wollert, Thornhill Park, Tarneit and Mount Atkinson.

Welcoming this first tranche of funding, Dr Simons said that MACS looks forward to the Allan Government fulfilling its election commitment of \$250 million in dedicated funding to build and upgrade kindergartens at Catholic schools across the state.

'MACS remains ready to proceed with additional early years projects as soon as this critical funding becomes available', he said.

'MACS is deeply committed to nurturing the development of children in their early years – setting them up for lifelong learning and success. We support the government's efforts to continue to prioritise the future learning and development of our youngest Victorians.'

With one in five Victorian children attending a Catholic school, MACS has plans to open seven new schools over the coming three to four years in growth corridors across Melbourne, all of which will have a purpose-built early years facility on site.

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### Background:

- MACS is the largest non-government school system in Australia, with nearly 300 schools and 115,000 students.
- In recognition of the critical importance of the early years, MACSEYE has been established to own and operate a growing network of early childhood education and care services across the Archdiocese.

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