



Education
and Training

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Central Goldfields Shire

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Education
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. REFORM CONTEXT

In an Australian first, the Victorian Government has committed to implement Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for all children over a 10-year roll-out with a total investment of almost \$5 billion, including \$1.68 billion to support the infrastructure expansion required for the reform. This reform will add another year of universal funded kindergarten so that, by 2029, all children in Victoria will have access to two years of play-based learning through a funded kindergarten program.

1.2. PURPOSE OF KISPS

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will require a large expansion of kindergarten across the State. The Government has invited all 79 Victorian Local Governments to discuss and agree upon a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Each KISP has been jointly developed with Local Government and published to estimate the growth in demand for kindergarten within the LGA. The KISPs will help all kindergarten providers meet demand and provide a clear picture of infrastructure need across the State.

While a KISP is not a funding document and does not define required infrastructure projects or commit any party to funding specific projects, it is expected that future investment requests through Building Blocks and funding decisions about Local Government and not-for-profit projects would align with the relevant KISP.

1.3. HOW TO USE THE KISP

Each KISP contains estimates of future kindergarten supply of, and demand for, Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places against existing enrolment capacity. Not-for-profit and for-profit providers can use these estimates to inform their plans to expand kindergarten programs, establish new services or invest in new or extended facilities.

For example, KISPs provide demand estimates in terms of where, when and how much demand for kindergarten places will grow in an LGA. KISPs also estimate where and how many kindergarten places providers can accommodate in existing facilities before an area needs new infrastructure to meet demand. The estimates can be used to inform decisions about where and when expansions of kindergarten program capacity and the construction of new or extended facilities are needed to meet demand growth.

Where there is an agreed KISP for the LGA, the Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers seeking co-investments through the Building Blocks Capacity Building stream must refer to, and align their proposed project with, the infrastructure need identified in the KISP.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE KISP

Each KISP consists of the following sections:

- **Section 1:** A short introduction to the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform and the KISP.

- **Section 2:** A map of existing and planned Early Childhood Education and Care service locations.
- **Section 3:** Local knowledge and context relevant to the expansion of kindergarten services.
- **Section 4:** Funded kindergarten demand estimates.

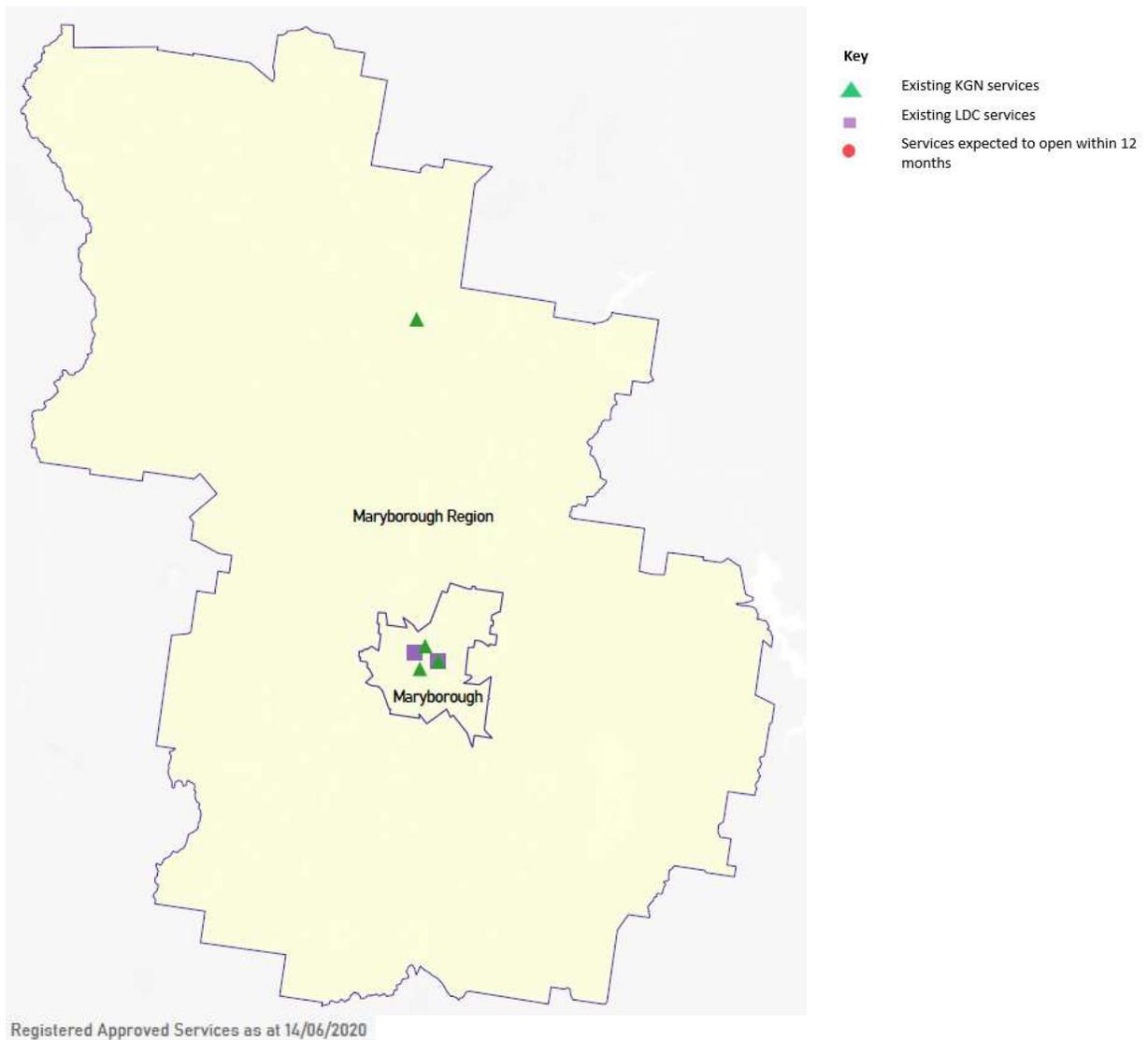
1.5. DISCLAIMER

All data presented in this document are estimates only and are based on the best information available to the Department and Local Government at the time. They are published on an as-is basis and are for informational purposes only. They are subject to adjustment in response to market forces and as new data and other relevant information becomes available. The data may under- or over-estimate both total demand in a given location or year and the capacity for new demand to be met by providers. As a result, operational and business decisions should not be made solely based on this document. Any use of this data is solely at the risk of the user. The Department and Local Government accept no responsibility for any loss or damage, either direct or incidental, that may result from the use of the data.

2. MAP OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES IN CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new services that are planned to open in the future in the LGA and across its communities.

This map has been prepared using Departmental data, from both the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA). Where applicable, this map has been refined by the Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department to capture other services that are planned to open in the future.



3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 PURPOSE

Local, place-based knowledge and context play an important role in supporting the implementation of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across Victoria. This section of the KISP documents this knowledge and context and has informed the funded kindergarten enrolment estimates in Section 4.

3.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

Central Goldfields Shire sits entirely on Dja Dja Warrung country and has a population of 13,000 of whom 1.5% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander – almost double the Victorian percentage population of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 0.8%.

Between 2011 and 2016 overall population in the Shire increased by 0.8%. This includes growth in the 20-24 year and 25-34 year age groups, increasing the likelihood of corresponding and accelerating growth in the childhood population in subsequent years particularly in Maryborough and Carisbrook which continue to experience growth in housing stock and new housing developments.

Central Goldfields Shire is the most disadvantaged local government area in Victoria (ABS, SEIFA 2016). Entrenched poverty serves to significantly reduce opportunities and choices by directly and negatively affecting the health, employment and educational prospects and outcomes of the population.

Twice as many people in Maryborough have below year 9 level qualifications (16%) as have degree level qualifications (7.4%) – the opposite of the typical national profile (8% and 22% respectively). (ABS 2016)

37% of two parent households (with adults of working age) have nobody in the household in paid employment (ABS 2016) – almost double the Victorian rate (19.5%).

The Restacking the Odds research program undertaken by the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI), after 12 months intensive research into early years supports, services and programs in Central Goldfields Shire in 2018/19 found that 52 out of the 159 4-5 yr olds in Central Goldfields (33%) attend the recommended 15hr/wk of Early Childhood Education and Care – half the national attendance rate.

The report also found that over the same time period school attendance in Prep – Year 3 was 92% compared to the Victorian average of around 94%

Over 10% of recorded family violence incidents across the Loddon Campaspe Region in 2019 took place in Central Goldfields Shire. The population of Central Goldfields Shire (13,209) comprises 5% of the population of the Loddon Campaspe region (246,400).

The continuing population level challenges experienced in Central Goldfields Shire increase the need for not only good quality kinder provision, but for a fully integrated early years ecosystem which targets and involves every child and every family from pregnancy to primary.

Community demand for kindergarten and future planning to provide adequate provision cannot be calculated simply through an analysis of population growth trends; the space available to deliver services, and the different ways in which kinder timetables and class sizes can be structured to make more efficient use of space.

Community demand for kinder can be better understood through incorporating attendance figures as part of the data analysis which in 2018/19 showed that two thirds of the population eligible for free kinder did not attend the recommended number of hours per week.

The major challenge for early-years services in Central Goldfields Shire is to increase demand within the current population to consistently access the range of services available to them. This is a challenge as much about accessibility, community involvement and empowerment, quality provision, local leadership and coordination and systems level decision making as it is about population size, square metres and timetables.

For example, as the population grows, creating new economic opportunities it is crucial that local people are supported to enter the labour market and employment. Extending the provision of long day care places, is a key driver in supporting more people into work – particularly women with young children. Growth in long day care places and growth in kinder places are not necessarily mutually compatible.

Holistic modelling which balances the need for increased prosperity and the policy levers at the disposal of local, state and federal government together with the need to offer kinder places for every child at a suitable time and location, together with the need to ensure every child and family is supported to get the best from all of our early years services is required to provide the full picture of early years services demand including kinder demand in Central Goldfields.

Projects or trends that may influence supply of early childhood education and care

Go Goldfields is a collaborative place-based partnership bringing together State and local governments, service providers and the Central Goldfields community to improve outcomes for children and families in the Shire.

In November 2020, the partnership launched a new initiative 'Every Child, Every Chance' aimed at ensuring all children in the Central Goldfields Shire can grow up safe, healthy, and confident. This initiative is already increasing community understanding of the importance of the early years to a child's development, complementing recent investments in 3 and 4 year old kinder provision. The 'Every Child, Every Chance' initiative encompasses a broad range of partners under five priority areas including:

- Healthy and Supported Pregnancies
- Confident and Connected New Parents
- Safe and Secure Children
- Valued Early Years Education and Care
- A Great Start to School for All Kids

Central to this initiative is increasing collaboration across early years education and care providers to build a Shire wide approach to ensure continuous support of children and their families from conception to their early primary years.

This means, building a culture that embraces the important role families and the community play along with formal education in shaping children's lives and, actively contributing to targeted community-based programs and supports that respond to the specific needs of children and their families within the Shire.

This Partnership and its renewed focus on early years, systems level improvements and population change through shared planning and decision making is the key driver for effective and sustainable improvements in the provision of services, the accessibility of services and the integration of services in the Shire. Kinder is one of the key services within this approach.

The Mitchell Institute report Report *Preschool- Two Years are Better Than One*, argues that optimum group size for the delivery of a three year-old preschool program, in line with current practice for 4 year olds is between 20 and 22.

In order to accommodate demand for enrolments (rather than attendance) to include 3 year old kinder in 2021, 3 services are running groups with over 30 children.

While the effects of larger group or class sizes on the development of children and their educational progress remains an area of contested debate, it is certainly the case that, at best, larger group sizes don't deliver a major detrimental effect to children at a population level. Typically children affected by trauma require more intensive 1-1 support. Where a community contains a higher than average proportion of children affected by trauma as a result of the poverty they experience, it follows that those children are better supported and the effects of this trauma area addressed in smaller groups or with more intensive supports such as those delivered within the School Readiness Funding program..

The KISP represents one element of a wider set of objectives shared by services and families in the Shire. As a living document the KISP will change necessarily as the Partnership grows and develops.

Key local geographic considerations or information relevant to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

The Shire is mapped across two SA2 areas as shown on page 5. The majority of the population and services are located within Maryborough SA2. Maryborough Region SA2 is geographically much bigger in size stretching over 60km from north to south with one operational kinder service based in Dunolly located in the northern end of the SA2 area. A second registered kinder is located in Talbot but has been in recession for 2020 and 2021 due to lack of enrolments. An increase in the birth rate in Talbot and surrounds in the last 3 years indicates that there may be sufficient demand for enrolments to re-establish the Talbot service from 2022.

An independent study into the condition of each of the Council owned buildings in which kinder and long day care services are based was commissioned by Council in 2020. The building from which the Talbot service is delivered was included in the scope of the project. The only building delivering kinder programs in the Shire not included in the study was Paisley Park which is privately owned.

A spread of services (across a small geographical area) limits opportunities for consistent quality improvement measures, limits the opportunities for greater stretch in budgets afforded through larger economies of scale, limits the reach of specialist / expert staff and can foster insularity within services.

Maintaining the status quo of existing services from the buildings currently in use over the next ten years will not support the work being undertaken through the Go Goldfields Partnership to achieve significant changes in the life chances of babies and young children in the Shire.

The development of a larger, integrated early years facility which consolidates a number of existing services is more cost effective for rate-payers in the long run, more likely to improve teaching standards, increase consistency of supports and the level of expertise in supporting children affected by trauma and, if managed in partnership with the community, will also increase attendance and participation rates in early years services in the Shire.

4. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 2021-29 FOR CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

4.1 PURPOSE

As Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is rolled-out and Victoria's population grows, demand for both Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places will increase significantly. While additional capacity will be needed to meet this demand, this will vary across the State and over time, due to differences in the capacity of existing services, growth trends and sector composition.

To identify where, when and how many additional kindergarten places are expected over the roll-out in Central Goldfields Shire, Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department have developed:

1. A summary of the current provision of kindergarten within the LGA (**Section 4.3**).
2. An approach to optimising the utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through 'change management' strategies that Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department will support to help meet additional demand in the LGA (**Section 4.4**).
3. An estimate of the Three and Four-Year-Old kindergarten places that cannot be met through existing services for the 2021-29 period, taking into account the additional demand that can be accommodated by optimising utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through point 2, above (**Section 4.5**).

Local Government and providers can use these published estimates to inform reform implementation activities such as service planning, kindergarten program expansion, infrastructure investments and Building Blocks funding applications in alignment with future demand over the 10-year roll-out.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

The estimated Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places used in the following sections have been agreed between Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department, and were informed by:

- Estimates developed by the Department which draw on a range of inputs, including population forecasts, current enrolments and results from the Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), conducted in 2019.
- The estimated capacity of new services that are planned to open in the LGA (Section 2)
- Local knowledge and context provided by the Local Government (Section 3) that explains particular issues and trends in their area.
- The approach to optimising utilisation of existing services in the LGA (Section 4.4), and
- Other sources, such as modelling undertaken by Local Governments and local data.

The KISP measures a service’s capacity to deliver funded kindergarten in terms of the number of children it could enrol in Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. The number of funded kindergarten places is different from a service’s licensed or approved places, which count the number of children permitted to attend the service at any one time under the license. Many services can enrol more children in their funded kindergarten program(s) than they have licensed places for because they can run more than one kindergarten program per week. Kindergarten places are therefore a more accurate measure of service kindergarten capacity than licensed places.

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places have been presented as 15-hour places so they can be easily compared to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places. Moreover, when Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is fully rolled-out in 2029, every three-year-old child will have access to 15-hours of kindergarten.

From 2023 all providers will have flexibility to determine how many hours of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten they deliver per week, with a minimum of five hours and a maximum of 15-hours funded pro-rata. It is expected that hours offered will vary. Given this variation, **it is important to be aware that during the transition to all three-year-old children receiving 15-hours of funded kindergarten per week in 2029, the 15-hour places presented in this report may represent multiple three-year-old places that individually receive less than 15-hours of kindergarten per week.**

These estimates have been developed at an LGA and community level to show the overall forecast and variation within an area. The KISP defines community at the Statistical Area Level 2, which is medium-sized areas which represent a community that interacts socially and economically, with a population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people, and an average population of about 10,000 people.

4.3 SUMMARY OF CURRENT KINDERGARTEN PROVISION

The figures below provide a summary of current kindergarten provision within the LGA and provide relevant context for the estimates of demand for funded kindergarten places included in Section 4.5. The data included in this section are largely drawn from:

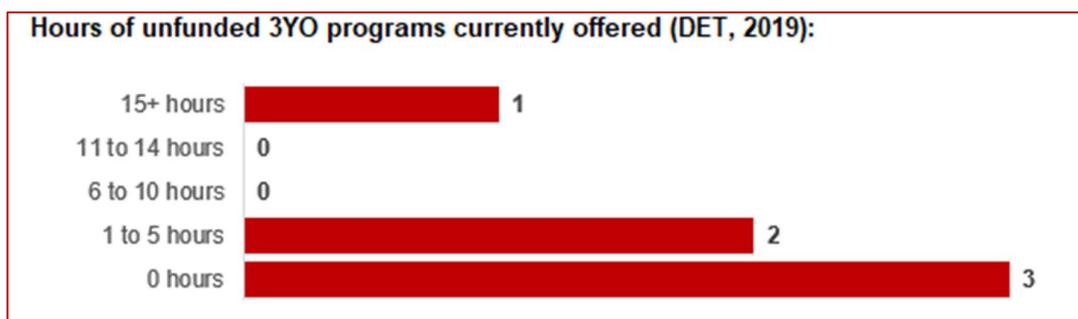
- The Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), collected between June and October 2019.
- The Department’s Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2019.
- The Department’s Quality and Regulatory Division (QARD) monitoring data, as at 2019.
- The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at April 2020.
- The Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS), as at 2018.

Please note that, because these sources were collected at different points, this may result in slightly different totals appearing in the below data.

Number of services by service type (NQAITS, 2020)	
Stand-alone kindergartens	4
Long day care centres	2

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITs, 2020)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	17%
Private not for profit	67%
Private for profit	17%
Other	0%

Current kindergarten offering	
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (VCAMS, 2018):	82%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	6
Number of services that offer an unfunded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	3



4.4 APPROACH TO OPTIMISING THE USE OF EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Change management strategies to optimise existing services and infrastructure

Children can often be accommodated through existing spare places and by services ‘unlocking’ unused capacity. As the experience of providers in the 2020 Three-Year-Old Kindergarten roll-out LGAs shows, while the optimisation of existing services can be challenging, it is highly time- and cost-effective compared to building new capacity through infrastructure projects. It also helps target infrastructure investment to the places that need it most and avoids over-supplying the local market.

Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department will support providers and services to maximise their kindergarten places through the following change management activities and practices:

- Increasing the capacity of any Local Government operated services by:

- Running additional programs.
 - Using different timetables, including running 7.5-hour days.
 - Changing the delivery model, such as introducing rotational models or mixed-age groups.
 - Having degree-qualified kindergarten teachers leading integrated kindergarten programs in long day care settings.
- Encouraging and supporting other providers and services in the LGA to undertake change management.

Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department have estimated how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places can be accommodated through existing services in the LGA (**Table 1**). Both parties are committed to helping providers and services offer these kindergarten places before progressing to funded infrastructure solutions to meet demand. This commitment is reflected in the LGA and community level estimates below (**Table 2** onwards), which assume that demand will be met first through existing services and second through additional infrastructure. Note that in some cases the number of kindergarten places that can be offered through existing services may exceed demand for kindergarten places.

Table 1: Total estimated funded kindergarten places that can be offered by optimising existing services and infrastructure across the LGA, between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Estimated existing supply of kindergarten places*	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226

*This may be higher than current three and four-year-old enrolments as it includes any spare places that are currently available or could be generated by making some minor adjustments to programming approaches. The likely expansion of services and kindergarten places in response to population growth (i.e. growth in demand not generated by the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Reform that would likely occur) is not accounted for in these estimates.

4.5 AGREED ESTIMATES OF DEMAND FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PLACES THAT CANNOT BE MET THROUGH EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The below estimates (**Table 2** onwards) have been developed by Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department to illustrate the estimated:

1. Total number of Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places expected over the roll-out period.
2. Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by optimising existing services and infrastructure over the roll-out period.

These estimates have been developed to reflect that the increase in demand for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places will be gradual.

In estimating how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places cannot be accommodated by existing services and infrastructure, Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department have taken into account any new places that will be made available through planned expansions of existing services or new services, into estimates of existing supply, where this information is available. This may include Local Government owned services being developed and planned Kindergartens on School Sites.

These estimates do not, however, estimate how and when the broader sector will expand to meet the additional demand for kindergarten places that are estimated over the roll-out period.

Infrastructure need in the LGA and its local communities is indicated by the bottom rows of the tables in this section (**Table 2** onwards): 'Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services'. For example, if the number of kindergarten places for the LGA or a community is above zero in this row, it means that the area is estimated to need additional infrastructure (noting that further optimisation which avoids the need for additional infrastructure may be possible). Any type of provider – Local Government, not-for-profit or for-profit – can build this additional infrastructure. If this row shows all zeros, it means that there is no estimated need for additional infrastructure in the area.

Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers must refer to the estimates in this section when applying through the Building Blocks Capacity Building Grants stream for Government funding. Under this stream, projects must be in a community where there is infrastructure need as shown in the community's table of estimated demand for kindergarten places (i.e. there are numbers in the bottom row above zero). Projects in LGAs or communities where demand can be met through existing services (i.e. the bottom row shows all zeros) are not eligible for funding under this stream.

LGA estimates

Table 2: Estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

LGA level estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	244	253	258	263	267	284	287	289	291
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	18	27	33	37	41	58	61	63	65

Community estimates

Table 3-4: Estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

Maryborough (Vic.) estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	193	199	203	207	210	222	224	226	228

Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	18	27	33	37	41	58	61	63	65
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Maryborough Region estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	51	54	55	56	57	62	62	63	63
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

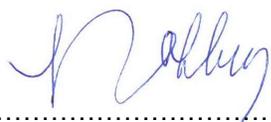
5. AUTHORISATION

The Area Executive Director (Loddon Campaspe) of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive of Central Goldfields Shire Council endorse this Kindergarten Services and Infrastructure Plan (KISP) for Central Goldfields Shire by signing on 04/06/2021.

This KISP is not intended to create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement between the parties. The parties may review this KISP in 2024 to publish a new version that will replace the previous version.

An out-of-cycle review may be triggered if both parties agree that there has been a change in relevant data, information or the local early childhood sector that significantly affects the reliability of a KISP's estimates for planning purposes.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Central Goldfields Shire Council



.....
Signature



.....
Witness Signature

Name: Lucy Roffey

Title: Chief Executive Officer

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Signed by Area Executive Director (Loddon Campaspe) Department of Education and Training



.....
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.....
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