



Education
and Training

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Shire of Cardinia

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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

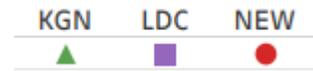
All data presented in this document are estimates only and are based on the best information available to the Department and Local Government at the time. They are published on an as-is basis and are for informational purposes only. They are subject to adjustment in response to market forces and as new 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 SHIRE OF CARDINIA

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 Cardinia Shire Council and the Department to capture other services that are planned to open in the future.

Service Name	Project Type	SA2	Total Licensed Capacity Proposed by project
Timbertop Integrated Child and Family Centre	Integrated Children's Centre	Beaconsfield - Officer	99
Officer South/Rix Road Child and Family Centre	Integrated Children's Centre	Beaconsfield - Officer	132
Brunt Road integrated children and family centre	Integrated Children's Centre	Beaconsfield - Officer	99
Total licensed capacity			330



Registered approved services as of October 2021

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

Cardinia Shire is located 50 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, covering 1,281 square kilometres of land area. It is one of 10 interface councils around the perimeter of metropolitan Melbourne, providing a transition between urban and rural areas. The Princes Highway and Gippsland railway corridors run east-west through the centre of Cardinia Shire, providing a key road and rail link between Melbourne and West Gippsland. The western end of this corridor comprises the Cardinia Shire growth areas of Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham. The primary urban centre is Pakenham, situated 55 km from Melbourne's central business district (CBD). The growth area covers approximately 10% of the Shire's land area.

Cardinia Shire has a large rural population with 27 rural townships outside the urban growth area. The northern part of the Shire is set in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges and includes Bunyip State Park and Cardinia Reservoir. Koo Wee Rup swamp and Westernport Bay are significant features of the southern landscape of Cardinia Shire.

Current and Projected Population Characteristics

Cardinia Shire is experiencing significant growth, and population statistics reflect this. The projected population in 2026 is 154,791, an increase of 60% from 2016's census. On a weekly basis, an average of five families re-locate to Cardinia Shire and 34 babies are born to residents. Over a third of Cardinia Shire's population is aged 0 to 24 years. Children aged 0 to 4 are the dominant age structure within this group. In 2016 this cohort represented 8.6% of the total population of Cardinia Shire. This trend is expected to continue, accounting for 8.8% of the population by 2026. By 2036 it is projected there will be over 16,000 0-4-year-olds in Cardinia Shire, an increase of over 190% on 2016's figure of 8,385.

Cultural Diversity

One in five residents of Cardinia Shire was born overseas (forecast.id) and represent 150 different nationalities. The most common countries of origin for migrants are India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, and South Africa. 11.2% of Cardinia Shire's population in 2016 spoke a language other than English at home compared to 32.3% in Greater Melbourne.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

The 2016 Census shows that 0.8% of Cardinia Shire's population identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is above the average for Greater Melbourne (0.5%). Cardinia Shire Council's Central Registration System (CRS) data demonstrates a steady pattern of kindergarten registrations from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Over 30 children a year access kindergarten through Early Start Kinder (ESK) funding, available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Housing Structure and Affordability

Household structure in 2016 comprised a higher composition of two-parent families with child(ren) (38.5%) and one-parent families (11.8%), than Greater Melbourne. With above average affordable rental housing stock and average median house prices, Cardinia Shire continues to attract young families who are first and second home buyers. Approximately 47% of households have a mortgage, compared to 34% for Greater Melbourne. The median house price and rents are around average, yet mortgage and rental stress are slightly above average. The median house price in Cardinia Shire is \$585,000 compared to \$785,000 in Greater Melbourne. The median house rental price is \$380 per week, compared to \$440 per week in Greater Melbourne. 14% of households within Cardinia Shire are considered 'low-income households'.

Education and Employment

45% of residents from Cardinia Shire complete Year 12. This compares to 65% for Greater Melbourne. 14% of residents complete a university qualification, compared with 28% for Greater Melbourne. Cardinia Shire has a high proportion of residents employed as technicians and trade workers, labourers, machinery operators and drivers compared to Greater Melbourne.

Public Transport Access

Cardinia Shire comprises a mix of rural and urban townships, with 41.9% of the Cardinia Shire population living near public transport. Most households within Cardinia Shire own a car (97%) and 75% of residents travel to work by car. There is a higher-than-average percentage of residents who commute more than two hours daily, to work.

Access to Medical and Allied Health Services

Cardinia Shire residents need to travel to the City of Casey and City of Greater Dandenong to access some medical and allied health services. In 2020, healthcare and social services accounted for 3.3% of registered businesses, compared to 6% in Victoria. Cardinia Shire also has a lower-than-average ratio of general practitioners per 1,000 population, compared to the south-eastern region of Victoria.

In the growth areas of Pakenham and Officer, Cardinia Shire Council's provision of 'Integrated Child and Family Centres' aim to provide opportunities for allied health services to co-locate with kindergarten and maternal child health services. This provides families the opportunity to access support under one roof, helping address barriers of accessibility for families, particularly relevant for those experiencing vulnerability. Cardinia Shire Council's, 'Services for Success' program, aims to attract health services to locate in Cardinia Shire. Services for Success is the service attraction philosophy for supporting our growing community's health and wellbeing. Through the development of Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan 2017-29, Council identified service gaps within the community. Cardinia Shire Council now seeks to work in partnership, attracting health and social services into Cardinia Shire, that enhance the health and wellbeing of the community.

There is one hospital in Cardinia Shire, located in the rural township of Koo Wee Rup. The 'Kooweerup Regional Health Service (KRHS),' provides a range of community and medical services and is an important hub to the local region. Currently the Pakenham Community Hospital is in planning phase. The Pakenham Community Hospital will be a small public hospital providing a range of services

including chronic disease management, urgent care, specialist medical appointments and diagnostic services.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measures disadvantage. Cardinia Shire is ranked in the 57th percentile, meaning 43% of local government areas in Greater Melbourne have less disadvantage. Areas of Cardinia Shire where residents experience the most disadvantage (below Shire's 57th percentile ranking) are Pakenham, Lang Lang, and Koo Wee Rup. Data from the 'Dropping off the Edge 2015' report also confirms these areas of disadvantage within Cardinia Shire.

Cardinia Shire residents experiencing disadvantage can face multiple challenges to their overall health and wellbeing. Data collected shows 24% of households with children under the age of 18 years report having low or very low food security and 40.5% of residents visit green space less than once per week (Cardinia Shire Council Liveability Plan 2017-2029).

Family Violence

Family violence is a key community safety concern in Cardinia Shire, with residents experiencing the highest rates in the Southern Metropolitan Region. Research confirms the connection between family violence and the impact it can have on mental health. Within Cardinia Shire, 43% of recorded family violence incidents, have children present. Cardinia Shire Council facilitates the 'Together We Can' roundtable to address local community safety concerns and identify ways to support local families.

Developmental Vulnerability

The 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data showed 18.4% of Cardinia Shire's prep students to be vulnerable in one or more developmental domain. Analysing the AEDC Cardinia Shire data, for vulnerability in two or more developmental domains, shows a "significant increase," from 2009 to 2018, when the comparative percentage was 7.3% and 9.7% respectively. There is a high percentage of developmentally vulnerable children located in some of the regional areas of Cardinia Shire. For example, in Gembrook / Pakenham Upper 25.9% of children are developmentally vulnerable in one or more domain and in Bunyip / Iona this figure is 25.0%. Children and families in these areas do not have access to integrated child and family centres which would provide co-located services, such as kindergarten, allied health, and maternal child health.

Maternal Child and Health Key Age and Stage consultations statistics in Cardinia Shire show a steady increase over the last nine years (2011-2020) for checks of newborns through to 18-month year-olds. COVID-19 has impacted on Maternal Child and Health Key Age and Stage Consultations and has also reduced the opportunities for children to access a range of social rich environments. This is likely to result in more children arriving at kindergarten with social and/or emotional development concerns. Greater allied health support for children and families may be required.

Cardinia Shire Council's services are evolving and adapting to meet the needs of the growing population. Cardinia Shire supports the state government policy of ensuring all children have access to two years of high-quality kindergarten to promote educational, developmental and wellbeing outcomes.

Differences in Modelling and Approaches

For internal analysis, Cardinia Shire Council uses different modelling and assumptions to project demand for kindergarten than the Department of Education and Training. These differences include:

- Cardinia Shire Council uses Forecast .id population data and the Department of Education and Training use Victoria In Future (VIF) data. A midpoint has been agreed upon for the KISP estimates. Forecast .id data is 2021 data and VIF data is 2019 data.
- SA2s (Statistical Areas Level 2) are medium-sized general-purpose areas (in some cases, suburbs) as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). SA2s are designed to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically (ABS, 2016). Boundaries between SA2 areas and forecast.id areas are different. In some cases, a single SA2 may encompass multiple forecast.id areas.
- KISP estimates reflect assumptions about the redistribution of demand between SA2s. However, the community utilisation of kindergartens varies and needs to consider transport, family preferences and schooling, and may therefore impact upon this assumption. These local trends are highlighted in the local context.
- The KISP shows estimated overall demand and unmet demand at the SA2 level, it does not address demand for individual services.
- The KISP may show there is sufficient supply because there are long day care providers within an SA2 area to absorb demand. Community preferences and funded kindergarten programs available within long day care centres varies. The take up of the places in LDC centres has not been high to date.
- KISP data assumes an initial three-year-old funded kindergarten participation rate of 70%. Based on previous community interest in three-year-old kindergarten and current four-year-old participation rates greater than 96%, this figure may not be reflective of the Cardinia Shire community. Cardinia Shire Council will continue to monitor participation rates and liaise with the Department of Education and Training in future KISP reviews.

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

Kindergarten Participation Rates

Four-year-old funded kindergarten participation rates across Cardinia Shire are consistently over 96%. Historically within Cardinia Shire, the preference of families of children attending kindergarten is to participate in sessional kindergarten over integrated programs within Long Day Care settings. In our Southern and Hills Regions, between 80-85% of children access kindergarten through a sessional kindergarten program. Community feedback and anecdotal evidence collected through central kindergarten registration (which includes only sessional services) suggests sessional kindergarten is more financially viable and accessible to families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In 2020 in our Southern and Hills Regions, 100% of the children accessing Kindergarten Fee Subsidy attended a Council kindergarten (93 children in total). Traditionally in Cardinia Shire, sessional kindergartens hold high reputation within the community.

Private schools operate Early Learning Centres (ELCs) providing education and care programs; however, this option is unaffordable for a large percentage of our community.

Other niche services cater exclusively to faiths or philosophy groups and whilst located within the Cardinia Shire Local Government Area, intake to these early learning centres stretches further than the Cardinia Shire border.

Future Precinct Structure Plans

Cardinia Shire has four precincts under current and future development, including Pakenham East and Officer South precincts. It is anticipated that these precincts will be popular to young couples and families due to affordability factors. This will result in a higher percentage of children 0-4 years within these precincts. Current population projections show a growth in this age cohort of 450% in the Officer South precinct and 16,500 % in the Pakenham East Precinct over the next 10 years to 2032. It is noted that the data provided within this KISP does not include the full impact of future projected population within the Precinct Structure Plan for Pakenham East and the ungazetted Officer South.

Long Day Care (LDC) Provisions

Cardinia Shire Council does not play a role in the infrastructure or provision of service of long day care (LDC) within Cardinia Shire. Since 2015, Cardinia Shire Council has approved 19 childcare planning permits with seven approvals resulting in the construction of a childcare building that is operational. 86% of these childcare centres are located within our Central Region, in the suburbs of Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham. A further five childcare planning permit applications are currently pending a decision by Cardinia Shire Council. The estimates of unmet demand in section 4.5 reflect certain modelling assumptions about the extent to which funded Three-Year-Old kindergarten will be available through LDC providers. If there less access through LDC than has been assumed, there may be an over-estimation of the supply of funded places in the modelling, resulting in unforeseen demand on Council Infrastructure that is not currently reflected in the estimates. Cardinia Shire Council will work closely with DET to manage this and review with the latest data where possible. Of the LDC Centres operating a funded kindergarten programs within Cardinia Shire, only one is managed by a non-religious affiliated Not for Profit organisation.

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

Cardinia Shire is surrounded by five other local government areas. Historical enrolment data indicates that approximately 10% of children accessing kindergarten programs within Cardinia Shire reside in another local Government Area (LGA). Enrolments received from outside the Cardinia Shire LGA occur mainly due to families selecting to access the closest kindergarten to their house, family's personal preference, and proximity to the school of a sibling or parent/carers workplaces.

The broad expanse of Cardinia Shire presents geographical considerations to the community use of kindergartens. Cardinia Shire is committed to 20 minutes neighbourhoods as per Plan Melbourne 2050. This is considered at a local service planning level when looking at the kindergarten infrastructure and usage provided by Cardinia Shire Council, ensuring our early years services remove access barriers such as distance, poor road conditions, lack of public transport and physical barriers caused by highways and train lines.

Key local geographical considerations to note are included below. The information has been broken into three key regions – Central, Hills and Southern and then further broken down into suburbs.

Central Region

The Central Region comprises Beaconsfield, Officer, Officer South, Pakenham, and Pakenham East. ID data population projections to 2036, estimate a growth in the number of 3- and 4-year old's within the region from 3,866 to 5,684.

Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield has three LDC Centres and two Council-owned kindergarten services. Cardinia Shire Councils Central Enrolment System data shows Council kindergartens within Beaconsfield are a popular choice for families residing in the City of Casey.

Pakenham and Pakenham East

For this local geographical area, it is important to note that population id. data used by Cardinia Shire Council for current population projections takes into consideration local planning and contextual information for the future Pakenham East Precinct. Victoria in Future (VIF) data used by DET currently does not provide population projections for this precinct as it was approved in 2020.

Pakenham has eight Long Day Care (LDC) centres, two Council owned kindergarten services and one private school providing LDC and kindergarten programs.

Officer and Officer South

There are no Long Day Care or Kindergarten services located in Officer South. Families access kindergarten through services in Pakenham and Officer.

Officer has three Long Day Care (LDC) centres, three Council owned kindergarten services and four private/Catholic schools providing kindergarten and/or LDC programs.

Hills Region

The Hills Region comprises Upper Beaconsfield, Pakenham Upper, Emerald, Avonsleigh, Cockatoo, Gembrook, Maryknoll, Garfield North, Tynong North, Nar Nar Goon North, Mount Burnett, Dewhurst, Tonimbuk, and Bunyip North. A key consideration in this region is a significant part of the population lives outside townships in rural and remote areas (ie in farms and on large rural properties).

The Hills Region population is projected to stay steady between now and 2036 with approximately 454, 3-and-4-year-olds.

There are no LDC or Kindergarten services located in the area from Nar Nar Goon North across to Bunyip North. Historically families residing in these areas have elected for their child to attend kindergarten in Bunyip, Garfield, Nar Nar Goon or have travelled to access a kindergarten program within the Central Region.

As Cardinia Shire is an interface metropolitan council, the application of assumptions applied by DET to obtain KISP data, has occurred using metro assumptions, including in the Hills Region. Local trends within this region demonstrate that demand needs to be understood at the township level, rather than at SA2 level and therefore this may result in unmet demand sooner than projected in the KISP data.

Upper Beaconsfield

Upper Beaconsfield has one LDC centre and two Council owned kindergarten services, one providing three-year-old kindergarten and the other providing four-year-old kindergarten.

Pakenham Upper

Pakenham Upper has no LDC or Kindergarten provisions. Children accessing kindergarten either attend a service within the Hills Region or access through a service through the Central Region.

Emerald

Emerald has one LDC centre and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Avonsleigh

Avonsleigh has no LDC centres and one Council owned kindergarten building. The majority of children attending Avonsleigh Kindergarten live in the Shire of Yarra Ranges and transition to Macclesfield Primary School.

Cockatoo

Cockatoo has one LDC centre and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Gembrook

Gembrook has one LDC centre and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Southern Region

The Southern Region comprises the area south of the Central Region and south of Princes Highway. It includes Koo Wee Rup, Lang Lang, Bayles, Tynong, Garfield, and Bunyip. A key consideration in this region is a significant part of the population lives outside townships in rural and remote areas (ie in farms and on large rural properties) which requires them to commute into local townships to access kindergarten. With limited public transport within this region of Cardinia Shire, accessing kindergarten through the local township becomes critical.

Current id. data projects the population of 3- and 4-year old's within the Southern Region will increase by 27% to 646 children by 2036. In the Southern Region of Cardinia Shire, there are a total of four privately owned LDC centres and six Cardinia Shire Council owned kindergarten sites.

Cardinia Shire is an interface metropolitan council. In the application of assumptions applied by DET to obtain KISP data, metro assumptions have been applied to the Southern Region. Local trends within this region demonstrate that demand needs to be understood at the township level, rather than at SA2 level and therefore this may result in unmet demand sooner than projected in the KISP data.

Koo Wee Rup

Koo Wee Rup has one privately owned LDC centre and one Council owned kindergarten building. Koo Wee Rup Preschool is a single room service and demand for this kindergarten is high. Prior to the roll-out of three-year-old kindergarten, this service provided two funded four-year-old kindergarten sessions. Historically, Bayles Preschool has picked up the overflow of children who have been unable to obtain a place at Koo Wee Rup Preschool.

Lang Lang

Lang Lang has one privately owned LDC centre and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Garfield

Garfield has no LDC centres and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Bunyip

Bunyip has two privately owned LDC centres and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Bayles

Bayles has no LDC centres and one Council owned kindergarten building. The Council owned kindergarten in Bayles supports the overflow of children wishing to access a kindergarten place at Koo Wee Rup Preschool.

Nar Nar Goon

Nar Nar Goon has no LDC centres and one Council owned kindergarten building.

Through the social demographic data and projected population, we have identified that there needs to be a considered approach within the Southern Region. Cardinia Shire Council is considering several options to address the needs and meet the demand for 3-year-old kindergarten.

Other information about the expansion of early childhood services

Cardinia Shire Councils' role, across the early years sector, is the provision of leadership to develop partnerships with community, service providers, Commonwealth and State Government stakeholders to create an integrated service system which is responsive and delivers accessible, equitable, affordable high-quality services for children, young people, and families. Cardinia Shire Council also administers the Central Registration System to ensure fair and equitable access to sessional kindergarten services across Cardinia Shire.

Current three-year-old enrolments

Cardinia Shire Council has provided a kindergarten opportunity for three-year-old children for many years. Historically there has been a significant interest in three-year-old kindergarten, however cost has proved to be a barrier to participation for some families. Enrolments received through our Central Registration System, which includes only sessional services, currently show a 25% increase in the number of children who have registered for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, compared to 2020. Our Central Registration System continues to receive and process both three and four-year-old kindergarten places for 2022 daily and based on previous enrolment data, this is expected to continue throughout 2022.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy Preferences

Across Cardinia Shire, council kindergartens account for the majority of places within our rural communities. Data demonstrates, in the Hills Region over 81% of children attending kindergarten access through a council kindergarten and in our Southern Region over 85%. Data provided by DET shows that in 2020, 100% of children who accessed a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy place in the Hills and Southern Regions, did so through a council kindergarten. Within our Central Region, this figure is over 87%.

Existing Kindergarten Infrastructure

As Cardinia is on the edge of the interface, next to the peri urban region it comprises both high-density growing suburbs and rural remote townships. This has resulted in the Cardinia Shire kindergarten infrastructure also being diverse with newer Integrated Child and Family Centres located within our growth corridor and aging infrastructure serving our rural communities. The reform now challenges the older infrastructure with the requirement to double our kindergarten capacity. This causes additional pressure on the organisation, whilst already trying to keep up with the growing population. This need for further investment in existing facilities and equipment, is to ensure our children can reach their maximum potential, laying the foundation for lifelong learning by accessing quality early childhood programs. This is important to ensure equitable access to

quality kindergarten facilities for all children within Cardinia Shire. Strategic planning for upgrades to existing sites will need to occur to ensure children are not displaced and to minimise the impact across our regions. Cardinia Shire Council does not currently have adequate information to inform these decisions, however it is anticipated that we will have more context at the first KISP review.

Change Management

Ensuring two years of universal kindergarten by 2029 will result in significant change management across Cardinia Shire. Increasing community understanding and perception around kindergarten being a 'program not a place' and that quality kindergarten programs can be accessed in LDC centres throughout Cardinia Shire will be central in this change management process.

Change Management may result in a shift in market share percentages for Council and LDC kindergarten providers across Cardinia Shire. Currently of the LDC services providing a kindergarten program within Cardinia Shire 89.6% (number being 26) are for profit, 3.4% (number being 1) are not-for-profit and 6.8% (number being 2) are private schools. Council will work with the Department of Education to promote the various three-year-old kindergarten options to families.

Community Rooms

Cardinia Shire Council Integrated Child and Family Centres currently provides a range of allied health and child/family support services from a community room. These services provide vital support to our community through connecting families with relevant support groups, allied services, playgroups, and parenting programs. Some of these rooms have previously been licensed, however are currently for community use. Changing the use of these licenced community rooms into kindergarten rooms would cause displacement of these vital services. Cardinia Shire Council will only consider accommodating kindergarten places in licenced community rooms when all other options have been exhausted.

Covid-19 pandemic

Within Cardinia Shire Council the pandemic may impact kindergarten services staff resourcing and increase the cost to renew or build new kindergarten facilities required to meet demand.

Budget Implications

Cardinia Shire Council makes a significant financial contribution to the provision of kindergarten through infrastructure and as the administrator for the Central Registration Enrolment System. Although committed to the educational benefits of the Early Years Reform, the ongoing costs to plan and deliver two years of 15 hours universal kindergarten will increase demand on existing Cardinia Shire Council infrastructure beyond what has been previously projected in capital works programs. This demand occurs whilst operating in a rate cap environment and is further impacted by the uncertain post-pandemic economy.

Council notes that funding is available through the Building Blocks Partnership grants program and officers will work collaboratively with the Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to secure funding to build new infrastructure where required.

To respond to the State Governments Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform, Cardinia Shire Council will need to increase its resources allocated to kindergarten central enrolment and early years planning and support. The annual cost to deliver these functions currently exceeds the funding received from DET.

The ongoing costs associated with the upkeep of assets and operational requirements needs to be considered. Each new asset adds further pressure to Cardinia Shire Councils capitals works budget and operational budgets. Expenses include:

- Asset renewal – Capital investment
- Asset replacement/disposal – Capital Investment
- Building maintenance – Operational Investment
- Landscape maintenance - Operational Investment
- Operating costs such as utilities and cleaning – Operational Investment including contract management
- Staffing – Operational Investment
- Asset Management Plans – Operational Investment
- Purchasing and upgrading/replacing Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment (FFE) - Capital/Operational Investment
- Project management and planning resources – Capital/Operational Investment

Cardinia Shire Council has reviewed and endorses this document in so far as it is an indicator of future unmet demand as predicted by currently available forecast data and a planning tool for potential future investment by various parties at their own discretion. Cardinia Shire Council's endorsement is not, and should not be interpreted as an indication that Council accepts responsibility for meeting that unmet demand, or that Cardinia Shire Council is capable of, or committed to meeting that demand, through either service provision or infrastructure expansion. Neither should Cardinia Shire Council's endorsement be interpreted as a commitment to impose change management activities and practices upon independent service providers, to resolve unmet demand.

4. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 2021-29 FOR SHIRE OF CARDINIA

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 Shire of Cardinia, Cardinia 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 Cardinia 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 Cardinia 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:

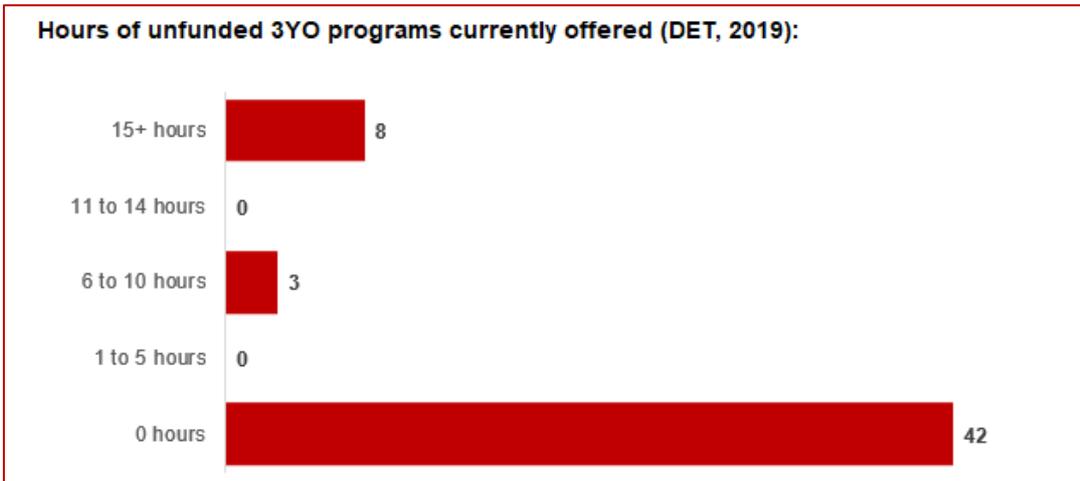
- The Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), collected between June and October 2019.
- The Department's Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2019.
- The Department's Quality and Regulatory Division (QARD) monitoring data, as at 2019.
- The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at March 2021.
- 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, 2021)	
Stand-alone kindergartens	28
Long day care centres	33

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITs, 2021)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	0%
Private not for profit	48%
Private for profit	44%
Other	8%

Current kindergarten offering	
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (VCAMS, 2018):	95%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	53
Number of services that offer an unfunded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program (DET, 2019):	11



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.

Cardinia 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.

Cardinia 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: 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*	4063	4415	4415	4566	4566	4566	4566	4566	4566

*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 Cardinia 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, Cardinia 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)	2049	2771	3141	3529	3882	4414	4732	5056	5455
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	40	215	490	889

Community estimates

Table 3-8: Estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

Beaconsfield - Officer estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	581	787	921	1063	1200	1418	1507	1625	1768
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85	228

Bunyip - Garfield estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	127	174	201	230	258	270	340	385	438
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	115	168

Emerald – Cockatoo estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	223	295	325	355	381	427	454	485	524
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	40	79

Koo Wee Rup estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	113	160	182	206	227	228	284	308	339
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	80	111

Pakenham - North estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	375	528	598	671	736	851	888	936	997
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	94

Pakenham - South estimates	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children)	629	827	914	1003	1080	1221	1260	1317	1390
Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services	0	0	0	0	0	40	80	137	210

5. AUTHORISATION

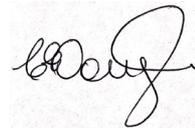
The Area Executive Director, Southern Melbourne of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive of Cardinia Shire Council endorse this Kindergarten Services and Infrastructure Plan (KISP) for Shire of Cardinia by signing on 17 / 02 / 2022

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.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Cardinia Shire Council



.....
Signature



.....
Witness Signature

Name: Carol Jeffs

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Address: 20 Sliding Avenue, Officer, Victoria, 3809

Signed by Area Executive Director, Southern Melbourne, Department of Education and Training



Signature

Patricia Palmer
...

Witness Signature

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