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Bayswater and Heathmont early childhood services share in more than \$40 million in capital grants

The Victorian Coalition Government has again demonstrated its commitment to early childhood education, by allocating more than \$40 million in capital grants today.

Member for Bayswater Heidi Victoria, together with Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Wendy Lovell, today announced two local centres were among 92 services statewide to receive grants.

The grants were available for upgrades to facilities or the development of integrated children's services hubs, and is a combination of state and National Partnership funding.

The Coalition Government has allocated an additional \$4 million to the original \$36 million available in this grant round, to ensure that every application that met all of the criteria has been funded to the full amount applied for.

Ms Victoria congratulated the successful local facilities.

"Our delivery of this funding will have a huge impact on children, not just now, but for many years to come," Ms Victoria said.

"We're committed to educating Victoria's youngest children and setting them up for a life of learning.

"The funding comes at a crucial time, as kindergartens across the state prepare to move to programs of 15 hours per week in the year before school as part of the Universal Access agreement," Ms Victoria said.

Successful centres in the region were:

- Bayswater Primary School Preschool with a grant of \$600,000 to establish a new funded kinder program within the Bayswater Primary School facility. An existing building will be altered and extended.
- Heathmont Preschool and Kindergarten with a grant of \$300,000 to extend the kinder building to create a second kinder room and entrance, and consolidate the existing storage facilities. Solar panels will be placed on the roof and energy efficient heating and cooling will be installed.

Ms Lovell said the government's strong record on early childhood funding was a sign of its priorities.

“I’m proud to say that we’ve delivered record spending in early childhood, including more than \$80 million in grants to services in our first 18 months,” Ms Lovell said.

“We recognise that 95 per cent of a child’s brain development happens by the age of five, and a good quality early childhood education will set them up for life.

“By getting it right in the early years, we can deliver better students to our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, and in the longer term, better applicants to the workforce.

“That can only be a positive outcome for children, families and our state,” Ms Lovell said.