

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Moira Shire

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Department
of Education

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 Moira Shire in 2027. 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 Moira Shire relevant to early childhood education.
- **Section 4:** Unmet demand estimates in Moira Shire over the life of the reform.

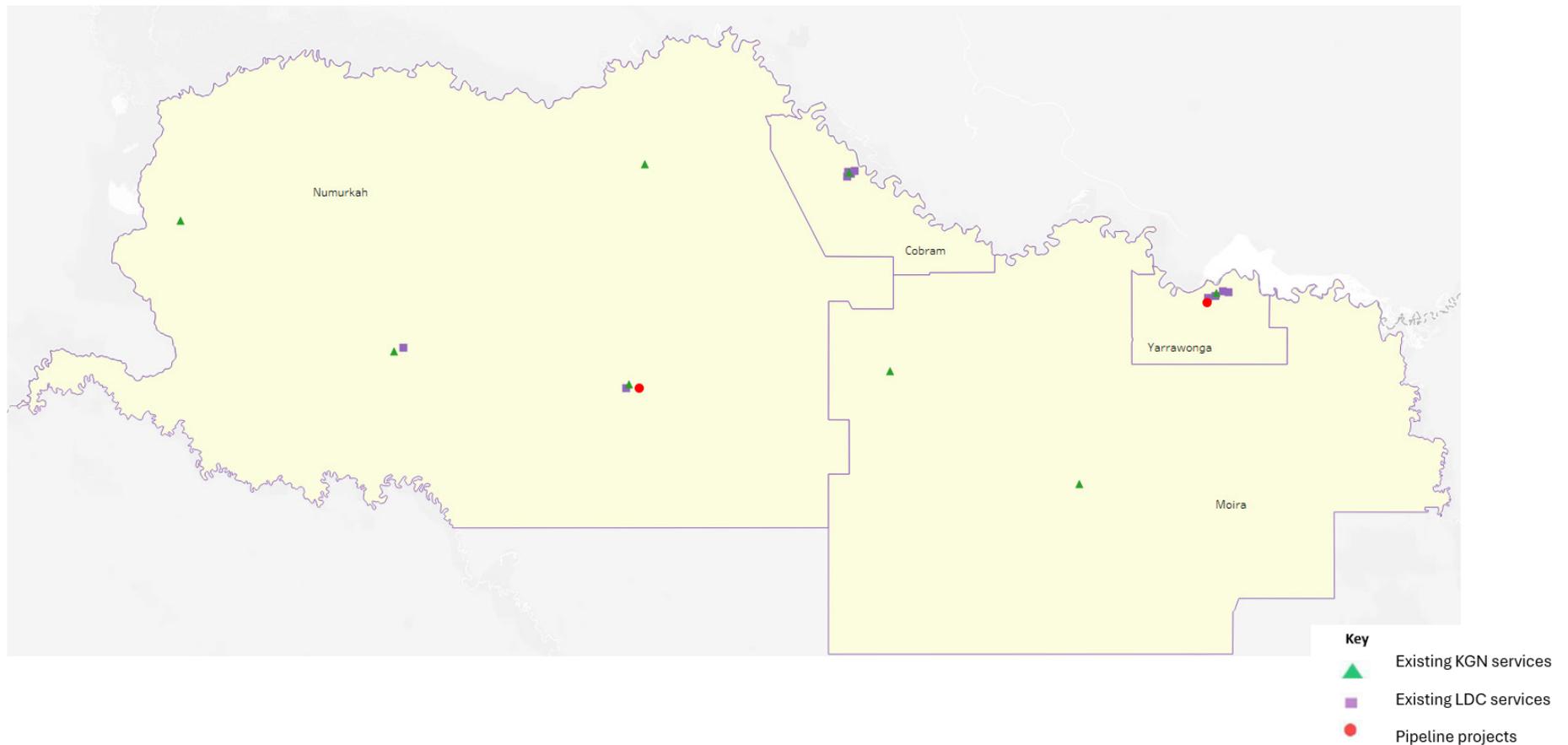
1.4. Disclaimer

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 Moira Shire 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 Moira Shire

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new State-supported services that are planned to open in the future in Moira Shire. 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).



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

The Moira Shire region, known affectionately as Sun Country on the Murray, boasts an abundance of sunshine year-round. The area is privileged to be surrounded by the Murray, Ovens, and Goulburn rivers, as well as Lake Mulwala. Visitors and residents alike can indulge in a wide range of activities, including golf, water sports, adventure, relaxation, art, fine dining, wine, and nature exploration. This diverse range of offerings positions Moira Shire as one of Australia's premier holiday destinations throughout the year.

Moira's economy relies primarily on industries like fruit cultivation, dairy farming, beef production, and manufacturing. Sectors such as construction, transport, postal services, warehousing, education, training, health care, and social assistance have shown steady growth. The health care and social assistance sector experienced the most significant job growth between 2016 and 2021, adding 391 jobs. Major towns in Moira include Cobram, Nathalia, Numurkah, and Yarrawonga.

With median age of 48 as per 2021 and population of 30,775 in 2023, Moira Shire has seen 2.9% population growth from 2018 in part due to the aging population bringing in health and social services workers. It is projected that population will grow by 18% between 2021 to 2046.

The early childhood education (ECE) sector in Moira Shire is characterised by a comprehensive range of services that support children from birth to school age, ensuring they receive the best possible start in life. While Moira Shire Council does not directly deliver early childhood services, it plays a crucial role in supporting providers through facility ownership, leasing arrangements, and infrastructure maintenance. The Council owns several kindergarten buildings, including Numurkah Kindergarten and some Goulburn Region Preschool Association (GRPSA) services, excluding Barmah and Katamatite. The sector comprises eight community-based kindergartens, managed either by parent committees or GRPSA, alongside ten long day care centres. To further strengthen early childhood services, the Council allocates \$100,000 annually for maintenance, capital works, and programming, ensuring facilities remain well-maintained and accessible while facilitating partnerships to enhance service quality across the region.

Recognition, acknowledgment and celebration of First Nation Peoples in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is pivotal in fostering environments where Indigenous children and families feel culturally safe, respected, and empowered.

In the Moira Shire region, initiatives and services are actively working towards this goal, including the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan, celebrating significant cultural events such as

NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week and ongoing collaboration through the development of an MOU with Traditional Owners Yorta Yorta Nation.

Statewide Initiatives Supporting Aboriginal Self-Determination

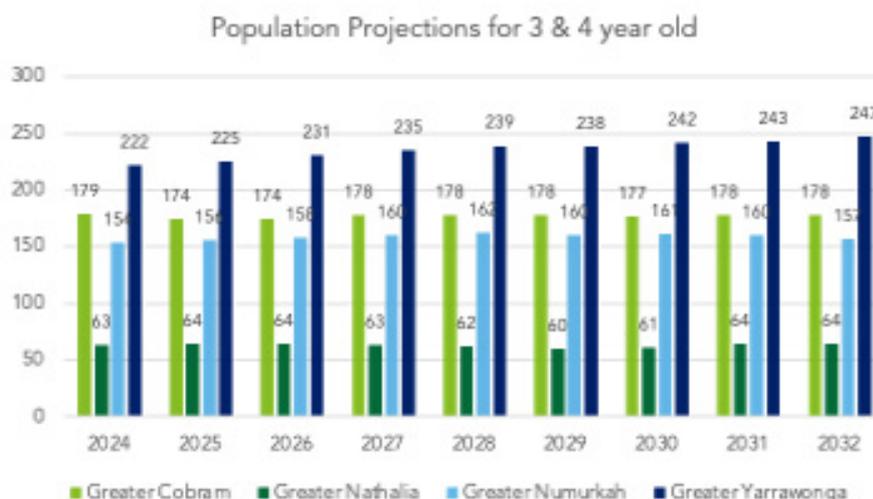
The Victorian Government has implemented several initiatives to support Aboriginal self-determination in education:

- **Strengthening Aboriginal Self-Determination in Education:** This initiative focuses on creating culturally safe and responsive school systems, promoting truth-telling in the curriculum, and amplifying Aboriginal voices in decision-making processes.
- **Koorie Kids Shine:** A program that promotes the value of kindergarten to Aboriginal parents and the community, ensuring that Aboriginal children aged three and four are eligible for 15 hours of free kindergarten each week.
- **bupup balak wayipungang Initiative:** A Victorian Government early childhood initiative aimed at improving inclusion of Koorie children and families and embedding Aboriginal perspectives throughout kindergarten services and programs.

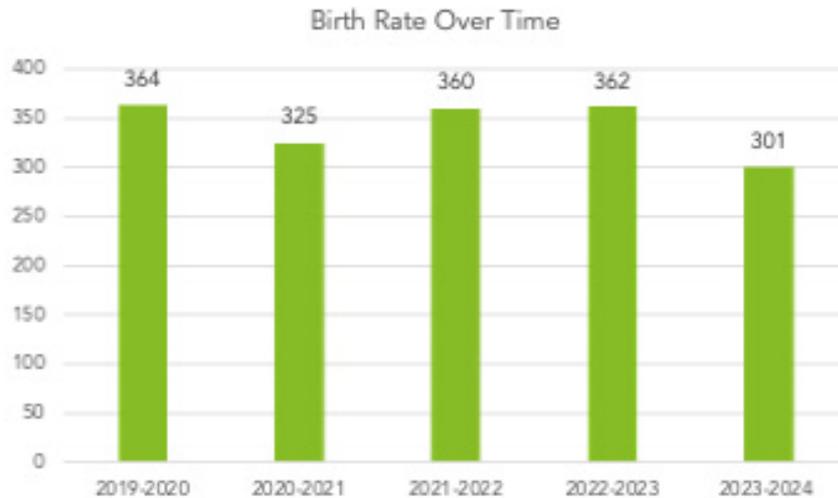
These initiatives, along with local efforts within the Moira Shire, contribute to a more inclusive and empowering early childhood education environment for Aboriginal children and their families.

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

Moira Shire is experiencing shifting demographic trends that impact the demand for kindergarten services. While the overall population is projected to grow by 18% between 2021 and 2046, much of this increase is in older age groups, affecting the availability of young families in the area.



Sources:
 • Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Moira (2021)



Between 2016 and 2021, the number of children aged 0-4 years declined from 1,585 to 1,478, largely due to an ageing population and housing affordability challenges. However, recent data suggests this trend may be reversing to the bright side. Birth rates, which dropped by 10% in 2020/21, returned to previous levels by 2022/23, and the population of 3 and 4-year-olds is expected to grow by 3.6% (613 to 635) between 2024 and 2036.

Housing affordability and availability also remain as one of the key factors influencing family settlement in Moira Shire. As per the data from realestate.com in May 2024, the average house price has risen to \$784,000, and rental options are limited, with only 43 long-term rentals available at time of writing. These challenges may make it difficult for young families to move into the region. To address this, new housing developments in Cobram, Yarrowonga, and Numurkah are underway, which may help attract families with young children and therefore increase kindergarten demand.

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

The supply of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in Moira Shire is being shaped by government reforms, workforce shortages, and demographic trends, as identified through stakeholder consultations, workforce surveys, and demographic analysis.

Enrolment projections indicate a slight increase in demand for kindergarten services over the next decade. In 2024, total enrolment across all ECE providers in the region was estimated at 677 children, rising to 822 children by 2034, representing a 20% increase. Over the same period, total kindergarten supply is projected to grow from 986 places in 2024 to 1,015 places in 2034, an increase of 5%. While this increase in supply is notable, demand patterns vary by township and there remains no undersupply of kinder spaces anticipated across the Shire.

To support this growth, a sustained increase in the early childhood workforce will be required. Findings from the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce Staff Survey provide valuable insight into Moira’s educator workforce. A majority (59%) of educators in Moira work part-time, which offers flexibility for staff but also presents challenges in meeting growing demand for full-time positions. The survey also indicates that 97% of educators are unwilling to relocate for work, making it difficult to address workforce shortages in some locations. Age demographics further

highlight emerging workforce risks, with 69% of Moira’s early childhood educators over 36 years old, suggesting a significant portion of the workforce may retire in the coming years.

Despite these challenges, the sector has seen positive impacts in workforce development. 22% of educators are currently pursuing further education, which is 10% higher than the national average. Additionally, most of the workforce (90%) report feeling supported in their roles, which is a positive indicator for retention. However, ongoing concerns remain, as 46% of educators cite low pay and workload pressures as barriers to long-term retention.

Housing affordability and availability have also emerged as critical factors influencing workforce supply. Stakeholder consultations identified that rising rental prices and limited long-term housing options in Cobram, Yarrawonga, and Nathalia make it increasingly difficult for educators to secure stable housing near their workplaces. In some cases, staff commute significant distances due to the lack of local housing availability, contributing to higher burnout and retention challenges.

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

The implementation of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep programs in Moira Shire is closely tied to local geographic factors, including population distribution, infrastructure capacity, workforce availability, and regional accessibility. While the Best Start, Best Life reforms aim to provide 15 hours of free kindergarten for three-year-olds, Moira’s regional setting and dispersed population centres present unique geographic considerations that must be addressed to ensure equitable access across the shire.

Moira Shire has a geographically dispersed population, with key township including Yarrawonga, Cobram, Numurkah, and Nathalia serving as the primary service hubs. Population forecast indicates a 3.6% increase in the three-and-four-year-olds age group between 2024 and 2036, rising from 613 to 635 children. This growth is partially significant in Greater Yarrawonga, where sustained residential development and lifestyle migration have led to an increase in young families settling in the area.

Other information about the expansion of early childhood services

The expansion of early childhood service in the Moira Shire region is driven by the projected increase in demand and workforce requirements. While enrolment projection indicates significant growth over the next decade, ensuring that ECE services remain accessible, high-quality, and sustainable requires a long-term, structured approach.

These challenges have been identified in the ‘2025 Future Growth of Kindergarten Review’, outlining several strategic initiatives. A key focus is on strengthen the early childhood workforce through targeted recruitment and retention strategies. This includes attracting school leavers, return-to-work parents, and mid-career professionals, while also supporting existing staff through mentorship programs, structured career pathways, and competitive employment benefits. Additionally, efforts are being made to enhance training opportunities and create a stronger professional development pipeline in partnership with local education institutions.

Beyond workforce considerations, broader system improvements are being introduced to support the expansion of early childhood services. A regional casual workforce pool is being developed to provide greater flexibility for service providers, helping to address staffing shortage. Additionally, a coordinated marketing strategy is being launched to attract early childhood professionals and families to the Moira Shire region, ensuring a stable workforce supply and sustainable enrolment growth.

4. Unmet demand estimates between 2026 - 2036 for Moira Shire

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 Moira Shire, Moira Shire Council and the department have developed:

1. a summary of the current provision of kindergarten within Moira Shire (**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 Moira Shire 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 Moira Shire 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

Moira Shire 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	8
Long day care centres (including services not currently delivering funded kindergarten)	10

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITS)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	0%
Private not for profit	61%
Private for profit	39%
Other	0%

Current kindergarten offering in Moira Shire	
Three-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	93%
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	102%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (KIMS):	18

4.4 Agreed estimates of demand for kindergarten places

The below estimates (**Table 1** onwards) have been developed by Moira Shire 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 Moira Shire

Moira Shire estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten places	679	771	828	895	919	1021	1021	1018	1017	1016	1015
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0

Community estimates

Table 2-A: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Cobram SA2

Cobram estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	169	186	196	208	212	230	229	228	227	226	226
Kindergarten supply	223	223	232	232	232	232	232	232	250	250	250
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-B: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Moira SA2

Moira estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	46	53	57	62	63	72	72	72	73	73	74
Kindergarten supply	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-C: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Numurkah SA2

Numurkah estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	255	294	319	348	358	398	395	392	388	385	382
Kindergarten supply	386	386	393	393	393	393	393	393	407	407	407
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0

Table 2-D: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2026 - 2036 in Yarrawonga SA2

Yarrawonga estimates	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	209	237	256	277	287	321	324	326	329	331	333
Kindergarten supply	449	449	462	462	462	462	462	462	487	487	487
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. Authorisation

The Goulburn Area Executive Director, of the Department of Education and the Chief Executive Officer of Moira Shire endorse this Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Moira Shire Council by signing on 4 / 12 / 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 Moira Shire Council.



Signature

Name: Matthew Morgan

Title: CEO

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



Signature

Name: Sharon Hensgen Smith

Title: Executive Area Director