$13.6 MILLION BOOST FOR VICTORIA’S CHILDREN

All Victorian children will now have a funded place at kindergarten in the year before school with the Brumby Labor Government investing an additional $13.6 million in early childhood services in the 2009 State Budget.

This investment will deliver an additional 4000 places in kindergartens across Victoria and maintain free places for eligible low-income families.

The Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Maxine Morand, said the 2009 State Budget was investing in the future of Victoria’s children.

“The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to support Victorian families and provide a social safety net in tough global times,” Ms Morand said.

“This $13.6 million additional investment will help give Victoria’s children the best start in life by ensuring all children can access a high quality kindergarten program.

“Participating in a structured kindergarten program is an important part of children’s development, setting them up for the successful transition to school.”

Ms Morand said there had been a 19 per cent increase in the number of children born in Victoria over the past 10 years and this funding increase would ensure all Victorian children could access a kindergarten place.

“The Brumby Labor Government’s 2009 State Budget builds on our strong record of investment in early childhood services, supporting Victorian families in tough global times and giving children every opportunity to learn, grow and experience a healthy childhood,” she said.

“We are giving young, growing families the support they need to nurture young Victorians.”

The 2009 State Budget also provides an extra $9 million for reforming early intervention and ongoing support services for children and young Victorians with disabilities or developmental delay.

“This investment will improve existing services by supporting them with better resources and training and ensuring more effective delivery of necessary services,” Ms Morand said.

“The 2009 State Budget increases our commitment to early intervention on top of last year’s $29 million investment in assistance for children with special needs and additional kindergarten inclusion support services.”

“This included building up Victoria’s early intervention workforce by investing almost $2 million to attract, retain and up-skill staff, especially in rural areas.