

Media Release

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Educating 5Star sustainable schools from the ground up

CERES Environment Park will ensure students at 15 new schools will receive best-practice environmental education

Minister for Education James Merlino recently launched the Government's New Schools PPP project at the future Mernda Central Prep-Year 12 School site. CERES is excited to be partnered with Learning Communities Victoria on this project which will see the delivery of 15 new schools. This will be the largest new school building project in Victoria.

"CERES' presence as a sustainability partner for this major project is an acknowledgment of our position as the leading provider of sustainability education in the State. We look forward to working with the network of partnerships established in the bid process to deliver a great result for the schools and their communities," says CERES Partnership Manager Judy Glick.

CERES currently works with over 280 early childhood centres and schools in Melbourne embedding sustainability into their systems and curriculum. "We are thrilled at the opportunity to build sustainability education into the new schools from the beginning and to also see these impacts flow into the wider community. These schools are designed to optimise sustainability in student learning with the built forms and natural environment offering endless ways to engage students," says CERES Education Outreach Manager Jane Burns.

Through activities such as measuring and monitoring energy use, water and waste management, and increasing biodiversity, schools contribute to more sustainable patterns of living, take positive action on climate change and achieve substantial financial savings.

The \$291 million New Schools Public Private Partnership project will enable the design, finance, build and maintenance for 25 years of 15 brand new schools in Victoria's fastest growing areas.

Learning Communities Victoria leads a consortium comprised of significant expertise. The consortium includes Amber as sponsor, ClarkeHopkinsClarke as architect, Watpac as builder, Spotless as facilities manager, YMCA as community partner, and CERES as sustainability partner.

Local School Reference Groups will be established for each school to provide a link between the project and the broader community during the initial planning and construction stage.

Each design will incorporate additional facilities to create a community hub for the use of students and the wider communities. Along with YMCA, CERES will run community and environmental programs at each school.

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Contracts were finalised in October with construction to commence on the first group of schools in November. Nine of the 15 schools will be operational from Term 1 2017, with the remainder opening the following year.

CERES looks forward to working with Learning Communities Victoria, the consortium and local communities in helping create more sustainable schools.

“Sustainability education has always been the heart of CERES' work. We are excited to be working closely with the new schools so they too become places for community-based learning and action for our environment,” says CERES Environment Park CEO Cinnamon Evans.

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