MARCH 2026

Universal Access to Early Learning

Communique #6

Building Early Education Fund & Key Early Years Initiatives in Tasmania

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) is pleased to provide this sector-wide update on the Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) and associated early years initiatives underway across Tasmania. These investments support the growth of quality early learning opportunities and strengthen partnerships across communities.

Building Early Education Fund – Schools Round

On 30 January 2026, it was announced that the Tasmania Government secured $25.5 million through the BEEF to build new Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) facilities co-located with government schools.

The funded sites are: Westbury Primary School ($5m), Rosetta Primary School ($5m), St Marys District High School ($4m), Bruny Island District School ($3.5m), Bothwell District High School ($3m), and Huonville Primary School/Huon Valley Council ($5m).

The purpose of the Australian Government's BEEF is to grow the number of not-for-profit ECEC services and places by providing capital funding to build and expand services in areas of need.

Tasmania's BEEF Funding Agreement includes federal election commitments for ECEC facilities at Westbury Primary School and one adjacent to Huonville Primary School

Under the $250 million BEEF 'Schools Round', capital funding is provided to state and territory governments to build or expand ECEC services co-located with schools. The Schools Round is one component of the broader $1 billion Fund.

Schools Round projects were to be nominated by the State Government and then assessed by the Australian Government to determine whether they met the eligibility criteria.

The eligibility criteria is:

- Be located on or near school sites

- Be in areas of ECEC under supply
- Be in areas of relative socioeconomic disadvantage
- Maximise the number of ECEC places
- Consider existing or pending development approval in the location to avoid crowding out other ECEC providers
- Prioritise projects that can increase ECEC supply as soon as practical

Project Identification and Evidence Base

Site selection was informed by supply and demand modelling, socioeconomic need, population growth, available land on school sites, and alignment with broader initiatives such as Early Learning for Three Year Olds and Access to Land for ECEC. DECYP engaged with schools, the Education and Care Unit, and utilised significant data, including the 2025 Ernst & Young report on Supply of engagement and economic modelling to inform approach to Early Learning for Three Year Olds and the associated feedback from the ECEC sector on challenges and opportunities to expand access to ECEC.

Project Delivery Timeline

Design, consultation, and approvals for each BEEF site will occur throughout 2026, with construction beginning in 2027 and completion expected in 2028. Facility Services (DECYP) will lead delivery, except for the Huonville project (delivered by Huon Valley Council).

Facility Services, DECYP will lead the stakeholder engagement for the BEEF projects.

Service Delivery Model

Under the Australian Government's funding requirements, services in the BEEF facilities must operate as CCS-approved Long Day Care services and be delivered by a quality not-for-profit provider, with the option for OSHC provision to support viability. Sector engagement and an open Expression of Interest process for providers will be undertaken for each site, with further details expected in 2027.

Early Learning for Three Year Olds (EL3) Initiative

Trial sites in East Devonport, Fingal, Bruny Island, and Cape Barren Island continue to operate in 2026. Building procurement for Zeehan and East Devonport was released in February 2026, with works anticipated from April. Deloitte's evaluation of EL3 continues in 2026, including Phase 2 consultations from May. DECYP is also working with communities to ensure children's experiences are reflected in program evaluation.

Access to Land for ECEC

DECYP is progressing a Request for Proposal process for sector access to government-owned land, ensuring strong due diligence and provider clarity. Engagement with schools is ongoing, with site announcements to follow once final confirmation is obtained.

More OSHC Initiative

The $10 million More OSHC program supports upgrades to expand before and after school care on DECYP sites. DECYP is finalising a program of capital upgrades under this initiative, to commence from 2026-27. Additional support has been provided to identified schools not requiring capital works but seeking to establish OSHC.

Next Steps

DECYP will continue to work closely with ECEC providers throughout 2026, with opportunities for involvement in new services and infrastructure projects. The Department acknowledges the vital role of the sector in supporting children, families, and communities across Tasmania.

Have a question or comment?

Further information including previous Communiques can be found at: www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/community-and-engagement/early-learning-for-three-year-olds/

If you have any questions, please contact: el3@decyp.tas.gov.au