



JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT

FROEBEL TO BRING EARLY LEARNING TO MELBOURNE CONNECT – WITH FOCUS ON STEM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The University of Melbourne and FROEBEL Australia are proud to announce their partnership at the Melbourne Connect Innovation precinct, with FROEBEL having been selected to develop, build and operate the new Early Childhood Education and Care Service at the precinct. The service will cater for 92 children from approx. 6 months to 5 years of age and offer an integrated, funded Kindergarten Program. It is due to open in late 2021.

About FROEBEL

FROEBEL is a boutique not-for-profit provider of early education and care services with a strong focus on

- inquiry-based early STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education,
- immersive language learning and
- education for sustainable development which nurtures skills, values and attitudes that lead to a more sustainable society.

It makes FROEBEL a natural and valuable partner for the Melbourne Connect innovation precinct. Carlton will become FROEBEL's third early learning centre in Melbourne, with the existing centres located in Fitzroy North and at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in the Parkville biomedical precinct - both rated at Exceeding National Quality Standard.

Vision for Early Learning at Melbourne Connect

FROEBEL intends to establish an Early Learning Centre at Melbourne Connect where excellence in design for education will pave the way for excellence in early childhood education and care, with a particular focus on early STEM education. FROEBEL's **Little Scientists** professional development program helps early childhood educators to grow their STEM teaching skills and has been designed to ignite young children's natural curiosity through inquiry-based learning, child-led discovery and age-appropriate, playful STEM exploration. FROEBEL has been delivering the program nationally in partnership with the Australian Government for more than 5 years. FROEBEL's vision is to holistically embed early STEM learning opportunities in its curriculum at the new Melbourne Connect service and to closely collaborate with the vibrant community and families in the innovation precinct.

FROEBEL aspires for every child to have the opportunity to grow into a curious, capable, caring and contributing global citizen, beginning with an empowered childhood. Children's learning will be scaffolded through a contemporary play-and inquiry-based early education program, tailored to the individual child. FROEBEL specialises in immersive language learning concepts, maximising children's opportunities through playful everyday exposure to a second language in their early years. Children will be immersed in an environment where two languages are

spoken naturally, providing children a head-start in their linguistic abilities and multicultural awareness. FROEBEL is inviting the Melbourne Connect community to share their feedback on the shortlisted languages before the second language for the curriculum will be determined.

We strongly believe that excellent design and excellence in early education and care are interdependent. Quality design contributes to better learning outcomes. Melbourne Connect offers a unique opportunity to create a magical place for children in one of Melbourne's most innovative and sustainable buildings. Environmentally sustainable architecture and a green, peaceful landscape design, where a combination of semi-open wintergardens and a rooftop play space with a giant slide under the sky, will provide exciting and stimulating learning environments for all children.

"The co-location of precinct tenants with our early learning service will provide increased opportunities for those who are returning to work or study in such a collaborative space and a place for their children to grow up and learn alongside their family members," said FROEBEL's Managing Director Olde Lorenzen. *"We are grateful to the Victorian Government for supporting this exceptional project with a \$1m Building Blocks grant towards the construction cost."*

"The value this early learning centre adds to Melbourne Connect has been so apparent when we speak to parents within the precinct who have young children," said Phil Callaghan, Director of Operations at Melbourne.

"We knew FROEBEL were the right partner as their inquiry-based STEM education aligns to the vision of the precinct and our focus on emerging technology and preparing for a digital future and the response from the precinct community has reaffirmed how popular this offering will be."

"At the core of any educational institute is a belief in life-long learning and we can now truly see this being realised within Melbourne Connect. Ranging from early learning beginning as young as 6-months old, through to the STEM Centre for Excellence in Science Gallery, the startup programs supporting emerging entrepreneurs, the Telstra Creator Space, and even the 527 bed post-graduate accommodation at the Lofts, it is truly a unique place for this 3,000 strong Melbourne Connect community to call home."

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