

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Darebin City

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Department
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1. Introduction

1.1. Reform context

The Victorian Government's \$14 billion Best Start, Best Life (BSBL) reforms are the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation.

The BSBL reforms include:

- **Free Kinder:** Free Kinder is now available for Victorian 3- and 4-year-old children at participating services in standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care centres – a saving of up to \$2,500 per child, every year.
- **Pre-Prep:** Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to 'Pre-Prep' – increasing to a universal 30-hour-a-week program of play-based learning for 4-year-old children in Victoria by 2036.
- **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten:** the continued roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, with programs increasing to 15 hours a week across the state by 2029.
- **Early learning and childcare centres:** the establishment of 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres. These centres will be built in areas with the greatest need and will make it easier for families to access early childhood education and childcare. The first of the centres opened in 2025.

These initiatives demonstrate a clear commitment to improving early learning outcomes for Victorian children, workforce participation and access for families, and present the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation.

Pre-Prep will roll-out in Darebin City in 2034. Statewide, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services, will be able to access up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep in 2026, increasing to up to 30 hours from 2028. Children who have (or have a parent or guardian who has) a Commonwealth concession card and children who are a multiple birth child (triplets or more) across the state will be able to access up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep in 2028, increasing to up to 30 hours from 2030.

1.2. Purpose of Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plans (KISPs)

New and expanded infrastructure is key to delivering the BSBL reforms and will require a large expansion of kindergarten facilities across the State. KISPs, which are jointly developed with Local Governments, indicate where and when new infrastructure will be required to support both reform implementation and population growth in each of Victoria's 79 local government areas (LGAs). KISPs help all kindergarten providers meet demand and collectively provide a clear picture of infrastructure need across the State.

KISPs support planning for services and future capital works and include detailed information about:

- Current capacity and demand for funded kindergarten

- Capacity to be delivered for planned infrastructure projects and future demand for kindergarten
- Forecast ‘unmet demand’ for kindergarten – that is, the kindergarten places needed that cannot be met by current or planned capacity
- Information specific to each local government area and its early childhood education and care landscape.

KISPs were initially developed to support the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and have now been updated to incorporate Pre-Prep.

KISPs are intended to support planning. They are not funding documents and do not commit any party to addressing the unmet demand identified.

However, it is expected that future investment requests through Building Blocks and funding decisions about Local Government, not-for-profit projects (including non-government schools) would align with the relevant KISP (including Section 3: Local Context).

1.3. Structure of the KISP

Each KISP consists of the following sections:

- **Section 1:** A short introduction to the Best Start, Best Life reform and the KISP.
- **Section 2:** A map of existing and planned Early Childhood Education and Care services.
- **Section 3:** Local context and knowledge of key information in Darebin City relevant to early childhood education.
- **Section 4:** Unmet demand estimates in Darebin City over the life of the reform.

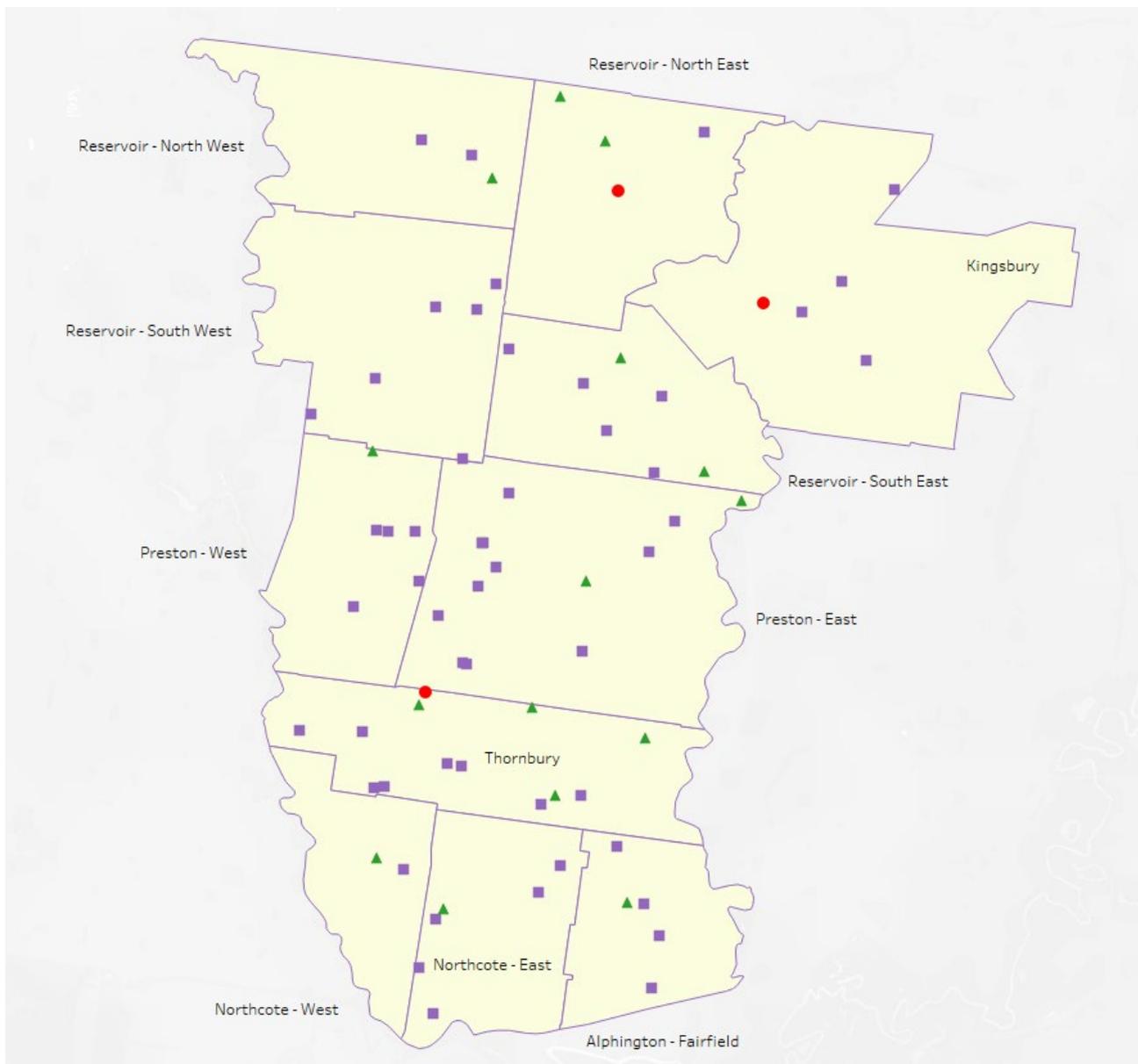
1.4. Disclaimer

All data presented in this document is published for information purposes only. Operational and business decisions should not be based solely on this document. Neither the Department nor Darebin City Council warrants, guarantees, makes any representation or assumes any duty of care in relation to the data, including as to its suitability, completeness, accuracy or adequacy.

2. Map of Early Childhood Education services in Darebin City

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new State-supported services that are planned to open in the future in Darebin City. Planned services by the private sector are not included.

This map has been prepared using departmental data, from both the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA).



- Key**
- Existing KGN services
 - Existing LDC services
 - Pipeline projects

3. Local context

3.1 Purpose

Local, place-based knowledge and context play an important role in supporting the implementation of the BSBL reforms across Victoria. This section of the KISP documents this knowledge and context and should be considered alongside the kindergarten demand estimates in Section 4.

Information provided as local context may support applications through the Building Blocks Capacity Building and Planning Grants streams.

3.2 Key considerations

Aboriginal Self Determination in Early Childhood Education and Care

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have maintained a strong physical and cultural presence in Darebin in the face of displacement, disenfranchisement and policies of assimilation.

Estimates derived from the 2021 Census report Darebin’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population to be 1,727. Whilst the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years has remained relatively stable over successive Census counts (152 in 2006 to 159 in 2021), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were reported to be attending pre-school is up significantly from an estimated 28 in 2006.

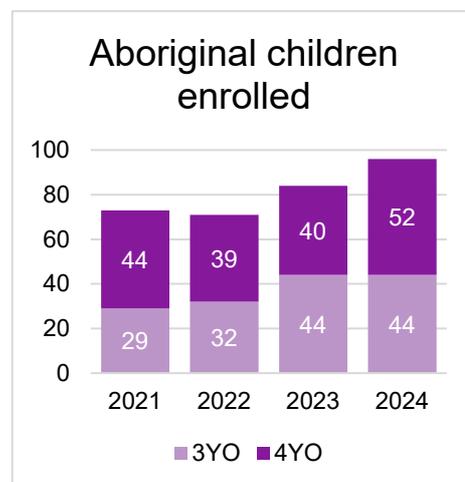
96 Aboriginal children were enrolled in a Darebin kindergarten program in 2024, an increase of 35% from a low of 71 in 2022. Increases have been seen in both 3- and 4-year-old enrolments since 2021.

As part of the statewide roll-out of Pre-Prep, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Darebin will be able to access to up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep a week from 2026, increasing to up to 30 hours a week from 2028.

Darebin is one of 30 Best Start project sites across Victoria. Darebin Best Start focuses on all Aboriginal children and priority children to ensure they can access quality early childhood experiences through Maternal and Child Health services, Supported Playgroups and kindergartens. Darebin Best Start is working towards the following outcomes:

- Children engage and participate in early childhood education (kindergarten and Supported Playgroups)
- Children and families actively engage with Maternal and Child Health services, attending key age and stage visits.

The Darebin Best Start Aboriginal Reference Group was established in 2009 to support the Darebin Best Start program to work with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), parents and Elders to better understand the needs of Aboriginal families and develop responses



underpinned by the principles of self-determination. The membership of this group includes the key ACCOs focused on health and education, as well as members of the Aboriginal education workforce. Organisations represented on the Darebin Best Start Aboriginal Reference Group include the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL), Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), Yappera Children's Service Co-Operative Ltd and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS).

Yappera Children's Service Co-Operative Ltd is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation on Wurundjeri Country in Thornbury which provides high quality, culturally grounded and holistic health and education programs to Aboriginal children and families. The service has a licensed capacity of 60 places and provides Long Day Care and Kindergarten services. In 2025 the service had 22 children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and 20 in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. Many children attending Yappera live outside of Darebin. The service advised Council that around 15% of children attending the service live in Darebin. Yappera is currently undergoing expansion with 25 additional places forecast to be available in 2026.

As outlined in the *Darebin Early Years Infrastructure Planning Framework 2021-2041*, Darebin City Council's approach to early years infrastructure planning is guided by Council's *Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people* and *Towards Equality – Darebin City Council's Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-29*, which affirm Council's obligation to respect, protect and promote the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, our responsibility to respect self-determination and recognise sovereignty, and our commitment to place recognition and rights of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority consideration in planning and decision-making. The Early Years Infrastructure Planning Framework 2021-2041 also includes the following principles to guide decision-making:

- **Connection to culture and Country.** To support children's connection to culture and country we will work to recognise and respect Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in infrastructure planning and provision, for example through naming, building design, landscaping and signage.
- **Truth-telling.** Recognition of, and respect for, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in infrastructure planning and provision will also be used, as and when deemed appropriate by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation and other local Aboriginal communities, as an opportunity for education and to enhance the knowledge and understanding of non-Aboriginal children and families, in the spirit of truth-telling.

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

Population Growth

The City of Darebin is expected to see significant population growth over the period to 2036. According to Council's population forecasts, the Darebin population is projected to grow from a baseline of 150,296 in 2021, to 186,679 by 2036 (Source: forecast.id updated in June 2024). This represents 24.2% growth across the 15-year period at an average annual growth rate of 1.6% .

The most significant areas of growth are in the Preston area, with the population of Preston East forecast to grow by 8,402 from 2021 to 2036, and Preston West forecast to grow by 6,847 during this same period. It is important to note that substantial growth is forecast across all SA2s with the exception of Reservoir North West.

SA2	2021	2026 Forecast	2031 Forecast	2036 Forecast	Growth 2021-2036	% growth 2021-2036
Alphington - Fairfield	9,072	9,746	10,467	11,219	2,147	24%
Kingsbury	10,564	11,957	12,887	13,708	3,144	30%
Northcote - East	15,230	15,805	17,020	18,187	2,957	19%
Northcote - West	10,427	11,158	11,704	12,581	2,154	21%
Preston - East	17,662	19,979	22,585	26,064	8,402	48%
Preston - West	16,163	17,173	20,589	23,010	6,847	42%
Reservoir - North East	14,989	15,614	16,122	16,799	1,810	12%
Reservoir - North West	9,887	9,906	9,967	10,040	153	2%
Reservoir - South East	12,941	13,846	14,638	15,794	2,853	22%
Reservoir - South West	14,182	14,688	15,477	16,337	2,155	15%
Thornbury	19,152	20,260	21,589	22,937	3,785	20%
Darebin City Total	150,269	160,131	173,045	186,679	36,410	24%

Forecasts for 3- and 4-year-olds specifically suggest that the areas that will see the most substantial increases in the period 2021-2036 will be:

- Preston West (a net increase of 152)
- Reservoir South West (a net increase of 91)
- Preston East (a net increase of 79)
- Northcote East (a net increase of 64).

It is important to note that Council's population forecasts are only one input into the KISP demand model, alongside Victoria in Future population projections. These two are averaged together to generate the population estimates used in the modelling. Furthermore, the unmet demand estimates at section 4 model a kindergarten participation rate of 96% for all ages.

Planning Reforms and Urban Development

Forecast population growth in Darebin is informed by development assumptions across the municipality, including expected dwelling yields at identified major development sites such as the Polaris Development (Kingsbury), Oakover Village (Preston West) and others in Northcote, East Preston and Alphington-Fairfield. Developments beyond Darebin's borders also impact population forecasts. For example, the population of the Fairfield-Alphington area in the City of Yarra (to the South of the Alphington-Fairfield area in Darebin) is expected to grow by 162% between 2021 to 2036 from 3,301 residents to 8,663 (source: <https://forecast.id.com.au/yarra/population-households-dwellings>). We understand this to be largely driven by the development of the 16.5-hectare Alphington Paper Mill site on the corner of Heidelberg Road and the Chandler Highway.

A number of recent planning reforms announced by the Victorian Government through the *Plan for Victoria* 'Housing for all Victorians' priority, along with announcement from other major stakeholders such as La Trobe University, provide indications that concentrated dense development may be encouraged in particular areas of the municipality.

The housing target for Darebin announced by the Victorian Government in 2025 is for 69,000 net new dwellings in the municipality to 2051. Key areas where density is to be encouraged include:

1. Projects under the Victorian Government's Activity Centres Program
 - a. Preston (High Street) – estimated housing target of 11,800-15,300 new dwellings. The Centre spans across both Preston East and Preston West SA2 areas. See <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/strategies-and-initiatives/activity-centres-program/preston-high-street>.
 - b. High Street (Thornbury) and St Georges Road (Thornbury) – plans have been released with expected development impact in both the Northcote East and Thornbury SA2s. See <https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/activity-centres-program/page/thornbury>.
2. La Trobe University City masterplan – The university's proposals include additional housing for 12,000 students, staff and private residents and a new 624-bed student accommodation facility already in the pipeline. There have also been discussions proposing an 88-place expansion of La Trobe University Community Children's Centre, which services a broader catchment than a typical Early Childhood Education and Care Service. See <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/future-city>.
3. Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) precincts – no precincts in Darebin have been announced, however, areas around Reservoir station and a new Bundoora station at La Trobe University may be included in the SRL North phase of this project (Box Hill to Melbourne Airport). See <https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/suburban-rail-loop/srl-north>.

Other demographic considerations

Whilst the size of the 3- and 4-year-old population is the primary driver of demand for kindergarten, other demographic factors including levels of socio-economic disadvantage and cultural and linguistic diversity provide important context for considering infrastructure needs in Darebin.

Families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may face financial and other barriers to accessing services such as kindergarten. The following areas of Darebin had higher levels of disadvantage than the Greater Melbourne average in 2021:

- the suburb of Kingsbury (part of the Kingsbury SA2),
- the four Reservoir SA2s, and
- Preston East

In response, Council's Early Years Infrastructure Planning Framework recognises the importance of ensuring adequate provision of sessional kindergarten places across Darebin, and in particular in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, to ensure that families are not excluded from kindergarten by the fees they may be required to pay for long day care services.

Socio-economic factors are also relevant when considering the statewide early roll-out of Pre-Prep from 2028 onwards to children who have (or have a parent or guardian who has) a Commonwealth concession card. The distribution of low-income households is an important indicator to consider here. In 2021, 21.6% of households in Darebin were classified as low-income (receiving less than

\$800 per week before tax). Areas in Darebin with a higher proportion of low-income households than the Darebin average (21.6%) are Reservoir South East (33.5%), Reservoir North West (29.5%), Reservoir North East (24.3%), Preston East (23.1%), Reservoir South West (22.0%), and Kingsbury-Bundoora (21.6%).

Cultural diversity is another important lens when considering participation in Darebin kindergartens. In 2021, 32% of Darebin residents spoke a language other than English at home and 6% spoke little to no English, compared with 34% and 5.4% across Greater Melbourne respectively. Data from the Darebin Maternal and Child Health service shows that 14% of MCH clients from 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2024 spoke a language other than English at home, with 50 languages or dialects recorded as being spoken at home. The most common languages other than English spoken at home amongst MCH clients were Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Hindi, Urdu, Somali, Spanish and Bengali. In 2024, 15% of children enrolled in Darebin kindergarten were from a non-English speaking background.

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

Darebin City Council and DE are working closely to respond to the demand for kindergarten places in Darebin created by the Best Start, Best Life reform program. Council and DE signed a Building Blocks Partnership Memorandum of Understanding in 2024 that included agreement to deliver two initial projects as the first tranche of a pipeline of works:

- An expansion of Merri Community Child Care and Kindergarten, Thornbury was completed in 2024 delivering an additional 5 licensed places in this area,
- A 38-place expansion of Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten, Kingsbury, is due to commence construction in 2025 with the intention that the additional capacity will be operational by Q1 2026.

In 2024, Council also delivered an upgrade of a Council facility in Thornbury to enable it to be used for kindergarten service delivery. This new facility has been licensed as the Raleigh Street Community Kindergarten, commencing service delivery in Q1 2025 with a license for 22 places.

Negotiations on the next tranche of projects to be included in the Building Blocks Partnership pipeline are ongoing.

In recent years, two Kindergarten on School Site (KOSS) projects have been delivered in Darebin:

- The Reservoir East Family Centre, which opened in 2023 on the site of Reservoir East Primary School, is currently licensed for 66 places. The centre has an additional unlicensed third children's room which is currently used for community and family services. This will switch to provide an additional 33 kindergarten places when future demand requires it.
- In Q1 2025, a new 99-place Darebin Creek Kindergarten opened on the site of Thornbury High School in Thornbury.

Further projects that have been announced by the State Government include:

- Reservoir Views Primary School Kindergarten – The new facility, currently under construction, will open in Term 1, 2026 and will have three kindergarten rooms for up to 99 children.
- Reservoir Early Learning and Childcare Centre – Reservoir has been announced as one of the locations for 50 new early learning and childcare centres across Victoria to be built and owned by the Victorian Government and run by Early Learning Victoria. The timing, location and full scope of this facility have not yet been confirmed.

- Yappera Children’s Service Co-Operative Ltd – Upgrades will result in 25 additional licensed places for the local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO).

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

Based on modelled estimates of available kindergarten supply, standalone kindergartens currently provide an estimated 40% of 15-hour kindergarten places in Darebin. The proportion of places provided in standalone kindergarten varies quite dramatically by SA2 area, with no standalone kindergartens operating in Reservoir South West, whilst in Reservoir North East an estimated 85% of places are supplied by standalone kindergarten services.

SA2	Estimated % of places in Standalone Kindergarten (supply at July 2025)
Alphington - Fairfield	23%
Kingsbury*	23%
Northcote - East	31%
Northcote - West	68%
Preston - East	17%
Preston - West	32%
Reservoir - North East	85%
Reservoir - North West	36%
Reservoir - South East	60%
Reservoir - South West	0%
Thornbury	63%
DAREBIN TOTAL	40%

**Expansion of Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten by 38 places in 2026 will increase to an estimated 41% (assuming no other centres open or expand in the area)*

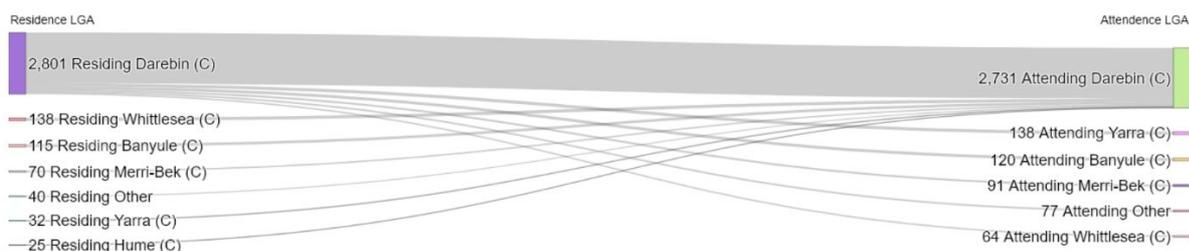
In 2024, 80% of kindergarten enrolments in Darebin were in Long Day Care services and 20% in standalone kindergarten services. This was similar to the distribution in 2022 and 2023. This suggests there is currently underutilised capacity in some stand-alone kindergarten services.

Darebin City Council’s policy position, outlined in the Darebin Early Years Infrastructure Planning Framework 2021-2041, is to seek equitable access to sessional kindergarten across Darebin, particularly in areas where low provision of sessional kindergarten places intersects with higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, as is the case in some parts of the north of Darebin. As such,

areas of particular concern include Reservoir South West, Reservoir North West, Preston East and Preston West.

Darebin City Council aspires to ensure that children and families in Darebin are able to access the services they need in facilities that are conveniently located, well serviced by public transport, have adequate parking and infrastructure to support active travel. Whilst many families prefer to access a kindergarten service close to home, we know that some families prefer to access services in other locations, for example locations that are close to their workplace or an older child’s school.

In 2024, 85% of Darebin’s 2,731 kindergarten enrolments resided in Darebin with 15% (or 420 children) attending from outside of the municipality. Conversely, 490 children residing in Darebin were enrolled in other Local Government Areas (LGAs).



Darebin is home to three Early Childhood Education and Care Services which draw enrolments from a wider regional catchment, which has been reflected in the supply assumptions that underpin the estimates in section 4. These services are:

- East Preston Islamic College
- La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre
- Yappera Children’s Service Cooperative.

Other information about the expansion of early childhood services

Darebin City Council, along with the other Councils in the North Eastern Melbourne Area (NEMA) and State Government, has a commitment to increase kindergarten participation in this area to the Victorian average, under the NEMA Early Years Compact.

The 4-year-old kindergarten participation rate has increased in Darebin over recent years, from 83% in 2021 to 92% in 2024 (with a high of 94% in 2023). This remains behind the state-wide rate of 96% in 2024. Whilst the 3-year-old participation rate in Darebin increased from 77% in 2022 to 87% in 2023 in line with state-wide trends, it fell to 82% in 2024, compared to a rate of 90% state-wide in the same year.

Participation rates at the SA2 level tend to fluctuate year by year, which can be explained in part by the larger influence of errors in the estimation of population counts at the smaller geographic level. This should be noted when considering the following observations about participation in 2024:

<i>Participation rates across Darebin SA2s (2024)</i>	<i>3-year-olds</i>	<i>4-year-olds</i>
Alphington - Fairfield	85%	100%
Kingsbury	73%	85%
Northcote - East	98%	100%
Northcote - West	87%	96%
Preston - East	77%	88%
Preston - West	87%	100%
Reservoir - North East	74%	89%
Reservoir - North West	80%	77%
Reservoir - South East	88%	95%
Reservoir - South West	85%	89%
Thornbury	77%	84%
Darebin	82%	92%
Victoria	90%	96%

4. Unmet demand estimates between 2026 - 2036 for Darebin City

4.1 Purpose

As the BSBL reforms are rolled out and Victoria's population grows, demand for kindergarten and Pre-Prep places will increase significantly. While additional capacity will be needed to meet this demand, this will vary across the State and over time, due to differences in the capacity of existing services, growth trends and sector composition.

To identify where, when and how many additional kindergarten places are expected to be required over the roll-out in Darebin City, Darebin City Council and the department have developed:

1. a summary of the current provision of kindergarten within Darebin City (**Section 4.3**).
2. an estimate of kindergarten places that cannot be met through existing services for the 2026 - 2036 period, taking into account the additional demand that can be accommodated by optimising utilisation of existing services and infrastructure (**Section 4.4**).

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

4.2 Methodology

The estimated kindergarten places used in the following sections have been agreed between Darebin City Council and the department, and were informed by:

- demand projections developed by the department which draw on a range of inputs, including population forecasts and current enrolments
- the estimated capacity of existing and planned services in the LGA (Section 2)
- where applicable, modelling undertaken by Darebin City and service level information; and
- local knowledge and context provided by the local government (Section 3) that explains particular issues and trends in their area.

Kindergarten places explainer

The KISP measures a service's capacity to deliver funded kindergarten in terms of the number of **15-hour places** (referred to as "kindergarten places") available for Three-Year-Old kindergarten and Pre-Prep (noting that, by 2036, two kindergarten places will be required for one Pre-Prep enrolment). The number of kindergarten places is different from a service's licensed or approved places, which count the number of children permitted to attend the service at any one time under the license. Many services can enrol more children in their funded kindergarten program(s) than they have licensed places for because they can run more than one kindergarten program per week. Kindergarten places are therefore a more accurate measure of service kindergarten capacity than licensed places.

Kindergarten places have been presented as 15-hour places so that new Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places and the additional 15-hour places required for Pre-Prep can be easily compared to existing 15-hour Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places. This is because, when Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is fully rolled out in 2029, three-year-old children will have access to 15-hours of kindergarten. When Pre-Prep is fully rolled out in 2036, four-year-old children will have access to up to 30-hours of kindergarten, an increase of the current offering of 15-hours per week.

It is important to note that enrolments are not equivalent to 15-hour places. One 15-hour place can support a total of 15 hours of delivery per week split between one or more children, including but not limited to the following examples:

One 15-hour place (15 hours of delivery)		
Example 1	1 child	1 x 3YO attending 15 hours per week
Example 2	1 child	1 x 4YO attending 15 hours per week
Example 3	2 children	2 x 3YOs attending 7.5 hours per week
Example 4	3 children	3 x 3YOs attending 5 hours per week

Two 15-hour places can support a total of 30 hours of delivery per week split between one or more children, including but not limited to the following examples:

Two 15-hour places (30 hours of delivery)		
Example 1	1 child	1 x 4YO attending 30 hours per week
Example 2	2 children	2 x 3YOs attending 15 hours per week
Example 3	2 children	1 x 3YO, and 1 x 4YO both attending 15 hours per week
Example 4	3 children	2 x 3YOs attending 7.5 hours per week, and 1 x 4YO attending 15 hours per week

Geographic boundaries used in the KISP

These estimates have been developed at an LGA and community level to show the overall forecast and variation within an area. The KISP defines community at the Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2), which is a medium-sized area which represents a community that interacts socially and economically, with an approximate population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people, and an average population of about 10,000 people. The KISP uses 2021 SA2 boundaries. More information is available at the [Australian Bureau of Statistics website](#).

Supply contributed by pipeline projects

Darebin City Council and the department have added any new places that will be made available through planned expansions of existing services or new services into estimates of existing supply,

where this information is available. This may include projects being delivered by not-for-profit providers (including non-government schools) with support from the Victorian Government, planned Kindergartens on School Sites, and government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres.

The KISP does not estimate how and when the broader sector will expand to meet the additional demand for kindergarten places that are estimated over the roll-out period.

4.3 Summary of current kindergarten provision

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

- the department’s Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2024.
- the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at August 2025.

Number of services by service type (NQAITS)	
Stand-alone kindergartens	15
Long day care centres (including services not currently delivering funded kindergarten)	52

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITS)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	0%
Private not for profit	49%
Private for profit	49%
Other	1%

Current kindergarten offering in Darebin City	
Three-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	82%
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	92%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (KIMS):	64

4.4 Agreed estimates of demand for kindergarten places

The below estimates (**Table 1** onwards) have been developed by Darebin City Council and the department to illustrate the estimated:

1. Demand – the total number of kindergarten places expected to be required over the roll-out period to support the current provision of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, the BSBL reforms, and population growth

2. Supply – the total number of kindergarten places that can be accommodated by existing services and infrastructure, and planned, State-supported services which are yet to open.
3. Unmet demand – kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by optimising existing services and infrastructure (i.e. the shortfall between demand and supply).

Interpreting the estimates

Infrastructure need in the LGA and its local communities is indicated by the bottom rows of the tables in this section (**Table 1** onwards): *Unmet demand*. If the number of kindergarten places in this row is above zero, it means that the area is estimated to need additional infrastructure capacity. Any type of provider – local government, not-for-profit (including non-government schools) or for-profit – can build this additional infrastructure.

Sub-SA2 factors may need to be considered to give a holistic picture of unmet demand. For example, in rural communities, one SA2 may contain several small towns, some with excess supply and some with unmet demand. At the SA2-level, demand may appear to be met because all supply and demand is considered in aggregate; however, it is not feasible to for families to drive long distances to access kindergarten capacity in another town. Sub-SA2 factors are covered in **Section 3: Local context**.

Table 1: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Darebin City

Darebin City estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten places	2915	3068	3295	3348	3447	3473	3503	3532	3926	4318	4994
Unmet demand	42	60	107	125	165	133	147	161	224	396	809

Community estimates

Table 2-A: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Alphington - Fairfield

Alphington - Fairfield estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	170	175	191	195	201	200	201	202	225	248	290
Kindergarten supply	228	228	237	237	237	237	237	237	256	256	256
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34

Table 2-B: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Kingsbury

Kingsbury estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	161	170	185	187	193	193	196	200	225	249	290
Kindergarten supply	291	291	301	301	301	301	301	301	319	319	319
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-C: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Northcote - East

Northcote - East estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	291	315	336	342	350	352	352	354	392	426	491
Kindergarten supply	335	335	348	348	348	348	348	348	373	373	373
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	7	19	53	118

Table 2-D: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Northcote - West

Northcote - West estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	172	173	188	194	201	203	206	208	233	258	301
Kindergarten supply	156	156	158	158	158	158	158	158	164	164	164
Unmet demand	17	17	30	35	42	45	47	50	69	94	137

Table 2-E: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Preston - East

Preston - East estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	427	458	493	507	521	533	543	550	609	668	766
Kindergarten supply	637	637	666	666	666	666	666	666	724	724	724
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42

Table 2-F: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Preston - West

Preston - West estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	320	339	372	383	400	408	418	426	474	525	610
Kindergarten supply	325	325	333	333	333	333	333	333	357	357	357
Unmet demand	0	14	39	50	67	75	85	93	118	169	253

Table 2-G: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Reservoir – North East

Reservoir - North East estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	234	259	278	281	289	289	290	289	328	366	433
Kindergarten supply	392	392	393	393	393	393	393	393	397	397	397
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36

Table 2-H: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Reservoir – North West

Reservoir - North West estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	175	179	193	195	200	201	201	201	225	249	291
Kindergarten supply	150	150	155	155	155	212	212	212	228	228	228
Unmet demand	25	29	38	39	45	0	0	0	0	21	62

Table 2-I: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Reservoir - South East

Reservoir - South East estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	284	291	311	314	320	320	321	323	355	389	445
Kindergarten supply	556	556	568	568	568	568	568	568	592	592	592
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-J: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Reservoir - South West

Reservoir - South West estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	275	287	305	307	316	317	319	320	359	399	467
Kindergarten supply	292	292	308	308	308	308	308	308	340	340	340
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	8	8	10	12	19	58	126

Table 2-K: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Thornbury

Thornbury estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	405	422	443	445	456	456	457	458	500	541	611
Kindergarten supply	630	630	642	642	642	642	642	642	666	666	666
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. Authorisation

The North Eastern Melbourne Area Executive Director, Jo Marshall, of the Department of Education and the Anne Howard, Chief Executive Officer of Darebin City Council endorse this Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Darebin City by signing on 13/11/2025.

This KISP is not intended to create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement between the parties. The parties may review this KISP in 2028 to publish a new version that will replace the previous version.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Darebin City Council.

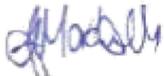


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Signature

Name: Anne Howard

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of the Department of Education



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Signature

Name: Joanne Marshall

Title: Executive Director