

Every Child Our Future



Policy issues and options paper

Developing a new Children's Services Policy for Port Phillip



Womin jaka

Port Phillip Council recognises the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage within this municipality and respectfully acknowledges the Yalukut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respects to their elders both past and present.

The Yalukut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung are the first people of the City of Port Phillip, with a continued strong connection to the land. Yalukut Weelam means 'river home' or 'people of the river', reflecting the original prevalence of the wetlands between the Yarra River and the foreshore. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

We also acknowledge the importance of the healthy development for our youngest residents, our Bubups, for they are the future of our municipality.

Photography

The photographs in this document have been professionally sourced and have the appropriate permissions for publication.



Message from the Mayor

We embrace difference, and people belong.

2017 – 2027 Council Plan Strategic Direction 1

The City of Port Phillip has been working closely with families, children and the early years sector to understand the challenges and opportunities for children in the City and how to best address them through a new Children's Services Policy.

On 5 September 2018, Council endorsed seven policy objectives developed directly by the community to strengthen support for our children's health and wellbeing. These objectives clearly articulate our community's expectations and require Council to assess how we are delivering against our commitments to be a trusted service provider, partner and broker, advisor and agent, and steward.

The new Children's Services Policy is a real opportunity to collectively shape the future of children's services in Port Philip, and to identify new ways to meet the expectations of our community. Our aim is to respond to the constant changes in the legislative landscape, population growth, trends in contemporary practice, and the changing needs of working families.

This Policy Issues and Options Paper takes into account all of the input received in the June/July 2018 Stage 1 community engagement process, and in ongoing discussions with families and early years' service providers. I want to thank all who participated for their time and commitment to develop this policy and service response.

Council will hold another round of community engagement in March and April 2019 where we will invite you to comment on this paper and its recommendations.

We appreciate the wealth of knowledge and experience in our community and we look forward to continuing to draw on your expertise to deliver on a future-ready and robust Children's Services Policy that enables all children in the City to reach their full health and wellbeing potential.

Yours sincerely,



Dick Gross

Mayor
City of Port Phillip



Table of Contents

Womin jeka	1
Message from the Mayor	2
Our Vision	5
What are Children's Services?	5
Listening to our community	6
Why do we need a children's services policy?	8
Policy Context	12
Where is Port Phillip Now?	18
What lies ahead?	29
Policy recommendations	40
Policy objectives	40
Policy Objective One	41
Policy Objective Two	43
Policy Objective Three	45
Policy Objective Four	47
Policy Objective Five	49
Policy Objective Six	50
Policy objective seven	52
How will we measure success?	53
Providing feedback	56
References	58

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Stage 1 Consultation Summary Report
- Attachment 2 - Community Reference Group Summary Report
- Attachment 3 - Early Years' Service Affordability Analysis
- Attachment 4 - National Quality Standard Rating of Port Phillip Early Years' Services
- Attachment 5 - Early Years' Services Access Analysis
- Attachment 6 - Early Years' Services Current and Future Demand Analysis
- Attachment 7 - Children's Services Asset Overview Summary



Our Vision

“A children’s services environment that honours diversity, builds creativity and social connections and encourages all children and families to maximise their health and wellbeing now and in the future”.

Children are our most valuable resource. Their health and wellbeing is one of Council’s top priorities. The City of Port Phillip Council Plan 2017-27 includes priority actions to ensure access to services that support the health and wellbeing of our growing community. As part of these priority actions, Council is developing a new Children’s Services Policy to guide how we support, deliver and invest in future services that will support the health and wellbeing of our community, specifically our children.

The City of Port Phillip supports the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child. Australia ratified the convention in 1990 and all levels of government have a duty to ensure that all children in Australia enjoy the rights set out in the convention. This includes the right of every child to be safe and to have adequate opportunities for growth and development, and to access quality health, child development and education services.ⁱ

The experiences of early childhood are a vitally important part of each person’s development and these experiences have lifelong effects on health and wellbeing. A child’s mind develops fastest in their early years: a baby’s brain builds 700 new neural connections a second.ⁱⁱ Early childhood experiences have a significant and measurable impact on a child’s brain for life. It is crucial for all children to have access to the highest-quality, affordable early learning and development experiences. There is strong evidence that programs providing these experiences strengthen a child’s social, emotional, language, literacy, cognitive and self-regulatory skills.ⁱⁱⁱ

This Policy Issues and Options Paper has been prepared to:

- help articulate a vision for children’s services in Port Phillip
- explore the issues and challenges facing the municipality
- suggest a range of recommendations and options that could be employed to address the issues and challenges
- help us to achieve our vision of all children reaching their full potential

What are Children’s Services?

The City of Port Phillip provides a range of diverse and multi-faceted services, programs and resources to support families and children during this key stage of life. When we talk about children’s services in this paper, we are talking about the range of early years’ services that provide education, learning and development experiences from birth to the commencement of primary school years, with a particular focus on:



toy library



childcare



playgroup



kindergarten

This Policy Issues and Options Paper will inform a new Children’s Services Policy and Municipal Early Years’ Plan that will encompass not only the four key areas (childcare, kindergarten, toy libraries and playgroups) addressed in this paper, but the broader suite of early years’ services (e.g. Maternal and Child Health and Family Support Services). The policy will improve outcomes for children by connecting and supporting families across services.

Listening to our community

The development of this Paper has been informed by a series of consultations with families, children, service providers and staff. This was undertaken through a number of channels including one-on-one interviews, group discussions, reference groups and surveys.

Council provided a range of opportunities for the community to provide ideas about how the City of Port Phillip can deliver services that support the health and wellbeing of children and their families. More than 200 adults and 70 children under the age of five participated in these engagement opportunities.

Through the consultation, we've listened to residents, committees of management, children and private industry. Engagement methods included:

- targeted discussions
- a *have your say* online engagement forum
- art-based workshops
- facilitated workshops
- a final group workshop
- reference groups and focus groups with service providers

The Children's Services Reference (CSR) Group was established with representatives from community-managed, council-run and private/independent services including childcare, kindergarten, toy libraries and playgroups. The CSR Group met monthly from July 2018 to March 2019, to provide information and advice and to inform Council's decision-making on Children's Services.

What we have heard

Families who took part in the community consultation were generally happy with the variety of services across the municipality. A key concern was the need for more information about what is available within their local community, so families can make better choices.

Children participating in early years' services were invited to design the type of services they would like. It was clear that the inclusion of natural elements in their playtime was important, as well as the safety of their environment.

Staff who participated at a workshop indicated that play was an important part of the learning and development process of children and that the quality of the environment in which the children play was critical to the successful development of a thriving child.

As a result of the community engagement process, Council has established a high-level summary of issues and community priorities (refer to Attachments 1 and 2), and identified key stakeholder groups that have potential to be affected by changes to the policy. We have used this feedback and the ideas generated to create our new policy objectives, options and recommendations within this report.

Council will continue to engage with the community on the policy options presented in this paper and consider this input when making decisions about the future policy.



Why do we need a children's services policy?

Access to quality education lies at the heart of healthy human development.^{iv} Continuing access to meaningful learning and development experiences is also critical to long-term improvements in productivity, the reduction of intergenerational cycles of poverty, preventive healthcare, the empowerment of women and reductions in inequality.

Enabling participation and inclusion to services for children requires supporting universal access to services that are affordable, safe and high-quality. This type of service environment means better outcomes for children, especially our most vulnerable.

- **Affordable services** - All children and families can afford to access services without causing financial stress
- **Safe services** - All services adhere to and are compliant with relevant regulations and legislation to ensure all children are protected
- **Quality services** - All services focus on integration, relationships and partnerships, and meet quality standards.

The first 1,000 days

A person's development and progression are heavily influenced by what happens in the first few years of their life, but especially in their first 1000 days (the period from conception, throughout pregnancy, and a child's first two years).^v The rapid pace of physical and brain development in the early years creates opportunities and risks that influence a child's future health and wellbeing.

The architecture of the brain is shaped through an ongoing process that begins before birth.^{vi} However, the most significant stage of brain development takes place after birth as a result of interactions with the environment. By the time a child is three years old, 90% of their brain is fully developed.^{vii} Sensory pathways such as those for basic vision and hearing develop first, followed by early language skills and then higher cognitive functions. Babies' brains require stable, caring, interactive relationships with adults for healthy development.

Starting from infancy, routine assessments of a child's development, social and emotional wellbeing, vision, health, oral health, language and communication skills are essential. Inadequate nutrition, coupled with factors such as poverty, housing instability, smoking, family violence, drug and alcohol use, and lack of access to quality education and support are strong predictors of poor child developmental outcomes.^{viii}

The effect of disadvantage on early years' development

Universal access provides for a quality kindergarten program to be available for all children in the year before formal schooling. All levels of government are working together through a National Partnership to increase participation of Indigenous children, as well as children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, in kindergarten programs.^{ix}

The majority of Australian children are doing well developmentally and most are well prepared to begin school. Those who are less well prepared tend to be Indigenous children, children living in very remote areas, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, and children living with disadvantage.^x

Historically, disadvantage was simply defined as poverty, that is inadequate resources or low income. More recently, disadvantage has come to be viewed as multi-dimensional, best captured by three overlapping issues: income poverty, deprivation and social exclusion.^{xi}

- Income Poverty can be absolute or relative. Absolute poverty refers to people who do not have sufficient income to pay for such basic necessities as food and housing. Relative poverty refers to people whose income is low relative to the incomes of other people in their community.
- Deprivation is not being able to sustain the minimum acceptable way of life in a person's own society because of lack of resources.
- Social exclusion highlights the role of institutional structures, community attitudes and social practices in creating barriers to a person's participation in the key activities of society. Social exclusion may be measured across a number of dimensions, including material resources, employment, education and skills, health and disability, social connection, community and personal safety.

A child born into disadvantage is more likely to have health problems and develop behavioural issues. They are also more likely to face housing and food insecurity, have lower levels of educational attainment and experience less supportive parental relationships.

The report *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry* clearly establishes the risk factors that make children vulnerable to disadvantage.^{xii} These include:

- history of family violence
- alcohol and other substance misuse
- mental health problems
- intellectual disability
- parental history of abuse and neglect
- situational stress

While all children benefit from quality early years programs, children experiencing disadvantage have the most to gain. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to face developmental challenges. The value of early intervention cannot be over-estimated as a tool to mitigate negative effects on children's physical wellbeing and motor development, language and literacy development, cognitive development, general knowledge, social and emotional development, and executive functions.^{xiii} There is good evidence that attending kindergarten is associated with improved outcomes, including a lower incidence of developmental vulnerability by the time a child starts school.^{xiv}

Barriers to access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families

In Australia, centre-based early childhood education and care is provided by a collection of private for-profit, local government and not-for-profit providers. According to the *Access to Early Childhood Education in Australia: Insights from a Qualitative Study* (2014) report, the most significant access barriers for early years' services are cost of services, lack of trust in formal care, distance to the services and lack of availability of places.^{xv}

While most families of young children are well supported and make good use of early years' services, those who are most in need of the services do not always access them, and it is these children who are at increased risk of poor health and development outcomes. Research tells us that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) are less likely to access early years' services because of fee structures and lack of understanding about early years' education.^{xvi} Families in poverty, families who have recently arrived in Australia and families where English is not their first language often do not understand the Victorian system of early years' education. These factors limit the capacity of families to provide their children with adequate learning opportunities and assumptions are sometimes made by these families that if kindergarten is not part of school, then it isn't important. Parental mental health (especially depression) can also reduce attendance at services.

A recent report from the Kids in Communities Study found certain factors can influence whether disadvantaged communities do well or poorly in early childhood development. Some of the factors relevant to Port Phillip are:

- Gentrification - Higher income families are moving into disadvantaged areas, resulting in displacement
- Housing affordability - Perceived affordability positively impacts early childhood development
- Housing tenure - Higher proportion of renters negatively impacts early childhood development
- Public housing - Perceived presence negatively impacts early childhood development
- Childcare costs - Perceived affordability affects use

Investment in the Early Years is an Investment in the Economy

Local governments can support child development through policies that ensure access to quality play and learning for young children. Investment in early years' services delivers benefits for individuals, families and the community. The US National Scientific Council on the Developing Child found that "Policy initiatives that promote supportive relationships and rich learning opportunities for young children create a strong foundation for higher school achievement followed by greater productivity in the workplace and solid citizenship in the community."^{xvii}

The Centre for Community Child Health outlines a number of considerations for policy and practice to ensure every child is provided with the best opportunities to thrive throughout their lifetime.^{xviii} These include policies that:

- Connect a young person to services throughout their life, from early years to youth development to adulthood
- Adopt an integrated and coordinated approach
- Invest in research and evidence-based practice
- Educate and empower residents, families and children
- Provide service-based interventions to promote effective parenting
- Address the environments and social determinants of health by reducing social inequities

Investment in quality early years services not only supports the development of cognitive, social, emotional, physical and motivational skills, but also drives later learning and achievement, which in turn contributes to the 'human capital' that underpins the economic and social wellbeing of the broader community.^{xix} When basic health and early childhood programs monitor the development of all children, problems that require attention can be identified in a timely fashion and intervention can be provided. If we fail to provide timely support the long-term costs are considerable. As social problems worsen, they become more difficult and more expensive to remedy.^{xx}

In addition to the impact on children living in Port Phillip, investment in quality early years' services has a long-term economic impact for our local communities, as quality early years' services contribute to the economy with their facilities, employment and training, and enable parents to participate in the workforce.^{xxi}



Policy Context

All levels of government in Australia have a key focus on and investment in outcomes for children and the provision of children's services. This creates an early years' sector that is regulated by a complex array of legal, educational, financial, and industrial policies, at federal, state and local government levels.

All Early Childhood Education and Care approved providers are accountable for ensuring children are protected from harm, and their opportunities for learning and development are maximised. All providers are regularly audited and monitored to ensure they are meeting their obligations from child safe standards to occupational health and safety. Some of the specific regulations include:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Children's Service Act 1996
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme 2017
- National Quality Framework (NQF) and National Quality Standard (NQS)

National Context

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed *Investing in the Early Years — A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, which aimed to ensure that 'by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation'.^{xxii}

The Commonwealth governs the new Family Assistance package,^{xxiii} which underpins the Commonwealth child care fee assistance, including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS). The Family Assistance Law also provides for the approval of child care providers to administer child care fee assistance on behalf of families.^{xxiv}

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is the result of an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and development outcomes for children. It provides an integrated and unified national system that aims to drive continuous improvement in the quality of early years' services and works with regulatory authorities.

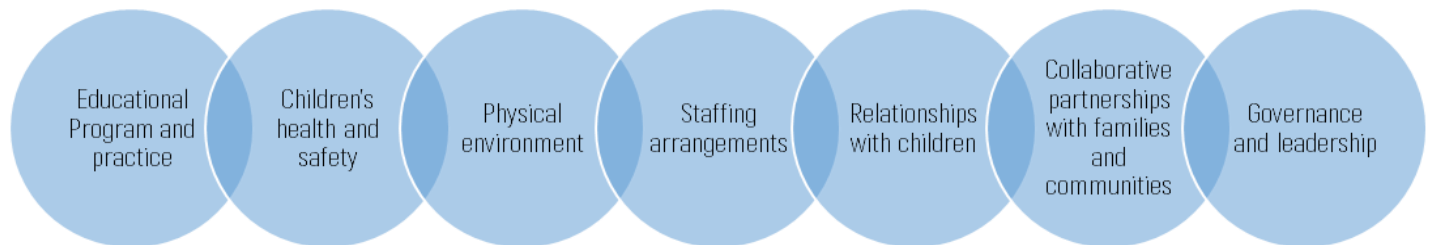
National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care

The NQF has a number of key features.

- Establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), a national body responsible for guiding the implementation and management of the national system.
- The Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulations), a national system for the regulation and enforcement of the National Quality Standards, legislated in each jurisdiction and administered by state and territory regulatory authorities (such as Victoria's Department of Education and Training) under the guidance of ACECQA.^{xxv}
- Setting the National Quality Standards (NQS), a national benchmark for the provision of quality services, including an approved learning framework that guides the development of quality early childhood programs (for example, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*).
- A national quality rating system that combines the seven quality areas with a five-point rating scale, to describe the quality of care in individual services across Australia.

Seven National Quality Standards

The National Quality Standards aim to promote the safety, health and wellbeing of children, and focus on achieving outcomes for children through high-quality educational programs, and increasing families' understanding of what distinguishes a quality service. Comprising seven quality areas, each service receives a rating from 'Significant Improvement Required' to 'Excellent', as well as an overall rating.



National Competition Policy

The National Competition Policy (NCP) is an Australian Government microeconomic reform program. The main purpose of NCP is to ensure government services do not have a competitive advantage over privately owned competitors. These reforms include a commitment to review legislation that restricts competition, and apply competitive neutrality to government business activities.

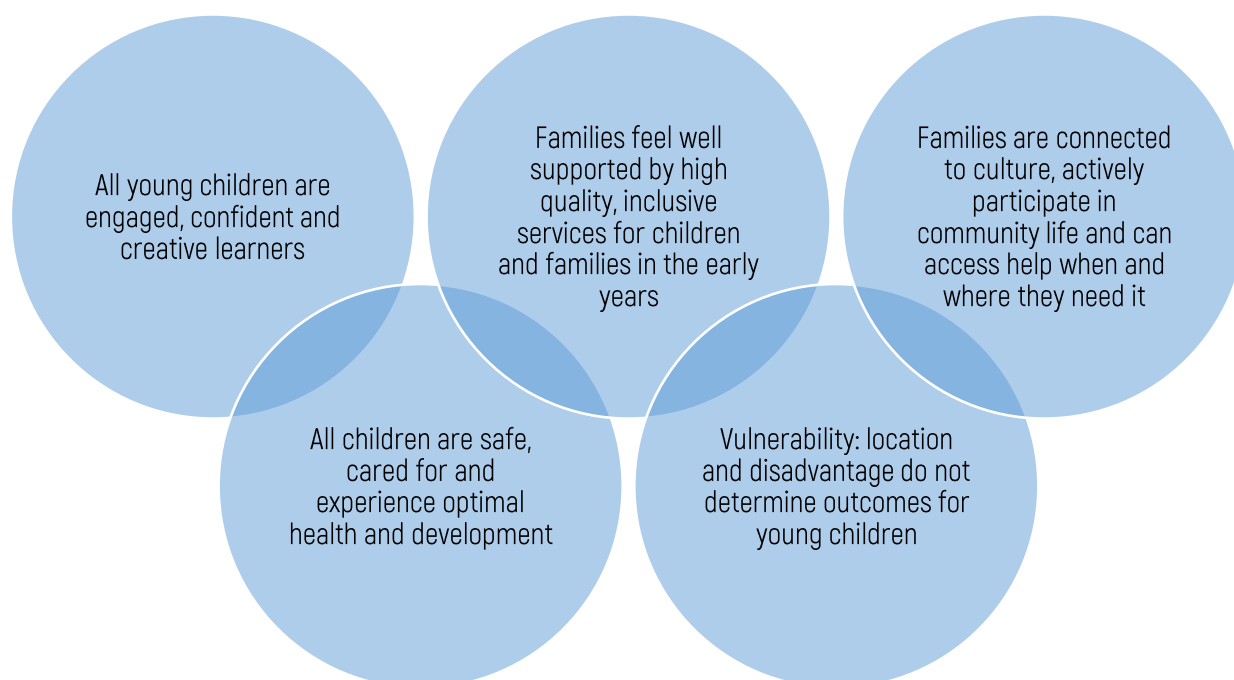
Where Council subsidies are required to meet certain social or economic objectives, a requirement under the NCP is the application of a public benefit/interest test to provide evidence and accountability for any public policy that restricts competition. Policies for which a public benefit cannot be demonstrated must be repealed or modified so that they do not reduce competition.

State Context

The State Government regulates and assesses all early years' services such as childcare, family day care, kindergarten and out of school hours care services against the National Quality Standards.^{xxvi} Some early years' services are regulated directly under the Victorian Children's Services Act 1996.

The Compact Agreement

The State Government's Compact Agreement (2017-2027) is an agreement between the Victorian state and local governments, who together provide collective stewardship of the early years' system.^{xxvii} The Compact Agreement states that in addition to councils' responsibility as planners, they also have responsibility for coordination and delivery of service for children and families.



The Compact Agreement focuses on the following outcomes:

The Compact Board has agreed on three state-wide priorities for the first year, focused on supporting developmentally vulnerable children and families in early years' services. These priorities are to:

- increase the participation of children in out of home care and children known to child protection
- increase participation of Aboriginal families
- improve the identification and referral of children and families at risk of family violence

Other Relevant State Government Plans and Reforms

There are a number of other State plans and reforms aimed at supporting healthy childhood development.

Theme	Relevant Plan or Reform
Services should support vulnerability and disadvantage and target services to support those who need it most (e.g. CALD, ATSI, children with disabilities, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Reform Plan • Roadmap to Reform: Strong Families Safe Children • Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan • Child and Family Services Funding Reform
All children can access quality and inclusive services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Reform Plan • Roadmap to Reform: Strong Families Safe Children • Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Violence 10 Year Plan
All children are safe from abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Standards Reportable Conduct Scheme Roadmap to Reform Strong Families Safe Children Family Violence 10 Year Plan
All children are engaged and confident learners, ready for kindergarten, school and their lives ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Childhood Reform Plan

Local Government Context

The Victorian Auditor General's Report *Delivering Local Government Services* provides a rationale for local governments to deliver services in alignment to the Local Government Act.^{xxviii}

Rationale	Explanation	Examples
Statutory obligation	Council is legally required to provide the service.	Rates, roads, sanitation, animal management.
Statutory discretion	Legislation gives council the option to deliver a service, but it is not mandatory for council to do so.	Household recycling collection, economic development, community grants.
Community expectation	Due to market failure or community demand, Council is expected to provide the service and it would be difficult for council to exit the service.	Sport and recreation services, libraries, citizenship ceremonies.
Council discretion	Although it is not legally required to do so, Council provides the service to meet an identified community need that other organisations may be able to provide.	Markets and saleyards, sister-city relationships.

Councils do not have any statutory obligations to provide or to directly deliver any children's services. It is at the discretion of each local government to determine its own local needs and priorities. The Municipal Association of Victoria articulates five main roles for councils in the children's services sector.^{xxix}

Planning and coordination - Acting as a key coordination point and community planner in early years

Service provision - Delivering a range of early years programs, activities and initiatives

Facility planning - Planning, providing and maintaining a range of early years infrastructure

Advocacy - Lobbying and advocating to state and federal governments and other key stakeholders on behalf of early years' programs, young children and their families

Strengthening community capacity - Facilitating community connections and participation in decision-making, including vulnerable families.

The Centre for Local Government's report *Best Practice Guideline for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities* provides an assessment of the role local governments play in the provision of childcare services.^{xxx}

Whole-of-community strategic planner and partner - In addition to providing a vision for the community, councils should consider a supply and demand analysis of current and future use, as well as consideration of the timing and staging of developments, and to plan with other levels of government for identified needs.

Enabler - Councils can help enable providers to move into their municipality through a number of mechanisms, including information about supply and demand, financial assistance and economic development planning.

Provider - There is significant variation across local government in terms of whether, and how, they become providers. Some councils provide a full range of early years' services, others have adopted a short-term provider role, others do not provide any services.

Statutory land use planner - As a land-use planner, local government has the capacity to integrate and enhance the process for the development of childcare centres, making it easier for providers.

This report was followed up by the *Guidelines for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities*, which outlined the important role local governments play in ensuring communities have the children's services they require through:^{xxxi}

Land use planning - Identifying land that may be used for childcare service

Collaboration - Supporting education, integrated planning and delivery, and providing guidelines and assistance for providers

Port Phillip Context

In 2005, Council commissioned a *Best Value Review of Children's Services*. The review found that the existing childcare system in Port Phillip was not sustainable and was unable to meet current and future demand. The review also identified that childcare centres require significant subsidies to operate and did not have the ability to review their assets, build capacity or offer affordable care to those who need it most.

The Review panel recommended that for all these reasons, a new approach to delivering childcare and creating more places in the City was critical. The *Childcare Policy 2006* was developed to address three policy outcomes for childcare:

- That families in Port Phillip would be able to access childcare when they needed it
- That childcare would be affordable and of high-quality
- That childcare would be provided by a mixed sector of council, community and privately-operated centres

The Policy established an Affordability Subsidy and Quality Incentive Program (Quality Subsidy) to support access and increase quality in childcare centres. Council worked to attract private and not-for-profit providers who expressed an interest in establishing childcare centres in the City and committed over \$5 million to a Council capital works program to expand the childcare service system to meet demand.

Since the adoption of the *Childcare Policy 2006*, a rapid succession of state and federal government reforms has resulted in a misalignment between the City's current service provision model and the changing legislative framework. Additionally, the childcare-centric policy is not in step with the shift towards a more integrated early years' service system.



Where is Port Phillip Now?

The Council invests in Children's Services and sets priorities for the future, in alignment with our commitment to our 2017–2027 Council Plan Strategic Direction 1 "We embrace difference, and people belong".

Council's current role in services

The role Port Phillip currently plays in supporting children's services includes:

- **Service and facility provision** — Council directly delivers a range of children's services, including as an approved Early Years' Manager of five childcare services. Council also provides maternal and child health services, and buildings for playgroups, toy libraries and kindergartens delivered by not-for-profit providers.
- **Advocacy** — Council lobbies and advocates to state and federal governments on behalf of children's services, young children and their families, for example advocating for increased early intervention services.
- **Planning** — Council acts as key community planner, identifying the early years as a key platform in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. For example, we identify high growth areas, and ensure future demand for childcare places will be met. Council also assesses planning applications for new early years' services facilities.
- **Strengthening community capacity** — Council facilitates community connections, community engagement, education programs and service integration and collaboration, for example supporting networks of early years' services providers and the Parent Information Program.

Children in Port Phillip

The national development indicators are outcome measures for young children captured through the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).^{xxxii} The AEDC measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full-time school. It consists of five key domains:

- **Physical Health and Wellbeing** — Children's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills
- **Social competence** — Children's overall social competence responsibility and respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things
- **Emotional maturity** — Children's pro-social and helping behaviours, and absence of anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention
- **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** — Children's basic literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy
- **Communication skills and general knowledge** — Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills

For each of the AEDC domains, children receive a score between zero and ten, where zero is most developmentally vulnerable. Children scoring in the 10th percentile and below are considered vulnerable. Recent AEDC data indicates that Port Phillip is doing well overall; however, we have seen an increase in several areas, as well as an increase in vulnerability across one or more domains.

Below are the figures for Port Phillip.

AEDC National Development Indicators in City of Port Phillip	2009 (Percentage of vulnerable children - %)	2012 (Percentage of vulnerable children - %)	2015 (Percentage of vulnerable children - %)

Physical Health and Wellbeing	7.4	5.9	5.4
Social competence	4.0	4.1	5.7
Emotional maturity	5.6	5.0	5.7
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	3.5	2.6	3.9
Communication skills and general knowledge	4.0	3.7	4.2
Vulnerable on one domain	13.5	11.9	13.9
Vulnerable on two or more domains	6.7	5.5	6.0

Socio-economic status of our households

Socio-economic factors can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Port Phillip's Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) score is 1,069, ranking the City as the eighth most advantaged municipality in Victoria.^{xxxiii} However, there are areas within the City that have extreme levels of disadvantage (particularly around public housing estates), including in one instance, one of the lowest scores in the country (surround Dorcas Street public housing estate).

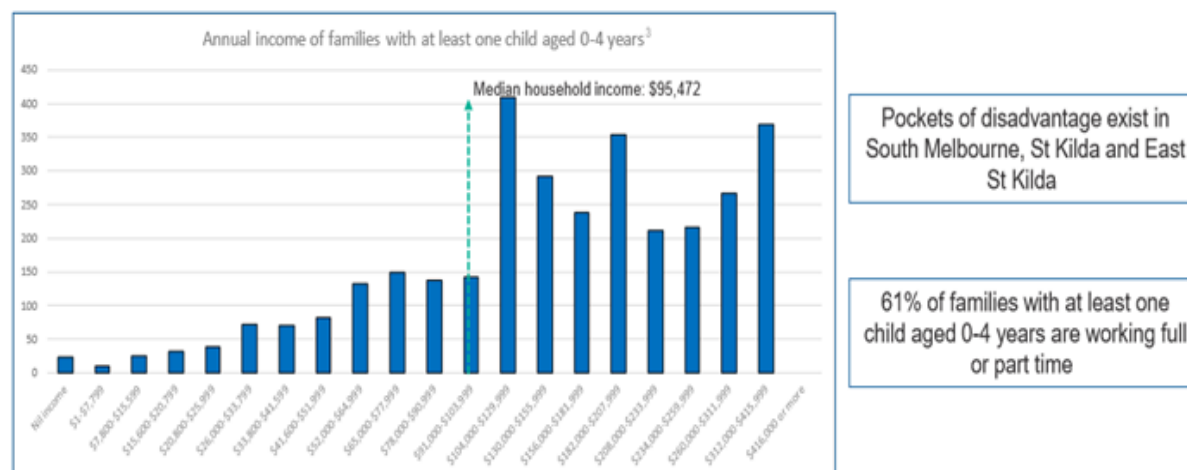
In 2016, the suburbs with the highest disadvantage were South Melbourne (1005) and St Kilda-West St Kilda (1058).

In comparison to Greater Melbourne, Port Phillip has a larger proportion of high-income households (those earning \$2,500 per week or more), with a median household income of \$1,836. Overall, 29.8% of households earned a high-income weekly, while 14.8% earned a low-income weekly. Middle Park (42.2%), Albert Park (40.1%), and Port Melbourne (37.9%) had the highest proportion of high income earners. South Melbourne (19.2%), St Kilda (16.4%) and Ripponlea (16.1%) had the highest proportion of low income earners.

Income status of families with children

In all neighbourhoods, there are higher proportions of high-income families (\$2,500 or more per week) than low-income families (\$650 or less per week). The neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of low-income families are:

- South Melbourne - 22.1%
- St Kilda - 16.4%
- East St Kilda - 13.8%

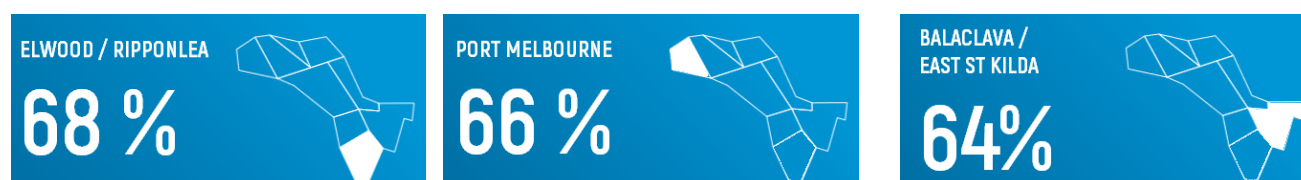


Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2016), Census of Population and Housing: Customised Report, ABS: 9 August

Work status of families with children

- Working families (where both parents or the single parent are working full or part-time equivalent) comprise 62.7% of all families in Port Phillip.
- In 2016, 17.7% of all families in Port Phillip with children aged 0-4 years were working full-time.
- In 2016, Port Phillip was leading the Greater Melbourne area with 71.8% (6,785) of women with dependent children participating in the labour force.

The neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of working families were:



Additionally, 21.5% of single parent families had the sole parent working full-time. However, a higher proportion were not in the labour force at 44.44%. The neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of single parents not in the labour force were South Melbourne – 60%, Port Melbourne – 54%, and St Kilda Road – 50%.

Housing and rental stress

A household is typically described as being in 'housing stress' if it is paying more than 30% of its income in housing costs. The ratio of 30:40 is often used as a benchmark — that is, if households that fall in the bottom 40% by income spend more than 30% of their income on housing, they are defined as being in housing stress.^{xxxiv}

The spectrum of people considered to be vulnerable is widening due to increased cost of living, rental and property costs, social exclusion and health inequity.^{xxxv} Low income families have also emerged as a top four priority group for housing support in Port Phillip. More than 8,000 residents are living in housing stress, more than 6,000 residents in rental stress, and 2,500 residents are on the public housing waiting list. Low-income families have emerged as a top four priority group for housing support in Port Phillip.

Housing affordability stress is much more common in families who are in private rental accommodation, compared to those paying off a mortgage. It is also more common in one-parent families, families with young children, families where the parent was born overseas, and families with the lowest income level. This is important to note, as Port Phillip has a very high proportion of renters (49.2%).

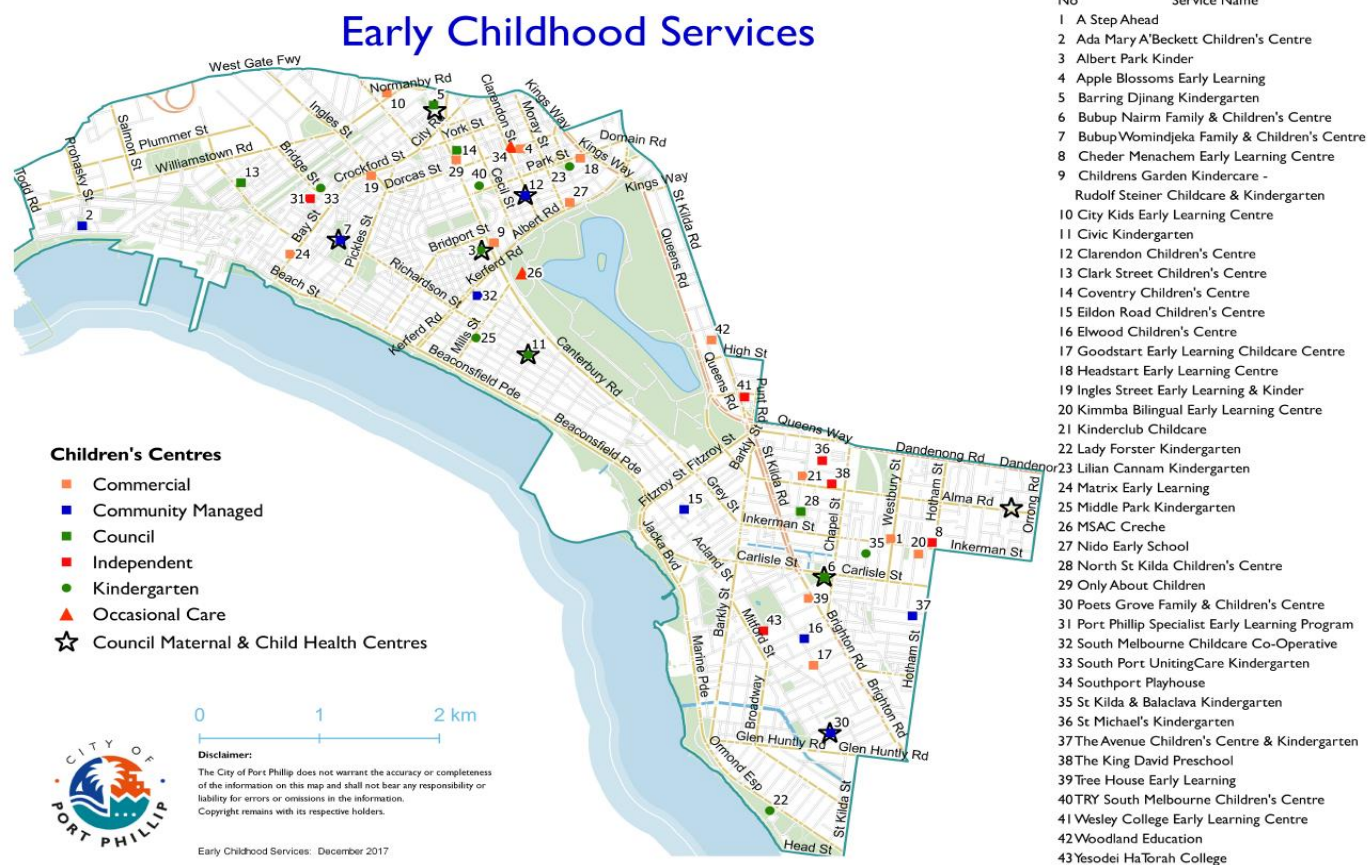
With the forecast growth and increase in density, ensuring access to quality early years' services for all members of our community, including our most vulnerable (disability, disadvantage, CALD, transient), will become increasingly challenging.

Early Years' Services across Port Phillip

Port Phillip has a healthy and diverse early years' services sector, much of which has been supported by Council through access to facilities or funding, as well as through many community volunteered hours.

Services include:

- Community support services
- Maternal and Child Health
- Kindergarten
- Libraries (storytime)
- Childcare
- Family day care
- Home-based respite
- Toy libraries
- Playgroups
- Holiday and vacation programs
- Consulting suites for allied health professionals
- Adventure playgrounds
- Sports and recreation programs
- Immunisation services
- Family support services
- Parenting education programs



* As at December 2018

There are ten early years' facilities that are stand-alone centres, five centres that are co-located with other community amenities and four integrated community hubs.

The distribution of services is spread across the municipality, with a north and south cluster of services. The service locations align to the location of 0-4 year olds across our municipality, but with a potential gap in services where significant growth is set to occur (Fishermans Bend; St Kilda Road and St Kilda neighbourhoods).

Point of Entry to Early Years' Services

Maternal and Child Health

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service works with families to care for babies and young children. It is a free service for all Victorian families. Visits to MCH nurses occur at ten key stages of your child's development. The visits focus on child and family wellbeing. Visits happen at:

- home, 2, 4, and 8 weeks
- 4, 8, 12 and 18 months
- 2 and 3.5 years

The service also runs first-time parent groups to help parents who have had their first child, and provides support to families who need extra help, like families with babies of low birth weight or families where mental health is an issue.

This extra support is also free and families can access a number of services such as home visits from the MCH nurse to help with serious sleep and settling problems.

Orange Door

Orange Door, originally founded as Child FIRST, was set up under the Children Youth and Families Act Vic (2005) to be the entry point for all Family Services support programs, and an anonymous referral point for persons to report concerns for the wellbeing of a child. Orange Door is the access point for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence, or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children to access the services they need to be safe and supported.^{xxxvi}

This referral service is a single point of entry connecting the members of the Port Phillip community with the family support services that are provided by Council.

Children's Services Waitlist

Council is currently the register point for a centralised Children's Services Waiting list for 13 centres across the municipality:

- Ada Mary A'Beckett Children's Centre, Port Melbourne
- Barring Djinang Kindergarten, Southbank
- Bubup Nairn Children's Centre, St Kilda
- Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre, Port Melbourne
- Clarendon Children's Centre, South Melbourne
- Clark Street Children's Centre, Port Melbourne
- Coventry Children's Centre, South Melbourne
- Eildon Road Children's Centre, St Kilda
- Elwood Children's Centre, Elwood
- North St Kilda Children's Centre, St Kilda
- Poets Grove Family and Children's Centre, Elwood
- South Melbourne Child Care, Albert Park

- The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten, Balaclava

Childcare places are offered aligned to the Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines, which all children's services are required to comply with as part of their funding agreement.

Access to Information

In Australia, families have a high reliance on early years' services to support their living and working responsibilities. Nationally, around 50% of children aged under 12 years receive some sort of non-parental care.^{xxxvii} Empowering parents through information provision is a common theme throughout the community feedback, and evidence shows supporting workers to access the diverse early years' service range that is on offer effectively contributes to the economy.^{xxxviii}

Parent Information Program

Council offers approximately twelve free parent information sessions annually to support positive parenting techniques across a range of topics from toileting, body safety and protective behaviours, through to school readiness.

Child and Youth Directory

Council's website provides information on children's services in the municipality, such as the Child and Youth Directory.

Port Phillip, in collaboration with Glen Eira, Kingston and Stonnington, maintains a directory of all child and youth support services throughout the municipality. Interactively filtered through a criterion of service urgency (see below), the directory guides the user to services that can service their need, within a geographic area.

Looking for help?

Urgent Help or Complex Needs

Services designed to assist with complex problems which require thorough and intensive support and responses

Direct Support

Services designed to work with moderate and multiple problems when more focused support is required

Some Support

Services designed to resolve a problem in its early stages to stop it getting worse

Just Curious

Services that provide information, education and engagement opportunities, designed to prevent a problem from happening



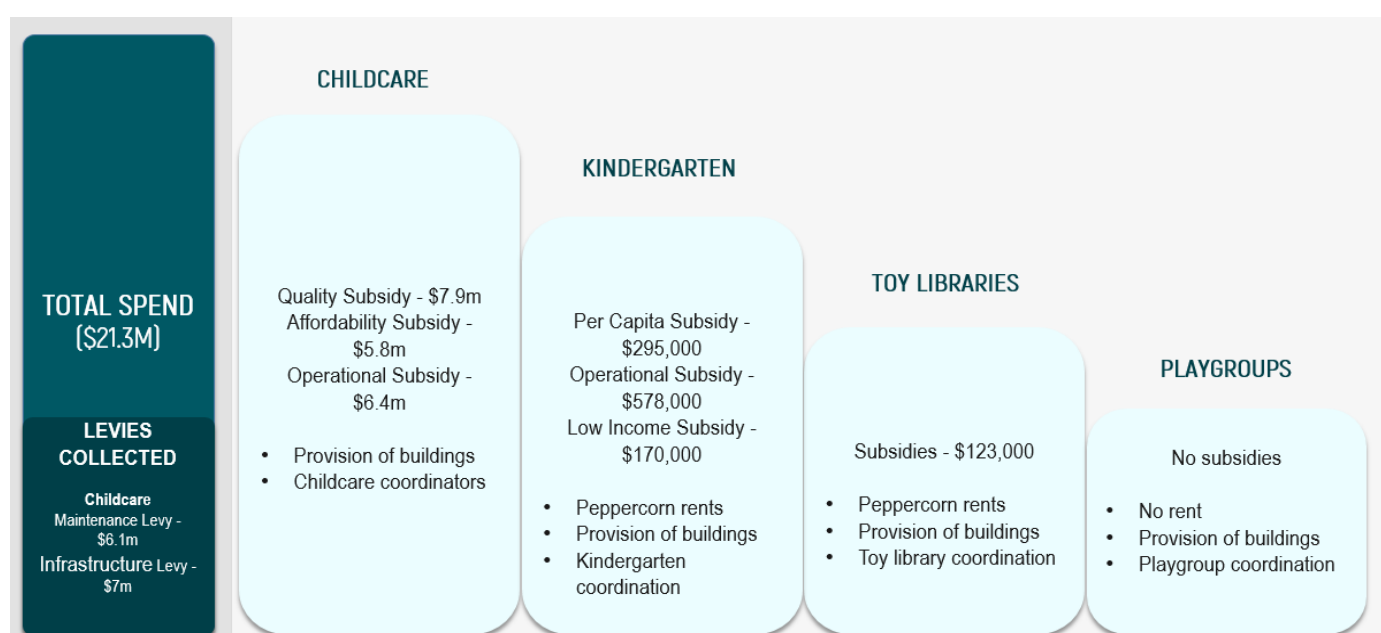
Investment by Council in Early Years' Services

Council provides subsidies to support community-managed children's services. Childcare services currently receive a Quality Subsidy. Kindergartens and toy libraries both receive three different subsidies (operational, low income, and membership/participation). Currently these subsidies are not acquitted to specific outcomes or KPIs.

Investment in assets

Council's current investment in infrastructure is significant. Council is developing an Early Years' Facility Strategy to help identify and address the cost of infrastructure and its ability to meet current and future service need.

Cost to Council over 10 years by service area



* please note the affordability subsidy does not apply from 2018/19 financial year onwards, due to the introduction of the new Childcare Subsidy that came into effect 1 July 2018.

The most significant cost to Council per annum over the past 10 years has been the childcare service area.

	Council-run	Community-run	Private	Independent Not-for-profit
Cost to Council	\$2.04m*	\$1.078m**	\$0	\$0

* Most centres pay for their own utilities (but not all). A majority of the cost is associated with Quality and Affordability Subsidies. The costings assume that the infrastructure and maintenance levies paid by centres cover council's costs, which is not the case.

Council has sought to address some of the additional subsidy costs through a business efficiencies project. It is intended that this will be realised in the 2019/20 financial year and expected to reduce the additional subsidy that has historically been provided to Council-run childcare services.

Community-Managed Centres

Council directly subsidises childcare services to make them affordable and accessible to the whole community. Council indirectly subsidises childcare services through its partnerships with external organisations (community-managed centres) by way of leasing Council facilities at a discounted rate. In May 2016, Council sought advice regarding National Competition Policy (NCP) compliance and the subsidies provided to community-managed centres. Council was advised they were compliant with the policy in subsidising community-managed centres, as they are not-for-profit providers.

Council Run Centres

In 2017/18, Council conducted a financial assessment to evaluate Council subsidies in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Better Regulation (OCBR). This assessment based on four Council-run childcare services shows that Council subsidised these centres (before making an allowance for competitive disadvantage) to the sum of \$2.04 million in 2017/18, as follows:

Item	\$m
Operational losses	0.72
Council overheads allocated [ex accommodation]	0.60
Cost paid direct by council	0.79
Accommodation provided	0.49
Subsidies less levies received	(0.56)
Level of Council subsidies – 2017/18	2.04

*As of 30 June 2018

**Barring Djinang excluded as it opened in this financial year and is still in a start-up phase

Under the NCP, Council would be required to reduce level of subsidies and/or increase fees to cover the subsidised amount. Council is able to take into account a number of considerations in working towards NCP compliance:

Whether there is a public interest that would support the subsidising of services

The cost of implementing measures to reduce the level of subsidies

Whether Council is at a competitive disadvantage in providing the services compared to other operators

NCP is an important consideration guiding the selection of options outlined in this Policy options paper. Further, the process of collecting and analysing the data to assess NCP compliance highlighted a number of areas where potential operational improvements need to be addressed.

Approach and Timeline for addressing the NCP

The Children's Services Policy development process is intended to be complete in 2019 and will enable Council to finalise its position on its future role in children's services and begin the transition towards compliance with the requirements of the National Competition Policy.

Collaborative networks

Over the years, Council has supported a number of initiatives that have succeeded in developing close working relationships with a range of service providers. This has included providing facilities, subsidies, and grants for services and specific projects. Networks that support collegiate and professional networking include:

1. Kindergarten Network
2. School Transition Network (comprising schools and kindergartens within the municipality)
3. Childcare Network (made up of Council- and community-managed services)

In addition, toy libraries have built relationships amongst themselves and Council meets regularly with community-managed childcare and kindergarten centres. This has resulted in a base level of collaboration between Council and service providers that can be built upon.

Council's relationships have been more effectively managed with service providers who are in receipt of Council facilities or funding. Council has fewer relationships with private or independent providers of childcare or kindergarten services, and has not traditionally had regular network meetings with toy libraries or playgroups. With the establishment of new networks, Council can play a leadership role in assisting the sector to provide a more joined-up and easy to navigate system for families.

Quality of Services

National Quality Standard Ratings in Port Phillip

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is an independent statutory authority that assists governments in implementing the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care throughout Australia. The scores for Port Phillip's childcare and kindergarten centres show that the education delivered within services in the municipality are of varying quality.

National Quality Standard ratings for Childcare and Kindergarten in Port Phillip

NQS Score	Number of childcare and kindergartens
Excellent	1 centre
Exceeding	16 centres
Meeting	14 centres
Working towards	6 centres
Provisional	1 centre – opening April 2019

*ACECQA ratings - correct as of January 2019

Port Phillip has one of only nine centres in Victoria rated excellent — Clarendon Children's Centre. While a clear majority of centres in the municipality (82%) are meeting or exceeding all National Quality Standards, there are six centres (two of which are community-managed, and in Council facilities) that are working towards the standards, and may require additional support (refer to Attachment 4 for further information).

Cluster Management in Port Phillip

Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM) was introduced in Victoria in 2003 to strengthen the management and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs and to provide kindergarten staff with professional employment arrangements. The Early Years Management (EYM) Policy Framework was introduced in 2016 and replaced the KCM. EYM is a four-way partnership between families, the EYM, local government and the Department of Education and Training.

An EYM partnership is a long-term arrangement between an EYM organisation and a kindergarten service. It is driven by the opportunity to improve outcomes for children and for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders in the community. In an EYM arrangement, the Committee of Management (CoM) becomes a Parent Advisory Group (PAG), and the role of Approved Provider, Employer and Funded Agency moves to the EYM provider.

Some key statistics from DET regarding EYM and kindergarten services in Victoria include:

- Just under 60% of eligible kindergarten services (community-based, not-for-profit) are in EYM arrangements
- 38% of all funded kindergarten services (approx. 2400 services in Victoria) are in EYM arrangements
- 47% of all kindergarten enrolments are in an EYM-managed service
- Of 16 services that were re-assessed from 2013 to 2017 after moving to EYM from standalone provision, nine of these increased their assessment and rating outcome (57%), compared to 38% of funded services not part of an EYM
- Analysis of data for all services in EYM that were re-rated indicates they were more likely to improve in quality than non-EYM services (45% had an improved quality rating compared to 38% of other services)

Other barriers to access in Port Phillip

- As identified through Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, a higher proportion of Port Phillip families are being assessed for and are accessing Family and Community Support Services.
- Port Phillip has a lower kindergarten participation rate than the Victorian average (82.1% compared to 96.2%). This may be partially due to population transience, and low participation by CALD communities.
- Need to ensure all services provide fully inclusive, welcoming and supportive environments for all children and families.



What lies ahead?

Through this paper, the Council seeks to identify key challenges for how we can support children and families in the City, and ensure we have the best plan for our community's future needs. This means facing the current and future challenges, and harnessing the opportunities. These challenges and opportunities include:

- population growth and future demand
- affordability
- appropriate infrastructure
- compliance and fitness for purpose
- policy and legislative change
- financial sustainability of the sector
- service planning and monitoring
- emerging trends in early years' learning

Population growth and future demand

With a 2017 population of just over 110,000, Port Phillip is growing rapidly. We are forecast to grow by more than 25,000 residents by 2027, increasing to an expected population of just over 145,000 residents by 2031, growth of more than 50%. We will experience unprecedented growth in Fishermans Bend, significant forecast growth in the Domain precinct (around the new Anzac station), as well as a healthy population increase in existing Port Phillip areas.



Population growth will not be uniform across the City, with St Kilda Road, Sandridge/Wirraway and Montague neighbourhoods projected to grow significantly. This will increase demand for and access to Council services and amenities in these areas. Health inequities and wealth disparity may be intensified if people find it difficult to access quality programs, services and amenities that support childhood development.

Population growth will drive an increase in urban density. Port Phillip will see more medium to high density residential development and continued pressure on land use. As housing density increases, all residents, but particularly families with children, will require access to suitable services.

0-4 Year Olds in Port Phillip

The total population of children aged 0-4 years is growing rapidly, and is forecast to increase from 4,888 in 2016 to 6,348 in 2031 (a total of 1,460, or almost 30%).^{xxxix} Future growth in this age group is expected across most of the municipality with the South Melbourne, St Kilda Road and St Kilda neighbourhoods showing the greatest increase. With the further development and establishment of Fishermen's Bend, Montague, and Sandridge/Wirraway are forecast to show proportional population growth. Two neighbourhoods will show a decline in this age group by 2031 (Port Melbourne and Middle Park/Albert Park), with one remaining stable (Elwood/Ripponlea).

Children 0-4 years by precinct

	Census figures*			Forecast figures**			
Geographic area	2006	2011	2016	2018	2021	2026	2031
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
City of Port Phillip	3912	4580	4888	5399	5541	5926	6348
East St Kilda neighbourhood	700	819	812	960	971	979	989
Elwood - Ripponlea neighbourhood	768	907	817	979	990	962	939
Middle Park - Albert Park neighbourhood	667	711	644	650	612	621	629
Port Melbourne neighbourhood	719	804	882	987	947	946	954
South Melbourne neighbourhood	789	418	475	555	628	680	715
St Kilda neighbourhood	587	701	714	869	875	926	935
St Kilda Road neighbourhood	181	233	321	382	448	504	514
Montague***					25	226	494
Sandridge***					17	54	163
Wirraway***					4	62	124

*Sourced from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016

**Sourced from Forecast id 2018, 2021, 2026, 2031

***Sourced from Fishermans Bend Indicative Populations by Age, supplied by Land and Use Population Research (2017).

Demand for Services by Workers

Utilisation of early years' services in Port Phillip are impacted by both resident and worker populations. In Council-run childcare services, residents average approximately 70% of the utilised places, with 30% used by workers/non-residents. Port Phillip's 93,387 worker population (refer to Attachment 5) has an impact on service demand, which impacts access to early years' services, especially childcare and kindergarten.

We also expect to see a significant increase in our worker population, which will have an impact on the demand for early childhood education and care services.

Therefore, in planning for future demand, Council have factored in a minimum 20% worker population use across the market for both childcare and kindergarten services in existing Port Phillip, and a ratio of one place for every 75 workers in Fishermans Bend.

Current and Future Demand by Service Area

An audit in 2018 was undertaken to understand current capacity and places available within the market across all early years' services to establish current and future demand for each of the service areas (refer to Attachment 5 and 6).

Toy Libraries

Council's current service provision benchmark is one toy library for every 2000 children. The data tells us there will be a requirement for an additional toy library from 2026, and a further 1.5 by 2031. Toy libraries currently operate on average three hours a week. Consideration should be given to increasing funding for additional operating hours and toys in order to increase access and availability to current services in Port Phillip, and address the service gap in Fishermans Bend going forward. Community feedback regarding toy libraries noted that opening outside of work hours may increase accessibility for some families with parents who are working. Functionality considerations for storage and similar facilities will also need to be factored in.

Kindergartens

Kindergarten services can be either sessional (15 hours of funded kindergarten per week) or extended hours (a kindergarten program where extended hours of care may be offered).

Key service levels identified to forecast the future demand for kindergarten are as follows:

- Of all four year olds in the municipality, 61% are predicted to attend kindergarten in a childcare setting and 39% are predicted to attend a stand alone kindergarten (either sessional or extended hours).
- Of those four year olds attending kindergarten, 71% are predicted to attend 15 hours per week of government- funded and parent-subsidised sessional kindergarten, where the rooms are used 5 days per week.
- The other 29% are predicted to attend extended hours education and care kindergarten programs, where the average time spent is three days per week.
- In addition, it is estimated that there will be a demand generated by workers living outside Port Phillip who wish to utilise childcare near their employment. This has been estimated as an average addition of 20% of resident demand for all neighbourhoods except Montague, which has been estimated at 50% because of its proximity to a significant-sized business area in Fishermans Bend.

Our kindergartens currently have limited capacity to support an additional 202 places by 2031. Further, three year olds will be eligible for funded kindergarten places over the next few years. This is likely to increase demand for kindergarten services specifically outside of childcare. Consideration needs to be given to increasing kindergarten facilities and their capacity to cater for funded three year olds in Port Phillip.

Playgroups

Council's current service provision benchmark is one playgroup for every 50 children aged 0-3 years. By 2031, an additional 17 groups or sessions (113 in total) will be required. The majority of this new demand will be in the Fishermans Bend area. However, there are far fewer playgroups operating in the northern end of the city, as they do not have the available, dedicated space that is in both Elwood/Ripponlea and St Kilda East/Balaclava neighbourhoods.

Childcare

According to a recently commissioned report, childcare places in the municipality are primarily vacant on Mondays and Fridays and within the 3-5 year old age group. Also, 65% of current vacancies are only available in Port and South Melbourne neighbourhoods compared to neighbourhoods in the middle and southern end of the city. Therefore, even though there is a sufficient geographic spread of services, there is demand in East St Kilda, Elwood and Ripponlea and St Kilda neighbourhoods.

Forecast demand shows that no further places will be required until 2031 (at 146 places), but the vacancies may not exist where they are required. Vacancies in Port and South Melbourne may be able to assist with the growing the population in Fishermans Bend to 2031.

While it is not possible to confidently predict the future supply of childcare places across Port Phillip beyond known Development Applications (DA) that are approved, we can assume the market will likely continue to address a high proportion of demand for childcare places for workers and residents in Port Phillip.

Affordability

Socio-economic factors have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Focusing on access, affordability and quality in early years' services alone has not addressed the City's lower than state average participation in kindergarten services. Addressing barriers to participation is crucial to meeting the emotional, social, health and educational developmental needs of all children. Ensuring access, participation and retention in quality early years' services for all members of our community, especially our most vulnerable (those facing disability, disadvantage, transient lifestyles, or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) will become increasingly challenging, especially with the increase in growth and density outlined above.

Subsidies provided by both federal and state governments are in place to reduce the costs of early childhood education and care services, to both enable workforce participation and to support universal participation. Subsidies include childcare subsidy, kindergarten funding and fee subsidy, early start, funding inclusion support packages and Health Care Card subsidies.

Affordability of Childcare

According to a study conducted by Domain, Port Phillip has consistently high childcare fees compared to the Melbourne average.^{xi} Childcare fees in the City cost on average \$133.90 (refer to Attachment 3). Cost of care is one of the main reasons one in five parents do not participate in the workforce, especially where more than one child requires care.^{xii}

Significant reforms to the way early education and care services are funded were introduced by the Commonwealth government in 2018. These included a move to sector neutral, unit-based funding and the promotion of a market-based response to deliver early years' education and care services, and the tightening of the Activity Test requirements for Childcare Subsidy (CCS) introduced from 1 July 2018. In response, in 2018/19 Port Phillip introduced a transition safety net through the Early Education Grant (EEG) for families who may be disadvantaged by these changes, and to support access in early years' education and care for all children.

Council and service providers have been funding the gap in fees and costs to ensure that children experiencing vulnerability have continuity of attendance at childcare. This is usually in the form of debt write off, which can have an impact on financial viability.

There is acknowledgement that centres require support to help families navigate the existing funding and subsidy system available to them, and that there are times that families suffer from situational vulnerability that may be a contributing factor to the debt write offs mentioned above.

Affordability of Kindergartens

Funded four-year-old kindergarten is free or low-cost for families who are eligible for state government funding. Eligible three year olds can access early start kindergarten in funded four year old kindergarten.

Outside of the group who are eligible for these subsidies, the parent contribution cost of kindergarten in Port Phillip varies across centres, ranging from \$550 a term to \$1,182.50. This is considered to be relatively affordable (refer to Attachment 3). However, our very low participation rates in kindergarten services in Port Phillip need to be addressed in relation to affordability and other access factors.

Affordability of Toy Libraries

Families can access toy libraries by purchasing an annual membership that allows them to borrow toys. All toy libraries give significant discounts for Health Care Card holders, however there is not a consistent approach, or clear support for any other vulnerable or low-income groups.

Affordability of Playgroups

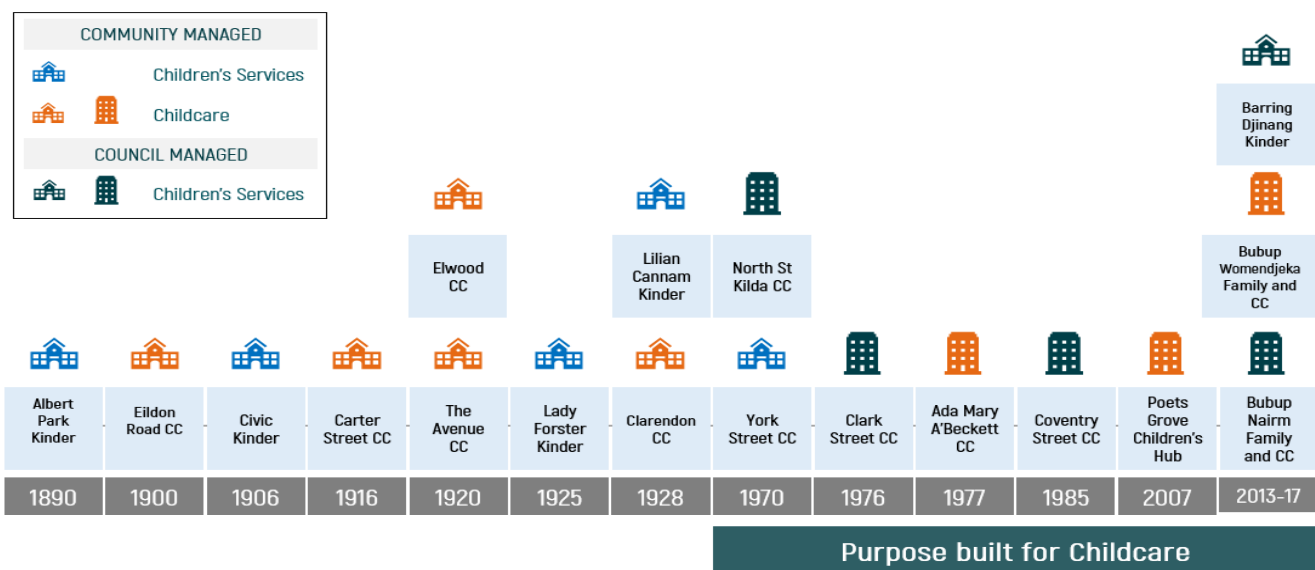
Across Port Phillip, community playgroups are offered at little to no cost (some require a small payment to cover insurance, tea, coffee, and toy purchase costs). Supported playgroups are also available at no cost, and have a facilitator who is employed to coordinate and deliver weekly sessions that provide support to parents and children.

Appropriate infrastructure

The Children's Services asset portfolio comprises a diverse building stock, with a varied history that includes many buildings that originally served other purposes, most notably past residences. The following statistics highlight some of the challenges we face:

- 59% of the portfolio is over 50 years old, with four of those buildings being over 100 years old
- Only three facilities are less than 10 years old
- 50% have undergone significant renovations since they were constructed, in many cases to convert the buildings to early years' service from other uses, but 64% of those were undertaken in the 1980s or earlier
- Only 41% were purpose-built as early years' services facilities
- 32% were originally residences that have been converted.

Age of Council buildings



Redevelopment of buildings already converted from other purposes, many over 40 years ago, can be difficult and expensive to achieve compliance and functionality requirements. Much of the portfolio requires significant work and expense to comply with both the National Construction Code and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.

When buildings are constructed or redeveloped they are made compliant to the regulations of the time. The main reason buildings fail on compliance is that gradual and constant changes in compliance regulations occur regularly. While Council endeavors to keep up with changes that have a minor impact on the building, there are many changes that require significant works that would impact the operation of the centre.

Risk levels will remain, and in some cases will increase over time. Significant upgrades to the portfolio are urgently required to reduce the risk profile. Functionality issues have also been identified in the recent Fit-For-Purpose audit. These issues impact operational efficiencies, environment, and safety standards of the facilities.

An Asset Summary (refer to Attachment 7) outlines asset by asset the compliant and functionality issues, costs to remedy, and capacity of the asset to meet compliance standards and future demand.

Compliance and fitness for purpose

Early years infrastructure must provide high-quality facilities that enable the effective delivery of connected, continuous programs and services for children into the early years of school. Facilities must adhere to specific details for safety, security, licensing and regulatory compliance, and the National Quality Standards, to achieve a high-quality rating, and for maintenance and occupational health and safety reasons. Facilities are also required to comply with the National Construction Code and relevant Australian Standards, and in some instances to higher standards where specifically identified for service requirements.

Fitness-for-purpose is a critical component to be able to accurately assess Council's assets in alignment to service requirements. Buildings may be structurally sound but unable to meet modern expectations and requirements to enable service delivery. All who use the space need to feel a sense of ownership and identity with their environment. It is often older buildings that are structurally sound, or heritage listed, and have have significant cultural and social attachment for the community, that are the most difficult to adapt to meet these needs.

Site planning and building design should also consider the ability to add future services, considering possible future site access points, the relationships between services and circulation through the planned facility.

Kindergartens and childcare centres

Sessional kindergarten facilities and long-day childcare centres operate from venues that are licensed with the Federal Government as education and care facilities. The licence prescribes the maximum number of children that can attend the facilities at any one time, for example a centre that is licensed for 28 places can accommodate a maximum of 28 children. The number of places that a centre can be licensed for is determined by the eligible floor area of the children's play room (3.25m² per place) and the outdoor play area at the centre (7m² per place).

Kindergarten, long-day childcare and family day care centres must comply with the facility requirements specified in the National Education and Care Act and Regulations (2011 and 2012 respectively), Building Code of Australia (BCA), Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations (OH&S) and various Australian Standards. These requirements relate to the size and design of children's play rooms, outdoor play areas, fencing heights, administration rooms, amenities, washing and laundry facilities, food preparation facilities, disability access and safety of children and employees.

Minimum 66 place centres are required for co-contribution funding from the State Government for facility renewal.

Toy Libraries

- A toy library in a shared space needs minimum 35m² storage room and 80m² display and collection room
- Ideally has a separate entrance
- Other facility needs include large adult and children's toilets, accessible toilet and changing facilities, kitchen, storage, outdoor spaces

Playgroups

- Dedicated playgroup spaces should have indoor outdoor flow, ideally located next to a park or have an outdoor space incorporated into their design
- Connecting doors if more than two play rooms
- Space requirements include playrooms, adult and children's toilets, disability toilet, kitchen, storage, outdoor space, break out area for parents to sit, and good visibility

Policy and legislative changes

Since the last Children's Services Policy was developed (2006), there have been 19 state and federal legislative changes. The most recent changes to the Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy led to the adoption of the City's Interim Childcare Policy 2018, which will remain in place until a new Children's Services Policy is developed.

Ongoing federal and state reforms in the early years' sector (for example, the introduction of funded three-year-old kindergarten) will require changes to the way Port Phillip children's services operate, to address gaps for those in our community who need it most. In addition, changing legislation poses continued challenges for Council's ageing infrastructure.

Financial sustainability of the sector

Financial sustainability is achieved when service and infrastructure levels and standards are delivered according to a long-term plan without the need to significantly increase fees or significantly reduce service offering. Responsible long-term financial sustainability ensures:

- Public resources are distributed fairly between current and future ratepayers, and this will be achieved by maintaining a balanced budget or operating surplus
- Funding is made available for the cyclic maintenance, replacement and upgrade of assets to meet community expectations
- All services are in a healthy financial position
- Consistent delivery of essential community services and the efficient development of infrastructure
- Current and future Council fees consider stability and predictability for the community.

The increasing cost of providing services coupled with the increasing demand stemming from population growth will become a significant challenge for Council to address. Childcare centres currently operating on Council premises (whether they be community- or council-operated) are all subsidised by Council to some degree. Early years' services and infrastructure require significant, ongoing investment to ensure they are compliant and aligned to legislative changes.

Funding priorities

The state government is focusing funding towards the following early years infrastructure priorities:

- Increasing infrastructure capacity for kindergarten programs for children in the year before school
- Promoting integrated service delivery where families can access early childhood education and care, health and development and family services at one place
- Improving access to local and responsive early childhood services for children from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged families
- Establishing early childhood infrastructure on or near school sites

It seeks to achieve these priorities through the Children's Facilities Capital Program, which has three streams of major grants funding for early learning centres, each with identified minimum requirements. These are summarised in the table below.

Requirements for major grants funding

	Requirements	% of cost funded	Capped amount funded
Integrated facilities	Minimum 66 places for kindergarten, plus LDC, MCH, allied services, and multi-purpose space	40%	\$1.6m
New facilities	Minimum 66 places for kindergarten, plus either LCC, 3YO kindergarten, MCH or playgroups	75%	\$650,000
Upgrades to facilities	Must increase places or improve the quality of education	75%	\$350,000

Within Fishermans Bend, an Infrastructure Contributions Plan will be developed to support facility and service development.

Service planning and monitoring

According to a recent Victorian Auditor General's Report,^{xlii} state and local government need to take a more active role in estimating demand for and supply of services (including the long-term availability of kindergarten infrastructure) to ensure that government objectives are achieved, and that there is timely delivery of services and related infrastructure for local communities.

Private and independent childcare and early learning centre service provision has expanded over the last 10 years in line with demand for services. Despite this, Council will need to continue to monitor and track the sector's ability to meet growing demand, as well as ensuring inclusive, quality services continue regardless of who the providers are.

There are currently gaps in monitoring non-regulated services, specifically toy libraries and playgroups. Although all organisations are legally responsible for self-regulation, there may be a role for Council in supporting education and capacity-building initiatives that support a safe environment for all children.

Data collection

According to the Victorian Auditor Generals Report, more needs to be done to improve the collection of system-wide information on participation and the reasons for under-participation in certain services. The Department of Education and Training has introduced positive initiatives to improve such issues as kindergarten participation by vulnerable groups. However, neither DET nor councils have a robust understanding of the major reasons for low participation in both maternal child health and kindergarten services within particular local government areas. Port Phillip is one of these, due to a lack of standardised data management systems and non-mandatory service reporting and no participation in centralised kindergarten enrolment systems to support and track against demographic statistics.

Integration, co-location and collaboration

Service integration can be defined as individuals and organisations working together to respond to specific problems and to deliver outcomes that are less effectively achieved by working alone.^{xliii} Integration can occur locationally (for example through children and family hubs) or virtually.

Research indicates that disadvantaged children and families are far less likely to participate in services. Research also shows that children from disadvantaged families are the ones to show the most benefit from connection to early years' services. Integration helps make connections between children from disadvantaged families and the services they require, faster and more often. It helps children's services

who have concerns about families outside their own area of expertise to help families make the necessary connection and referral to relevant services.

Siloed service systems have difficulty effectively responding to the multiple and complex needs of increasing numbers of families with young children. Integrated service delivery is an efficient and effective way of delivering the diverse services required by families.^{xliiv} Some of the ways of achieving integrated services is through the development of integrated hubs, and supporting staff to work in integrated ways.

A recent states' and territories' commissioned report on improving educational outcomes for children states that collaboration between parents, communities and early childhood professionals ensures optimal opportunities are available for enhancing children's development in the formative stage of life.^{xliv}

Co-location

There are many ways in which a joined-up sector can operate. Schools have been identified as key sites for integrated and co-located models of service, as they can be more than places for learning. This is particularly relevant in growth areas. Schools have potential to be used by different groups and for purposes that benefit the whole community. To maximise value, the Victorian Government is prioritising the transformation of many education facilities into integrated community centres that can bring people together, connect local services and foster community pride.^{xlvi}

The future directions for the Victorian Government are to:

- Continue to identify opportunities for co-location of education facilities for early childhood, school, training and TAFE to help support lifelong learning.
- Support the transformation of schools into community facilities and improve the quality of services and education for students and their communities.
- Strengthen school networks by encouraging the sharing of facilities across schools in local areas to promote equity and integration within the community.

Collaboration

Port Phillip currently champions collaborative practices through the Collaborative Practice Framework 2016.

Greater collaboration can bring significant community benefits:

- **Single-entry points** - While multi-entry points are very useful for families with complex needs, a single-entry point is also useful for parents who only want to provide their details once, for example, a centralised waiting list for childcare.
- **Standardised referrals** - Relevant organisations can standardise processes for referrals into or out of services, obtaining consent from parents, and information sharing.
- **Collaborative industry information sharing** - The new Child Information Sharing scheme (CIS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVIS) will enable professionals from health, human services, justice, policy, and education to share information to promote children's wellbeing and safety and better protect all Victorian Children.

Collaboration to develop a more navigable service system requires quality referrals. A quality referral is one in which service providers understand the extent to which a family will need assistance in accessing services (e.g. the difference between providing contact details for a service, and following up with a family to see how the referral went). Knowing when and how to do a quality referral requires training and experience.

Emerging trends in early learning

Play as early learning

Play is essential for child learning and development. The importance of play is noted in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is also a strong evidence base regarding the importance of play in a child's development. Play is important for optimal brain development. For example, play stimulates the productions of proteins in the part of the brain responsible for organising, monitoring and planning for the future. While play is important for all children and young people it is particularly crucial for children aged under 3. Ninety percent of brain development occurs during before the age of 3. Access to quality play and learning opportunities during this time has the strongest effect in supporting the development of the child and laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning and optimal development into young adulthood and beyond.

There is a large volume of literature demonstrating that play is associated with the development of language and literacy, sociability and mathematical ability. Services that enable children to play are fundamental to early childhood development. Play occurs within a context and services that support play are a key method of engaging with and building the capacity of vulnerable families; fostering community connection for the parents and carers of young children and providing access to play equipment for children. Playgroups were the first movement to support developmental play and over time, three types of playgroups have emerged – community, supported, and rostered. A unique feature of playgroups is providing a place for families to meet other families in their community and for playgroup members to strengthen connections and to support each other. Playgroups Alongside the development of playgroups, the toy libraries initiative has grown nationally and today provides unique access to child-appropriate materials and equipment in an environment where costs and space can act as significant barriers to private access. Presidents of toy libraries in Port Phillip report that toy libraries are attractive to families with small apartments or houses with a lack of space for toys, which will be of increasing importance for local families, especially as density increases.^{xlvii}

Nature Play

There are increasing concerns about the disconnection between children and nature.^{xlviii} Playing outdoors is important for developing capacity for creativity, symbolic play, problem solving and intellectual development. Outdoor play has clear physical benefits for developing children, including helping children to acquire gross motor skills, eye-hand coordination and helping to prevent obesity.^{xlix}

Interest is growing in nature play for Australian children. The not-for-profit organisation Nature Play operates across Australia with a mission to 'make nature play a normal part of childhood again.' It provides a range of resources for parents, organisations and educators to understand the benefits of nature play and learn how to incorporate it into children's lives. Private enterprise is also responding to the growth of interest in nature play by offering facilitated playgroups in bush and beach locations across Melbourne (for example Eco Explorers).

Bush settings for children to play in can range from completely 'natural' (the temporary spaces for kindergarten education in the north of Melbourne), to more 'landscaped' (the Ian Potter Foundation's Children's Garden in Melbourne's Royal Botanical Gardens. A number of councils across Australia are beginning to offer natural playgrounds instead of the traditional play equipment (see the Morialta Nature Playground in the City of Adelaide Hills and Braithwaite Park in the City of Vincent).

The Department of Education and Training encourages childcare and kindergarten providers to include natural elements in their outdoor areas, and to provide increased opportunities for sensory play. More recently, bush kindergarten has been included as a kindergarten-approved service by DET. Bush kindergartens exist in different pockets of Melbourne. Two popular models are dedicated bush kindergartens (where children enrol in the bush kindergarten) and bush kindergartens that are excursions (where children who are enrolled in a local kindergarten regularly visit a bush kindergarten location). For bush kindergarten excursions, parents typically drop off and pick up their children from the bush kindergarten location, instead of their usual kindergarten. Beach kindergarten seems less

developed than bush kindergarten, however one of Port Phillip's kindergarten services is currently experimenting in this space.

National Quality Standards and the Importance of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning spaces are a desired feature of learning environments across Australia. They offer a range of possibilities not available in indoor play. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education.

The NQS Quality Area Three states:

Physical environments refer to both sustainability and the physical aspects of outdoor environments that facilitate childrens learning.

Standard 3.2 — The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.

Standard 3.3 — The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contribtues to a sustainable future.

Port Phillip is home to a large foreshore and a relatively large amount of open space per head of population for an inner urban council. Though a significant amount of this space is crown land, Council has a good working relationship with the state government to advocate for the use of this land. In addition, we already have one kindergarten that is experimenting with beach kindergarten and another childcare centre offering nature play opportunities nearby their centre. As yet, Council has not developed nature playgrounds, but has the capacity to convert existing playgrounds as they age and require replacement. There are several sites that would create ideal spaces for children's natural play spaces — the foreshore, Albert Park Lake (which has significant wildlife), park areas with native and indigenous plantings, and the St Kilda Botanical Gardens.

Our increasing density will mean these types of play environments will become more vital.



Policy recommendations

Policy objectives

The Port Phillip community and early years' service providers worked closely with Council to develop key policy objectives to underpin the development of the new Children's Services Policy. The policy objectives articulate and prioritise the goals for children's services in the City.

1. Council will work with partners to ensure that every child, regardless of their abilities or background, will have access to affordable, safe, accessible, quality early years' services to support development to their full potential.
2. Council will understand current and future needs of families in the city and influence the provision of early years services to meet those needs.
3. Early years' services will be financially sustainable and consistently aligned with relevant policies and legislation at the local, state and federal level.
4. Council will encourage collaboration across all early years' services.
5. Families will have access to the services and information they need, at the times they need it, to make choices appropriate for their needs.
6. Early years services will be supported by safe, accessible, contemporary, fit-for-purpose, sustainable facilities and environments.
7. Children will have access to natural environments that allow them to learn about and experience play in nature. This includes natural environments within early years' services.



Policy Objective One

Council will work with partners to ensure that every child, regardless of their abilities or background, will have access to affordable, safe, accessible, quality early years' services to support development to their full potential.

What the community has told us

Cost of care can be prohibitive — Early years' services and care needs to be affordable for families. Parents have reported that childcare costs are prohibitive to them returning to work, particularly where they require placement for more than one child in early years' services. The costs can be even more prohibitive where the childcare subsidy is not sufficient to cover the higher costs of care required for children with disability.

Support access for all — Identified as a priority by the Port Phillip community. Of the 212 community members who participated in the Stage I community consultation, 32 identified that access to high-quality and low-cost services should be available to all children who live in the municipality.

Target and support vulnerability — Strong endorsement (48 participants) in the ratings given to support children facing disadvantage or vulnerability to access services.

Support professional development and training — To enable staff and volunteer committees of management (CoM) to be across all regulations and legislation, as well as build pedagogical practice to enable quality services.

Support improved user experience – As a measure of both access and quality.

Low kindergarten participation by children from migrant and refugee backgrounds – Identified by teachers and educators.

Where do we need to focus?

There is now an established market for early childhood education and care services in Port Phillip, which seems to be meeting demand, however within that are certain market failures.

- Financial barriers for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.
- Barriers for children and families with multiple and complex needs, whom the evidence tells us benefit the most from participation.
- Absence of clear and transparent information about the market. It is currently difficult to ascertain what services are available, their service offering, for example specialised services, educational philosophy (Steiner, Montessori or Reggio Emilia), and fee comparison.

It is Council's overall responsibility to work with funders and providers to ensure access for all to quality and safe services. There is a wide and varying market delivering services and Council plays a part in that market. However, there are clear areas for Council to focus on.

- Ensuring the market can continue to deliver quality and safe services within resources and capacity.
- Addressing low kindergarten participation in Port Phillip.
- Work to mitigate and overcome any other failures in the future.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation 1.1

Create a new grant program to provide a financial subsidy for families experiencing ongoing and situational vulnerability and disadvantage. This subsidy will be available for all eligible City of Port Phillip community members accessing any Early Years' Service in the City.

Policy recommendation 1.2

Support Child Safe Standards implementation across all early years' services (especially toy libraries and playgroups) through an education and capacity-building program.

Policy Recommendation 1.3

Fund an early intervention outreach role to work with relevant service providers in the City (child protection, homelessness, mental health, family violence) to increase participation of vulnerable children in early childhood education services, especially kindergarten services.

Policy recommendation 1.4

Develop a Children's Services website that will provide information on all children's services in the City. This will include services provided, vacancies, specialist expertise, fee levels, educational approaches, target groups served and more. Participation in the website should be a condition for services to receive Council grants.



Policy Objective Two

Council will understand current and future needs of families in the city and influence the provision of early years' services to meet the those needs.

What the Community Has Told us

- **Access to flexible services** — Especially flexible hours of operation (times, days and venues offered), but also the size of services.
- **More sessional kindergarten** — With greater clarity around options for childcare, sessional kindergarten and extended hours kindergarten.
- **Equitable spread** — Services across the municipality.
- **Planning** — Available and current data for now and the future.

Where Do We Need to Focus?

Childcare — There will be a requirement for 146 additional childcare places required by 2031. (This figure does not consider development applications for future services, which are likely to be able to meet this demand.)

Kindergarten — There were no additional four-year-old Kindergarten places required in 2018. However, by 2021 there will be 40 places required, 88 places in 2026 and 152 places by 2031. The recent change to provision of funding for three-year-old kindergarten will mean a further increase in demand for kindergarten places. This will need to be factored into future planning, especially for facility requirements to cater for both funded three- and four-year-old kindergarten.

Playgroup — There are no additional playgroup requirements until 2026 when there will be 10 additional sessions, and 21 additional sessions by 2031. These can operate from dedicated facilities, functional multipurpose spaces or private spaces.

Toy Library — Two additional toy library spaces or services will be required by 2031, with an additional demand for one service from 2021. An increase in operating hours and functionality of existing facilities would likely meet this future demand. A dedicated toy library facility in Fishermans Bend should be considered.

Note — future demand will be considered within integrated hub settings (refer to Policy Objective 6).

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendation 2.1

Review and update the service model for toy libraries to include:

- Review funding model and operating subsidy to increase operating hours at current toy library sites to increase access and availability to services for residents now and into the future in existing Port Phillip areas.
- Develop one new toy library site in Fishermans Bend to service the growing population, as part of an integrated hub.

Policy recommendation 2.2

Monitor, track, encourage and report on the market response to childcare demand.

Policy recommendation 2.3

Review and update the service model for playgroups to include:

- A dedicated, or several functional multipurpose, playgroup space/s to be considered in Fishermans Bend, as part of an integrated hub.
- An additional playgroup or children's multipurpose space in the north end of Port Phillip to be considered (South Melbourne or Port Melbourne neighbourhoods).
- Make available the playgroup rooms in Bubup Nairn Family and Children's Centre across five days of the week and transition other programs into other Family Services Rooms in the building to increase availability and capacity.

Policy recommendation 2.4

With the addition of funded three-year-old Kindergarten, consider transitioning current Council assets into kindergarten facilities to meet future demand where relevant, especially where the private market is meeting the demand/need for childcare services in that area.



Policy Objective Three

Early years' services will be financially sustainable and consistently aligned with relevant policies and legislation at the local, state and federal level.'

What the community has Told us

- **Enable long-term planning for viability** — For example, longer lease arrangements with tenants.
- **Targeted funding** — For those that need it most, taking into consideration the unique attributes of each service and its participants, with linked data/evidence.

Where Do We Need to Focus?

- Implementing business efficiencies to reduce the operational subsidy Council invests into childcare services.
- Council should be compliant and seek competitive neutrality in its business operations.
- Council should seek a return on Council assets where relevant, including both social and economic benefits.
- Council should review all its current subsidies and levies (operational, maintenance and infrastructure) to ensure they are delivering the best return on investment, with equitable cost allocation, articulated outcomes and KPIs.

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendation 3.1

Council to decide the future service model for childcare services from five policy options (A, B, C, D, E).

- A. Council continues operating and subsidising childcare services as is.
 - This option is likely to be in non-compliant with the National Competition Policy.
 - It is unlikely Council will be able to maintain and renew all existing assets to meet current and future demand, functionality and compliance issues.
 - Council subsidies will continue to be untargeted and not based on need.
 - Some assets will not be fit-for-purpose or compliant with legislation.
 - Could explore co-funding or lease-to-own opportunities with tenants of council-owned facilities.
- B. Council continues operating services, but at full cost recovery.
 - This option is likely to meet National Competition Policy requirements.
 - Requires a review of infrastructure and maintenance levies to ensure they cover all renewal and utility costs.
 - Will require increased fees at Council-run childcare services to allow for cost recovery (\$5-\$15 per day).
 - Explore co-funding or lease-to-own opportunities with tenants of council-owned facilities.
 - Continued support for community managed centres.
- C. Council ceases operating Council-run childcare services and transition services to not-for-profit providers.
 - This would include full cost recovery rental arrangements, and utilities at cost to new owner.
 - Meets all industrial obligations under relevant agreements and legislation.
 - This could include purchase, co-funding or lease-to-own opportunities with not-for-profit providers.
 - Operational savings to Council
 - Asset sales to support transition arrangements

- D. Council ceases operating Council-run services and sells or transitions assets for other Council purposes.
- This assumes that the market will meet current and future demand.
 - Uncertain as to how market failures will be overcome.
 - Operational savings to Council.
 - Asset sales to support transition arrangements
- E. Council chooses a hybrid model based on above options.

Policy recommendation 3.2

Review all funding, subsidy and levy arrangements to ensure return on investment and KPI deliverables for acquittal purposes.



Policy Objective Four

Council will encourage collaboration across all early years' services.

What the community has told us

During the community engagement, families talked about their lack of knowledge of the services that are available, and when and how to engage with them. The children's services sector can feel fragmented and difficult to navigate for families. Research shows that a sector that is better integrated and provides easily navigable pathways for families can increase early diagnosis of issues and create better outcomes for children.ⁱ

Fifty-four participants specifically talked about navigating the service system, with suggestions about how this might be improved.ⁱⁱ The themes included:

- Reducing the administrative requirements for accessing services, including the management of service waitlists and greater transparency about how they operate.
- Greater transparency and assistance to educate the community about how the children's services sector operates, what services are available, how they are funded and how families can both access services and transition between different services.
- Making it easier for parents to access services through co-locating or visiting between services. For example, having allied health professionals and/or Maternal Child Health nurses visit playgroups, and sharing information about transition to school requirements with parents of children in kindergarten.
- Supporting parental involvement in services, with evidence quoted from recent research that supports the achievement of better outcomes for children when parents are involved.
- Building community partnerships across the sector, helping to build transitions and better integration between services.
- Workforce professional development opportunities being developed across the sector, and consistent approaches to workforce across Council services.

Where do we need to focus?

- Explore options to enable, facilitate and navigate, for example outreach roles to assist providers and families with system/service navigation.
- Virtual integration through strong connection between early years' services.
- Council to lead a targeted and collaborative practice model with agencies and partners for the purposes of integrated services across Port Phillip to support referral, system navigation and early intervention, especially in the areas of South Melbourne and St Kilda.
- Work with Enhanced Maternal and Child Health nurses, local organisations (Port Phillip Community Group, Launch Housing, St Kilda Legal Aid, Family Support Services) and the Department of Health and Human Services to identify disadvantaged families and new and emerging communities who may not be accessing kindergarten for their eligible three- and four-year-old children, to maximise attendance, participation and retention.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation 4.1

Facilitate collaborative and collegiate relationships with early years' networks.

- Identify professional development needs for educators (including assistance in sourcing bulk discounts for training and providing free training room space).
- Childcare staff to visit and learn from centres in the municipality or within Melbourne that are consistently receiving an 'Exceeding' or 'Excellent' NQS rating, encouraging a 'community of practice'.
- These recommendations to apply to all providers, including independent and private providers.
- Support of Educational Leaders and networking across services.

Policy recommendation 4.2

Support the development of a kindergarten network to provide collaborative practice and integrated services that inform pedagogy and practice, for example approved provider responsibilities, professional development, quality referrals and transition to school programs.



Policy Objective Five

Families will have access to the services and information they need, at the times they need it, to make choices appropriate for their needs.

What the community has told us

- **Clarity of information about service options** — What they are, their costs, how to access them at the time for their child's stage/age/needs. Make more information easily available online.
- **Priority of access** — Clarity of criteria and how people can access services, especially regarding waitlist management. Service providers have mixed views on whether the waitlist supports or hinders access.
- **Welcoming and inclusive services** — Meet the needs of diverse community, for example disability-specific or supported services. Co-location can support greater access to a broad range of services.

Where do we need to focus?

- Consolidated portal of information on early years' services and linkages to existing sources.
- Consolidated and well-managed waitlists for kindergarten and childcare.
- Enabling access and support to services, including access through Early Start Kindergarten.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation 5.1

Proactively create and promote opportunities for families with children to meet other families and develop social connections through such things as community events and parents' workshops.

Policy recommendation 5.2

Improve communications about the availability of, and access to, all early years' services, especially kindergarten to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Policy recommendation 5.3

Utilise approved state funding to scope the creation of an effective and centralised municipal-wide enrolment system for community-run and independent kindergartens in Port Phillip. This will require significant consultation with service providers.

Policy recommendation 5.4

Develop a Memorandum of Understanding for playgroups with guidelines regarding:

- size and inclusion
- available support for volunteers, committees and parents
- sustainability, including sharing of resources between groups and recycling

Policy recommendation 5.5

Develop a centralised portal and communication strategy as part of the Customer Experience and Technology Transformation project, and work with children's service providers and families to establish the best way for families to receive the information they need, in the way they need it, when they need it.

Policy recommendation 5.6

Improve the current childcare waitlist and investigate expanding it to include private and independent centres in order to provide families with better information about places for children under the age of three, as well as to inform short- and medium-term planning for childcare. about places for children under the age of three, as well as to inform short- and medium-term planning for childcare.

Policy Objective Six

Early Years services will be supported by safe, accessible, contemporary, fit-for-purpose, sustainable facilities and environments.

What the community has told us

- **Sustainability** — Green and sustainable features in facilities.
- **Update buildings to improve access for all** — Meet compliance (OHS & DDA mentioned specifically), such as ramps, doorways.
- **Flexible spaces** — Enable change in service offering, and adapt to any regulatory/legislative changes.
- **Address current levies and subsidies** — Be equitable in the distribution of funding/support and enable the delivery of quality services.
- **Facility hubs** — Be based on need rather than size of building/service to drive integrated hub development. Accessibility to parking and public transport is crucial.

Where do we need to focus?

- Consolidated information on our assets and a long-term plan.
- Consolidate and invest in new assets to support service delivery where compliance cannot be achieved and service demand exists.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation 6.1

Develop an Early Year's Services Facility Framework that will deliver the following outcomes:

- All assets to meet legislative and building compliance over the life of the strategy.
- All assets able to receive co-contribution funding from state government. This will require all assets to meet a minimum of 66 places.

Policy recommendation 6.2

Work with all community-managed services over time to implement the framework outlined above.

Policy recommendation 6.3

Ensure additional facilities for services and consolidate existing services if required to meet functionality and compliance are incorporated into integrated facility hubs to address multiple service demands. Council will optimise opportunities for Major Capital Works grant applications available from Department of Education and Training for the building of integrated service hubs, especially on any new school sites, such as in Fishermans Bend.



Policy objective seven

Children will have access to natural environments that allow them to learn about and experience play in nature. This includes natural environments within early years' services.

What the community has told us

- **Balance within services** — Between wet weather/indoor play and bush/natural outdoor areas.
- **New service model** — Develop a bush/farm/nature kindergarten in Port Phillip.
- **Connection to nature and natural environments** — For children to explore and manipulate their environments.

Where do we need to focus?

- Optimise the existing opportunities for children in Port Phillip to access natural environments in their early years.
- Council to consider funding natural or sensory play experiences, for example mud kitchens, water walls, vegetable patches, sensory gardens and excursion strollers.
- Foster gradual improvement in play spaces over time, ensuring targeted value for investment.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation 7.1

Develop model for optimising access to existing assets in the city such as parks, beaches, and adventure playgrounds.

Policy recommendation 7.2

Advocate for the promotion of outdoor learning environments and programs that promote children's connection to nature and environmental sustainability practices, for example Clean up Port Phillip Day, Be Out There, Let's G.O (Get outside), and Indigenous nature-based cultural programs.

Policy recommendation 7.3

Develop a minimum design guideline for future playground works/upgrades at childcare centres that can be tailored for each site and implemented in stages, including investigating the development or suitability of nature and sensory play environments within open space settings for excursion purposes, for example developing bush kindergarten setting/s in the municipality.

Policy recommendation 7.4

Work with early years' networks to consult and promote the range of opportunities to incorporate nature and sensory play into their service settings with supported funding opportunities.

How will we measure success?

Seven critical success factors

To support the vision for early years' services, address our challenges and deliver on our key policy objectives, we have developed seven critical success factors to guide decision-making and identify specific actions for each policy objective.

Critical Success Factor	Definition
Legislative compliance	<p>All facilities and services in the market will comply with legislation including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Discrimination Act • Occupational Health and Safety Act • National Competition Policy • National Construction Code
Meeting national quality standards	<p>All services in the market will meet or exceed expectations in line with State Government assessment and rating process.</p>
Positive market impact	<p>The Council will undertake an assessment of the impact of Council service provision on the local children's services market to ensure there is no competitive advantage where Council provides support to services, especially where the market can provide such services (in line with the LGA Competition Principles Agreement).</p>
Access for all	<p>Facility and service offerings will have equity of access for all members of our community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affordability • geographic spread aligned with demographics • support for vulnerability • support for additional needs (disability, cultural and linguistic diversity, income, transience etc)
Future-focused	<p>Council will meet the population growth and be adaptable to changing children's services market requirements into the future.</p>
Financial sustainability	<p>Council's role as planner is to ensure that decisions are made and actions are taken having regard to their financial effects on future generations.</p> <p>Services will be financially viable. Council's obligations under the Local Government Act are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage financial risks prudently, having regard to economic circumstances • align income and expenditure policies with strategic planning documents • undertake responsible spending and investment for the benefit of the community to achieve financial, social and environmental sustainability over the long term

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide value-for-money services and infrastructure that are accessible and responsive to the community's needs • consider the use of Council's subsidies to incentivise alternative provision by the NFP or profit providers.
Ability to implement	Council will ensure that actions are able to be delivered effectively, within the approved budget and timeframes, and are feasible to deliver in consultation with community and service providers.

Partnerships

We need to work in partnership with others to achieve our vision and policy objectives. The general community, state government partners, private industry, community-managed and not-for-profit sector all play a critical role in our success.

In Port Phillip, this includes childcare centres, kindergartens, toy libraries, playgroups, maternal child health (including the enhanced service), Council's Integrated Family Support Service, Star Health and other allied health services, Orange Door, and Child Protection. And most importantly, it is with our children and families.



Providing feedback

We welcome your feedback on the recommendations on this Policy Issues and Options Paper between 25 March to 23 April 2019.

You can provide this via an online survey or by attending one of the workshops to be held across the municipality.

Join a community workshop

Come along and have a conversation with us at the workshops being held across the municipality during the months of April 2019, see haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/childrens-services.

Online

The online survey and information about the policy issues and options paper is available at haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/childrens-services.

Email

Email: children@portphillip.vic.gov.au and put “Every Child Our Future Feedback” in the subject line.

Write to:

Every Child Our Future Feedback – Service Transformation Team
99A Carlisle Street, St Kilda



References

- ⁱ United Nations: Human Rights Office of the High Commission. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, signed by Australia in 1990. Sourced on 8 November 2018 from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>.
- ⁱⁱ Harvard University. Sourced on 7 November 2018: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Thompson, R. A., (2018). *Social-Emotional Development in the First Three Years: Establishing the Foundations*. Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University. Sourced from <http://prevention.psu.edu/uploads/files/RJWF-Infant-Brief.pdf>.
- ^{iv} Consortium for Research on Education Access, Transitions and Equity. *Why access to Education is Important*. Sourced 10 January 2019 from <http://www.create-rpc.org/about/why/>
- ^v Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Policy Brief no. 28. (2018). *The First Thousand Days – Our Greatest Opportunity*.
- ^{vi} Centre on the Developing Child. Harvard University. (2018). *Brain Architecture*. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>
- ^{vii} Winter, P. (2010). *Engaging Families in the Early Childhood Development Story*. Department of Education and Children's Services.
- ^{viii} Australian Medical Association. (2013). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Report Card 2012 – 2013: The Health Early Years – Getting the Right Start in Life.
- ^{ix} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Universal Access to Early Childhood Education*. Australian Government. Sourced 7 November 2018 from <https://www.education.gov.au/universal-access-early-childhood-education>.
- ^x Productivity Commission 2014, *Childcare and Early Childhood Learning: Overview*, Inquiry Report No. 73, Canberra.
- ^{xi} Montoya, D. (2014). *Child disadvantage in NSW: recent findings*. NSW Parliamentary Research service.
- ^{xii} State Government Victoria. (2013). *Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility: Strategy 2013-2022*.
- ^{xiii} Commonwealth of Australia. (2014). *The Forrest Review: Creating Parity*.
- ^{xiv} Brotherhood of St. Laurence. (2017). *Early Years: Position Paper February 2017*.
- ^{xv} Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2014). *Access to Early Childhood Education in Australia: Insights from a Qualitative Study – Research Report No. 28*. Australian Government. Sourced on 9 November 2018 from <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/access-early-childhood-education-australia-insights-f/5-barriers-using-ece>
- ^{xvi} Walker, K. (2004). National Preschool Education Inquiry Report: 'For all our Children'. Independent Inquirer.
- ^{xvii} National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Harvard University. (2007). *The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Page 2.
- ^{xviii} Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Policy Brief no. 28. (2018). *The First Thousand Days – Our Greatest Opportunity*.
- ^{xix} Australian Medical Association. (2013). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Report Card 2012 – 2013: The Health Early Years – Getting the Right Start in Life.

- ^{xx} Murdoch Childrens Research Institute. Policy Brief no. 18. (2010). *Engaging Marginalised and Vulnerable families*.
- ^{xxi} McCuaig, K. (2013). *Early Childhood Development as Economic Development*. Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development.
- ^{xxii} Commonwealth of Australia. (2009). Investing in the Early Years — A National Early Childhood Development Strategy: An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments.
- ^{xxiii} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Legislative Framework*. Sourced on 13 November 2018 from <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/legislative-framework>.
- ^{xxiv} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Child Care Legislation*. Sourced on 13 November 2018 from <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>.
- ^{xxv} Sheppard, M. (2015). *Child Care in Australia: a Quick Guide - 23 June 2015*. Parliament of Australia. Sourced on 21 November 2018 from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick_Guides/ChildCare
- ^{xxvi} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Regulation of Childcare and Kindergarten*. State of Victoria. Sourced on 21 November 2018 from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/child-care-regulation.aspx>.
- ^{xxvii} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *The Early Years Compact*. Victoria State Government. Sourced on 12 November 2018 from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/theearlyyearscompact.aspx>
- ^{xxviii} Victorian Auditors General Report. (2018). *Delivering Local Government Services*.
- ^{xxix} Municipal Association of Victoria. (2018). Resource Guide to Municipal Early Years Planning.
- ^{xxx} University of Technology Sydney for the Centre for Excellence for Local Government. (2013). Best Practice Guideline for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities: Final Review Report.
- ^{xxxi} Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government. (2014). Guidelines for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities.
- ^{xxxii} AEDC Community Profile 2015 – 1. About the Australian Early Development Census: Port Phillip.
- ^{xxxiii} IdCommunity. (2016). *City of Port Phillip SEIFA by Local Government Area*. <https://profile.id.com.au/port-phillip/seifa-disadvantage>
- ^{xxxiv} Thomas, Dr. M. & Hall, A. *Housing Affordability in Australia*. Parliament of Australia. Sourced on 12 November 2018 from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook45p/HousingAffordability
- ^{xxxv} City of Port Phillip. (2017). Health and Wellbeing Implementation Strategy.
- ^{xxxvi} Press, F., Sumsion, J. & Wong, S. (2017). *Integrated Early Years Provision in Australia*. Prepared for Professional Support Coordinators Alliance by Charles Sturt University, Bathurst.
- ^{xxxvii} Health and Human Services. (2018). *Child and Family Services Information, Referral and Support Teams (Child FIRST)*. Sourced on 8 November 2018 from <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>
- ^{xxxviii} Walker, K. (2004). National Preschool Education Inquiry Report: 'For all our Children'. Independent Inquirer.
- ^{xxxix} idCommunity (2016). *City of Port Phillip Population Forecasts*. <https://forecast.id.com.au/port-phillip>
- ^{xl} Domain. [2018]. *Childcare in Melbourne*. Sourced 31 January 2019 from <https://www.domain.com.au/news/childcare-in-melbourne-most-expensive-and-cheapest-suburbs-revealed-20180615-h11efq-440085/>

- ^{xlii} Baxter, J. A., Hand, K., & Sweid, R. (2016). *Flexible Childcare and Australian Parents' Work and Care Decision-making* (Research Report No. 37). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- ^{xliii} Victorian Auditor General's Office. (2017). *Effectively Planning for Population Growth*.
- ^{xliiii} Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. (2016). *Outcomes Practice Evidence Network*. Sourced 13 November 2018 from <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/open/>
- ^{xliv} Department of Education and Training. (2017). *Victorian Infrastructure Plan*. Victorian State Government.
- ^{xlv} Professor Deborah Brennan. (2017). *Lifting our Game: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools Through Early Childhood Interventions*.
- ^{xlvi} Jeffery, L & Beasley, K. (2012). *Create the Perfect Play Space: Learning Environments for Young Children*. PSC National Alliance: Child Australia.
- ^{xlvii} Toy Libraries Australia. *For Professionals*. <https://www.toylibraries.org.au/for-professionals>
- ^{xlviii} Department of Education and Training. (2013). *Natural Environment: Practice Note 5*. State Government Victoria:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/regulation/pracnotesnaturalenv.pdf>.
- ^{xlix} Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Natural Environments*. Victorian State Government. Sourced on 8 November 2018 from
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/naturalenvironments.aspx>.
- I Moore, T & Fry, R. (2011). *Place-based approaches to child and family services: A literature review*. Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health.
- li Joseph, E. (2018). *Why childcare is not affordable: Research Report 37 – August 2018*. The Centre for Independent Studies.

Every Child Our Future

Attachments

Attachment 1

Stage 1 Consultation Summary Report

Community Engagement Summary

This document summarises the feedback received from the first phase of engagement which took place between June and July 2018.

The engagement activities ranged from drop in sessions at strategic locations, facilitated workshops, children's workshops and a final culminating workshop. At the completion of these activities all the data received was collated and provided to 27 community members and council staff who attended the culminating workshop in mid-July. The aim of this workshop was to synthesise all the feedback received and develop a set of recommendations to hand over to Council as a way forward.

Who Participated?

Over 200 adults and 71 children under the age of 5 participated in the engagement activities.

Summary of Feedback Received

We asked participants at the drop-in sessions to vote on the challenges that they would like Council to prioritise. Each participant saw the list of challenges below and placed up to 5 votes each. The City of Port Phillip website – Have your Say, had the same list of challenges that users could vote on (refer to table 1) as well as the opportunity to add their own (refer to Table 2). New challenges could also receive a vote by online users.

Table 1 – Votes received on challenges to prioritise (F2F= Face to Face).

Challenges prioritised	F2F	Online
Ensuring an adequate supply of childcare for children under three	45	2
Supporting children and families experiencing vulnerability	38	4
Ensuring children with additional needs are able to access services	28	5
Updating old buildings	20	2
Addressing the gap in kindergarten participation	20	1
Supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds	44	4
Ensuring children are 'school ready'	28	5
Helping families find the services they need	32	4
Ensuring children starting school are proficient in English	13	2
Providing leadership and funding to projects which have cross-sector involvement	7	1
Making sure we have enough children's services for growth areas	41	3
Using collaborative planning to address challenges together	15	0

Table 2 - New challenges listed from Have Your Say Webpage

New challenges	Votes
Anti-Social Media Is Bad For Children The addiction of children (and young adults) to social media is alarming. The Communication Minister should close down sites like facebook, twitter and all the rest. Most of these sites are controlled by Americans whose main interest is making money from advertising. Facebook reminds me of a totalitarian states control of the people. Emails, texts and phone conversation are fine though.	0
Self Reliance Not State Reliance Parents and relatives need to help more with babysitting. I am a bachelor and baby sat my nephew in the 1980/90's for a number of years mostly at weekends. I have offered to do the same for his daughter when she is aged 2 or older in 18 months time. I see many grandparents minding children in Middle Park too.	1
Support for alternatives to full day child care In Port Phillip there is only one occasional care centre that provides an alternative to full day child care services. Southport Playhouse is not supported by the Council or Government and it's completely reliant on the attending families and community. This centre provides a hybrid option/alternative that helps children get ready for kinder and school. More of these options for families I think would help raise kinder participation and provide options for those who cannot afford full day child care.	2
Children In Street At Risk With Social Media And Possible Push Polling Interesting story in a Melbourne metropolitan newspaper today (23 Jun 18) about children and adults with ear plug in when in the street. Not only is this anti social and dangerous, if not paying attention to your surrounding, constant use of ear plugs can send you deaf just as constant loud music in discotheques send some deaf too. Hearing and sight are a humans most useful asset. Incidentally there are lots of entries here from City of Port Phillip (I assume this means Port Phillip City Council staff) which is fine as long as it's not push polling.	0
Affluent Port Phillip Residents Port Phillip is an affluent municipality therefore parents can afford a private kindergarten or a nanny. Not much need for state or council services for children. If you have children, preferably no more than two per couple, you look after them rather than the state. We dont live in a state controlled Marxist state.	1
Offer children, parents and educators a programme to foster tools for better resilience Most parents and educators grew up without social media, but our children are exposed to it before they even talk (how many babies are plastered all over instagram and facebook?!). There is a gap between the adult's experience of growing up and current children's experiences. With childhood anxiety on the rise, understanding how to combat the pressures of social media and bridge the gap of understanding should be everyone's responsibility. There are programmes such as the Resilience Project doing just this with great success; it should be accessible to all.	3
Creating a service for sustainable giving and repurposing... I've talked a lot with other parents about living more sustainably and know many of us care deeply about it. A lot of us have excess stuff that we are given and accumulate rapidly as the children grow up so quickly (toys,clothes,books,baby stuff, bedding, utensils, high chairs, etc). Many of us struggle to know what to do with it all. Organisations such as St Kilda Mums take a portion of this excess. Could the council also offer such a service, in conjunction with the child care centres? Child care centres, community centres, independent groups, disadvantaged children, refugee children, shelters, and everyone else, could all benefit from such a service.	4
Derelict buildings fixed Fix the derelict buildings - they have been left burnt out and abandoned for years - attracting criminal behaviour and showing a presence of little respect. Force the wieners to fix/sell/build - local council allowed for the demolition of The London, however these derelict buildings I the area are still standing (at least 1/2 dozen).	0
High schools Short - we need high schools for the growing population in the area. One campus schools, not spread out over 3 sites - APC. Prepare for the growth in the area.	0

Attachment 2

Children's Services Reference Group



Children's Services Reference Group

Summary of recommendations
July 2018 to March 2019



About the reference group

- The Children's Services Reference Group held 8 monthly meetings between July 2018 and February 2019.
- The reference group was facilitated by an independent external facilitator.
- The group was made up of representatives from community-managed, council-run and privately/independent services including childcare, kindergarten, toy libraries and playgroups.
- There were 80 invitees to the reference group with attendance averaging 20 members each meeting.
- The reference group was formed to provide information and advice to inform Council's decision-making on the development of the new Children's Services Policy.
- Topics for each meeting were:
 - Support for community-managed models
 - Facilities
 - Integration of Services
 - Legislative and Regulatory Environment
 - Networked Service Support and Childcare waitlist
 - Places for Children in Children's Services
 - Quality of service and service improvement and review of key recommendations to Council

Priority recommendations from members

In February 2018, members reviewed a summary of the recommendations they raised across all meetings so far. Members developed their priority recommendations or actions they would like to see Council commit to in the new Children's Services Policy. These are listed in priority order in the table below.

Mix of services: Continue to provide a mix of services (Council-run, community-managed, private) to ensure accessible, affordable places, support for vulnerable families who do not receive other funding, and places for vulnerable children (with priority of access through Council's centralised waitlist).
Case management: Provide additional case management support for services and direct support to help services manage the social issues they face.
Staff support: Provide support to staff in services to improve how they can work with vulnerable families and know the services they can refer families to.
Financial support: Continue to review and improve the financial support provided to services to work with vulnerable children.
Support vulnerable families: Council prioritises the needs of children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage.
Provide better information: Communication between Council and services can be improved with consistency (the same information to all services), clarity, access to information and listening to services.
Council could provide a central database and resources to support services.
Provide networking spaces and opportunities: Council could facilitate a resourced network/provide a space for a network of service providers to share information and training. Networking between Council and other services will also increase trust and support for services. Services would also benefit from the opportunity to network between them.
Promote services: Council to manage and make available current information about children's services including what services exist (including toy libraries and playgroups) and what they offer.
Council should ensure outreach Maternal Child Health nurses have the best and current information about children's services to provide families.
Fit for purpose policy: Council should consider the needs of individual services and not take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
Accountability: More transparency required around budgets for assets including levies collected, and maintenance performed for community-managed services.
Support community- run services: Continue to offer financial support for community-run services.
Service accessibility: Services would benefit from having more flexible spaces to accommodate different age groups.
Extend Toy Library hours of operation and make them accessible.

Other recommendations to consider for the new Children's Services Policy

The following issues and recommendations have been themed under the seven policy objectives for the new Children's Services Policy that were set by Council and informed by community consultation including the Children's Services Reference Group.

Objective 1: Council will work with partners to ensure that every child, regardless of their abilities or background, will have access to affordable, safe, accessible, quality Early Years services to support development to their full potential

Training

- Provide support to staff in services to improve how they can work with vulnerable families and know the services they can refer families to.
- Support opportunities for mentoring and professional development for services to improve the quality of their service e.g financial mentoring, legal training.

Resources

- Provide additional case management support for services and direct support to help services manage the social issues they face.
- Community transport and/or public transport subsidy/private transport options could assist vulnerable families travel to services.

Funding

- Council could review and improve the financial support provided to services to work with vulnerable children.
- The group is concerned the new Federal Childcare subsidy disadvantages vulnerable families and high-income families.

Mix of services

- Continue to provide a mix of services (Council-run, community managed, private) to ensure accessible, affordable places, support for vulnerable families who do not receive other funding, and places for vulnerable children (with priority of access through Council's centralised waitlist).
- A balance of community-run, council-run and privately-run services ensure community members have a choice and access to more affordable childcare and lessens the impact of possible market failure (e.g the collapse of ABC centres in the past).
- Services should be spread across municipality and where possible, near public transport

Certainty

- Services need certainty from Council that they will continue to be supported by Council to operate. The short term leases currently in place create uncertainty for services and inhibits long term planning.

Management model (eg cluster or Early Years Management)

- One model shouldn't be preferred over another as there are other important factors such as the people involved and governance.

Waitlist

- Review waitlist and funding agreement as it currently limits the ability of services to be agile and no longer supports services as effectively as it could.

Objective 2: Council will understand current and future needs of families in the city and influence the provision of Early Years services to meet those needs.

- Start a playgroup for children with disabilities
- Extend Toy Library hours of operation and make them accessible
- The biggest impact on demand in the last 5 years has been the new Federal Government Childcare Subsidy which has impacted demand for places from high income families and vulnerable families.
- A utilisation survey of services would assist Council to understand current and future needs
- Kindergartens should be located on/near primary school sites for better integration (in line with government policy)

Objective 3: Early Years services will be financially sustainable and consistently aligned with relevant policies and legislation at the local, state and federal level.

- Support co-location and integration of services- bring services into childcare (and hubs) that help support vulnerable families
- Council could provide a 'cheat sheet' of legislation requirements and insurance to assist services
- Facilitate seminars and training sessions for services particularly on relevant legislation and new government policies
- Council can be a centralised resource of up-to-date information for services to guide best practice

Objective 4: Council will encourage collaboration across all Early Years services

- Kindergarten participation can be increased with early identification by MCH, GPs and agencies.
- Work with DHHS to identify vulnerable families and transient families and help them connect to services.
- Council can facilitate a resourced network/provide a space for a network of service providers to share information and training. Networking between Council and other services will also increase trust and support for services. Services would also benefit from the opportunity to network between them. The group felt a sector network would work best if Council facilitated it.
- Council could provide better contact information for services.
- Communication between Council and services could be improved with consistency (the same information to all services), clarity, access to information and listening to services.
- Support better connections between services eg childcare coordinators to visit new parent groups.

Objective 5: Families will have access to the services and information they need, at the times they need it, to make choices appropriate for their needs

- Council should ensure Maternal Child Health nurses have the best and current information about children's services to provide families.
- Promote children's services better and highlight the points of difference between services.
- Council to manage and make available current information about children's services including what services exist (including toy libraries and playgroups) and what they offer.

Objective 6: Early Years services will be supported by safe, accessible, contemporary, fit-for-purpose, sustainable facilities and environments.

- More transparency required around budgets for assets including levies collected, and maintenance performed for community-managed services.
- Demand should drive the size of centres, financial modelling does not take into account a service's history, position in the community and quality of the service they deliver.
- Accessibility for people with a disability is critical.
- Council should consider the needs of individual services and not take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- Council should understand how each service is different and how policy impact is different for each service
- Services would benefit from having more flexible spaces to accommodate different age groups.
- Council could consider the opportunity to re-imagine existing spaces

Objective 7: Children will have access to natural environments which allow them to learn about and experience play in nature. This includes natural environments within Early Years services.

- The child has a right to play under the UN convention on the right of the child.
- The planning department could consider the provision of access to natural environments in planning permits and consider the new children's services policy when making development application decisions
- The sustainability team could also review planning developments to have input
- Small spaces offer potential for playspace (not just open parks) eg pocket parks.
- Parks/Open Spaces department could consider positive "risk" in playground design.
- Children should be considered in design of natural environments.

Attachment 3

Early Years' Service Affordability Analysis

Childcare

Domain conducted an analysis of costs of childcare in the Mychild website across suburbs in Melbourne which showed the cost of childcare in Port Phillip is consistently in the highest quartile range, except for the centre within a public housing tower.

Table 1 - Childcare fees – quartiles.

Quartile ranges	Melbourne	Port Phillip
Lowest	\$84 - \$101	\$98 - \$125
Middle lowest	\$101 – 108	\$125
Middle highest	\$108 – 117	\$125 - \$130.50
Highest	\$117 - 151	\$130.50 - \$175

These service fees for childcare have been broken down into the type of service provider in Port Phillip also for comparison.

Table 2 - Cost of childcare in Port Phillip. – update with Grosvenor report

	Council-run	Community-run	Private	Independent Not-for-profit
Centres	5	8	14	1
Places	362	580	1148	55
Average fees	\$129.50	\$123.75	\$145.33	\$137

- Indicative as of July 2018.

Childcare fees, in Port Phillip, range from \$98 (in a childcare centre at the base of public housing tower) to \$175 (for childcare centre offering languages). On average the cost is \$131.19 per day.

Kindergarten

Sessional kindergarten is free or low cost for families who are eligible for state government funding (Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander, triplets or more, refugee with a visa or bridging visa (200-204, 786, 866) or hold one of the following cards – health care, pensioner or veteran affairs gold or white card)⁴⁹. Outside of the group who are eligible for these state government subsidies, the cost of kindergarten in Port Phillip varies across centres, ranging from \$550 a term to \$1,182.50. Compared to Stonnington it is less expensive, but compared to Maribyrnong, it is significantly more expensive.

Table 3 - Sessional quarterly kindergarten fees – quartiles.

Quartile	Stonnington	Maribyrnong	Port Phillip
Lowest	\$752	\$400	\$555
Middle Lowest	\$950	\$430	\$660
Middle Highest	\$1,000	\$430	\$760
Highest	\$1,200	\$450	\$1,070

Attachment 4

National Quality Standard Rating of Port Phillip Early Years Services and licenced places (LPs)

	Excellent		Exceeding		Meeting		Working Towards		Provisional	
	Service name	LPs	Service name	LPs	Service name	LPs	Service name	LPs	Service name	LPs
Council-run			Bubup Nairm Children's Centre	116	Clark Street Children's Centre	65				
			Coventry Children's Centre	60	North St Kilda Children's Centre	77				
			Barring Djinang Kindergarten	44						
Community-managed	Clarendon Children's Centre Co-op	40	Ada Mary Abeckett Children's Centre Inc	142	Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre	155	Eldon Road Child Care Centre	44		
			South Melbourne Child Care (Carter St)	40	Poets Grove Family and Children's Services Centre	105				
			Elwood Children's Centre	39	The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten	40				
			Civic Kindergarten	23	Middle Park Kindergarten	30	Lillian Cannam Kindergarten	67		
Kindergarten			Lady Forster Kindergarten	49						
			Albert Park Preschool Centre	24						
			Nido Early School Albert Park	135	Matrix Early Learning	90	Apple Blossoms Early Learning	52		
Childcare			Only about Children	90	City Kids ELC	123	Guardian ELC - St Kilda Road	140	Guardian - South Melbourne (opening 2019)	180
			TRV South Melbourne Mission	30	Tree House Early Learning	149	A Step Ahead Early Learning	60		
			Children's Garden Kindercare	82	Kindercub	45	Kimmba Bilingual ELC	32		
			Goodstart Early Learning	55	Mercedes Dadon Creche	16				
Private / Independent					King David School Preschool	60				
					Yesodei Hatorah College	45				
					Nido Early School Port Melbourne	122				
			Southport UnitingCare Kindergarten	29						
			St Kilda & Balclava Kindergarten	55						
TOTAL	1	40	16	1,013	14	1,122	6	395	NA	N/A
% of market	2.7%	1.6%	4.3%	39%	38%	44%	16.3%	15.4%	N/A	N/A

* Correct as at 31 January 2019 (2,570 places available across 37 centres in the market)

Attachment 5

Early Years Services Access Analysis

Childcare places

In 2018, there were 13 dedicated childcare facilities owned by the City, representing 41 per cent of the market. Eight of these facilities are run by a Community-managed model of service.

As at November 2018, there were 2,403 licenced childcare places across Port Phillip. While centres are licensed for a maximum number of places, more than one child can access a place based on part-time attendance (for example, two, three or four sessions/days per week).

The availability of places across Port Phillip and their capacity is outlined in the table below.

Table 1 - Childcare places across Port Phillip.¹

Location	Neighbourhood	Number of places***	Utilisation*
Council-run			
Barring Djinang Kindergarten	Montague (Fishermans Bend)	44	13
Bubup Nairn Children's Centre	East St Kilda	116	102
Clark Street Children's Centre	Port Melbourne	65	59
Coventry Children's Centre	South Melbourne	60	55
North St Kilda Children's Centre	St Kilda and St Kilda West	77	68
TOTAL		362	297
Community-managed			
Ada Mary A'beckett Children's Centre Inc	Port Melbourne	142	106
Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre	Port Melbourne	155	155
South Melbourne Child Care (Carter St)	Albert Park and Middle Park	40	40
Eildon Road Child Care Centre	St Kilda and St Kilda West	44	34
Elwood Children's Centre	Elwood and Ripponlea	39	35
Poets Grove Family and Children's Services Centre	Elwood and Ripponlea	105	104
Clarendon Children's Centre Co-op	South Melbourne	40	39
The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten	East St Kilda & Balaclava	40	36
TOTAL		605	549

¹ ACECQA. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers/services/>

Location	Neighbourhood	Number of places***	Utilisation*
Private Independent			
Ingles Street Early Learning and Kinder	Port Melbourne	122	97
Matrix Early Learning	Port Melbourne	90	70
Apple Blossoms Early Learning	South Melbourne	52	35
Nido Early School	South Melbourne	135	129
Only about Children	South Melbourne	90	81
TRY South Melbourne Children's Centre	South Melbourne	30	24
City Kids Early Learning Centre	South Melbourne	123	80
Guardian Early Learning Centre	South Melbourne	opening 2019	
Guardian Early Learning Centre	St Kilda Road	140	96
Children's Garden Kindercare	Albert Park and Middle Park	82	80
Tree House Early Learning	St Kilda and St Kilda West	149	149
A Step Ahead Early Learning	East St Kilda & Balaclava	60	44
Kimmba Bilingual Early Learning Centre	East St Kilda & Balaclava	32	30
Kinderclub	East St Kilda & Balaclava	45	34
Yesodei Hatorah College	Elwood and Ripponlea	45**	NA**
Kind David School Pre-School	East St Kilda & Balaclava	60	NA
Goodstart Early Learning	Elwood and Ripponlea	55	55
Mercedes Dadon Creche	East St Kilda & Balaclava	16**	NA**
TOTAL		1,265 ** (1,326)	1,004
TOTAL		1,870 ** (1,931)	1,553**

* Correct as of September 2018.

** not inclusive Guardian ELC (South Melbourne), Mercedes Dadon Creche, Yesodei Hatorah due to admission criteria or yet to be operational

***ACECQA -Correct as of November 2018

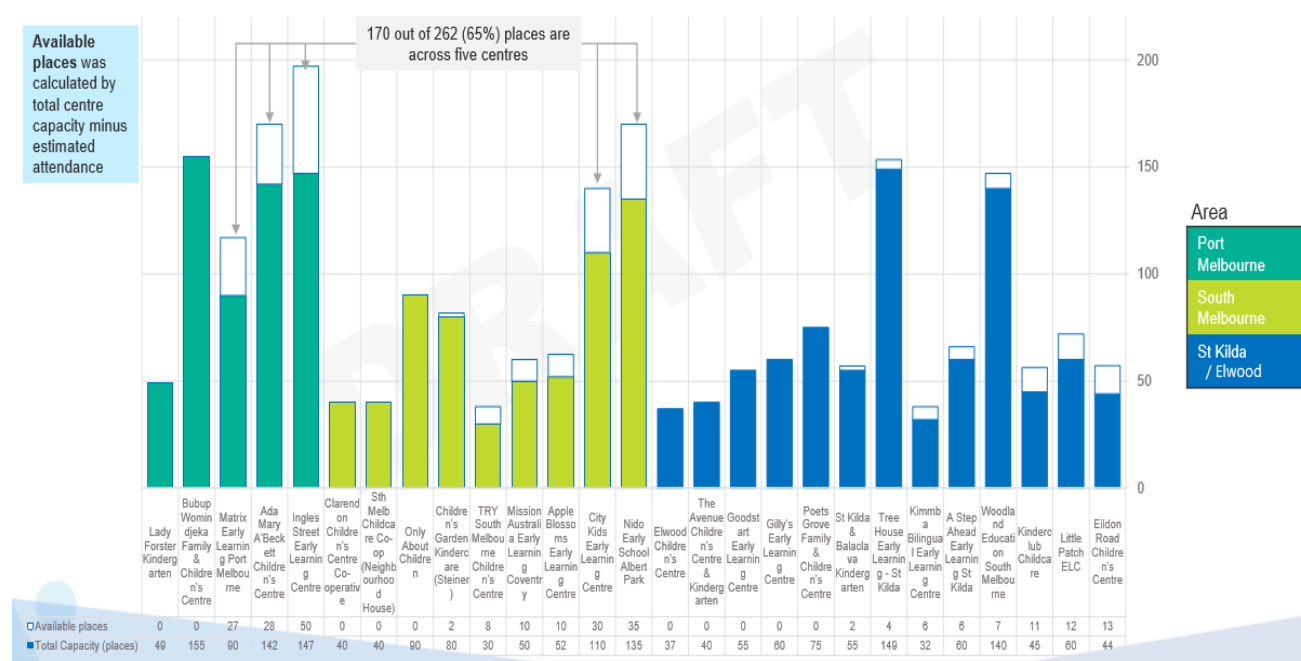
Based on current utilisation there is not a need for further childcare places currently. However, it is important to understand current capacity within context. According to a report by Grosvenor, commission September 2018, childcare places that do exist in the municipality are primarily available on Mondays and Fridays, and within the 3-5-year-old age group². Also, 65% of current vacancies are only available in Port and South Melbourne neighbourhoods compared to neighbourhoods in the middle and

² Zhang, K. (2018). Childcare Market Analysis. Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory.

southern end of the city¹. Therefore, even though there is a sufficient geographic spread of services, the demand currently exists in East St Kilda, Elwood and Ripponlea and St Kilda neighbourhoods.

In addition it is estimated that there is a demand generated by workers living outside Port Phillip who wish to utilise childcare near their employment. This has been estimated as an average addition of 20% of resident demand for all neighbourhoods except Montague, which has been estimated at 50%. It is assumed that those places take up a significant portion of what appears to be an excess of places in 2018.

Figure 1. Childcare places available by area³



³ Zhang, K. (2018). Childcare Market Analysis. Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory.

Kindergarten

In 2018, there were 4 dedicated kindergarten facilities owned by the City, representing 66 per cent of the market. All four of these facilities are run by a Community-managed model of service.

As at April 2018, there were 247 licenced kindergarten places across Port Phillip. While centres are licensed for a maximum number of places, more than one child can access a place based on part-time attendance (for example, two, three or four sessions/days per week).

The availability of Kindergarten places across Port Phillip and their capacity is outlined in the table below. Please note, those services operating Kindergarten within long day care settings, have only been included in the Childcare section of the strategy. Utilisation data for some kindergarten services were unavailable when writing this report.

Table 2 - Kindergarten places across Port Phillip.⁴

Location	Neighbourhood	Number of places*	Utilisation**
Community-managed			
Lilian Cannam Kindergarten	South Melbourne	67	44
Albert Park Preschool	Middle Park and Albert Park	24	19
Civic Kindergarten (Middle Park Community Centre)	Middle Park and Albert Park	23	23
Lady Forster Kindergarten	Elwood and Ripponlea	49	49
Middle Park Kindergarten	Middle Park and Albert Park	30	30
TOTAL		193	165
Private Independent			
Southport UnitingCare Kindergarten	Port Melbourne	29	29
St Kilda and Balaclava Kindergarten	East St Kilda & Balaclava	55	52
TOTAL		84	81
TOTAL		277	246

* Correct as of November 2018.

**CoPP collected data April 2018.

Access of Early Years' Services for children of residents and workers

The distribution of Early Years' services and spread of employment locations and number of workers is outlined in the following maps and table.

Utilisation of Early Years' services in Port Phillip are impacted by both resident and work populations. Approximately 15 per cent of all workers (13,973 people), both live and work in the City of Port Phillip. At Council-run child care services, residents average approximately 70 per cent of the utilised places, with 30 per cent to

⁴ ACECQA. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers/services/>

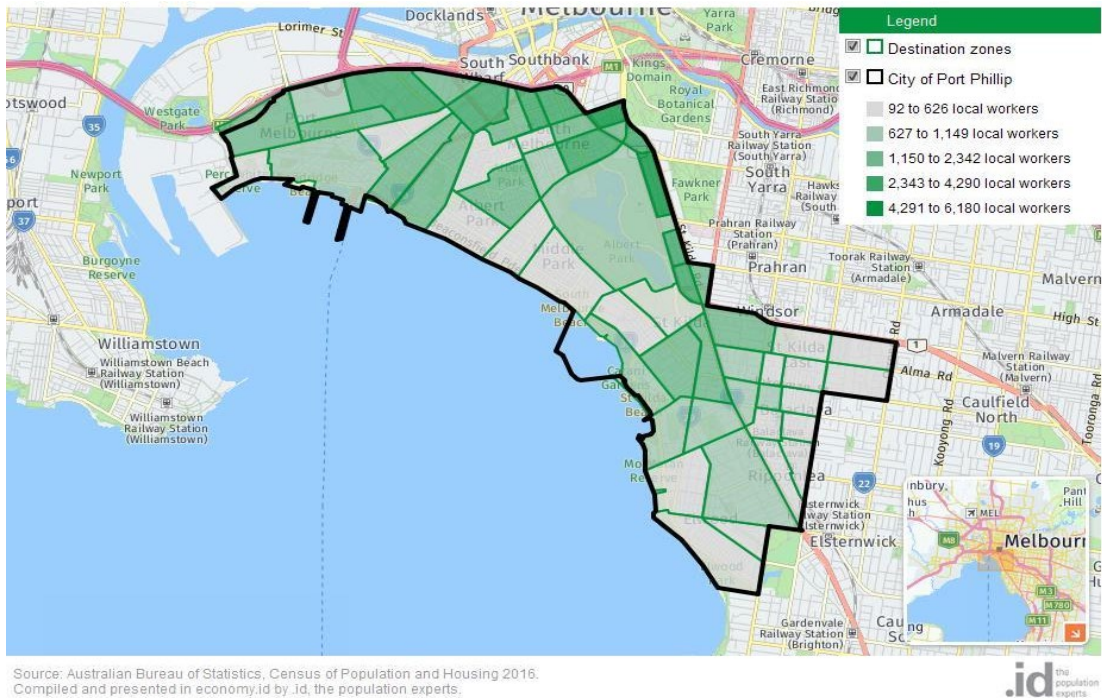
workers. Additionally, there is a demand generated by workers living outside Port Phillip who wish to utilise Early years' services near their employment. Port Phillip's 93,387 worker population (NIERI, 2017) has an impact on access to early years' services, especially long day care and kindergarten.

The distribution of services is spread across the municipality, with primarily a 'north' and 'south' cluster of services. This could mean some gaps exist for service offering within middle neighbourhoods such as Albert Park/Middle Park and St Kilda Road. Any distribution gaps will be addressed through Objective Two, in understanding future services demand by neighbourhood.

Figure 2 - Early Years' Services across Port Phillip

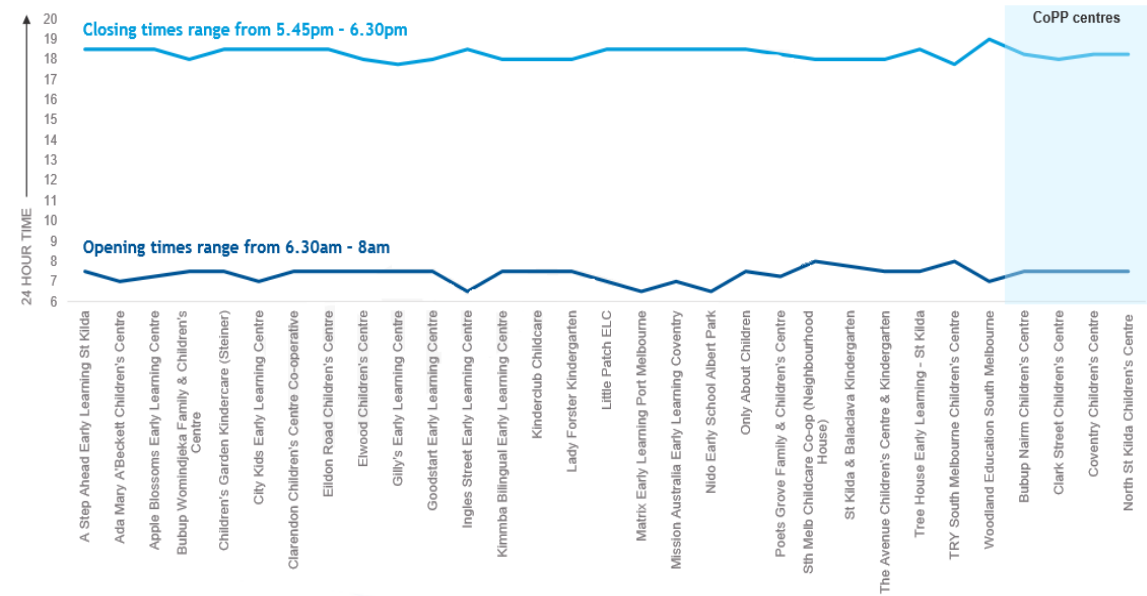


Figure 3 - Residential Worker population heat map.

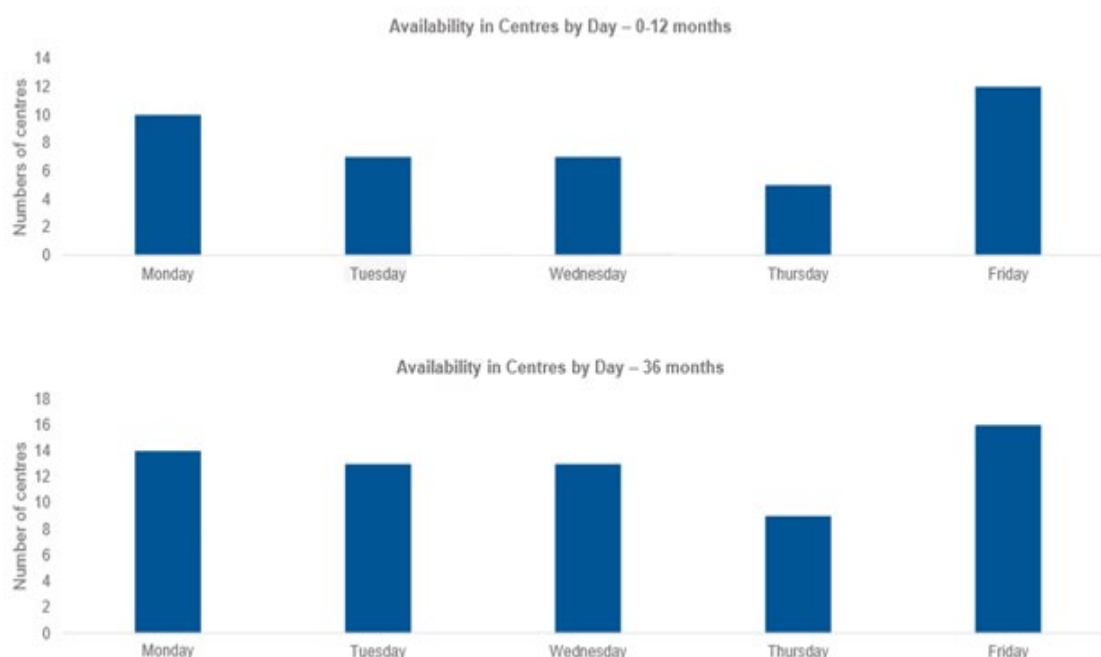


In terms of the barriers, the lack of availability of care at the times that working parents need it is a significant barrier. Some parents seek better flexibility in the workplace, as a means of being able to better balance their work and care responsibilities²⁶. Centres of operation in Port Phillip are fairly consistent with the hours of operation, with opening times ranging from 6.30 am to 8 am, and closing times from 5.45 pm to 6.30 pm. There is only one centre, in South Melbourne, that operates until 7 pm.

Figure 4. Market comparison – hours of operation⁵



⁵ Zhang, K. (2018). Childcare Market Analysis. Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory.

Figure 5. Current vacancies by age⁶

Playgroups

Port Phillip owns 12 centres in which playgroup services are run, providing a total of 96 of the 98 playgroups within the municipality (98 per cent). All playgroups are a Community-managed model of service. Playgroup membership and location will always be variable as it depends on the needs and demands of the parents/carers and children attending. As at July 2018, there were 98 playgroups across Port Phillip. The location and number of playgroups were:

Table 3 - Playgroup sessions across Port Phillip.

Neighbourhood	Location
Port Melbourne	Bubup Womindjeka (12 sessions per week)
	Sandridge Community Centre and Trugo Club (1 session per week)
	Port Melbourne Community Centre and Trugo Club (1 session per week)
	Clark Streets Childrens Centre (1 session per week)
Montague	Ferrars Street Education and Community Facility (1 session per week)
South Melbourne	Koolingnal Family and Children's Centre (3 sessions per week)
	South Melbourne Community Centre (2 sessions per week)
Middle Park and Albert Park	Middle Park Community Centre (4 sessions per week)
East St Kilda and Balaclava	Alma Road Community House (2 sessions per week)
St Kilda	Bubup Nairm Family and Children's Centre (22 sessions per week)
Elwood and Ripponlea	Elwood Playgroup Centre (43 sessions per week)

⁶ Zhang, K. (2018). Childcare Market Analysis. Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory.

	Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre (4 sessions per week)
Across Port Phillip	Other (meeting in private homes, parks/playgrounds, cafes, churches etc) (2 sessions per week)

Toy Libraries

Port Phillip families can access toy libraries by purchasing an annual membership which allows them to borrow toys. Most Toy libraries give significant discounts for Health Care card holders²². Port Phillip has four toy library locations across the City with varying membership numbers and hours of operation, these are:

Table 4 - Toy library memberships and hours of operation.

Toy library	Location	Neighbourhood	Membership number	Hours of operation
Elwood Toy Library	Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre	Elwood and Ripponlea	224	4.5 hours per week
Middle Park Toy Library	Middle Park Community Centre	Middle Park and Albert Park	60	6 hours per week
South Melbourne Toy Library	Koolingnal Family and Children's Centre	South Melbourne	70	3 hours per week
Port Melbourne Toy Library	Port Melbourne Town Hall	Port Melbourne	90	3 hours per week

Attachment 6

Early Years' Service Current and Future Demand Analysis

In alignment with population forecasts for 0-4 year olds and taking into account identified service levels and worker population percentages, we predict the following future service need for Early Years' Services in Port Phillip.

Childcare

While it is not possible to confidently predict the future supply of childcare places across Port Phillip beyond known Development Applications (DA) that are approved, we can make some assumptions based on supply between 2006 and 2016 and known future supply in the next few years that the market will most likely continue to address a high proportion of demand for childcare places for workers and residents in Port Phillip.

Current demand

Based on current utilisation there is not a need for further childcare places currently. However, it is important to understand current capacity within context. According to a recent commissioned report by Grosvenor, childcare places that do exist in the municipality are primarily available on Mondays and Fridays and within the 3-5 year old age group. Also, 65% of current vacancies are only available in Port and South Melbourne neighbourhoods compared to neighbourhoods in the middle and southern end of the city. Therefore, even though there is a sufficient geographic spread of services, the demand exists in Elwood and Ripponlea and St Kilda/St Kilda West neighbourhoods.

Childcare modelling

Key components of the modelling are as follows:

0-3 Year olds:

- The current ratio of 0-3yo LDC places is 30%

4 Year Olds:

- For all 4 year olds in the municipality 61% will attend kindergarten in a long day care (LDC) setting and 39% will attend a kindergarten (sessional or extended)
- Of the 61% in LDC, 50% will attend a council/ community-managed facility and 50% will attend a private/ independent facility
- Of those that attend a LDC facility, the average time spent is 3 days per week

In addition it is estimated that there is a demand generated by workers living outside Port Phillip who wish to utilise childcare near their employment. This has been estimated as an average addition of 20% of resident demand for all neighbourhoods except Montague, which has been estimated at 50%. It is assumed that those places take up a significant portion of what appears to be an excess of places in 2018. Therefore the 2018 excess (availability) of places in the system has been calculated by taking the 2018 Total Places from the 2018 Total Utilisation.

Note that the four council-owned Children's Services centres that host both childcare and kindergarten (Bubup Womindjeka, Barring Dijnang, Carter Street and Poets Grove) have been included in the Childcare modelling, not the Kindergarten modelling. The current private and not-for-profit providers are included in the modelling to understand the total capacity of the system.

Figure 1. Current vacancies by age**Forecast demand**

Forecast demand shows that no further places will be required until 2031 (at 146 places).

Table 1 - Childcare need 2018-2031.

	2018			2021	2026	2031
	UTILISATION (TOTAL)	ACECQA LICENCE (TOTAL)	TOTAL (CAPACITY PLACES AVAILABLE)	TOTAL DEMAND (ON 2018 LICENCE)	TOTAL DEMAND (ON 2018 LICENCE)	TOTAL DEMAND (ON 2018 LICENCE)
Port Melbourne	487	574	-87	-103	-99	-95
Montague	93	167	-74	-69	-3	84
Sandridge/Wirraway	0	0	0	150	206	298
South Melbourne	454	587	-133	-116	-96	-85
St Kilda Road	96	140	-44	-25	-14	-12
Albert Park/ Middle Park	120	122	-2	-16	-8	-3
St Kilda/ West St Kilda	251	270	-19	-24	-8	-4
Balaclava/ St Kilda East	246	293	-47	-43	-39	-35
Elwood/ Ripponlea	191	199	-8	-2	-8	-2
TOTAL	1938	2352	-414	-248	-101	146 places
TOTAL PLACES (LICENCES) REQUIRED				2104	2251	2498

Kindergarten

Current demand

An audit in 2018 was undertaken to understand current capacity and places available within the market. There is a total of 277 licenced kindergarten places in the municipality (this includes all council/community-managed and private/independent centres) with a utilisation rate of 269.

This means there are currently only 8 places available for kindergarten access across Port Phillip.

Forecast demand

The modelling identifies the current approved places at each facility, and the additional number of places that will be required over the coming 13 years.

Only five of the eight neighbourhoods included in the modelling have a dedicated kindergarten facility in 2018. Of those five, only Albert Park/ Middle Park has both council-owned and private/independent centres.

Key service levels identified for the modelling are as follows:

- For all 4 year olds in the municipality 61 per cent will attend kindergarten in a long day care (LDC) setting and 39 per cent will attend a kindergarten (sessional or extended).
- Of those 4 year olds attending kindergarten, 71 per cent will attend sessional kindergarten, where the rooms are used 5 days per week, while 29 per cent will attend extended care programs, where the average time spent is 3 days per week.
- In addition it is estimated that there is a demand generated by workers living outside Port Phillip who wish to utilise childcare near their employment. This has been estimated as an average addition of 20 per cent of resident demand for all neighbourhoods except Montague, which has been estimated at 50 per cent.

Table 2 - Forecast kindergarten places required to meet demand.

	UTILISATION			ACECQA LICENCE			TOTAL			
	COUNCIL/ COMMUNITY	PRIVATE/INDEPENDENT	TOTAL	COUNCIL/ COMMUNITY	PRIVATE	TOTAL	2018 CAPACITY PLACES AVAILABLE	2021 DEMAND *	2026 DEMAND*	2031 DEMAND *
Port Melbourne	0	29	29	0	29	29	0	-10	-5	-2
Montague	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	16	35
Sandridge/Wirraway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	19
South Melbourne	67	0	67	67	0	67	0	2	13	17
St Kilda Road	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	18	18
Albert Park/ Middle Park	42	30	72	47	30	77	-5	-12	-5	-1

St Kilda/ West St Kilda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	40	43
Balaclava/ St Kilda East	0	52	52	0	55	55	-3	-1	2	4
Elwood/ Ripponlea	49	0	49	49	0	49	0	4	5	19
TOTAL	158	111	269	163	195	277	-8	40	88	152
Total places (licences) required						277		317	365	429

*Based on 2018 ACECQA licence

Toy library

Toy Libraries

The following Table evaluates required toy library provision now and over the coming 13 years, against an analysis of the current number, assuming that the service delivery model remains the same and the assets are maintained but not enlarged or redeveloped.

Table 3 - Forecast Toy Libraries required to meet demand.

	2018			2021	2026	2031
	Current Toy Libraries	Total required Toy Libraries	Additional required from 2018	additional required from 2018	additional required from 2018	additional required from 2018
Port Melbourne	1	0.6	0	0	0	0
Montague	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
Sandridge/Wirraway	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Melbourne	1	0.4	0	-1	0	0
St Kilda Road	0	0.2	0	0	0	0
Albert Park/ Middle Park	1	0.5	0	-1	-1	-1
St Kilda/ West St Kilda	0	0.5	0	1	1	1
Balaclava/ St Kilda East	0	0.6	0	1	1	1
Elwood/ Ripponlea	1	0.7	0	0	0	0
Total	4	3.5	0	0	1	1.5

Playgroup

Playgroups

The future growth in service need across the municipality does not rise until 2026, and by 2031 there are an additional 7 groups or sessions (103 in total) required.

The following Table evaluates required playgroup provision now and over the coming 13 years, against an analysis of the current number, assuming that the service delivery model remains the same and the assets are maintained but not enlarged or redeveloped.

Table 4 - Playgroup need 2018-2031.

	2018			2021	2026	2031
Children's services facility	Current playgroups	Total required playgroups	additional required from 2018	Additional required from 2018	Additional required from 2018	Additional required from 2018
Port Melbourne	16	Data available by municipal level only				
Montague	1	Data available by municipal level only				
Sandridge/Wirraway	0	Data available by municipal level only				
South Melbourne	5	Data available by municipal level only				
St Kilda Road	0	Data available by municipal level only				
Albert Park/ Middle Park	4	Data available by municipal level only				
St Kilda/West St Kilda	0	Data available by municipal level only				
Balaclava/ St Kilda East	24	Data available by municipal level only				
Elwood/ Ripponlea	44	Data available by municipal level only				
Other locations	4					
Total	98	92	-2	0	10	21

Attachment 7

Children’s Services Facilities: Asset Overview Summary

The following table provides a summary of information relating to the 22 facilities that are council-owned and either council or community-managed in the City of Port Phillip.

- The cost plan estimates included in the Asset Summary column are very high level and offer only preliminary estimation of costs to undertake the above works. No design work has been available to inform these figures, and significant further work is required in to test and refine them.
- When considered together, the information gathered on the assets informs assessment of the capacity and readiness of each Children’s Services facility to meet future needs, both within their own catchment and within their neighbourhood. A rating system for Future Readiness has been developed, which is an indicator of need for consideration of the possible approach to future asset solutions. This may include upgrading infrastructure, disposal or addition of alternative/ additional facilities, and will be considered in the context of service model options in Stage 2. The ratings are as follows:

- 1 Facility has capacity to meet future needs now
- 2 Facility has capacity to meet future needs with alterations/ redevelopment
- 3 Facility has no capacity to meet future needs without rebuilding

	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places	April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHIP	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING	ASSET SUMMARY
PORT MELBOURNE															
	Ada Mary A'Beckett	2 Batman Rd Port Melbourne	comm- unity m'ged	X					1977 solid brick, single storey purpose built facility with flat roof; extended in 2013, well maintained over the years; provision of electronic security monitoring; landscaped play areas with shade; within parkland setting	142	106	\$7,000,000 Crown	good	2.4 Good	<i>Existing building condition and functionality both good but due for significant renewal works to meet customer expectations. Facility in the “large” size category. Opportunity to undertake significant renewal, with space available on site for expansion to meet current and future needs. Located in an SA1 area of moderate to high disadvantage, making it suitable as a potential facility of focus to support improved social outcomes.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for significant (50%) upgrade to the existing building = \$5,140,000. This equates to \$36,197 per place.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)
	Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children’s Centre	85 Liardet St Port Melbourne	comm- unity m'ged	X	X	X	X*		2013 light-weight veneer purpose built single storey building with low pitch roof.	155	155	\$8,300,000 Crown	good	1.12 Very Good	<i>New building, so assume no works required. Building condition very good and functionality is good. Facility in the “large” size category</i> <i>* Playgroup using shared space that would benefit from a location that can be dedicated.</i> Future Readiness 1 (refer above)
	Clark Street Children’s Centre	106 Clark St Port Melbourne	council m'ged	X					1976 purpose built single storey flat roof centre, with few alterations since it was built.	65	59	\$7,200,000 Freehold	good	3.2 Moderate	<i>Existing building condition Moderate and functionality Good. Facility in the “medium” size category. Significant alterations are required, with opportunity limited to second floor expansion due to density of site. Extent of compliance works required may trigger requirement to upgrade whole building to compliance, which may be cost prohibitive, reduce service capacity and be difficult to achieve to regulatory satisfaction.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for complete upgrade to the existing building = \$3,200,000. This equates to \$49,230 per place.</i> <i>or</i> <i>Option to build new 700m2 facility to achieve up to 90 places within existing site = \$6,130,000. This equates to \$68,111 per place.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)

	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places	April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHIP	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING	ASSET SUMMARY
	Port Melbourne Town Hall	333 Bay St Port Melbourne	council m'ged					X	1882 substantial brick two-storey building housing multiple community facilities (building issues bigger than current minor use of building by toy library)	na (toy library only)			moderate	2.85 Moderate	<i>Small space within large community building. assume any condition/ compliance works required not addressed as part of this project</i> <i>Toy library smaller than Design Toolkit requires. Options to be sought to find additional space, particularly for storage, within town hall or in alternative location.</i> Future Readiness 1 (refer above)
FISHERMANS BEND															
	Barring Djinang	Level 5, 129 Ferrars Street Southbank	council m'ged	X	X	X	X		Located on Level 5 of the new South Melbourne Primary School	44	13		very good	1.0 Very Good	<i>New building so no upgrade works are required. Facility in the “medium” size category.</i> <i>While this is a new facility in very good condition and there is capacity in this building for approximately ten years, once the population of Fishermans Bend expands it will rapidly outgrow this facility and further infrastructure will be required.</i> <i>With the Children’s Services spaces being within a multi-storey, multi-purpose building, there is no capacity for expansion to meet future needs at this location.</i> Future Readiness 1 (refer above)
SOUTH MELBOURNE															
	Clarendon Street Children’s Centre (and Koolin-ngal Family Centre	410 Clarendon St South Melbourne	comm- unity m'ged	X		X	X	X	1928 single storey solid brick school converted into childcare in the 1980's, with some additions.	40	39	\$2,600,000 Crown	good	2.29 Good	<i>Existing building condition and functionality of the Children’s Centre building are both good. Facility in the “small” size category.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for complete (100%) upgrade of the Childcare Centre wing of the existing building = \$2,190,000. This equates to \$54,750 per place and would not significantly increase the number of places due to limited outdoor space.</i> <i>Koolin-ngal centre which occupies approximately 50% of the total building footprint was refurbished recently and is in very good condition.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)
	Coventry Street Children’s Centre	328 Coventry St. South Melbourne	comm- unity m'ged	X					1985 purpose built single storey brick building. Capacity for future needs noted in 2015 Building Condition Audit	60	55	\$2,500,000 Freehold	good	2.32 Good	<i>Existing building condition and functionality both good with compliance upgrades required. Facility in the “medium” size category Located adjacent to an SA1 area of high disadvantage, making it suitable as a potential facility of focus to support improved social outcomes.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for complete (100%) upgrade of the existing building = \$3,620,000. This equates to \$60,333 per palce.</i> <i>A significant increase in capacity could be attained with the full replacement of the existing building with a multi-level facility. Cost estimates have not been determined for this option.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)

	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places	April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHIP	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING	ASSET SUMMARY
	Lillian Cannum Kindergarten	97 Eastern Rd South Melbourne	comm- unity m’ged		X				1928 building with renovations in the 1980's. Single storey brick (?) building. Major renewal items coming up.	67	67	\$3,900,000 Freehold	good	3.03 Moderate	<i>Existing building condition Moderate and functionality good with significant alterations required although some works recently undertaken. Facility in the “medium” size category. Located in an SA1 area of high disadvantage, making it suitable as a potential facility of focus to support improved social outcomes.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for complete (100%) upgrade of the existing building = \$2,600,000. This equates to \$38,805 per place.</i> <i>Option to build new 700m2 facility on existing site = \$6,160,000 may increase capacity to up to 90 places which equates to \$68,444 per place.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)
ST KILDA ROAD															
no Council-owned Children’s Services assets															
ALBERT PARK/ MIDDLE PARK															
	Albert Park Kindergarten	18 Dundas Place Albert Park	comm- unity m’ged		X	X			Late 19th c. single storey solid brick residence converted in 1940s, with later additions. In good condition; in residential area Building has heritage overlay	24	19	\$2,550,000 Freehold	good	2.2 Good	<i>Existing building condition and functionality both good but requiring significant upgrades. Facility in the “small” size category Limited capacity with little space for expansion. Single-room MCH facility only, which is not considered good practice.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for significant (75%) upgrade of the existing building = \$1,490,000. This equates to \$62,083 per place.</i> <i>Option to build new 500m2 facility on existing site = \$4,350,000 but would not increase capacity due to limited outdoor space. This equates to \$181,250 per place.</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer below)
	Middle Park Civic Kindergarten	256 Richardson St Middle Park	comm- unity m’ged		X	X	X*	X	1920s double-storey brick building with significant refurbishment in 2013. Community Centre with library, childcare and meeting rooms. Many rooms are quite small Building has heritage overlay	23	23	\$3,950,000 Freehold	na	2.1 Good	<i>Significant recent refurbishment but existing building condition rated as "Moderate" with functionality as good for MCH/ playgroup/ toy library (kindergarten not rated). Assume compliance upgrades required. Facility in the “small” size category.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for significant (50%) upgrade of the existing building = \$790,000. This equates to \$34,347 per place and there is no ability to increase capacity by redevelopment due to heritage and outdoor space restrictions.</i> <i>*Playgroup using shared space</i> Future Readiness 2 (refer above)
	South Melbourne Childcare Coop (Carter Street)	5 Carter St Albert Park	comm- unity m’ged	X	X				Originally built in 1916 and converted in 1985, then significant 2002 renovation. Two storeys. Limited capacity due to lack of FFP layout and space provision Building has heritage overlay	40	40	\$4,500,000 Freehold	moderate	2.3 Good	<i>Existing building condition and functionality rated as good. Compliance upgrades required. Facility in the “small” category Limited capacity with limited space for expansion.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate to completely upgrade the existing building = \$2,200,000. This equates to \$55,000 per place.</i>

															<i>Option to build new 500m2 multi-level facility on existing site = \$4,350,000 may only yield an additional 20 places due to outdoor space size. This equates to \$72,500 per place.</i>
															<i>Future Readiness 2 (refer above)</i>
	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places	April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHIP	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING	ASSET SUMMARY
ST KILDA WEST/ ST KILDA															
	Eildon Road Children’s Centre	17 Eildon Rd St Kilda	comm- unity m’ged	X					1900 converted solid brick two storey house. Audit notes that the building is severely compromised and lacks the capacity for conversion to appropriate facilities Building has heritage overlay	44	34	\$3,150,000 Freehold	poor	2.95 Moderate	<i>Existing building condition is rated as Moderate and functionality is rated as poor. Facility in the lower end of the “medium” size category</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate to replace the existing building on existing/comparable site = \$2,500,000 (not including site purchase). Heritage restrictions and limited size of the site may only yield an additional 20 places. This equates to \$39,065 per place.</i> <i>The extent of compliance works required may trigger requirement to upgrade whole building to compliance, which may be cost prohibitive, reduce service capacity and be difficult to achieve to regulatory satisfaction.</i> <i>Future Readiness 3 (refer above)</i>
	North St Kilda Children’s Centre	71 Argyle St St Kilda	council m’ged	X					1970 brick veneer single storey building with flat roof; landscaped play areas with shade	77	68	\$2,500,000 Freehold	good	2.9 Moderate	<i>Existing building condition is rated as Moderate and functionality is rated as good. Facility in the “medium” size category. Significant compliance upgrades are required.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate for a complete (100%) upgrade of the existing building = \$3,490,000. This equates to \$45,324 per place.</i> <i>Option to build new 1000m2 facility on existing site = \$8,440,000 may yield up to 30 additional places. This equates to \$78,878 per place.</i> <i>Future Readiness 2 (refer below)</i>
	York Street Kindergarten	8 York Street St Kilda West	council owned		X				1972 brick veneer single storey building in poor condition that is currently vacant and has only minimal maintenance in recent years; multiple poorly integrated additions; within residential area	na (closed)		\$3,800,000 Freehold	na	3.2 Moderate	<i>Existing building is currently closed due to condition, which is rated as Moderate. Functionality was not rated as building not operating, but expected that it would not perform well. Facility in the “small” size category but not currently licenced. Significant compliance upgrades are required, with limited capacity for required upgrades to occur. Consideration of whether this facility will be needed in the future to meet service demand to be assessed in Stage 2.</i> <i>High level Cost Plan estimate to upgrade (100%) the existing building = \$1,880,000.</i> <i>Option to build new 500m2 facility on existing site = \$4,320,000 may only yield up to 50 places due to limited outdoor space. This equates to \$86,400 per place.</i> <i>Extent of compliance works required may trigger requirement to upgrade whole building to compliance, which may be cost prohibitive reduce service capacity and be difficult to achieve to regulatory satisfaction.</i> <i>Future Readiness 3 (refer above)</i>

	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places		April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHI P	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING
BALACLAVA/ EAST ST KILDA															
	Alma Road Community House	200 Alma Road St Kilda East	MCH= council m'ged			X	X		1920s brick single storey house converted to community centre many years ago. Limited space internally	na (MCH only)			good	2.1 Good	Existing building condition and functionality for MCH/ playgroup areas are rated as good. It is assumed compliance upgrades are required. High level Cost Plan estimate for significant (75%) upgrade of the existing MCH area of building = \$273,000. Future Readiness 2 (refer above)
	Bubup Nairm Children's Centre	99b Carlisle St St Kilda	council m'ged	X		X	X		2013 purpose built multi-storey multi-purpose community facility adjacent to Town Hall, concrete and steel construction with integrated external play spaces	116	102	\$5,413,000 Freehold	very good	2.07 Good	Recent building with condition rated as good and functionality rated as very good. Facility in the "large" size category Minor compliance upgrades are required, with some work scheduled in next financial year. Future Readiness 1 (refer above)
	The Avenue Children's Centre	39 The Avenue Balaclava	comm- unity m'ged	X					1920's single storey residence converted into childcare centre. Some significant subfloor structural issues and lack of capacity for expansion on site noted in 2015 building condition audit	40	36	\$2,200,000 Freehold	moderate	2.66 Moderate	Existing building condition and functionality both rated as moderate. Facility in the "small" size category. Significant compliance works required. High level Cost Plan estimate for full replacement or redevelopment of the existing building on existing site = \$1,980,000. This may only yield an additional 20 places due to limited outdoor space and safe car parking facilities. This equates to \$33,000 per place. Future Readiness 3 (refer above)
ELWOOD/ RIPPONLEA															
	Elwood Children's Centre	46 Tennyson St Elwood	comm- unity m'ged	X					1920 converted solid brick two storey house, converted approx 30 years ago. Audit notes that the building is severely compromised in appropriate facilities and requires significant upgrade to bring it up to standard Building has heritage overlay	39	35	\$2,450,000 Freehold	moderate	3.2 Moderate	Existing building condition rated as moderate and functionality rated as poor. Facility in the "small" size category (39 licenced places) with some capacity available (current utilisation = 35 places). Significant compliance works required. High level Cost Plan estimate for full replacement or redevelopment of the existing building on existing site or comparable = \$2,200,000 (not including site purchase). Redevelopment of existing site may only yield an additional 20 places due to limited outdoor space and safe car parking facilities. This equates to \$37,288 per place. Extent of compliance works required may trigger requirement to upgrade whole building to compliance, which may be cost prohibitive, reduce service capacity and be difficult to achieve to regulatory satisfaction. Future Readiness 3 (refer above)
	Elwood Playgroup	51 Broadway Elwood	comm- unity m'ged				X		1950s solid brick single storey residence with tiled roof. Modifications and extensions undertaken over time; well- maintained over the years; within residential area; landscaped play areas with shade Building has Heritage overlay	na (playgroups only)		\$2,950,000 Crown	good	2.3 Good	Existing building condition and functionality rated as good. Compliance works required. High level Cost Plan estimate for complete (100%) upgrade of the existing building = \$2,150,000. Future Readiness 2 (refer above)

	NAME	ADDRESS	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Childcare	Kindergarten	MCH	Playgroup	Toy Library	BUILDING DESCRIPTION	2018 Licence Places		April 2018 Utilisation	VALUATION LAND OWNERSHI P	FIT FOR PURPOSE RATING	BUILDING CONDITION RATING
	Elwood/ St Kilda Neighbourhood House	87 Tennyson St Elwood	comm- unity m'ged					X	1860's/ 1910 original solid brick/ timber house converted to community facility in the 1980's. Toy Library has small space within building Building has heritage overlay	na (toy library only)			good	2.53 Moderate	<p>Existing building condition rated as moderate and functionality rated as good. Toy library only occupies small part of the building.</p> <p>Currently used as a community learning centre and toy library. The building is due for a major redevelopment and given the large land parcel could be redeveloped into a large childcare centre if some of the reserve space is used. Cost estimates have not been developed at this stage.</p> <p>Some compliance works required but these should be considered in conjunction with the overall building, not in isolation.</p> <p>Future Readiness 2 (refer above)</p>
	Lady Forster Kindergarten	63b Ormond Esplanade Elwood	comm- unity m'ged		X				Part of Elwood Beach Community Centre. Built in 1925 and converted in 2012. Single storey weatherboard building.	49	49	\$4,500,000 Crown	moderate	2.6 Moderate	<p>Existing building condition rated as moderate and functionality rated as good. Facility in the “medium” size category.</p> <p>High level Cost Plan estimate for complete upgrade of the existing building = \$2,540,000. This equates to \$51,836 per place.</p> <p>Extent of compliance works required may trigger requirement to upgrade whole building to compliance, which may be cost prohibitive. As it is part of a community building on Crown land with other uses, an alternative site needs to be considered in the next few years.</p> <p>Future Readiness 2 (refer above)</p>
	Poets Grove Family and Children’s Centre	18 Poets Grove Elwood	comm- unity m'ged	X	X	X			2007 purpose built single storey building in good condition. Located in flood overlay as adjacent to canal Building has heritage overlay	105	104	\$6,125,000 Crown	good	2.3 Good	<p>Existing building condition and functionality rated as good. Facility in the “large” size category. compliance upgrades required.</p> <p>High level Cost Plan estimate for minor (10%) upgrade of the existing building = \$750,000. This equates to \$7,142 per place and is a low priority project.</p> <p>Future Readiness 1 (refer above)</p>