

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Southern Grampians Shire

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Education
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. REFORM CONTEXT

In an Australian first, the Victorian Government has committed to implement Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for all children over a 10-year roll-out with a total investment of almost \$5 billion, including \$1.68 billion to support the infrastructure expansion required for the reform. This reform will add another year of universal funded kindergarten so that, by 2029, all children in Victoria will have access to two years of play-based learning through a funded kindergarten program.

1.2. PURPOSE OF KISPS

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will require a large expansion of kindergarten across the State. The Government has invited all 79 Victorian Local Governments to discuss and agree upon a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Each KISP has been jointly developed with Local Government and published to estimate the growth in demand for kindergarten within the LGA. The KISPs will help all kindergarten providers meet demand and provide a clear picture of infrastructure need across the State.

While a KISP is not a funding document and does not define required infrastructure projects or commit any party to funding specific projects, it is expected that future investment requests through Building Blocks and funding decisions about Local Government and not-for-profit projects would align with the relevant KISP.

1.3. HOW TO USE THE KISP

Each KISP contains estimates of future kindergarten supply of, and demand for, Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places against existing enrolment capacity. Not-for-profit and for-profit providers can use these estimates to inform their plans to expand kindergarten programs, establish new services or invest in new or extended facilities.

For example, KISPs provide demand estimates in terms of where, when and how much demand for kindergarten places will grow in an LGA. KISPs also estimate where and how many kindergarten places providers can accommodate in existing facilities before an area needs new infrastructure to meet demand. The estimates can be used to inform decisions about where and when expansions of kindergarten program capacity and the construction of new or extended facilities are needed to meet demand growth.

Where there is an agreed KISP for the LGA, the Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers seeking co-investments through the Building Blocks Capacity Building stream must refer to, and align their proposed project with, the infrastructure need identified in the KISP.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE KISP

Each KISP consists of the following sections:

- **Section 1:** A short introduction to the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform and the KISP.

- **Section 2:** A map of existing and planned Early Childhood Education and Care service locations.
- **Section 3:** Local knowledge and context relevant to the expansion of kindergarten services.
- **Section 4:** Funded kindergarten demand estimates.

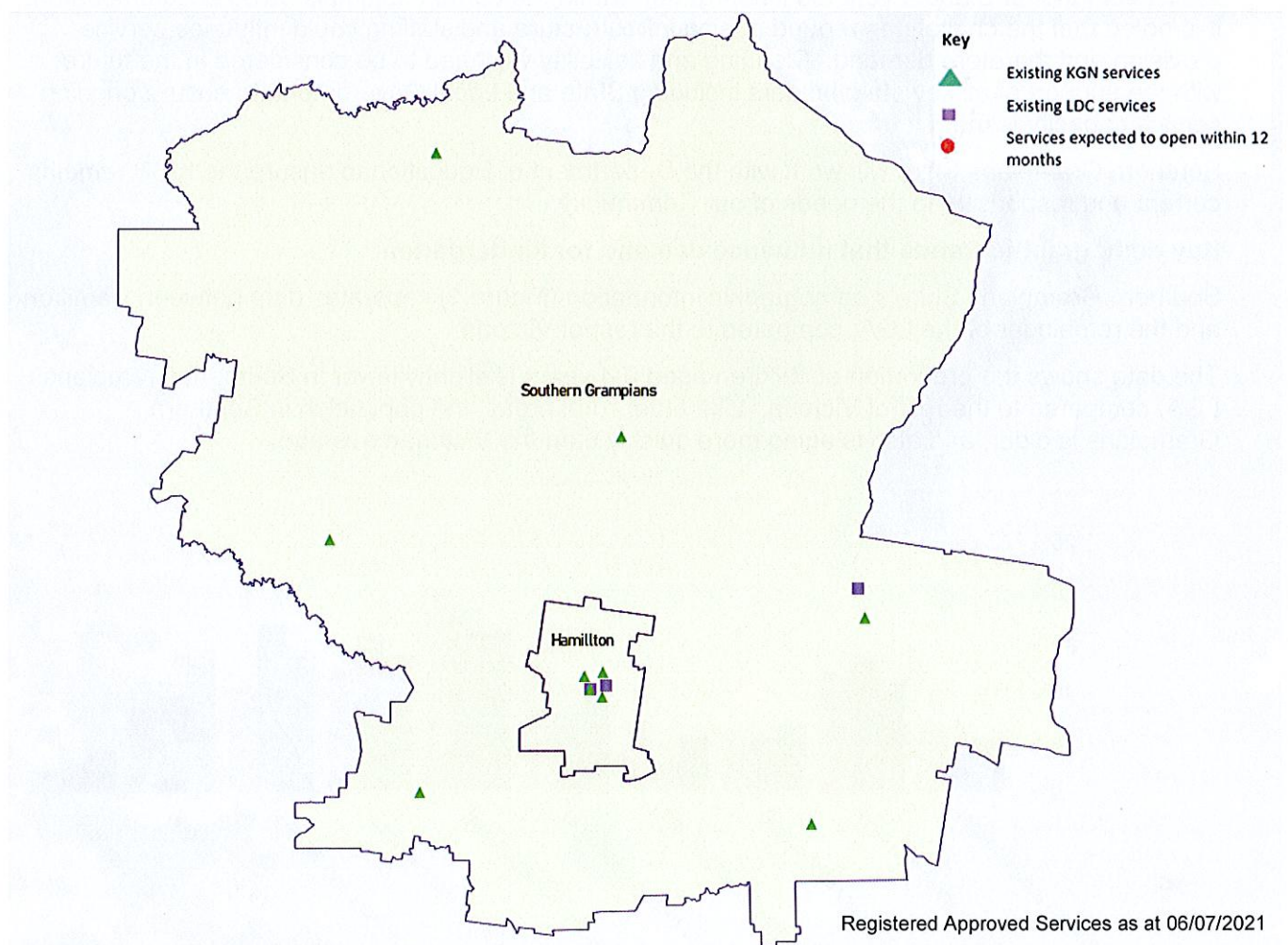
1.5. DISCLAIMER

All data presented in this document are estimates only and are based on the best information available to the Department and Local Government at the time. They are published on an as-is basis and are for informational purposes only. They are subject to adjustment in response to market forces and as new data and other relevant information becomes available. The data may under- or over-estimate both total demand in a given location or year and the capacity for new demand to be met by providers. As a result, operational and business decisions should not be made solely based on this document. Any use of this data is solely at the risk of the user. The Department and Local Government accept no responsibility for any loss or damage, either direct or incidental, that may result from the use of the data.

2. MAP OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES IN SOUTHERN GRAMPAINS SHIRE

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new services that are planned to open in the future in the LGA and across its communities.

This map has been prepared using Departmental data, from both the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA). Where applicable, this map has been refined by the Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department to capture other services that are planned to open in the future.



3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 PURPOSE

Local, place-based knowledge and context play an important role in supporting the implementation of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across Victoria. This section of the KISP documents this knowledge and context and has informed the funded kindergarten enrolment estimates in Section 4.

3.2 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The Southern Grampians Shire is developing a detailed locally based document that will support the KISP. The document will identify the challenges and opportunities of local service provision, taking into consideration the capacity of current kindergarten infrastructure and service complexities within a rural setting.

Whilst demand for 3 and 4 year old kindergarten within the current setting is being accommodated, it is noted that the challenges around ageing infrastructure and staffing could influence service provision and therefore demand. Planning and flexibility will need to be considered in the future with the support of all key stakeholders including State and Local Government, to ensure ongoing service capacity is met.

Southern Grampians Shire will work with the Department of Education to ensure the KISP remains current and responsive to the needs of our Community.

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

Southern Grampians Shire's demographic information (Figure 1) separates data between Hamilton and the remainder of the LGA, compared to the rest of Victoria.

The data shows the proportion of children aged 0-4 years is slightly lower in Southern Grampians LGA, compared to the rest of Victoria. Like other rural areas, the population in Southern Grampians is older, and also is aging more quickly than the Victorian average.

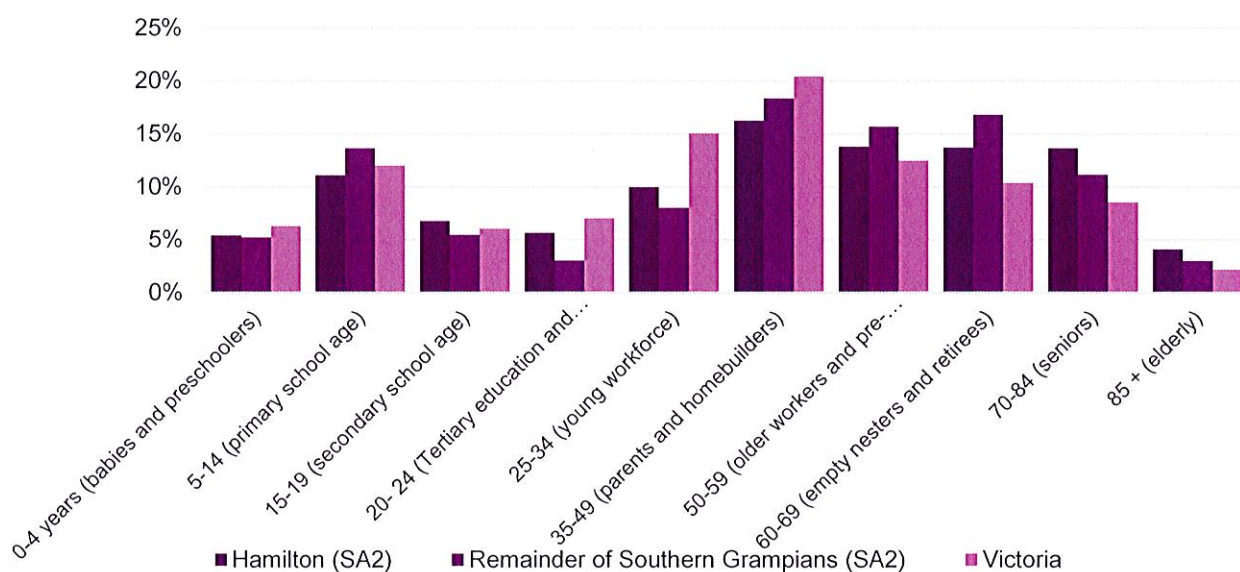
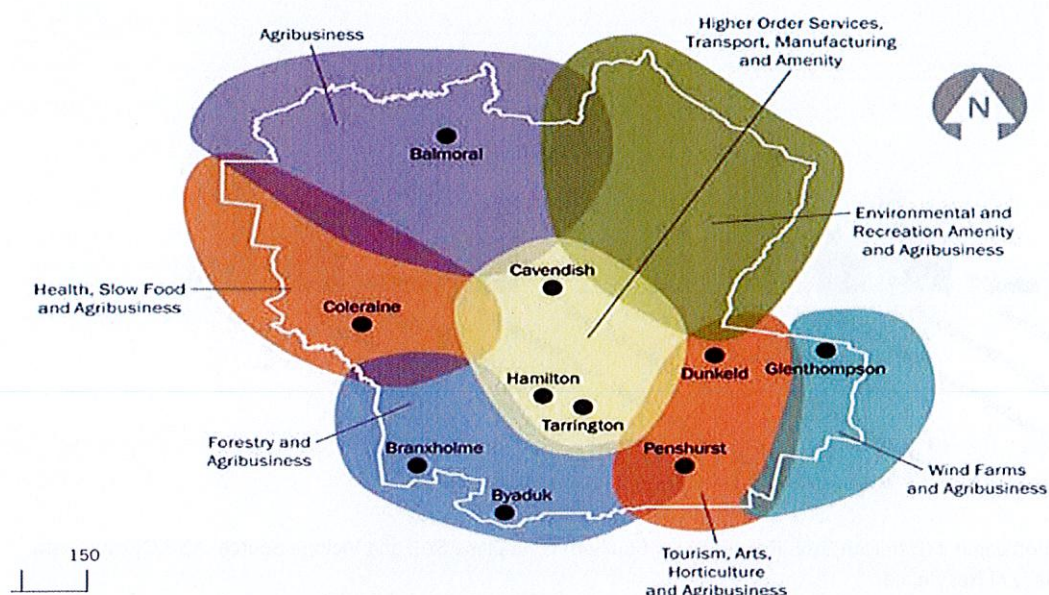


Figure 1: Age in 5 Year Groups (Hamilton SA2, Remainder of Southern Grampians SA2 and Victoria. Source: ABS Census Data, 2016, Count of Persons, Place of Residence

As expected with a rural locale, the town of Hamilton is the cluster for the education, health and service industries, while the balance of the LGA is dominated by agriculture.



In a number of SA2s, the rate of full time and part time employment is much higher than the Victorian average. The unemployment rate differs significantly across the LGA, with Coleraine having an unemployment rate of 7% in 2016 vs Balmoral's 0%.

Both Hamilton and the surrounding Southern Grampians area have lower average income levels than Victoria. The surrounding Southern Grampians SA2 had higher levels of income than in Hamilton, most likely relating to the high value agricultural sector. The incidence of lower (<\$51,999) and middle income (\$52,000-\$103,999) families is higher than the Victorian average.

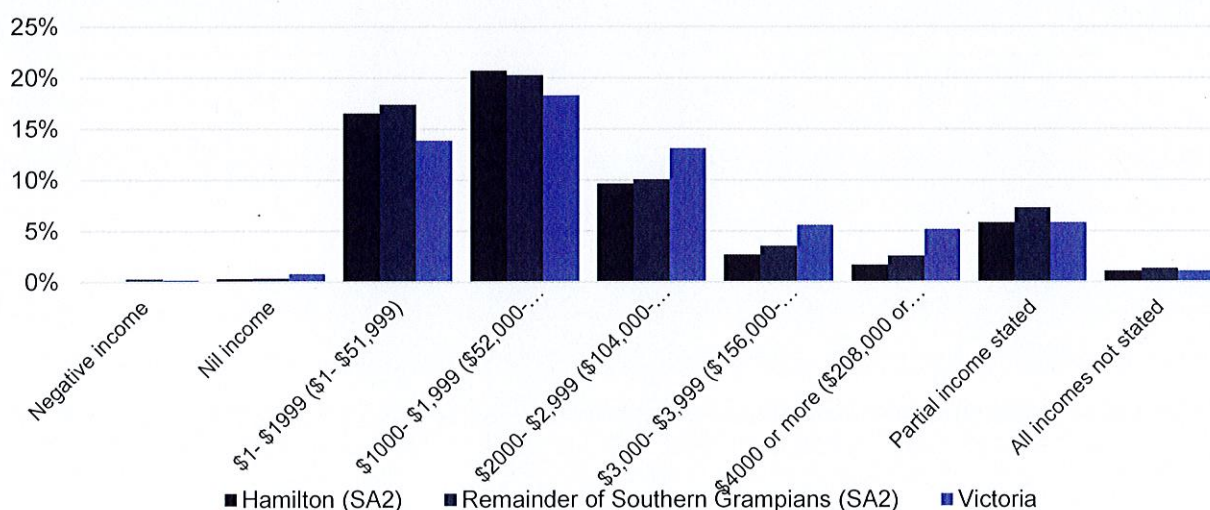


Figure 2: Total Family Income: Weekly (Hamilton SA2, Remainder of Southern Grampians SA2 and Victoria). Source: ABS Census Data, 2016, Count of Families, Place of Enumeration

The LGA has a lower level of educational attainment than the rest of Victoria. Those with higher education are concentrated in Hamilton, commensurate with the range of services/ employment sectors offered in a regional centre.

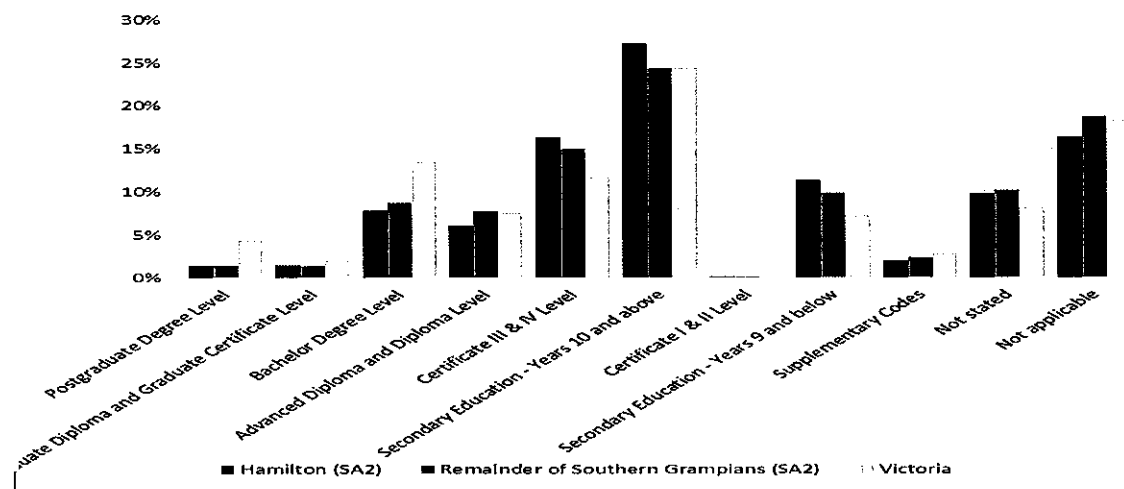


Figure 3 Highest Education Attainment (Hamilton SA2, Remainder of Southern Grampians SA2 and Victoria Source: ABS Census Data, 2016, Count of Persons, Place of Residence.

Hamilton has higher levels of disadvantage relative to most other parts of the Southern Grampians LGA, except for Glenthompson, and to a lesser extent Cavendish and Branxholme. Within Hamilton, there are pockets of significant disadvantage (Figure 4). As most community and support services are located in the regional centre of Hamilton, it is often the case that those most in need of access will gravitate towards those services. This trend somewhat follows income levels, where a greater proportion of people with higher income levels live in the rural parts of the LGA (refer back to Figure 2).

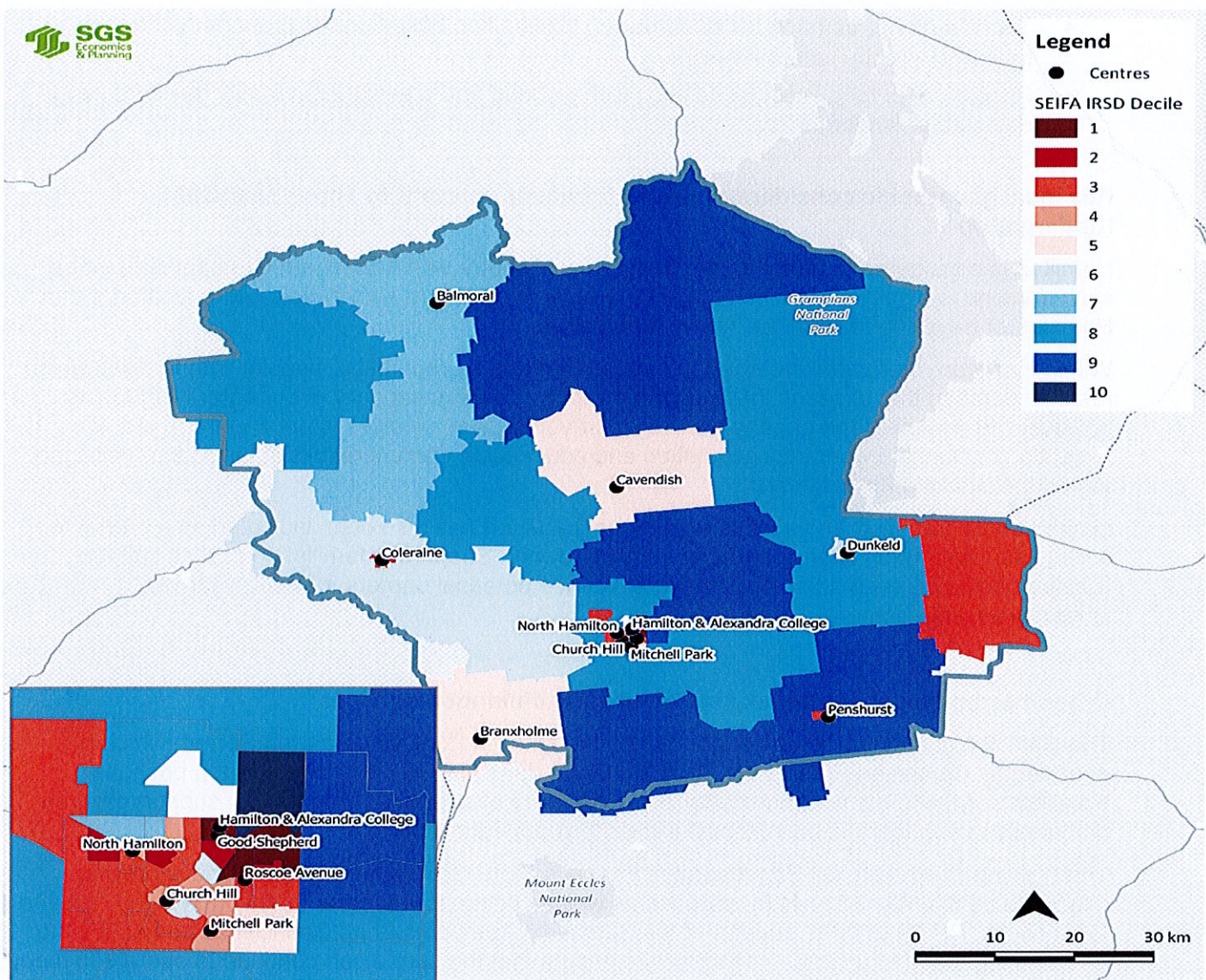


Figure 4: Index of Relative Disadvantage Source: SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage

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

Based on the analysis above, the following findings will have implications for the supply and demand of early childhood education and care:

- Levels of income are lower in Southern Grampians than in Victoria, however the unemployment rate is lower, meaning more middle-income level people across the municipality working more hours.
- The higher incidence of part-time work in Southern Grampians suggests demand for sessional kindergarten may be higher to suit those with flexible work arrangements.
- Pockets of higher unemployment rates may impact demand.
- A 'hollowing out' of the age profile may reduce demand in the future if fewer children are born from the 'parents and homebuilders' cohort in the future.

- There is higher demand for kindergarten in Hamilton based on the proportion of people travelling into the centre for work.
- People prefer long sessions to align with working hours (whether in family day care, long day care or kindergarten).

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

Hamilton is considered to be the major geographical centre within Southern Grampians Shire as such demand is higher in Hamilton than in the outer lying towns, with people being located within Hamilton or travelling to Hamilton for work purposes.

Within Hamilton, there are kindergarten centres that are, by reputation, popular with families which result in demand that exceeds these centre's supply. There is capacity in our outer lying towns, however the reverse trend of people willing to travel to these services is not apparent, with the exception of Dunkeld where the reputation and educational content results in families travelling to attend the Dunkeld Kindergarten.

Limited public transport and access to personal transport has also been indicated as a barrier to access services within Hamilton and outer lying towns. Supporting families to access suitable transport could be seen as an opportunity to reduce potential barriers for three-year-old kindergarten engagement.

Other information about the expansion of early childhood services

The Hamilton community is well supported by the Mitchell Park Kindergarten Service which is operated by Combined Preschools Southern Grampians (CPSG), this kindergarten provides excellent service to the community through its delivery of additional programs to support children and family to engage and be successful in early years education.

The building which Mitchell Park operates from is a State Government building and is proving difficult to be maintained as fit for purpose as well as being able to cater for the increasing demand for services. CPSG with the support of the Southern Grampians Shire Council has been planning and seeking funds to upgrade its facilities to ensure that the centre can continue to operate to meet the needs of this community.

Good Sheppard Early Childhood Services, has increased capacity in their kindergarten services by 22 children per day with a building expansion which was completed in 2020 and opened 28th January 2021.

Southern Grampians Shire does not provide kindergarten services, however, owns a number of buildings used for kindergarten services. The aging nature of these facilities will increase pressure on supply of three and four-year-old kindergarten with the requirement to significantly upgrade or replace these buildings in the future. The Shire will be a keen participant in the Building Blocks Grants process to support the renewal or capital and maintenance costs associated with maintaining an adequate supply of kindergarten places for our community.

Southern Grampians Shire and its local kindergarten service providers recognise the need for a strong workplace strategy to ensure a suitable and quality workforce is attracted to our region and that training and development opportunities are provided to support to retain and grow our own workforce as well.

4. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 2021-29 FOR SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

4.1 PURPOSE

As Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is rolled-out and Victoria's population grows, demand for both Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places will increase significantly. While additional capacity will be needed to meet this demand, this will vary across the State and over time, due to differences in the capacity of existing services, growth trends and sector composition.

To identify where, when and how many additional kindergarten places are expected over the roll-out in Southern Grampians Shire, Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department have developed:

1. A summary of the current provision of kindergarten within the LGA (**Section 4.3**).
2. An approach to optimising the utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through 'change management' strategies that Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department will support to help meet additional demand in the LGA (**Section 4.4**).
3. An estimate of the Three and Four-Year-Old kindergarten places that cannot be met through existing services for the 2021-29 period, taking into account the additional demand that can be accommodated by optimising utilisation of existing services and infrastructure through point 2, above (**Section 4.5**).

Local Government and providers can use these published estimates to inform reform implementation activities such as service planning, kindergarten program expansion, infrastructure investments and Building Blocks funding applications in alignment with future demand over the 10-year roll-out.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

The estimated Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places used in the following sections have been agreed between Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department, and were informed by:

- Estimates developed by the Department which draw on a range of inputs, including population forecasts, current enrolments and results from the Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), conducted in 2019.
- The estimated capacity of new services that are planned to open in the LGA (Section 2)
- Local knowledge and context provided by the Local Government (Section 3) that explains particular issues and trends in their area.
- The approach to optimising utilisation of existing services in the LGA (Section 4.4), and
- Other sources, such as modelling undertaken by Local Governments and local data.

The KISP measures a service's capacity to deliver funded kindergarten in terms of the number of children it could enrol in Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. The number of funded kindergarten places is different from a service's licensed or approved places, which count the number of children permitted to attend the service at any one time under the license. Many services can enrol more children in their funded kindergarten program(s) than they have licensed places for because they can run more than one kindergarten program per week. Kindergarten places are therefore a more accurate measure of service kindergarten capacity than licensed places.

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places have been presented as 15-hour places so they can be easily compared to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places. Moreover, when Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is fully rolled-out in 2029, every three-year-old child will have access to 15-hours of kindergarten.

From 2023 all providers will have flexibility to determine how many hours of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten they deliver per week, with a minimum of five hours and a maximum of 15-hours funded pro-rata. It is expected that hours offered will vary. Given this variation, **it is important to be aware that during the transition to all three-year-old children receiving 15-hours of funded kindergarten per week in 2029, the 15-hour places presented in this report may represent multiple three-year-old places that individually receive less than 15-hours of kindergarten per week.**

These estimates have been developed at an LGA and community level to show the overall forecast and variation within an area. The KISP defines community at the Statistical Area Level 2, which is medium-sized areas which represent a community that interacts socially and economically, with a population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people, and an average population of about 10,000 people.

4.3 SUMMARY OF CURRENT KINDERGARTEN PROVISION

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

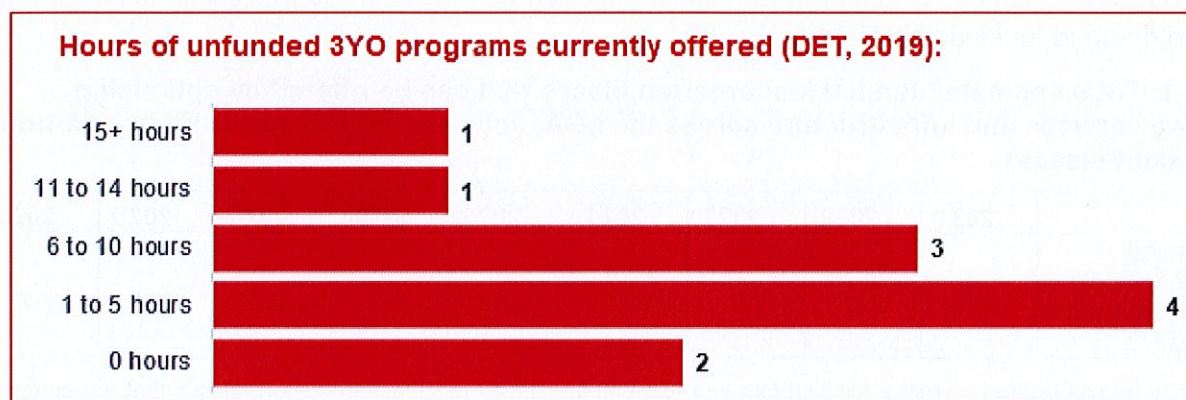
- The Kindergarten Capacity Assessment Program (KCAP), collected between June and October 2019.
- The Department's Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2019.
- The Department's Quality and Regulatory Division (QARD) monitoring data, as at 2019.
- The National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at April 2020.
- The Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS), as at 2018.

Please note that, because these sources were collected at different points, this may result in slightly different totals appearing in the below data.

| Number of services by service type (NQAITs, 2021) | |
|---|----|
| Stand-alone kindergartens | 10 |
| Long day care centres | 3 |

| Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITs, 2021) | |
|---|------------|
| Type | Percentage |
| Local Government | 0% |
| Private not for profit | 69% |
| Private for profit | 15% |
| Other | 15% |

| Current kindergarten offering | |
|--|-----|
| Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (VCAMS, 2018): | 90% |
| Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (DET, 2019): | 11 |
| Number of services that offer an unfunded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program (DET, 2019): | 9 |



4.4 APPROACH TO OPTIMISING THE USE OF EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Change management strategies to optimise existing services and infrastructure

Children can often be accommodated through existing spare places and by services ‘unlocking’ unused capacity. As the experience of providers in the 2020 Three-Year-Old Kindergarten roll-out LGAs shows, while the optimisation of existing services can be challenging, it is highly time- and cost-effective compared to building new capacity through infrastructure projects. It also helps target infrastructure investment to the places that need it most and avoids over-supplying the local market.

Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department will support providers and services to maximise their kindergarten places through the following change management activities and practices:

- Increasing the capacity of any Local Government operated services by:
 - Running additional programs.
 - Using different timetables, including running 7.5-hour days.
 - Changing the delivery model, such as introducing rotational models or mixed-age groups.
 - Having degree-qualified kindergarten teachers leading integrated kindergarten programs in long day care settings.
- Encouraging and supporting other providers and services in the LGA to undertake change management.

Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department have estimated how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places can be accommodated through existing services in the LGA (**Table 1**). Both parties are committed to helping providers and services offer these kindergarten places before progressing to funded infrastructure solutions to meet demand. This commitment is reflected in the LGA and community level estimates below (**Table 2** onwards), which assume that demand will be met first through existing services and second through additional infrastructure. Note that in some cases the number of kindergarten places that can be offered through existing services may exceed demand for kindergarten places.

Table 1: Total estimated funded kindergarten places that can be offered by optimising existing services and infrastructure across the LGA, between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Estimated existing supply of kindergarten places* | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 | 627 |

*This may be higher than current three and four-year-old enrolments as it includes any spare places that are currently available or could be generated by making some minor adjustments to programming approaches.

4.5 AGREED ESTIMATES OF DEMAND FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PLACES THAT CANNOT BE MET THROUGH EXISTING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The below estimates (**Table 2** onwards) have been developed by Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department to illustrate the estimated:

1. Total number of Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places expected over the roll-out period.
2. Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by optimising existing services and infrastructure over the roll-out period.

These estimates have been developed to reflect that the increase in demand for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places will be gradual.

In estimating how many Three and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places cannot be accommodated by existing services and infrastructure, Southern Grampians Shire Council and the Department have taken into account any new places that will be made available through planned expansions of existing services or new services, into estimates of existing supply, where this information is available. This may include Local Government owned services being developed and planned Kindergartens on School Sites.

These estimates do not, however, estimate how and when the broader sector will expand to meet the additional demand for kindergarten places that are estimated over the roll-out period.

Infrastructure need in the LGA and its local communities is indicated by the bottom rows of the tables in this section (**Table 2** onwards): 'Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services'. For example, if the number of kindergarten places for the LGA or a community is above zero in this row, it means that the area is estimated to need additional infrastructure (noting that further optimisation which avoids the need for additional infrastructure may be possible). Any type of provider – Local Government, not-for-profit or for-profit – can build this additional infrastructure. If this row shows all zeros, it means that there is no estimated need for additional infrastructure in the area.

Local Government and not-for-profit kindergarten providers must refer to the estimates in this section when applying through the Building Blocks Capacity Building Grants stream for Government funding. Under this stream, projects must be in a community where there is infrastructure need as shown in the community's table of estimated demand for kindergarten places (i.e. there are numbers in the bottom row above zero). Projects in LGAs or communities where demand can be met through existing services (i.e. the bottom row shows all zeros) are not eligible for funding under this stream.

LGA estimates

Table 2: Total estimated three and four-year-old kindergarten places between 2021-29 (presented in 15-hour equivalent places)

| LGA level estimates | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children) | 365 | 382 | 392 | 389 | 387 | 401 | 399 | 396 | 393 |
| Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Community estimates

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

| Hamilton estimates | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children) | 276 | 289 | 297 | 296 | 294 | 306 | 304 | 302 | 299 |
| Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Southern Grampians estimates | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total estimated demand for kindergarten places (three and four-year-old children) | 89 | 93 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 95 | 95 | 94 | 94 |
| Total kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by existing services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |


5. AUTHORISATION

The Area Executive Director (Wimmera South West) of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive of Southern Grampians Shire Council endorse this Kindergarten Services and Infrastructure Plan (KISP) for Southern Grampians Shire by signing on 29 / 07 / 2021

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 2024 to publish a new version that will replace the previous version.

An out-of-cycle review may be triggered if both parties agree that there has been a change in relevant data, information or the local early childhood sector that significantly affects the reliability of a KISP's estimates for planning purposes.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Southern Grampians Shire Council


.....
Signature


Name: Michael Tudball

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Address: 111 Brown Street, Hamilton 3300


.....
Witness Signature


Signed by Area Executive Director (Wimmera South West) Department of Education and Training


.....
Signature

Name: Suzanne Camm

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