

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE GRANTS**

*Statement by Minister for Early Childhood Education*

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Early Childhood Education)** [9.04 am]: I rise to update the house on the supporting children in early childhood education and care Western Australia grants program that the Minister for Education, Hon Tony Buti, and I announced late last year. The grant funding amounts of between \$20 000 and \$100 000 have been provided to early childhood providers across the state. These grants are focused on improving kindergarten participation and driving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and developmentally vulnerable children. This is the first time grants like these have been available for WA's early childhood education and care sector after a funding boost from the Albanese Labor government that was delivered through the preschool reform agreement. I also want to acknowledge Minister Anne Aly, the federal Minister for Early Childhood Education, who is leading implementation of the preschool reform agreement, along with other state and territory counterparts, who all share a passion for children's early learning. This funding of over \$1 million in grants will benefit over 5 700 children, giving them the opportunity to learn and thrive and the best start in life. We know that early learning can have transformational benefits and our government is proud to be investing in children. The grants were administered by Child Australia and all providers approved under the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 were eligible to apply. I had the pleasure of attending Child Australia's Early Learning Centre in Lockridge with my colleague in the other place Hon Lorna Harper to announce the successful recipients. The successful grant recipients were from all over Western Australia, including regional and remote areas. Organisations such as Ewin Early Learning Centre in Kununurra are using their grant to create a culturally secure outdoor play space with sensory and nature-based elements. The grant will also allow them to acquire teaching aids, resources and play equipment with a focus on First Nations themes. Importantly, the grant will allow the centre to provide professional development for staff, acknowledging the critical role of early childhood educators. This is a great example of the Albanese and Cook Labor governments working together in a shared vision to best support our early learners.