



Education
and Training

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Bass Coast Shire

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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.

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 Influencing Demand for Kindergarten

Higher than Expected Population Growth

Bass Coast Shire has experienced higher than expected population growth in the past decade, growing from 29,616 in 2011 to 37,445 in 2020. This represents growth of 26.4% whereas population forecasts had projected growth of 20%.¹

Strong anecdotal evidence indicates population growth has been even more substantial in the last 12 months, as people have relocated permanently from metropolitan Melbourne during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of this is evident through the increasing cost of housing, low rental vacancy rates, and a rapid increase in demand for services and supports such as kindergarten, childcare and school.

The most significant population growth has occurred in Cowes and Phillip Island, San Remo, the Waterline communities, Inverloch, and Wonthaggi. Future growth will be highest in Wonthaggi and North Wonthaggi where significant land is available for development over the next 10 – 20 years. Consistent population growth is also projected to occur in Cowes, Phillips Island, San Remo, the Waterline communities and Inverloch. Current kindergarten registrations via the Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) indicates kindergarten services should be able to meet demand for kindergarten in 2022. Analysis of current and forecast population data for specific township and communities across Bass Coast Shire, shows the Waterline and Rural Balance, and the Wonthaggi / Wonthaggi North communities are unlikely to be able to meet demand for kindergarten from as early as 2023. Planning has commencement to deliver infrastructure to meet the demand from 2023.

In 2016 Wonthaggi was one of the fastest growing regional towns with a population of 7,700, these numbers are expected to grow with an estimated *18,000 new residents within the catchment by 2036 (130% increase).²

Growth in the Kindergarten Cohort

The number of children aged 0 – 4 years in Bass Coast Shire is projected to increase by 16 percent between 2020 and 2029, but most importantly the number of children aged 3 and 4 years old is expected to grow by 16.7 percent (136 children), with the largest increase to occur in **the Waterline and Rural Balance communities, and in Wonthaggi and Wonthaggi North**. Given the higher-

¹ Bass Coast Shire Community Profile and Population Forecast. Available: [Home | Bass Coast Shire | Community profile \(id.com.au\)](#). Accessed 9 June 2021

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Urban Enterprise, 2017, Wonthaggi Commercial and Industrial Land Assessment

than-expected population growth in Bass Coast in the last decade, it is likely growth in the number of 3- and 4-year-old children will be higher than projected.³

Disadvantage

Overall, the Bass Coast community experiences slightly higher levels of disadvantage than regional Victoria and somewhat higher than Greater Melbourne. Bass Coast has a SEIFA (Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage) score of 967 compared with 977 for regional Victoria and 1,021 for Greater Melbourne.

Disadvantage is highest in Wonthaggi – Cape Paterson, the Waterline communities, and North Wonthaggi, indicating this is where families are more likely to have reduced capacity to pay to access services and may experience additional challenges such as a lack of transport. The statistics below highlights how critical it is for families to have access to early years services and supports close to where they live, to minimise barriers to accessing these services and supports.

- 14% of children aged under 15 living in jobless families compared to the Victoria average of 10.5%
- 31% of children in low income, welfare dependant families compared to the Victoria average of 10.5%⁴
- 44% of families are living in rental stress⁵. This is expected to increase further as rental prices across Bass Coast have increase significantly over the past 12 months.

This is particularly important given the impact of COVID-19 upon the community. Many local businesses have closed, particularly in the retail and hospitality sector, incidence of family violence and harm from alcohol have increased significantly, as have issues related to mental health. Financial stress means families are more likely to access stand-alone kindergarten services rather than kindergarten integrated with long daycare.

Family Preferences

More than half of families in Bass Coast Shire chose to access kindergarten in sessional kindergarten settings rather than integrated with long day care. While there is some fluctuation in the choice families are making, overall, there has been a reduction in the proportion selecting sessional kindergarten between 2016 and 2019. This has been influenced by two key factors. One is the opening of the Bass Valley Children's Centre incorporating childcare and kindergarten. Previously the service offered sessional kindergarten only. The second has been a reluctance or slow move towards sessional kindergartens offering long days, which often support working families more effectively than shorter sessions.

With all sessional kindergartens in Bass Coast now making long day programs available, it will be important to monitor whether the demand for kindergarten in sessional or long daycare settings changes. The introduction of a Kindergarten Central Registration in Bass Coast from 2021 will assist Council and service providers to understand how the demand may change.

³ Bass Coast Shire Community Profile and Population Forecast. Available: [Home | Bass Coast Shire | Community profile \(id.com.au\)](https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/Community-profile), Accessed 9 June 2021

⁴ VicHealth Young People, Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2019)

⁵ atlas.id.com.au/bass-coast, atlas.id.com.au/south-gippsland; ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016

Year	Sessional	Long Day Care
2016	65.8%	34.2%
2017	70.8%	29.2%
2018	57.3%	42.7%
2019	58.3%	41.7%

Table 1: Proportion of children attending kindergarten in sessional services and long day care services Bass Coast Shire 2016 – 2019

Influences Upon the Supply of Early Childhood Education and Care

There are a number of factors influencing the supply of early childhood education and care in Bass Coast including:

- The development of additional program rooms at existing early years services.
- Services operating below their licensed capacity.
- Service models not being responsive to the changing needs of the community.
- How services balance the competing demand for kindergarten and childcare services, particularly in locations where there is only one service operating.
- The constraints of single program room facilities.

Recent expansion (not recognised in KISP data)

There will be an increase in the availability of space to support kindergarten in Inverloch from mid-2020 and Phillip Island from the beginning of 2021. An additional 2 program rooms are being developed at Inverloch Children’s Centre with the capacity for 44 children. The service plans to operate funded kindergarten programs from these spaces, subject to securing educators and demand from the community.

An additional 2 program rooms are being developed at Phillip Island Early Learning Centre with the capacity for 44 children. The service plans to operate 3-year-old kindergarten from the rooms from the beginning of 2021.

Services Operating Below their Licensed Capacity

Several services in Bass Coast Shire operate below their licensed capacity, particularly those offering funded kindergarten. This occurs for several reasons including:

- Where the infrastructure cannot effectively support the licensed capacity (e.g. it is in poor condition), there are no breakout spaces to support children who need quiet time or activities. The Victorian Government provides Building Blocks grants for upgrades,

refurbishments and expansions of existing early learning facilities, as well as the construction of new early learning facilities.

- Where operating at the licensed capacity will impact upon the viability of the service e.g. one service has a licenced capacity of 45 but operates at 44 because staff child ratios require an additional staff member for every 11 children.
- Where the service has concerns about program quality if the licenced capacity in a program room is too high e.g. where more than 28 – 30 children can be accommodated in a program room and / or where there are a high number of children with additional needs. One service has a program room with a licenced capacity of 40 children. The service will never operate at full capacity because of significant concerns about the educational outcomes for children.

A Need for More Responsive Service Models

Some services have been reluctant to offer long day kindergarten sessions, because of a perception parents prefer shorter sessions or concerns educators have expressed about the education outcomes. While this has reduced their capacity to respond to the increasing demand for services, this is changing with all sessional kindergartens in Bass Coast offering at least one program of long days in 2022. The introduction of a Kindergarten Central Registration System has highlighted that many families prefer long day kinder sessions. The service models will need evolve more rapidly with the increased demand for kindergarten over the next decade.

Balancing the Competing Demands for Kindergarten and Childcare Services

The demand for both kindergarten and childcare services is high right across Bass Coast Shire, which means services that offer both childcare and kindergarten have limited capacity to accommodate the additional demand from 3-year-old kindergarten, without the provision of additional infrastructure. This is a particular concern in the Waterline communities where there is only one early years' service, but is also an issue in Phillip Island, Wonthaggi and Inverloch.

While the demand for childcare is not specifically addressed through the KISP, a lack of access to childcare is a key issue for the Bass Coast community and must be considered as part of planning for the roll out of funded 3-year-old kindergarten. The lack of childcare is expected to rapidly increase the uptake of 3-year-old kindergarten and require services to move towards offering 15 hours of 3-year-old in the short term rather than over the medium to long term. This is likely to bring the timelines forward for kindergarten infrastructure expansion works.

Constraints of Single Program Room Facilities

Single program room facilities significantly constrain the capacity of services to deliver multiple kindergarten programs. Fortunately, in Bass Coast Shire, Drysdale Street Kindergarten is only kindergarten with a single program room. Planning for the expansion of this facility to increase the capacity of the service to respond to community needs is a priority for Council.

Local Geographic Considerations

A key consideration when planning for early years services in Bass Coast Shire is the distance families are willing or able to travel to access services. Typically, families prefer to access kindergarten and childcare services close to where they live, where the child will attend school, and

sometimes close to where parents work. In Bass Coast Shire the travel distances between townships can create significant barriers for families accessing services. For example, it may not be reasonable and / or it may not be possible for families to travel from the Waterline communities to San Remo to access kindergarten. Ensuring families have access to services locally is a key priority for Council.

Other information about the expansion of Early Childhood Services

Wonthaggi North East Precinct Plan

The Wonthaggi Northeast Precinct Plan includes provision for a community hub incorporating kindergarten and childcare facilities. It is expected planning for these facilities will commence from 2023. The facility is currently planned on Council land adjacent to new primary school, and as part of the planning, Council would like to investigate options to integrate of the kindergarten and the school.

Change Management

Council is working closely with kindergarten and long day care services operating from Council owned buildings to support the transition to funded 3-year-old kindergarten. With support from DET, Council is identifying opportunities for service models to be changed to accommodate the increased demand.

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme

Bass Coast Shire Council is currently implementing a kindergarten central registration system (CRS) to provide a central place that families can obtain information and make an application for kindergarten. Registrations will open in the CRS from June 2021 for children who will attend kindergarten in 2022.

Most services offering kindergarten programs in Bass Coast Shire have committed to participate in the CRS.

4. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 2021-29 FOR BASS COAST 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 Bass Coast Shire, Bass Coast 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 Bass Coast 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 Bass Coast 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:

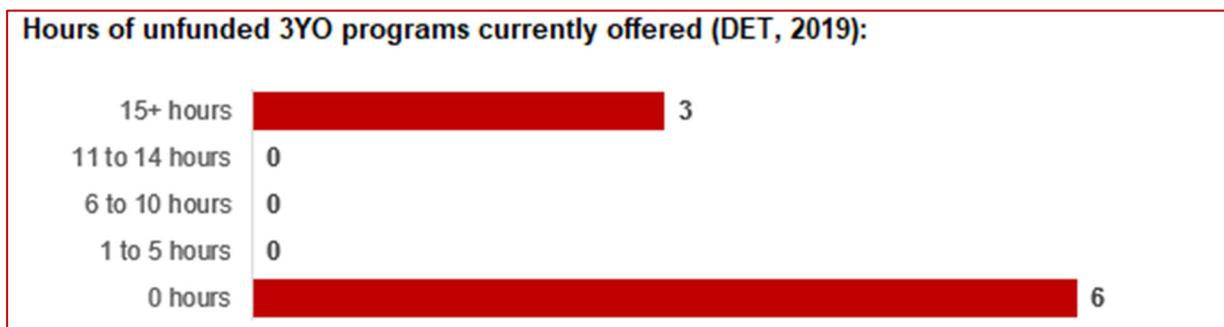
- The Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), collected between June and October 2019.
- The Department’s Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2019.
- The Department’s Quality and Regulatory Division (QARD) monitoring data, as at 2019.
- The National Quality Agenda IT System (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	6

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITs, 2020)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	0%
Private not for profit	60%
Private for profit	30%
Other	10%

Current kindergarten offering	
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (VCAMS, 2018):	93%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	9
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.

Bass Coast 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.

Bass Coast 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*	584	584	584	584	584	584	584	584	584

*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.

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 Bass Coast 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, Bass Coast 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: Total 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)	432	541	583	632	674	743	789	836	898
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	3	49	90	160	205	252	314

Community estimates

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

Phillip Island estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	112	146	158	172	183	203	215	229	247
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	3	17	28	48	60	74	92

Wonthaggi – Inverloch estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	320	395	425	461	491	541	573	607	651
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	32	62	112	145	179	222

5. AUTHORISATION

The Area Executive Director (Inner Gippsland) of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive of Bass Coast Shire Council endorse this Kindergarten Services and Infrastructure Plan (KISP) for Bass Coast Shire by signing on / /

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 2023 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 Bass Coast Shire Council

Ali Wastie
.....

Signature

[Handwritten Signature]
.....
Witness Signature

Name: Ali Wastie

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Address: 76 McBride Ave, Wonthaggi, Vic, 3995

Signed by Area Executive Director (Inner Gippsland), Department of Education and Training

A. Eastcott
.....

Signature

Erin Davidson
.....
Witness Signature

Name: Andrew Eastcott

Title: Area Executive Director (Inner Gippsland)

Address: Corner Kirk and Haigh Streets, Moe, VIC, 3825