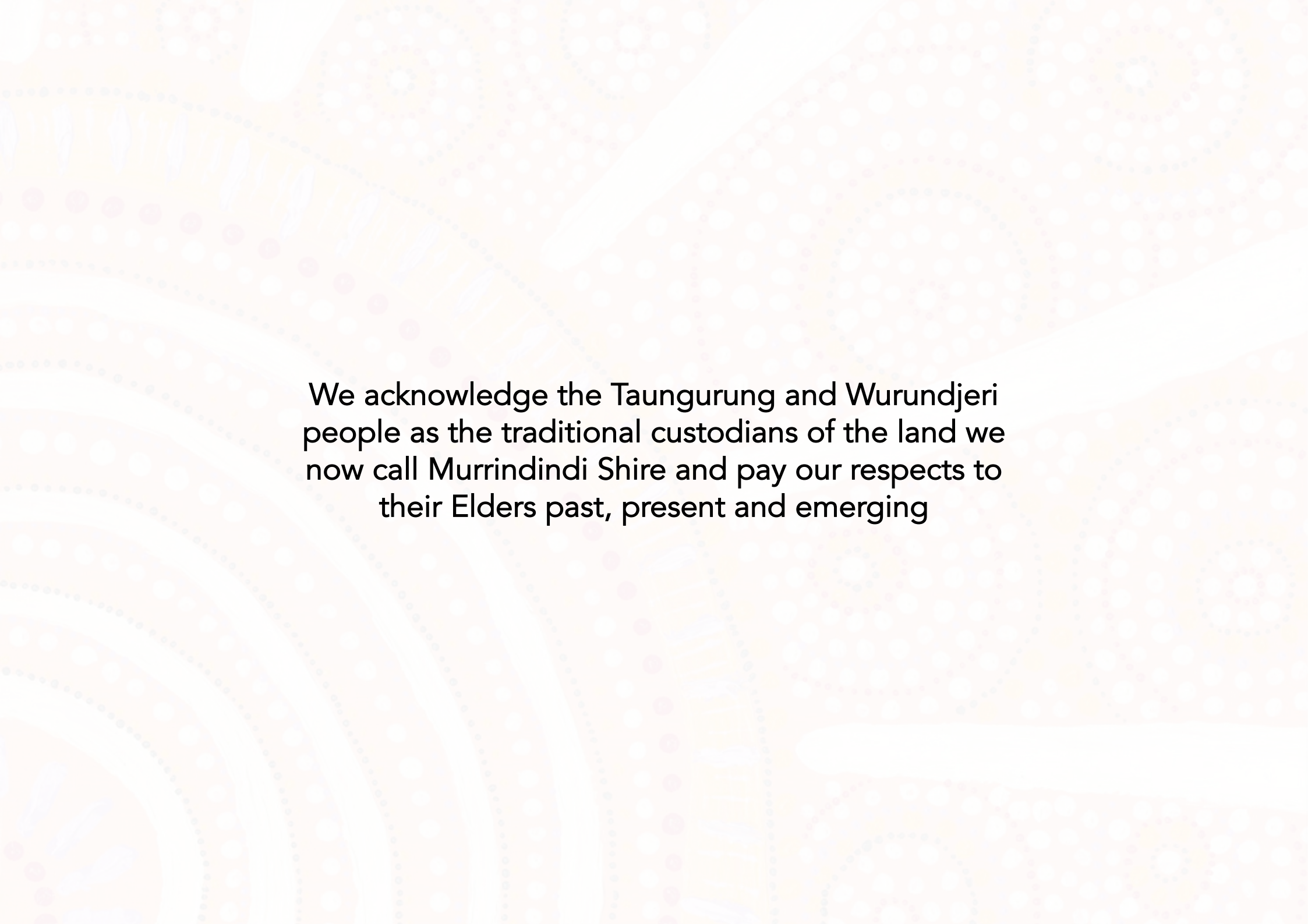# Murrindindi Shire Council
Early Childhood Education Workforce Plan

March 2024

We acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging

Situation & Challenge

1.1 Background

How can the Murrindindi Shire Council effectively support the sustainable supply of early childhood services workforce and infrastructure required to meet the growing demand?

Background

In June 2022, the Victorian Government announced an additional $9 billion over 10 years to deliver the Best Start, Best Life reform. Initiatives include:

- Free kinder for all three- and four-year-old children at participating services;
- Beginning in 2025, four-year-old kindergarten will by 2032 transition to Pre-Prep, a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning; and;
- The establishment of 50 new government-owned and affordable childcare centres

Currently, Murrindindi Shire hosts a variety of three-year-old and four-year-old Prep-Prep programs and childcare services. Murrindindi Shire has been designated as a key Local Government Area for the adoption of the Victorian Government's Best Start Best Life reforms, which commences in 2025. This anticipated shift is expected to place greater strain on the already oversubscribed services and facilities in Alexandra and Yea, with limited room for expansion.

The Murrindindi Shire Council had previously undertaken feasibility studies in 2022 which revealed crucial insights for enhancing early education and care. The key findings include a steady population growth and a projected increase in children's numbers, stressing the need for expanded services. The Shire currently faces capacity issues and growing waitlists, indicating high demand. New strategic directions aim to meet the increasing demand while maintaining quality and accessibility in early education and care services.
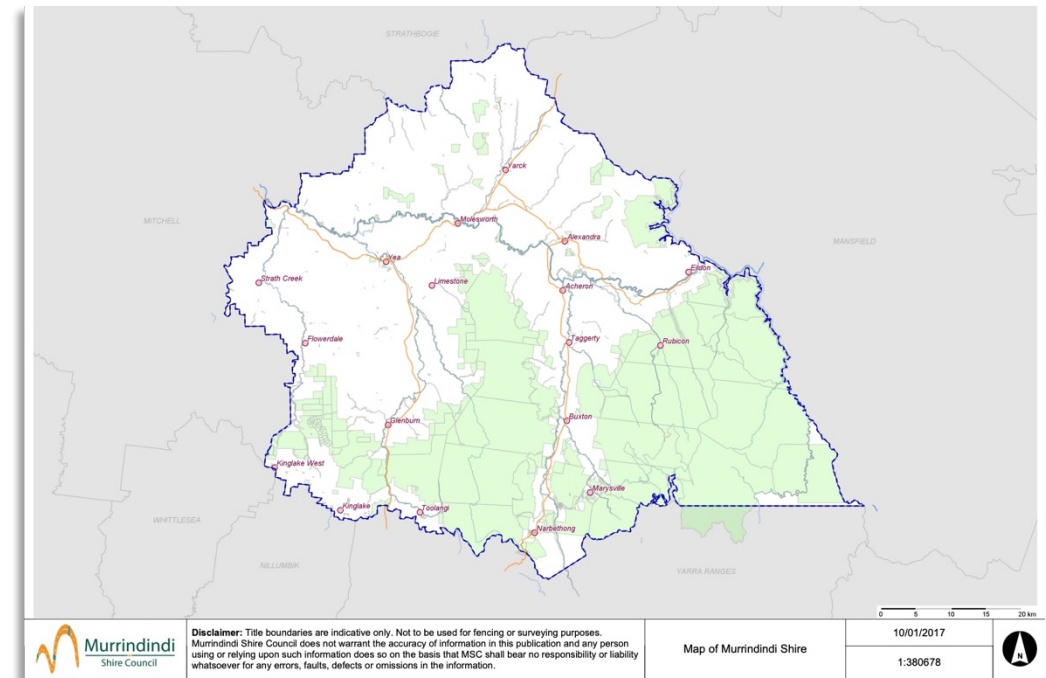
Pictured: Murrindindi Region Map

1.2 Challenge

How can the Murrindindi Shire Council effectively support the sustainable supply of early childhood services workforce and infrastructure required to meet the growing demand?

Challenge

The challenges presented to Murrindindi Shire Council revolve around the provision of early years education services within the region, with a focus on the towns of Alexandra and Yea. These challenges include:

- **Infrastructure Constraints:** Limited facilities in key towns like Alexandra and Yea are struggling to keep pace with escalating demand, a situation likely to worsen with new educational reforms.

- **Leasing and Operational Constraints:** Existing agreements and shared facility arrangements pose limitations on service expansion across the Shire, impacting the ability to scale up early education services.

- **Workforce Shortages:** A critical lack of adequately trained and experienced early childhood educators in the region exacerbates the difficulty in meeting the growing demand for quality early education.

- **KISP Update Requirement:** Murrindindi's Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan which measures capacity and predicts future demand, requires updating due to the pressures of increased demand on capacity.

To address these issues, the Department of Education has funded Murrindindi Shire Council to develop Early Years Education Planning.

Pictured: Alexandra's historic, tree-lined streets house some hidden gastronomic treasures

1.3 Purpose & Outcome

How can the Murrindindi Shire Council effectively support the sustainable supply of early childhood services workforce and infrastructure required to meet the growing demand?

Purpose

This plan's primary objective is to develop workforce strategies for the early years sector in the Murrindindi region. This development is driven by the anticipated growth resulting from the Department of Education workforce planning grants. The strategies are designed to address the evolving needs of the sector, focusing on enhancing workforce capabilities and readiness.

This plan includes recommendations for addressing the infrastructure needs of the early years sector. Central to this is a comprehensive evaluation of shortlisted options, ensuring that the infrastructure developments align with the growth and demands brought about by the government funded grants and unique needs of the Murrindindi Shire.
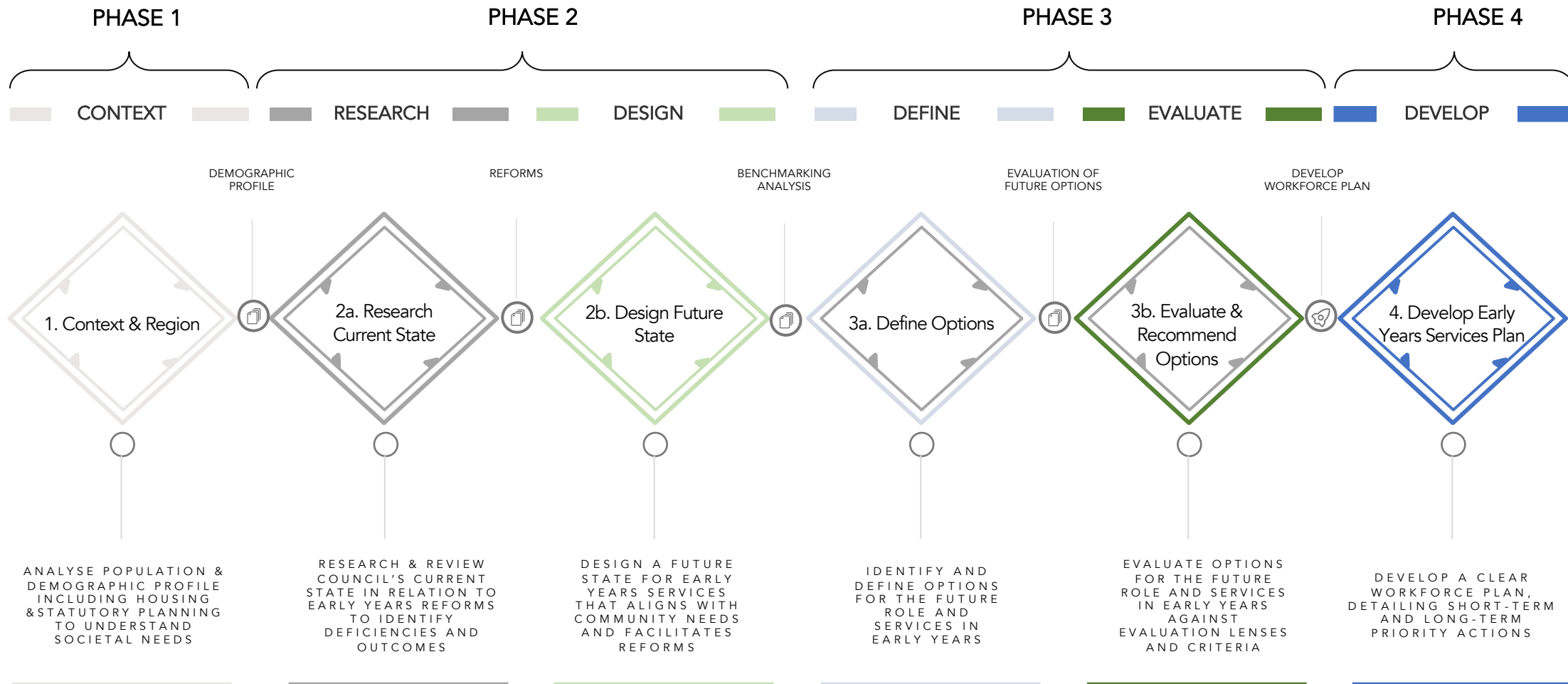

2024-2029 Workforce plan

3-YEAR-OLD KINDER
Best Start
Best Life
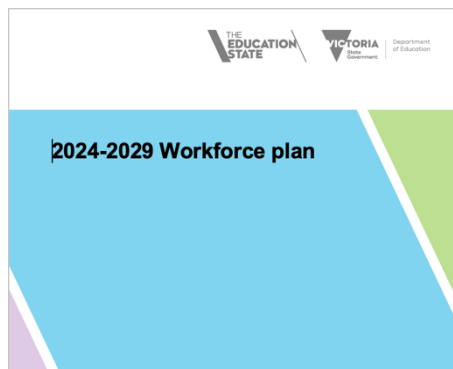
Proposed Approach

2.1 Project Approach

NMC has undertaken four-phased program of work, reviewing the current state of provision of children's services, defining the desired future state, identifying and evaluating future options to develop an Early Years Workforce Plan for the Murrindindi Shire Council

PHASE 1 **PHASE 2** **PHASE 3** **PHASE 4**

CONTEXT   RESEARCH   DESIGN   DEFINE   EVALUATE   DEVELOP

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE   REFORMS   BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS   EVALUATION OF FUTURE OPTIONS   DEVELOP WORKFORCE PLAN

1. Context & Region

2a. Research Current State

2b. Design Future State

3a. Define Options

3b. Evaluate & Recommend Options

4. Develop Early Years Services Plan

ANALYSE POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE INCLUDING HOUSING & STATUTORY PLANNING TO UNDERSTAND SOCIETAL NEEDS

RESEARCH & REVIEW COUNCIL'S CURRENT STATE IN RELATION TO EARLY YEARS REFORMS TO IDENTIFY DEFICIENCIES AND OUTCOMES

DESIGN A FUTURE STATE FOR EARLY YEARS SERVICES THAT ALIGNS WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND FACILITATES REFORMS

IDENTIFY AND DEFINE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE ROLE AND SERVICES IN EARLY YEARS

EVALUATE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE ROLE AND SERVICES IN EARLY YEARS AGAINST EVALUATION LENSES AND CRITERIA

DEVELOP A CLEAR WORKFORCE PLAN, DETAILING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PRIORITY ACTIONS

Murrindindi Shire Council

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2.2 Workforce Framework - NMC's Regional Workforce Development Model

By prioritising six focus areas for the workforce development utilising NMC's Regional Workforce Development Model, a comprehensive analysis and forecasting can be made as critical input into the early childhood workforce capability and capacity design for the Murrindindi Shire

ATTRACTION
Ability to attract staff in alignment with capabilities and capacity required

RECRUITMENT
Design and implementation of effective recruitment strategies

RETENTION
Ability to retain staff, with low turnover rates

Regional Workforce Development

SKILLS & TRAINING
Provision of training uplift and develop skills required

MIGRATION
Utilise opportunities that present from migration to fill workforce gaps

HOUSING
Minimise impact of regional housing challenges on the workforce

Six Priority Areas

NMC identified six workforce development priority areas for a comprehensive analysis. Note, NMC assumes an overlap between the six priority areas, with some lenses weighing higher on their level of significance.

Murrindindi Shire Council

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About the Region

3.1 Geography

Murrindindi is a dynamic region known for its diverse townships, sustainable agriculture, and a picturesque landscape, fostering economic resilience and cultural vitality

Context & Region

Geography

The Murrindindi Shire, established in 1994 through the union of Alexandra and Yea shires among others, is a local government area situated in the northeast of Victoria. It extends over an area of 3,880 square kilometres, stretching from Flowerdale to Eildon and is in close vicinity to Euroa and Healesville. This region is home to a population of 15,197 residents as of 2021, who enjoy the serene lifestyle offered by its rural landscape.

Located just over 2 hours away from Melbourne, Murrindindi is a convenient escape to the countryside for those in the capital. It encompasses key settlements such as Marysville, Yea, Alexandra, Eildon, and the Kinglake Ranges, each offering its unique blend of country charm and community spirit. The area boasts a variety of smaller townships and rural localities, presenting a tapestry of natural beauty from its forested areas to its mountainous terrain.
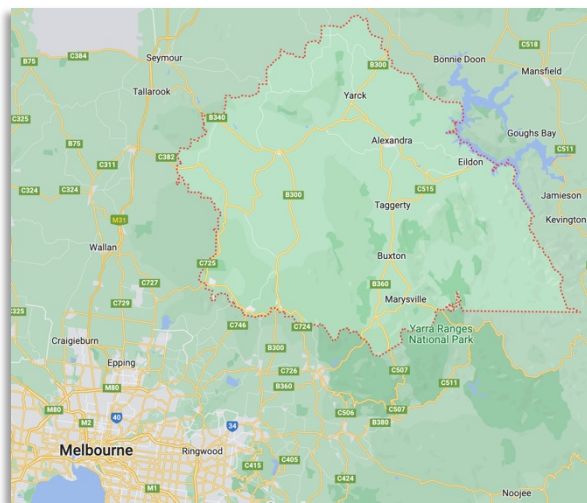
Main townships

Murrindindi is a region abundant with diverse townships, each contributing uniquely to the area's richness.

- **Alexandra**: Known as the commercial hub of the Shire, Alexandra is a picturesque town famed for its historical buildings and vibrant local community.

- **Eildon**: This township is a popular destination for water sports and fishing, particularly known for the nearby Eildon Dam, which offers stunning natural scenery and recreational activities.

- **Kinglake**: Situated on the slopes of the Great Dividing Range, Kinglake is notable for its natural beauty and is a gateway to various national parks, perfect for nature enthusiasts.

- **Marysville**: A beautiful town with a strong sense of recovery and community spirit, Marysville is known for its lush landscapes and as a gateway to the Lake Mountain Alpine Resort.

- **Yea**: Rich in history, Yea is a charming town with a heritage streetscape, known for its antique shops and local produce, offering a snapshot of country life.

3.2 Population & Demographic Data

Murrindindi has seen a moderate rate of population growth and a shift in household types with a notable increase in single-parent families and older children's households, and a slight decline in couples with young children

Context & Region

Extrapolation from the Census Data (2021) depicts the demographic and population data across the Murrindindi.

People

Median Age	2021	50
Population	2017	14,290
Population	2021	15,348 (↑7.4%)

Gender
- 48.5% Female
- 51.5% Male

Population Growth

Year	Population
2017	14290
2018	14561
2019	14737
2020	14872
2021	15139
2022	15348

Age Range

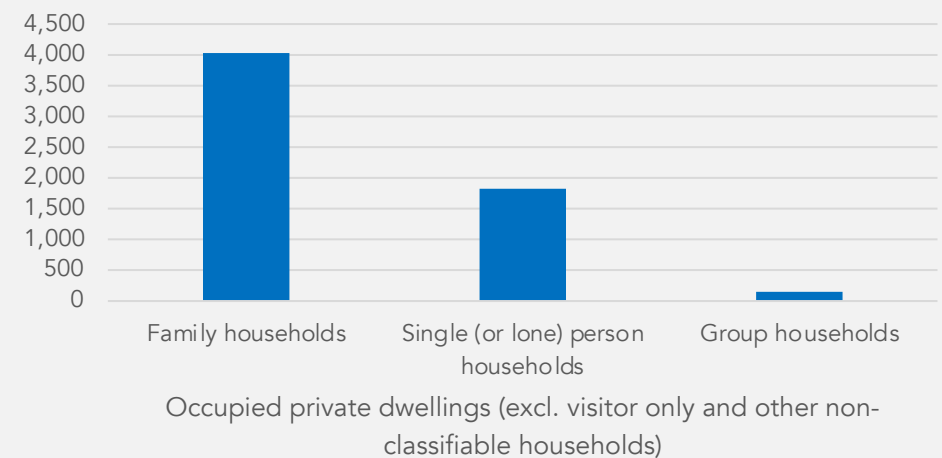| Age	%
0-4 yo	4%
5-14 yo	10%
15-19 yo	5%
20-24 yo	4%
25-34 yo	8%
35-44 yo	10%
45-54 yo	14%
55-64 yo	17%
65-74 yo	16%
75-84 yo	8%
85+ yo	2%
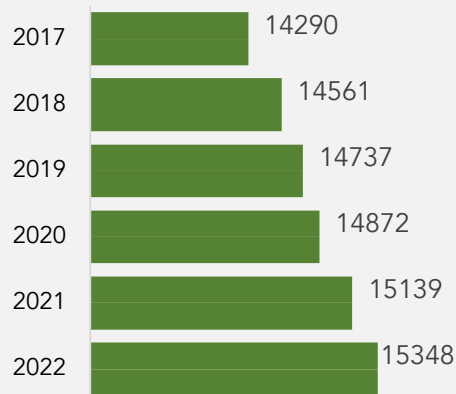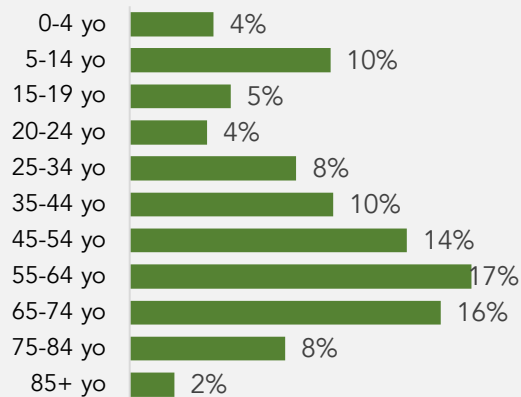
Families

Families   2021   4,120

Average number of children per family

| for families with children | 2021 | 1.8 |
| for all households | 2021 | 0.6 |

Household Type

Occupied private dwellings (excl. visitor only and other non-classifiable households)

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi (2021)

Murrindindi Shire Council

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3.2 Population & Demographic Data

Murrindindi Region: Demonstrating steady demographic expansion with significant growth rates up to 9.1%, reflecting the area's increasing residential appeal

Context & Region

Murrindindi Region Towns Population Growth

Town	2016	2021	% Growth
Kinglake (Total)	3,047	3,380	10.93%
Alexandra	2,695	2,801	3.93%
Yea	1,587	1,789	12,73%
Flowerdale	689	790	14.66%
Eildon	974	944	-3.08%
Marysville	394	501	27.16%
Taggerty	328	405	23.48%
Glenburn	415	443	6.75%
Buxton	492	591	20.12%
Pheasant	322	360	11.8%

The data from the Murrindindi Region illustrates significant population growth from 2016 to 2021, with Marysville showing the most substantial increase at 27%. Notably, areas with smaller populations, such as Taggerty and Buxton, have experienced robust proportional growth, suggesting an emerging trend towards growth in smaller townships. Conversely, Eildon saw a slight decline in population.

Overall, the region's population is on an upward trajectory, particularly in smaller localities which could be attractive for their community feel and lifestyle appeal.

3.2 Population & Demographic Data (0-4 age group)

Steady Growth, Strained Capacity: Murrindindi Shire's young population is on the rise, with a pressing need for expanded early education infrastructure

Context & Region

Population Trends for 0–4-Year-Old

The population of children aged 0-4 years in Murrindindi Shire has demonstrated steady growth since 2010. In 2021, the Murrindindi Shire experienced a significant increase in birth rates. **The number of births jumped from 108 in the previous year to 131**. This increase occurred despite the pandemic lockdown in Victoria and the halt in migration into Australia at that time.

According to the 2021 ABS Census, Murrindindi Shire had 641 children aged 0-4 years, comprising of **135** 3-year-olds and **135** 4-year-olds.

Predictive Outlook

Projections indicate growth in the **0-4 age group, with an expected increase to 746 by 2036- an addition of 105 children**. The 5-9 age group is also projected to grow, from 726 in 2021 to 780 by 2036- an increase of 54.

Current and Future Demand

As of 2021, the capacity of early education providers in the region was 426. **Enrolment rates for 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten programs were high, at 97% and 102% respectively**, indicating that providers are operating at full capacity. This situation underscores the need for enhanced infrastructure to accommodate not only current demands but also future growth in early education services.
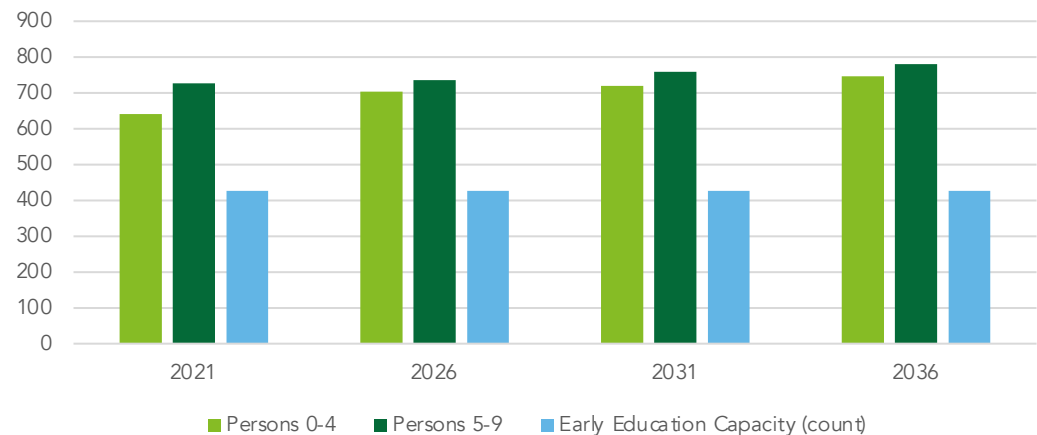
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

Community Child Care Association, Early education service and infrastructure review: Murrindindi Shire Council (2023)

Estimated Resident Population: Persons 0-4 & 5-9

Legend: ■ Persons 0-4 ■ Persons 5-9

ERP vs Early Education Capacity

Legend: ■ Persons 0-4 ■ Persons 5-9 ■ Early Education Capacity (count)

Murrindindi Shire Council

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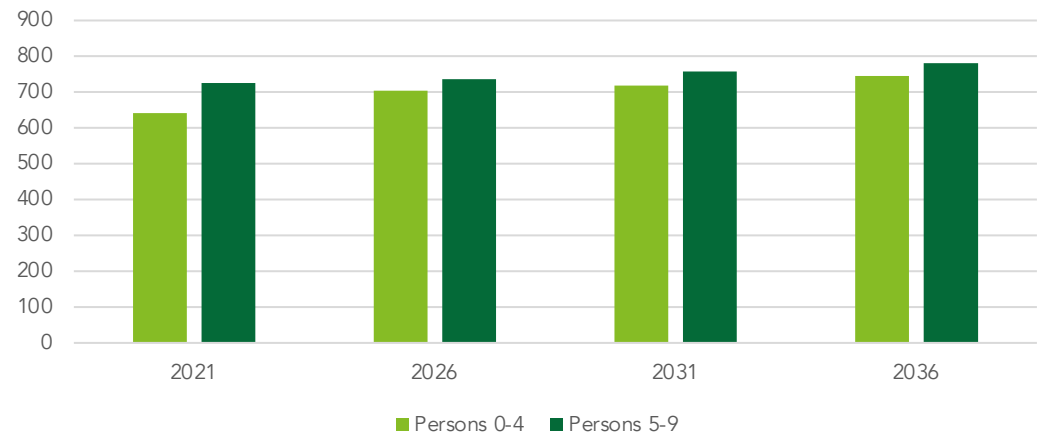
3.2 Population & Demographic Data

Insights into the workforce dynamics of the Murrindindi Shire - understanding employment, income, and industry shifts for informed decision making
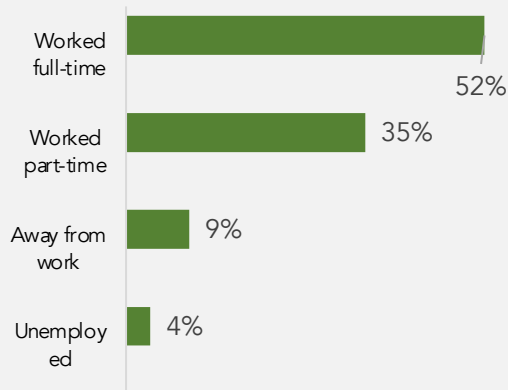
Context & Region

Extrapolation from the Census Data (2021) depicts the demographic and population data across the Murrindindi Shire.
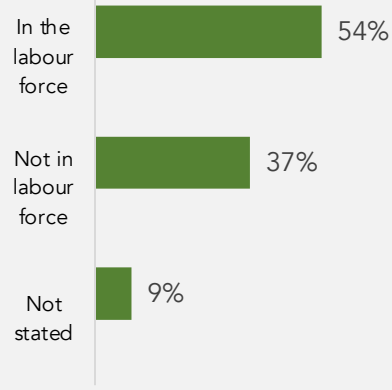
Employment

Median Weekly Personal Income	2021	$673
Median Weekly Household Income	2021	$1,287
Median Monthly Mortgage Payment	2021	$1,517

Employment Status

- Worked full-time — 52%
- Worked part-time — 35%
- Away from work — 9%
- Unemployed — 4%

Labour Participation

- In the labour force — 54%
- Not in labour force — 37%
- Not stated — 9%

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

Industry

Occupation

- Technicians and Trades Workers — 19%
- Managers — 18%
- Community and Personal Service Workers — 12%
- Labourers — 12%
- Clerical and Administrative Workers — 11%
- Machinery Operators and Drivers — 7%
- Sales Workers — 6%

Industry of employment, top responses (%)

- Aged Care Residential Services
- Local Government Administration
- Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals)
- Accommodation
- Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised)

(axis: 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4)
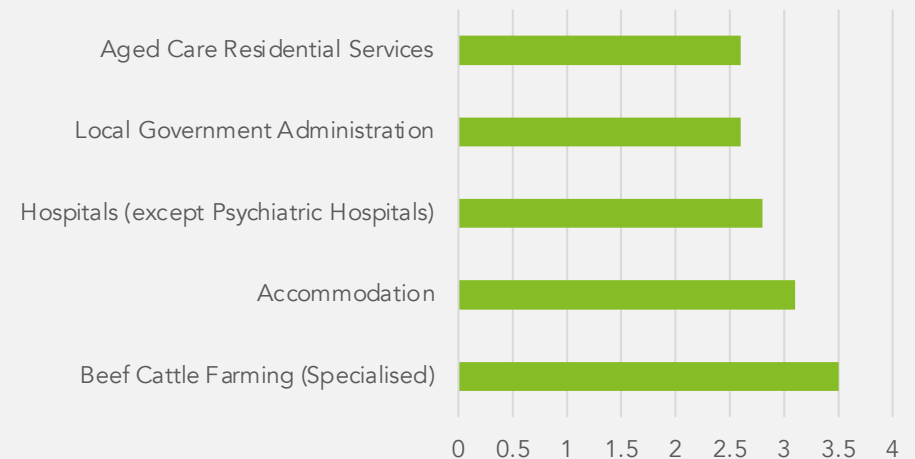
.id (informed decisions), Industry sector of employment, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

Murrindindi Shire Council

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3.3 Infrastructure - Housing

The Murrindindi Shire housing market is characterised by rising prices, declining property availability, and an increasing scarcity of affordable options

Context & Region

An analysis of the current Murrindindi Shire property market was undertaken to understand pricing and uncover market trends:

House Prices & Trends

As of October 2023, the **average house price has reached $770,634, reflecting a 70% increase** since January 2018.
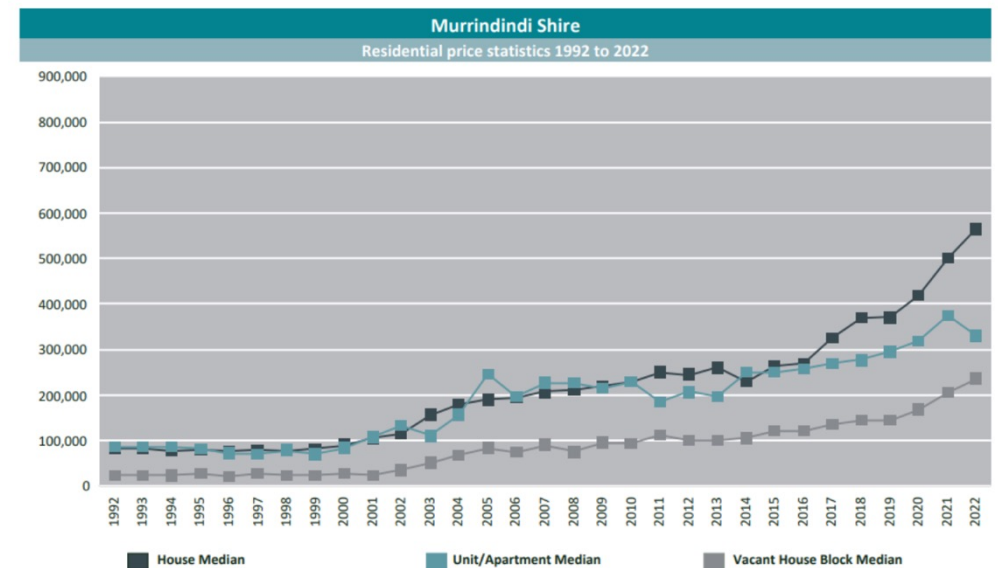
Supply Factors:

- Stock on Market: **There is a stock availability of 0.35%, equivalent to 33 listings**, which is relatively low, suggesting limited options for buyers in the market.
- Inventory: **Inventory sits at 2.26 months**, indicating that it would take just over two months to sell all the current listings at the current rate of sale, which is a relatively short period in real estate terms.
- Hold Period: **The average hold period is 10.25 years**, suggesting that once people buy property in the area, they tend to keep it for over a decade before selling.

Demand Factors:

- Days on Market: Properties are **staying on the market for an average of 30 days**, which is a quick turnaround time, pointing to strong demand.
- Vacancy Rate: **The vacancy rate is at 0.97%, or 5 vacancies**, which is quite low, further indicating high demand for housing and a competitive rental market.
- Search Index: The search index scores for both buying and renting are 4.0, on a scale where higher numbers reflect greater search interest, suggesting active interest in both buying and renting in the area.

Overall, these metrics indicate a housing market in the Murrindindi Shire with low supply and high demand, as evidenced by the low stock and vacancy rates, the quick turnover of properties, and the relatively long hold period. This contributes to the steady increase in house prices and the competitive nature of the housing market in the region.

Murrindindi Shire Median House Price (2018-2023)

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)
Higher than Average Groeth (HtAG), Murrindindi Shire (2023)

Murrindindi Shire Council

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3.4 Infrastructure - Rental

Murrindindi Shire's rental market shows a trend of affordable housing, with most rents under $300, and a gradual increase in mid-range rents while remaining more affordable than regional Victoria

Context & Region

An analysis of the current Murrindindi Shire rental property market was undertaken to understand statistical growth and uncover trends of the rental market. Extrapolation from the Census data (2021) and HtAG data (2023) depicts the rental and total households' data across the Murrindindi Shire region.

Rental Prices & Trends

Median Rent Price and Trends:

- In 2021, the median rent in Murrindindi Shire **was just above $270**, positioning it below the averages for both Victoria and the nation. Over time, rent prices have seen a **slight but steady** increase. This gradual rise reflects a broader trend affecting many regional areas, where housing affordability is increasingly challenged.

Rent Stress:

- Despite the comparatively lower rent, the proportion of income spent on this expense is higher for many Murrindindi residents due to generally lower wages in the area. A significant number of households find themselves allocating **more than 30% of their income to rent**, which is the benchmark commonly used to define housing affordability, leading to higher instances of rent stress within the community.

Rental Availability:

- The availability of rental properties in Murrindindi Shire is on the **decline**. An analysis of the local housing market indicates a tightening situation, with **fewer rental options available each quarter**. This scarcity contributes to the subtle uptick in rent prices and suggests that the rental market is becoming more competitive, with potential implications for residents searching for affordable housing options.

Higher than Average Growth (HtAG), Murrindindi Shire (2023)

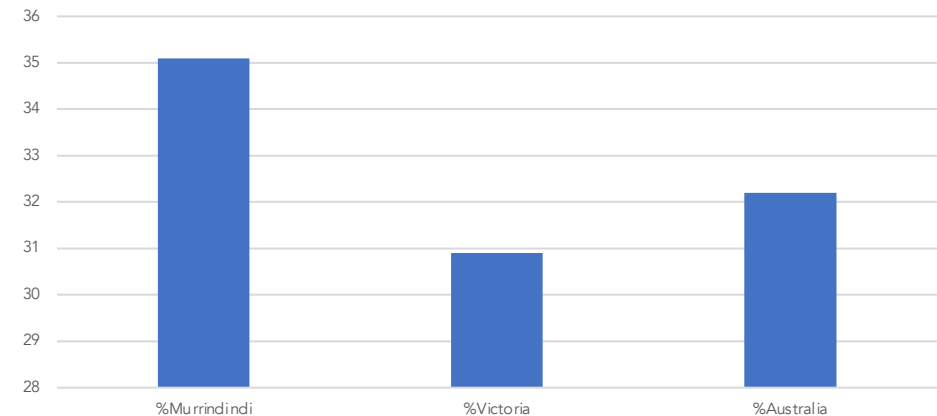Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

Comparative Median Rent (2021)
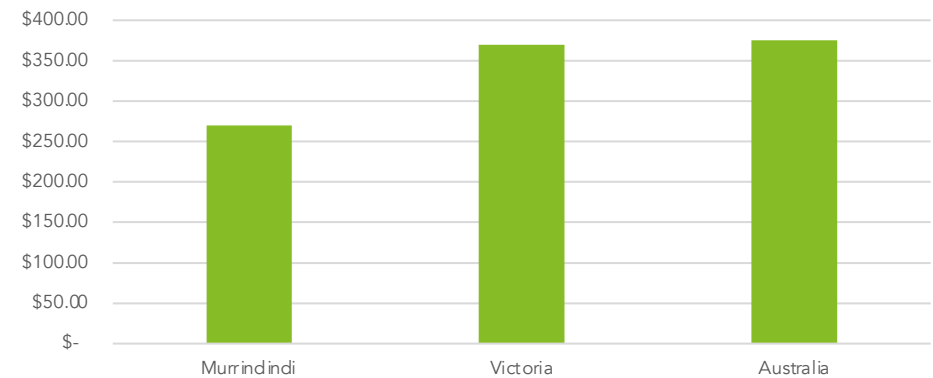
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

Renter households with rent payments greater than 30% of household income (2021)

Murrindindi Shire Council

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3.4 Infrastructure - Housing & Statutory Plans

Growth prospects in Murrindindi Shire are underscored by projected population increases and strategic housing development plans in key growth areas, which face market and regulatory hurdles that may affect development

Context & Region

Housing Demand & Capacity

- Murrindindi Shire has seen a historically slow yet steady increase in population. Recently, this **growth rate has surged to between 2% and 5%, surpassing the state average** and historical rates for the area.

Housing Supply and Development

- The majority of existing housing stock comprises of single detached dwellings, highlighting a lack of housing choices, temporary accommodation, and affordable housing options for workers.
- The Shire has the **capacity to develop an additional 1,174 lots** on zoned land, which aligns with the 15-year housing supply policy. The strategy emphasises various housing types like key worker accommodation, build-to-rent units, mixed-use developments, aged care facilities, and social & affordable housing.

Challenges in Meeting Housing Demand

- Despite the zoned capacity, the existing housing stock is anticipated to be **depleted by 2026**, hinting at a potential housing shortage. The undeveloped state of much of the zoned land further complicates the supply issue, with a significant lag before these areas contribute to the market.

Growth Areas

- **Yea and Alexandra** are key focus areas for **residential growth and development**. The strategy emphasises urban consolidation in both towns, with Yea targeting residential growth to the west and exploring a future urban growth area south of the town. Alexandra's development includes preparation of a Structure Plan to guide growth options and low-density residential development. Both towns are looking into infill development to promote diverse housing types and increased densities, aligning with the broader goal of addressing the growing housing needs in the Shire while maintaining community character and supporting infrastructure development.

Source: Murrindindi Shire Council, Housing and Settlement Strategy

Murrindindi Shire Council

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ECE Context & Vision

4.1 ECE Context

In Murrindindi there are 7 Early Childhood Education (ECE) providers, 5 Family Day Care educators, and 10 Primary Schools offering services including long day care, kindergarten, bush kinder and OSHC
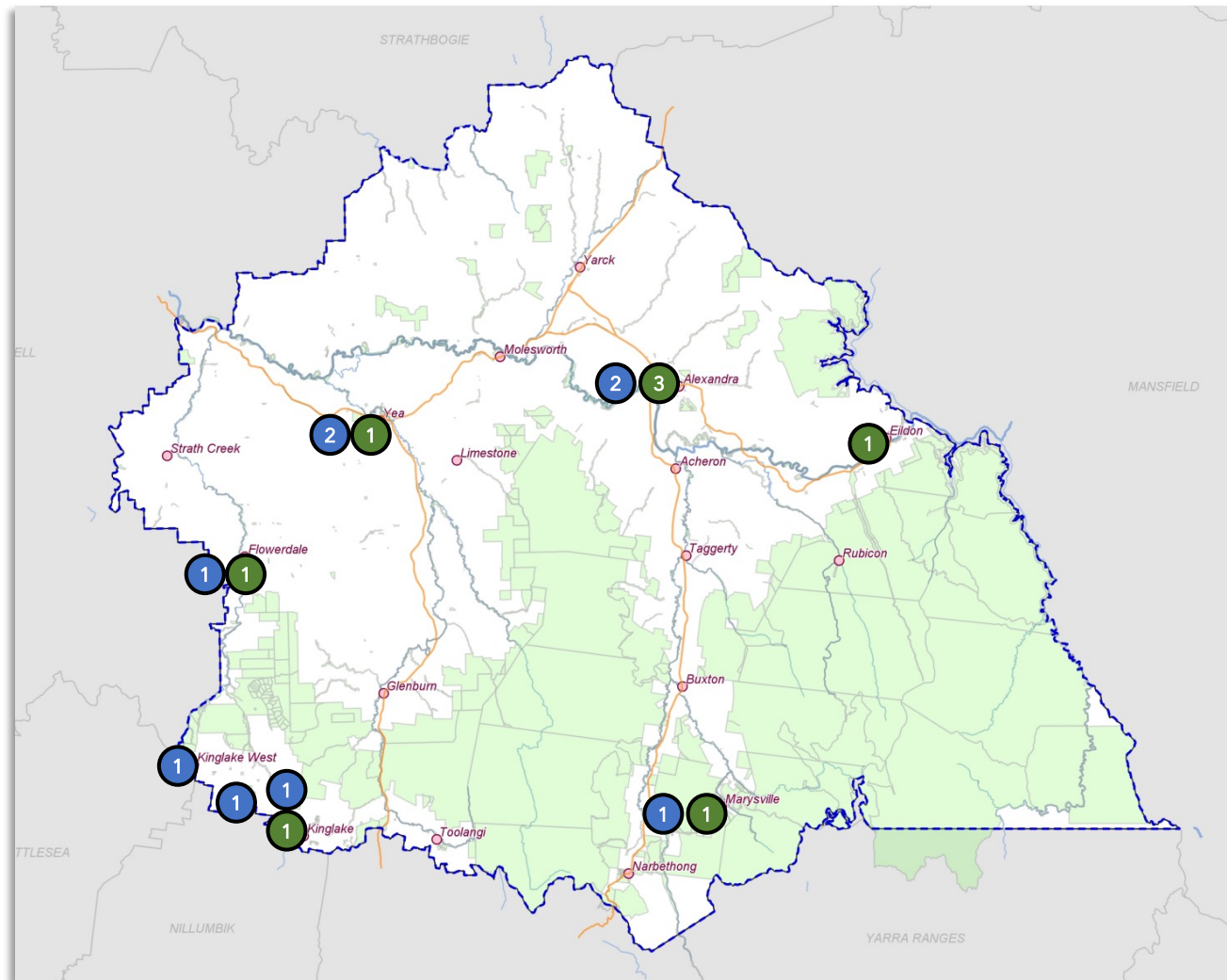
Context & Region

Early Years Services

In Murrindindi, a wide range of early years services is in place, tailored to address the specific childcare, educational, and development requirements of the Murrindindi communities' youngest members. These services include:

- **Long Day Care:** Long day care refers to structured and licensed childcare arrangements for children from birth to school age. It typically operates fort extended hours, covering a full working day.

- **Kindergarten**: Kindergarten, often part of an early education program, is designed for children aged 3 to 5 years. It focuses on school readiness, providing a curriculum that includes pre-literacy, numeracy, and social skills development.

- **Bush Kinder:** Bush kinder, or outdoor kindergarten is an innovative approach to early childhood education. It takes place in natural environments like forests, parks, or rural areas.

- **Family Day Care**: Family day care is a form of childcare where certified caregivers provide care in their own homes. This option offers a more personalised and home-like setting for children, often involving mixed age groups.

- **Out of School Hours Care (OSHC):** OSHC refers to before and after school care programs for school-age children. These programs operate during school term times and school holidays.

Providers

There are seven service providers and four family day care in the Murrindindi region, namely Alexandra & District Kindergarten, Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre, Marysville and District Kindergarten, & Yea Uniting Early Learning

- Alexandra & District Kindergarten

- Alexandra Baby Care

- Eildon and District Kindergarten

- Flowerdale Kindergarten

- Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre

- Marysville and District Kindergarten

- Murrindindi Family Day Care x 5

- Yea Uniting Early Learning

Murrindindi Shire Council

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4.2 ECE Providers and Services

In Murrindindi, there are 7 Early Childhood Education (ECE) providers, 5 Family Day Care educators, and 10 Primary Schools offering services including long day care, kindergarten, bush kinder and OSHC

Early Years

- Alexandra & District Kindergarten
  - Alexandra Baby Care
- Eildon and District Kindergarten
  - Flowerdale Kindergarten
- Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre
- Marysville and District Kindergarten
  - Murrindindi Family Day Care x 5
  - Yea Uniting Early Learning

Primary Schools

- Alexandra Primary School
  - St Marys Alexandra
  - Eildon Primary School
- Marysville Primary School
  - Yea Primary School
- Sacred Heart Primary School (Yea)
  - Flowerdale Primary School
  - Kinglake Primary School
  - Kinglake West Primary School
  - Middle Kinglake Primary School

4.3 Council's Role

Murrindindi Shire Council supports the delivery of kindergarten services by providing infrastructure for participating kindergartens

Council's Role in Early Years

The early years in the Murrindindi Shire region are characterised by a comprehensive range of services and support systems aimed at nurturing the development and well-being of children from birth to school age. The services play a crucial role in ensuring that children receive the best possible start in life, setting the foundation for future growth and success. The Murrindindi Shire Council is actively involved in facilitating and overseeing various early years services, in line with the state and national guidelines.

Council's existing role in the early years is focused upon four core areas:

Provision of Infrastructure:
- The Council is responsible for developing and maintaining the physical infrastructure necessary for early education services. This includes the planning and creation of long day care, kindergarten, and integrated children's hubs that provide various social services. The Council also collaborates with other service providers to address the infrastructure needs of the community, such as the development of a maternal health hub in Alexandra and the expansion of early education service hubs in areas like Yea.
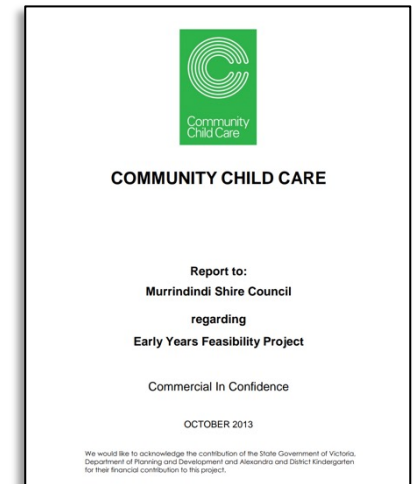
Direct Service Delivery:
- While the Council does not directly run early childhood services, it supports the delivery of maternal and child health services, playgroups, and other community-based family services. It works with service providers to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the needs of the community, particularly in areas affected by past adversities like the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

Sector Coordination and Capacity Building:
- The Council plays a pivotal role in coordinating and building the capacity of the early years sector. This includes the development of workforce plans to attract and retain early childhood educators, leveraging government incentives, and enhancing the overall quality of early education in the Shire.

Capacity Planning for the Service System:
- Understanding the geographical spread and the unique challenges of the Shire, the Council is involved in strategic capacity planning. It ensures that services are located appropriately and are accessible to families, taking into account factors like the absence of public transport between towns and the distances families need to travel to access services.

COMMUNITY CHILD CARE

Report to:
Murrindindi Shire Council

regarding
Early Years Feasibility Project

Commercial In Confidence

OCTOBER 2013

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the State Government of Victoria, Department of Planning and Development and Alexandra and District Kindergarten for their financial contribution to this project.

Community Child Care Association

Early education service and infrastructure review: Murrindindi Shire Council

April 2023

4.4 ECE Workforce

Murrindindi Shire Council supports the delivery of kindergarten services by providing infrastructure for participating kindergartens

Context & Region

ECE Workforce

The Murrindindi Shire region faces a significant shortage of early years workforce, compounded by challenges in both attracting and retaining quality staff. One major hurdle is the scarcity of permanent accommodation options, coupled with the isolation of towns within the region, making it difficult for providers to secure and maintain staff.

In Yea and Alexandra, numerous positions remain unfilled for extended periods, underscoring the ongoing struggles in recruiting personnel to the area.

Alexandra & District Kindergarten
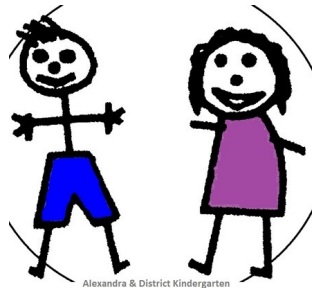
New Infrastructure

The establishment of new sites, excluding Kinglake, is expected to further disrupt the existing workforce, as these new providers/sites are likely to draw from the existing local talent pool.

Compounding these issues, there is a lack of relief coverage across the region, as all sites operate independently (single site) without ability to rotate staff between locations.

Future Considerations

When contemplating future infrastructure or expanding of service providers for the region, it is crucial to take into account workforce considerations.

Expanding existing providers to encompass multiple sites can alleviate strain on the workforce by enabling staff rotation without the concern of staff poaching.

Murrindindi Shire Council

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4.5 ECE Infrastructure

Murrindindi Shire Council supports ECE providers by providing infrastructure and maintenance

Context & Region

Alexandra			Flowerdale
Alexandra & District Kindergarten	**Alexandra Baby Care**	**Eildon and District Kindergarten**	**Flowerdale Kindergarten**
Address: 15 Bayley St, Alexandra VIC 3714	**Address:** 13 Coster Street, Alexandra VIC 3714	**Address:** 45 High Street, Eildon VIC 3713	**Address:** 3377 Whittlesea-Yea Rd, Flowerdale VIC 3717
Service: • 3- and 4-year-old kinder	**Service:** • Long daycare	**Service:** • 3- and 4-year-old kinder	**Service:** • 3- and 4-year-old kinder
Licensed places: 51	**Licensed places:** 29	**Licensed places:** 23	**Licensed places:** 41
SA2: Alexandra	**SA2:** Alexandra	**SA2:** Alexandra	**SA2:** Yea
Provider Management Type: Private not for profit community managed	**Provider Management Type:** Private for profit	**Provider Management Type:** State/Territory government schools	**Provider Management Type:** State/Territory and Local Government managed

4.5 ECE Infrastructure (contd.)

Murrindindi Shire Council supports ECE providers by providing infrastructure and maintenance

Context & Region

Kinglake	Marysville	Various	Yea
Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	Marysville and District Kindergarten	Murrindindi Family Day Care x 5	Yea Uniting Early Learning

Kinglake

Address:
37-69 Extons Road Kinglake Central

Service:
• Long daycare

Licensed places:
120

SA2:
Kinglake

Provider Management Type:
Private not for profit community managed

Marysville

Address:
15 Falls Road Marysville, VIC 3779

Service:
• Long daycare

Licensed places:
60

SA2:
Alexandra

Provider Management Type:
Private not for profit community managed

Various

Address:
Various Locations

Service:
• Long daycare

Licensed places:
Data unavailable

SA2:
Alexandra

Provider Management Type:
Private not for profit community managed

Yea

Address:
23 The Semi Circle Yea VIC 3717

Service:
• Long daycare

Licensed places:
67

SA2:
Yea

Provider Management Type:
Private not for profit community managed

4.6 ECE Infrastructure - Supply and Demand

KISP data forecasts a 31% growth of three-year-old and 44% growth of four-year-old population for the region over the 9-year period of 2023-2032, leading to unmet ECE needs

Context & Region

KISP Methodology:

The primary objective of the KISP is to assist all kindergarten providers in meeting the growing demand and to provide a comprehensive overview of infrastructure requirements across the Murrindindi Shire region.

KISP estimates the future demand and supply of 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten using forecast population data and existing local kindergarten capacities.

Based on KISP numbers provided by the Murrindindi Shire Council and Sociologic, NMC analysed the projected workforce demand for the 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten in the Murrindindi Shire.

SA2 Definition:

SA2, or Statistical Area Level 2, is a medium-sized geographical classification used in Australian statistics. It groups multiple smaller regions together for collecting and analysing statistical data. In Murrindindi Shire, this means several localities are combined under one SA2 category. While this facilitates broader data analysis, it can also obscure specific details and characteristics of individual smaller regions within the shire, potentially leading to less precise local insights.

KISP SA2 Limitations:

When analysing KISP data using SA2 grouping, it is important to consider the following limitations:
- Broad regional categorisation leads to loss of detail.
- Potential masking of local variations and specific trends.
- Misleading generalisations due to socio-economic differences between areas.
- Inefficient resource allocation based on generalised data.
- Challenges in comparability across different SA2 regions.
- Possible misalignment with specific KISP data requirements.

Unmet demand estimates

DE ONLY (baseline) unmet demand estimates
These estimates **do not** include any adjustments provided by Council and are included for reference only.

SA2	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Alexandra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinglake	9	6	32	24	25	25	29	28	29	31
Yea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGA total	**9**	**6**	**32**	**24**	**25**	**25**	**29**	**28**	**29**	**31**

Revised KISP unmet demand estimates - including Council provided inputs

SA2	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Alexandra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinglake	3	5	37	30	33	33	37	37	37	38
Yea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7
LGA total	**3**	**5**	**37**	**30**	**33**	**33**	**37**	**38**	**41**	**44**

Please refer to the "Revised Estimates" tab to see the supply and demand breakdown for each SA2.

4.7 ECE Reforms

Victorian Government had introduced new reforms for the Early Years Program to expand Three-Year-Old and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten services across the state
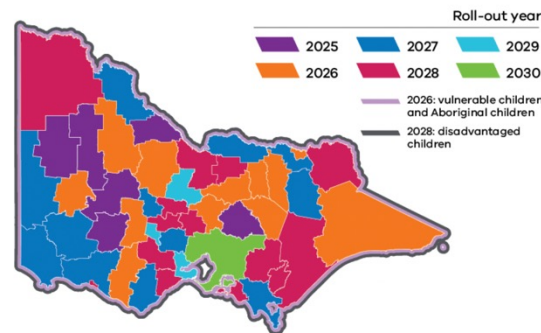
Context & Region

Best Start Best Life

The Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms represent a substantial overhaul of Victoria's early childhood sector, marking a significant generational change. Key aspects of these reforms include:

1. **Free Kinder Access:** From 2023, all 3- and 4-year-old children in Victoria will have access to Free kinder services. These services will be available at both standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care (childcare) centres, resulting in potential annual savings of up to $2500 per child for families.

2. **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Expansion**: The rollout of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten programs will continue, with the goal of providing 15 hours of weekly engagement across the entire state by 2029. This expansion ensures that Victorian children receive two years of a quality kindergarten programs before commencing formal schooling.

3. **Transition to "Pre-Prep" for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten**: In the next 10 years, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in Victoria will change to 'Pre-Prep'. This means that every 4-year-old child can go to a play-based learning program for 30 hours per week

4. **Early Learning Centres:** 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning centres will be established.

Early Start Kindergarten

The Victorian government is rolling out funded kindergarten for all three-year-olds. During the roll-out, there will be no change to Early Start Kindergarten. Early Start Kindergarten will continue to provide 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten per week to all eligible children in all areas across Victoria.

Roll-out year		
2025	2027	2029
2026	2028	2030
2026: vulnerable children and Aboriginal children		
2028: disadvantaged children		

Supported Playgroups

The State Government had provided $22.3 million to expand supported playgroups across the state, giving families who need extra support access to groups run by trained facilitators. That includes providing funding to help improve the connections between First Time Parent Groups and community playgroups.

Building Blocks Program

Department of Education has developed the Building Blocks program, an overarching investment program to support the sector that includes 'Building Blocks Partnerships', Kindergartens on School Sites and a new, single grants program, which incorporates the existing Children's Facilities Capital Program and Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program.

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Infrastructure Funding Streams

WHAT IS A KISP?

A KISP will allow Department of Education and an LGA to share information and agree on:

• the current supply (or capacity) and demand for funded kindergarten in the LGA

• forecast demand for Three and Four-Year- Old Kindergarten

• expectations about how demand growth will be accommodated over the roll-out (i.e., the use of existing capacity and building new or expanded capacity, and the role of different types of provision).

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4.8 ECE Reforms Impact

Unveiling the Impact: How ECE Reforms Reshape Experiences for Families, Schools, Communities and Workforce

Context & Region

Murrindindi Shire Council

- Anticipated growth in the early childhood sector will demand more oversight and governance from the council.
- Increased community workforce may strain existing infrastructure and necessitate new developments.
- Potential for increased revenue from licensing and taxes related to the growth of facilities.
- The council may need to play a more active role in community engagement to address the potential challenges and benefits of the sector's growth.
- Introduction of new policies and regulations to ensure quality control and standardisation across providers.
- A potential increase in public feedback and community forums related to early childhood service provisions.
- Council may have to address potential inequality issues that arise due to differential access to services.

ECE Providers/Workforce

- Significant recruitment efforts due to increased demand for childcare services.
- Enhanced training and development initiatives to meet the sector's quality standards.
- Potential challenges in resource allocation, facility expansion, and upskilling.
- More opportunities for career growth, skill enhancement, and specialisation.
- Dynamic evolution of the sector, emphasising adaptability and continuous learning.
- Increased competition among providers leading to innovation and improved service offerings.
- Enhanced collaboration between providers for sharing best practices and resources.
- Rising importance of technology integration for efficient service delivery and management.
- A potential increase in wages and benefits due to a higher demand for skilled professionals.

Local Children/Families

- Easier access to quality kindergarten services due to increased availability.
- Financial reliefs leading to more affordability for families.
- Improved and comprehensive early education experiences for children.
- A more inclusive educational environment fostering academic and holistic development.
- Families may be more informed and involved in their child's early education journey.
- Greater choice for families due to increased service providers in the sector.
- Assurance of quality education based on standardised regulations and controls.
- Increased community events and workshops focused on early childhood development and parent education.
- Potential for more tailored services catering to the specific needs of children and their families.

Current State

5.1 Current State: Methodology

The Current State Methodology involves capturing relevant inputs from desktop research, targeted survey, consultation and workshop findings and an analysis of the challenges, to define prioritised challenges for the early childhood workforce in Murrindindi region

Current State

Current State Review

A comprehensive current state analysis was undertaken to identify workforce capability and capacity of early childhood in Murrindindi Shire region.

The **key workforce challenges** that are pertinent to Murrindindi Shire communities are identified and its analysis is administered on quantitative (i.e., **data request** and desktop **research**) and qualitative elements (i.e., **one-on-one consultation**s with both internal and external stakeholders). The analysis includes the data capture of segmented industry information, and discussion and collaboration with key stakeholders from the region, and comprehensive benchmarking analysis to provide a clear understanding of emerging workforce challenges for the region.

The current state analysis utilises an **Analysis Framework** against the six priority areas of NMC's Regional Workforce Development Model. The evaluation of the current workforce challenges across early years industry enables the stakeholders to **prioritise challenges** based on workshop findings and tailor actions that will generate the maximum impact in the Murrindindi Shire communities.

NMC's Regional Workforce Development Model

Methodology

	Desktop Research	Design and analyse quantitative data through desktop research and data request to extract valuable insights about workforce capability and capacity of the region
	Consultations	Engage with key stakeholders to identify current state and emerging workforce challenges and opportunities for the region
	Workshops	Facilitate a workshop based on principles of design-thinking to discuss ECE workforce challenges and prototype solutions that are pertinent for the region
	Survey	Conduct a targeted survey to understand specific challenges and opportunities and provide input into a potential future state

Photos from stakeholder consultations

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

5.1 Current State: Methodology (contd.)

The current state analysis involved capturing relevant input from data requests and consultation findings for the early years' workforce planning in the Murrindindi Shire region

Data Request

In conjunction with the consultation, the Council staff along with various stakeholders were actively engaged in contributing essential data and artefact to support an in-depth quantitative analysis of the current state.

NMC provided a comprehensive list of data requests including the submissions of existing plans and strategies, demographic statistics specific to the Murrindindi Shire - data relevant to the early childhood workforce within the region.

Consultation Process

Murrindindi Shire Council provided NMC with a *shortlist of key stakeholders* consisting of early years' service providers in the Murrindindi Shire region, Council's Strategic Planning Department, Maternal Child Health Department, real-estate providers, and local community members. NMC reached out to each stakeholder via email (with follow-ups as required) to coordinate a suitable time for a one-on-one 45 min consultation. As part of the consultation process, key stakeholders were asked to discuss their organisation's workforce challenges and identify key focus areas for potential improvement and opportunities. The engaged stakeholders also shared ideas for support and help that they wish to receive in order to achieve a more sustainable workforce outcome in the future state.

Targeted Survey

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the early years' workforce profile, a survey was administered to early years providers. The primary aim was to gather detailed insights into the composition and dynamics of the workforce engaged in early childhood education and care.

The survey was designed to collect data on various aspects of the workforce, including qualifications, experience, challenges faced, and areas of expertise. This was conducted in collaboration with key stakeholders in the early childhood education sector. The survey was distributed through email to the 7 providers in the region and was completed by 5 of them.

5.1 Current State: Methodology (contd.)

The current state methodology also involves engagement with key stakeholders and a 3-hour workshop with pertinent industry providers and Project Working Group to identify and prioritise key workforce challenges of early childhood in the Murrindindi Shire region

Current State Workshop

The current state workshop has two key aims:

(a) To align all key stakeholders (attendees) on the current state analysis based on obtained quantitative and qualitative data. This is to achieve consensus and agreement on the emerging challenges of early childhood workforce in the Murrindindi Shire region.

(b) To prioritise key challenges and prototype a solution for emerging workforce challenges based on the benchmarking analysis and case studies across regional Victoria.

The workshop outcomes and outputs provide a prioritised challenges for the Infrastructure Maintenance Department for each six priority areas (i.e., attraction, recruitment, retention, skills & training, migration, and housing).

Workshop Details

Venue: Council Office, Yea

Date: 7th December 2023

Time: 4:30pm – 7:30pm

Attendees:

Sue Carpenter	Deputy Mayor
Stuart Coller	Manager
Carren Hedger	Project Officer
Kate Broadway	Alexandra Kindergarten
Louise Flowers	Alexandra Kindergarten
Sandra Bishop	Marysville Primary School
Katie Gelbert & Kellie	Marysville & District Kindergarten
Fiona Purvis	Yea Uniting Early Learning
Nick Frederiksen	Sacred Heart Primary School
Bec Glynn	Flowerdale Kindergarten (Mitchell Shire)
Lynda Price	Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre

Workshop Activities

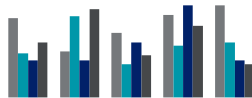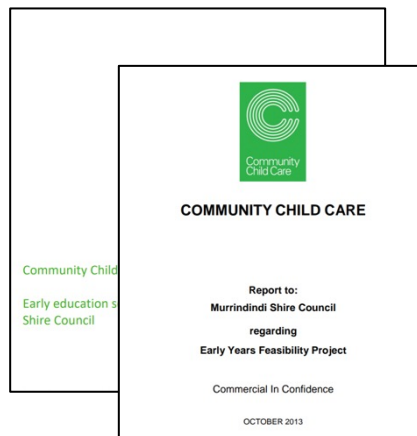| Activity 1	Method
Define the key current challenges for ECE workforce	• 2 x Group discussion • Definitions on butcher's paper
Activity 2	**Method**
Prioritise current challenges	• Placing voting dots on the butcher's paper against elements
Activity 3	**Method**
Co-design solutions	• Additions on butcher's paper • 2 x groups
Activity 4	**Method**
Present all findings	• Group discussion

5.1 Current State: Methodology (contd.)

The current state analysis involved artefact and data request, and consultations with key stakeholders in the Murrindindi Shire region

Current State
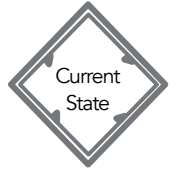
Quantitative Data Request

- Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP)

- KISP Methodology Explainer

- Kindergarten Central Enrolment Feasibility Studies 2018

- Council Plan 2021-25

- Housing and Settlement Strategy

- Early Education Service and Infrastructure Review

Community Child Care

Community Child
Early education s
Shire Council

COMMUNITY CHILD CARE

Report to:
Murrindindi Shire Council
regarding
Early Years Feasibility Project

Commercial In Confidence

OCTOBER 2013

Qualitative Consultations

- Stuart Coller, Sue Porter, Carren Hedger – Project Working Group

- Ben Harnwell – Manager Economic Development

- Cameron Fraser – Coordinator Planning

- Nathalie Matheson – Coordinator Community Engagement

- Rosie Kane – Coordinator Communications

- Yea Uniting Early Learning Centre

- Yea Primary School

- Sacred Heart Primary School

- Alexandra & District Kindergarten

- Alexandra Primary School

- St Marys Primary School

- Eildon Primary School & Kindergarten

- Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre

- Kinglake Primary School

- Middle Kinglake Primary School

- Kinglake West Primary School

- Department of Education

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

5.2 Current State: Survey Findings

Exploration of workforce survey results across Murrindindi Early Years Organisations, highlighting staff profiles, recruitment challenges, and strategic retention initiatives

Current State

Derived from survey responses of four providers in the Murrindindi Shire area, these findings offers a snapshot of workforce trends, challenges, and strategies shaping the early years education sector.

Staff Qualifications

- 33% of the workforce had Certificate III, Diploma, Bachelor's Degree.
- 71% of new staff in last 12 months had diplomas, and 29% had Cert III

Type of Contract

- The workforce is primarily made up out of part-time or casual staff
- 50% of respondents said their workforce was 75%-100% part-time casual, and 25% said 50%-75%
- 0-25% of the workforce is full time

Residency

- 40% of staff live 5-20 km away from the workplace.
- 40% live 21-40 km away.
- 80% responded that relocation was not necessary for their role, while the remaining 20% were not sure

Total Staff

- 60% of organisations have 10-15 employees.
- 20% report a larger staff size of 10-30.
- Another 20% are unsure about their staff size.

5.2 Current State: Survey Findings (contd.)

Exploration of workforce survey results across Murrindindi Early Years Organisations, highlighting staff profiles, recruitment challenges, and strategic retention initiatives

Current State

Derived from survey responses of four providers in the Murrindindi Shire area, these findings offers a snapshot of workforce trends, challenges, and strategies shaping the early years education sector.

Workforce Retention

- Employees on average stay at their provider for over 10 years (50% of respondents) and remaining 50% were 5-9 years.
- The attrition rate is low, as on average, less than 5% of the workforce is turned over each year
- The primary reasons for leaving are career progression/change and retirement
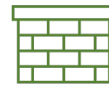
Existing Barriers

- Housing shortages issues were each noted by 40% of the respondents
- 20% said travel was a barrier
- 13% said remuneration and workload were barriers
- 7% noted leadership as a barrier
- to mitigate these barriers organisations have implemented initiatives such as relocation packages, flexible working conditions, and sign-up bonuses to attract work to their organisation.

Skills and Training

- Majority of ECE providers (80%) had a relationship with a training provider.
- There was not one dominant provider, and the following were all selected once: ACU, Deakin, Selma, Swinburne, TAFE Seymour
- 75% of respondents said they had an affiliation with education providers through a training program.

5.3 Current State: Existing Workforce Profile

Current workforce profile for each service providers in the Murrindindi Shire region

Current State
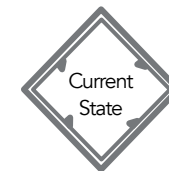
Priority Areas	Workforce Elements	Alexandra & District Kindergarten	Alexandra Baby Care	Eildon and District Kindergarten	Yea Uniting	Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	Flowerdale Kindergarten	Marysville & District Kindergarten	Murrindindi Family Day Care
	Total number of staff	10-15	Waiting for data	Waiting for data	10-30	Waiting for data	Waiting for data	10-15	Unsure
	Staff qualifications	Certificate III; Diploma; Bachelor's Degree			Certificate III			Certificate III; Diploma; Bachelor's Degree	Diploma
	What type of contracts? (casual, fixed, part-time)	0-25% Full-Time 75% - 100% Part-Time/Casual			No Response			0-25% Full-Time 75-100% Part-Time/Casual	Unsure
	Annual attrition rate	5-10%			2-5%			2-5%-	Less than 1%
	Average tenure year	5-9 years			10+ years			5-9 years	Unsure
	Staff residency	5-20km			21-40km			21-40km	Unsure
	Number of new hires in the last 12 months	Less than 5			Less than 5			Less than 5	Less than 5
	Relationship with education providers	Swinburne, Deakin			ACU - incentive of receiving IT equipment, students from TAFE Seymour, Swinburne Uni (informal)			Selma	N/A

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for ECE Workforce Attraction

Attraction

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- Geographical issues, such as location, distance, and transportation between home and work, make it challenging to attract workers.
- Housing is relatively expensive and with limited supply.
- The lack of alternative health services, such as allied health and NDIS support, makes the area less attractive compared to areas that offer these services.
- Sector reforms disrupting existing processes require additional admin and new commitment requires resulting in a reduced desirability to work in the field.
- Poor mental health and wellbeing of employees in the sector due to substandard work conditions, culture and leadership.
- Difficulty attracting talent as once individuals become qualified, they often pursue further studies or higher-paying roles, such as primary school teaching.

Current Mitigation Strategies

- ECE providers within the region are promoting their Employee Value Proposition to attract workforce from overseas, metropolitan Melbourne, and other regional towns.
- Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre offers flexibility, training, and mentorship opportunities for its staff.

Challenges identified from data and observations:

- The disparity in remuneration levels range from $16,000 for early career teachers to more than $30,000 for experienced teachers in comparison to those in primary school.
- The updated Bachelor of Education program offers a double degree in Early Childhood Education and primary school, which puts the ECE industry in a disadvantage as students often choose to seek employment in primary schools due to higher wages and more attractive working conditions.

5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for ECE Workforce Recruitment

Recruitment

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- There is a shortage of qualified staff because most positions advertised require only minimum wage employees with minimal qualifications.

- The expensive housing and rental market in the area make it challenging to find long-term accommodation.

- There is a lack of career pathways and professional development opportunities.

- The lack of relief staff with varying award agreements discourages sharing staff across providers.

- The provisions within current award agreements pose challenges in offering full-time positions.

- There is a mismatch between current pay rates and expected workload.

Challenges from data and observations:

- The limited availability of childcare options for staff members can hinder workplace recruitment because potential employees prioritise locations where they can secure reliable care for their own children.

- An individual is ineligible for relocation grant if they've been an early childhood teacher in Victoria within the last year, unless they are a recent graduate. Relocation supplements are for those moving significant distances (at least 100km).

Current Mitigation Strategies

- Multiple providers offer flexible working hours to accommodate travel times for those who are coming from outside the immediate region.

5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for ECE Workforce Retention

Retention

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- Burnout is common due to high workload and poor work conditions.
- Centre enrolments are at capacity with a lack of staff and funding to meet demand.
- There is a scope creep for ECE educator role in areas such as mandatory reporting, children misbehaviour, complex family issues and more.
- The 1:11 staff to child ratio and and recent changes to the ECE policies put increasing pressure on staff
- Award agreements and wages are inconsistent across the sector.
- Low design standards of buildings hinders the quality of care that can be delivered resulting in poor staff retention.

Current Mitigation Strategies

- Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre have implemented initiatives to advance the formal education of their staff to retain them.

Challenges from data and observations:

- The housing shortage in the region makes it tough for ECE professionals to settle and when they can find available properties, they are often unfit for their families.
- ECE pay is quite low when compared to other industries, and the majority of roles in the sector are not full-time, creating uncertainty in employment and finances.
- Class sizes have increased without a proportional increase in space, making work conditions more challenging.

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for Skills & Training in the ECE workforce

Skills & Training

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- There is no formal relationship with education providers and there is no consistency in training and upskilling.
- Significant cost and time associated with in-person delivery makes it difficult for ECE staff and students to remain consistent.
- Accelerated training has previously led to burnout.
- Providers are experiencing high stress because they are unable to allocate time to mentoring, as they are at maximum workload capacity.
- Staff are leaving due to retirement, maternity leave, resignations, work culture and feelings of isolation.

Current Mitigation Strategies:

Challenges identified from data and observations:

- There is a lack of infrastructure to support the provision of ECE training in the area (i.e., no public transport and large distance between training provider and workplace).
- Staff are departing due to lack of clear career pathway in Early Childhood Education.
- Staff often leave ECE and seek employment in primary schools after receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Education.

Murrindindi Shire Council

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5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for ECE workforce Migration

Migration

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- The lack of availability and affordability of housing in the region imposes significant constraints for regional and overseas migration.
- Limited community infrastructure services, such as childcare facilities, public transport, and schools or tertiary education institutions, pose challenges for families looking to relocate to the area.
- The lack of diverse employment opportunities makes it difficult for partners of ECE workers to find work.
- International migrants can experience language barriers and culture shock.
- International migrants have faced challenges in adapting to new environments, particularly in regional areas where there may be dangerous wildlife. Many people are unfamiliar with how to safely interact with such wildlife.
- Limited entertainment and social events can make it challenging for immigrants to integrate socially into the community.

Challenges from data and observations

- International students with Certificate III and Diploma qualifications are not eligible for skilled migration visa and a permanent residency pathway.
- Only students with a Bachelor's degree in Education are eligible for skilled migration and sponsorship.
- To be eligible for regional relocation grant an applicant must move from at least 100km away.

Current Mitigation Strategies:

- The Victorian Early Childhood Teacher Incentives Program offers re-location packages to attract teachers to areas with high demand. These packages range from $2,000 to $8,000, depending on the distance re-located and whether the teacher has dependents, with higher amounts for relocating over greater distances or from New Zealand.

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

5.5 Current State: Workforce Challenges

Key challenges and mitigation strategies identified for ECE Workforce Housing

Housing

Challenges raised in the current state workshop:

- The high cost, lack of diverse properties and limited availability of accommodation or housing in the area pose significant challenges for both potential and current employees.
- The growth of housing is hindered by the lack of supporting infrastructure, such as inadequate sewerage and power availability.
- The supply of contractors necessary for building housing is limited.

Challenges from data and observations

- **Housing Availability**: The Shire has capacity to develop an additional 1,174 lots on zoned land, which aligns with the 15-year housing supply policy.
- **Surging Housing Costs**: The average house price surpasses $700k with over 70% increase since 2018. There is a stock availability of 0.35%, equivalent to 33 listings, which is relatively low, suggesting limited options for buyers in the market.
- **Rental Constraints**: The number of long-term rentals in the area is very low, making it hard to find accommodation. Coupled with steadily rising rent prices in the Murrindindi Shire, this poses further housing challenges for ECE professionals.

Current Mitigation Strategies:

- Murrindindi Shire Council is proactively engaged in formulating a Housing and Settlement Strategy. This approach identifies Yea and Alexandra as key focus areas for residential growth and development. The strategy emphasises urban consolidation in both towns, with Yea targeting residential growth to the west and exploring a future urban growth area south of the town. Alexandra's development includes preparation of a Structure Plan to guide growth options and low-density residential development.

Future State

6.1 Future State: Methodology

The Future State Methodology involves the development of workforce strategies and actions against the six priority areas based on design-thinking workshop outcomes, benchmarking analysis findings and KISP data

Future State Design

A comprehensive future state analysis was undertaken to design workforce goals and strategic actions to address emerging challenges that ECE providers are facing in the Murrindindi Shire region.

The future state analysis utilised valuable inputs from the design-thinking workshop and benchmarking analysis held as part of this project. NMC analysed the projected population growth and early childhood education (ECE) demand for 3- and 4-year-old for the next 13 years to define the future workforce demand and supply for the region based on Kindergarten Infrastructure Strategic Plan (KISP) data provided by the Council.

By evaluating the workforce challenges and mitigation strategies identified in the current state against the six key areas of the NMC's Workforce Framework, future workforce strategies and actions were defined by the industry leaders during the workshop.

Methodology

|		
	Design-Thinking Workshop	Conducted a design-thinking workshop with key industry partners from the region to prioritise emerging workforce challenges and co-design potential solutions collaboratively
	Benchmarking Analysis	Conduct one-on-one consultations with other regional Local Governments to discuss different approaches for Early Childhood Education and successful workforce strategies that are in place
	KISP Data	Analysed the region's existing and updated Kindergarten Infrastructure Strategic Plan (KISP) to define the future workforce demand and supply
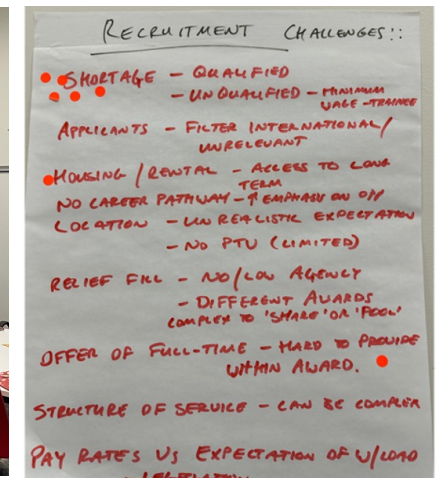
6.2 Future State: Workforce Supply and Demand

KISP data forecasts a 31% growth of three-year-old and 44% growth of four-year-old population for the region over the 9-year period of 2023-2032, leading to unmet ECE needs

Context & Region

KISP Methodology:

The primary objective of the KISP is to assist all kindergarten providers in meeting the growing demand and to provide a comprehensive overview of infrastructure requirements across the Murrindindi Shire region.

KISP estimates the future demand and supply of 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten using forecast population data and existing local kindergarten capacities.

Based on KISP numbers provided by the Murrindindi Shire Council and Sociologic, NMC analysed the projected workforce demand for the 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten in the Murrindindi Shire.

SA2 Definition:

SA2, or Statistical Area Level 2, is a medium-sized geographical classification used in Australian statistics. It groups multiple smaller regions together for collecting and analysing statistical data. In Murrindindi Shire, this means several localities are combined under one SA2 category. While this facilitates broader data analysis, it can also obscure specific details and characteristics of individual smaller regions within the shire, potentially leading to less precise local insights.

KISP SA2 Limitations:

When analysing KISP data using SA2 grouping, it is important to consider the following limitations:

- Broad regional categorisation leads to loss of detail.
- Potential masking of local variations and specific trends.
- Misleading generalisations due to socio-economic differences between areas.
- Inefficient resource allocation based on generalised data.
- Challenges in comparability across different SA2 regions.
- Possible misalignment with specific KISP data requirements.

Unmet demand estimates
DE ONLY (baseline) unmet demand estimates
These estimates **do not** include any adjustments provided by Council and are included for reference only.

SA2	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Alexandra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinglake	9	6	32	24	25	25	29	28	29	31
Yea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGA total	**9**	**6**	**32**	**24**	**25**	**25**	**29**	**28**	**29**	**31**

Revised KISP unmet demand estimates - including Council provided inputs

SA2	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Alexandra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinglake	3	5	37	30	33	33	37	37	37	38
Yea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7
LGA total	**3**	**5**	**37**	**30**	**33**	**33**	**37**	**38**	**41**	**44**

Please refer to the "Revised Estimates" tab to see the supply and demand breakdown for each SA2.

Murrindindi Shire Council

NINETY MILE CONSULTING

6.3 Future State: ECE Staffing Model Methodology

ECE staffing model harnesses enrolment data, staff ratios, and service hours, blending provider inputs and demographic trends to project early childhood education staffing needs.

SCOPE & PURPOSE OF MODEL:

- Developed to forecast staffing needs for early childhood education providers and regional requirements.
- Aims to support decision-making for current and future workforce planning.

Data Input & Structure

- Enrolment data: Current numbers of 3 and 4-year-olds per provider and at the regional level.
- Staffing ratios: Based on regulatory standards for staff-to-child ratios.
- Operating hours: Defined service hours for each age group and full-time workweek hours for staff.

Model Application

- Converts child enrolment and service hours into total staff hours needed.
- Determines the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff based on contact hours.
- Includes projections based on population growth data up to 2036.

Model Functionality

- Provides immediate FTE calculations for current enrolments.
- Allows for easy updating with new data for future planning.

6.3 Future State: Staffing Model Assumptions & Limitations

Assumptions and limitations addressing the model's reliance on assumed class sizes and staff ratios, while noting the influence of potential demographic and policy changes on staffing projections.

Primary Assumptions:

- Class Size: All rooms are assumed to support a minimum of 11 children in accordance with staff-to-child ratio mandates.
- Service Types: Distinguish between long day care (37.5-hour workweek) and sessional kinder (20-hour workweek).
- Policy Shifts: A pivotal change to a 30-hour kindergarten week for 4-year-olds is anticipated to commence in 2027 in Murrindindi Shire region.
- Infrastructure: Current room availability can accommodate the current staffing ratios of 1:11

Model Limitations:

- Demographic Fluctuations: Assumes linear population growth, potentially overlooking migration patterns, birth rates, and economic factors that could affect enrolment.
- Uniform Attendance: Projects full attendance based on enrolment, potentially misrepresenting actual daily attendance variations and its impact on staffing.
- Regulatory Changes: Any unforeseen changes in regulation that might affect staff-to-child ratios are not accounted for.

Addressing Model Limitations:

- Regular Updates: Incorporate new data and policy changes to maintain model accuracy.
- Demographic Sensitivity: Introduce sensitivity analysis to cater to various demographic scenarios.
- Regulatory Monitoring: Stay abreast of policy changes to adjust the model accordingly.

Background data

Assumption: room sizes can accommodate whole classes of at least 11 children (staffing ratios)
Dependant on infrastructure and number of rooms available

Staff-to-Child Ratio	Full-Time Workweek (FTE) Hr	Service Type (Long Daycare/Sessional)	Service Hrs for 3-year-old	Service Hrs for 4-year-old (Future)	Service Hrs for 4-year-old (Current)
11	37.5	Long Daycare	15	30	15
11	20	Sessional	15	30	15
11	37.5	Long Daycare	15	30	15
11	20	Sessional	15	30	15

6.3 Future State: Staffing Model Results - Provider

Current and projected Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing requirements for individual providers in the Murrindindi Shire region, reflecting operational needs and future staffing needs at a provider level.

Provider	15 hour 4-Year-Old Kinder 15 Hour 3-Year-Old Kinder	30 hour 4-Year-Old Kinder 15 Hour 3-Year-Old Kinder					2024 – 2029 Additional FTE Requirement
	2024 FTE Required	2025 FTE Required	2026 FTE Required	2027 FTE Required	2028 FTE Required	2029 FTE Required	
Alexandra & District Kindergarten	3.2	5.2	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	+2.4
Alexandra Baby Care	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Eildon & District Kindergarten	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	+0.4
Flowerdale Kindergarten	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	+0.4
Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	2.8	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	5.2	+2.4
Marysville & District Kindergarten	3.2	3.6	3.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	+2.4
Yea Uniting Early Learning	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	+0.4
Total	10.8	16.8	17.2	17.2	17.6	18.4	+7.6

This table presents the calculated Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing requirements for various early childhood education providers in Murrindindi Shire region region from 2024 to 2029. The data reveals that Murrindindi Shire region Alexandra & District Kindergarten will experience an increase in FTE needs from 3.2 in 2024 to 5.6 in 2029, indicating a significant growth of 2.4 FTE. In contrast, Eildon & District Kindergarten maintains a constant FTE requirement of 1.2 throughout the years, suggesting stability in its operational demands. Overall, the total FTE requirement across all providers is projected to rise from 10.8 in 2024 to 18.4 in 2029, demonstrating a collective anticipated increase of 7.6 FTE to accommodate the expansion of service hours for 4-year-olds to 30 hours per week and maintain the service hours for 3-year-olds at 15 hours per week. This forecast underscores the need for strategic workforce planning to ensure that staffing levels are aligned with service commitments and the evolving needs of the community.

6.3 Future State: Staffing Model Results - Region

Aggregate view of staffing demands, combining regional data to depict a broader perspective of current and future FTE needs, aligning with demographic shifts and policy implications.

Service Hours	Year	Alexandra			Kinglake			Yea			Total		
		Projected 3y/o Population	Projected 4y/o Population	Total FTE required	Projected 3y/o Population	Projected 4y/o Population	Total FTE required	Projected 3y/o Population	Projected 4y/o Population	Total FTE required	Projected 3y/o Population	Projected 4y/o Population	Total FTE required
15 hour 3-year-old 15 hour 4-year-old	2024	60	55	4.4	39	27	2.8	45	43	3.6	144	125	10.8
15 hour 3-year-old 30 hour 4-year-old	2025	61	60	4.8	40	39	3.2	46	45	4.0	147	144	12.0
	2026	62	61	4.8	42	40	3.2	47	46	4.0	151	147	12.0
	2027	63	62	7.2	42	41	4.8	48	47	6.0	153	150	18.0
	2028	64	63	7.2	43	41	4.8	49	47	6.0	156	151	18.0
	2029	65	64	7.2	43	42	4.8	50	47	6.0	158	153	18.0
	2030	66	65	7.2	43	43	4.8	51	50	6.0	160	158	18.0
	2031	67	66	7.6	43	43	4.8	52	51	6.0	162	160	18.4
	2032	68	67	8.4	43	43	4.8	53	52	6.0	164	162	19.2
	2024 - 2032 Additional FTE Requirement	+8	+12	+4	+4	+16	+2	+8	+9	+2.4	+20	+37	+8.4

This table provides an aggregated regional overview of staffing requirements, detailing Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) projections from 2024 to 2032 for early childhood education in the Alexandra, Kinglake and Yea areas. The regional data illustrates a progressive increase in FTE needs, coinciding with anticipated growth in the population of 3 and 4-year-olds. In Alexandra, the FTE requirement is expected to increase by 4 over the period, while Kinglake and Yea anticipate a rise of 2 and 2.4 FTE. Collectively, the total regional FTE demand is projected to grow by 8.4, indicating a need for strategic scaling of the workforce to accommodate demographic shifts and the extension of 4-year-old kinder service hours to 30 hours weekly by 2025.

6.4 Future State: Benchmarking Methodology

One-on-one consultations with other Local Governments were undertaken to document different approaches for ECE and its workforce

Consultations with other Local Governments were conducted to document different approaches for Early Childhood Education (ECE) and identify successful workforce strategies and initiatives that are implemented in regional Victoria. It has been recognised that **there's no universal "best" solution**, but rather a context-specific approach to adapting insights for each region.

Benchmarking analysis involved one-on-one consultations with;

- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Murrindindi Shire region Shire Council
- Latrobe City Council
- Alpine Shire Council
- City of Wodonga
- Rural City of Wangaratta
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council

To facilitate the benchmarking analysis, a comprehensive interview guide and key questions were strategically designed to encompass a wide range of essential elements critical to the benchmarking analysis based on the NMC Workforce Framework. Both quantitative (i.e., follow up request) and qualitative data (i.e., consultations) were analysed to provide better understanding of regional profile, demographic profile, local unique context, housing situation, and ECE needs.

6.5 Future State: Benchmarking Findings

Benchmarking analysis findings

Benchmarking Elements	Alpine Shire Council	Bass Coast Shire Council	Latrobe City Council	Rural City of Wangaratta
Does Council provide early years services?	Not a direct provider	Not a direct service provider	Direct service provider	Direct service provider
What's the Council's role in early year?	• Infrastructure • Central Registration	• Infrastructure • Central Registration	• MCH • Early Learning Centres • Kindergarten & Preschool • Central Registration	• MCH • Early Learning Centres • Kindergarten & Preschool
Does Council offer a Central Registration System?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
What is the total number of ECE providers in the municipality?	4 providers – 7 locations	20-25	34	
What is the Council's provision of infrastructure for early years?	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	
Service Vacancies Status	Over 100		Doesn't have waitlist for both kindergarten and long day care programs	100 waitlist for the long day care 100 waitlist for the family day care
If Council is a direct provider, what is the size of early years workforce?	NA	NA	59.6 FTE	
If Council is a direct provider, how many facilities or locations does Council run?	NA	NA	25 kindergartens 3 day care centres	
Does Council have any educational collaborations and partnerships?	NA	NA	Federation University & TAFE Gippsland	
What are the existing workforce attraction strategies and programs?	Advocacy and coordination for the ECE providers	Advocacy and support for the ECE providers Joint communication Collaboration with the Department of Education	Recruitment all year around Training and career development opportunities Flexible rostering Job rotation Working Towards Program	Short-term incentive ($1000 sign on bonus + $500 for referrals)

6.5 Future State: Benchmarking Findings

Benchmarking analysis findings

Benchmarking Elements	Golden Plains Shire	Baw Baw Shire Council	City of Wodonga	Murrindindi Shire region Shire Council
Does Council provide early years services?	Direct service provider	Not a direct service provider	Direct Service provider	Not a direct provider
What's the Council's role in early year?	• MCH • Long Day Care • Occasional Child Care • Family Day Care • Kindergarten Cluster Management	• MCH • Infrastructure • Central Enrolment	• Infrastructure • MCH • Kindergarten	• Infrastructure • Central Enrolment • Coordination & networking
Does Council offer Central Enrolment System?	Yes	Yes	Yes only for council kindergarten services	Yes
What is the total number of ECE providers in the municipality?	7	11 facilities 22-26 family day care	18 kindergarten providers 6 Kindergartens – Council Run 2 x additional Stand-alone kindergartens (not Council run) 10 kindergartens in long day care services	14
What is the Council's provision of infrastructure for early years?	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance	• Lease Council owned buildings • Maintenance
Service Vacancies Status	Do currently have a waitlist for kindergarten programs	Not Specified	Do currently have a waitlist for kindergarten programs	Zero on waitlist (kindergarten)
If Council is a direct provider, what is the size of early years workforce?		NA	25 Early Childhood Teachers 21 Early Childhood Educators Team Leader (1 EFT); Admin Support (1.8EFT)	NA
If Council is a direct provider, how many facilities or locations does Council run?		NA	6 Council-run kindergarten services 6 Council owned kindergarten sites 1 x site owned by DET run by Council	NA
Does Council have any educational collaborations and partnerships?		TAFE Gippsland , Federation University	La Trobe University, Wodonga TAFE	Formal partnership with Victoria University
What are the existing workforce attraction strategies and programs?		Build partnership model for the ECE providers	Training and upskilling opportunities Flexible hours (only sessional kindergarten program)	Advocacy and coordination for the ECE providers

6.6 Future State: Case Studies

Case studies

Case Study: Workforce Recruitment

The Latrobe City Council, as a service provider implements a clearly outlined recruitment strategy centred on a "grow your own" approach. This strategy targets various demographic, including individuals returning to work after parenthood, school leavers, and those undergoing a career change.

In a similar vein, the Rural City of Wangaratta, another service provider has fostered a robust partnership with local TAFE providers. This collaboration has resulted in the recruitment of new seven staff members this year.

The Rural City of Wangaratta extends opportunity by offering an annual traineeship to school leavers who have completed year 10.

Case Study: Workforce Attraction

The Latrobe City Council and City of Wodonga, both service providers prioritise their Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to effectively attract and retain staff. Their EVPs include:

- **Site rotations:** Both Councils recognise the importance of providing employees with diverse experiences through site rotations.
- **Staffing ratios:** Ensuring optimal staffing ratios is a key aspect of their EVPs.
- **Career advancement**: The Councils actively promote upskilling opportunities for staff (i.e., Cert 3 to Diploma, Diploma to Bachelor)

As a result of their focused EVPs, both Councils achieved a success in talent acquisition, with zero vacancies.

Latrobe City Council adopted a year-round recruitment approach to ensure continuous pipeline of talent and positions the Council as an employer of choice within the region.

6.7 Future State: Workforce Strategies

The resultant workforce strategies for the future state of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Murrindindi Shire region

Purpose

A comprehensive future state analysis was undertaken to identify workforce goals to address and mitigate existing workforce challenges for the future state of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Murrindindi Shire region.

The evaluation of the future state goals enables the key stakeholders to prioritise actions and activities that are pivotal in reaching future state in line with the fast-changing demands of the ECE workforce and thereby, supporting service providers in the region.

Workforce Strategies

	Quality Work Environment	Establish guidelines and support systems for sustainable Early Childhood Education providers to create quality work environments
	Localised Training Initiatives	Establish and sustain a localised training model in partnership with local education institutions for ECE providers in the region
	Coordinated Recruitment and Workforce Development	Implement a coordinated approach to recruitment and workforce development for ECE in the region
	Council-Driven Advocacy and Partnerships	Cultivate collaboration and partnerships with government bodies to collectively advocate for the needs of ECE providers.

6.7 Future State: Workforce Strategies Methodology

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state of the ECE in the Murrindindi Shire region region against the six key elements

Methodology

A comprehensive future state analysis was undertaken to identify workforce strategies and actions for the future state of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Murrindindi Shire region.
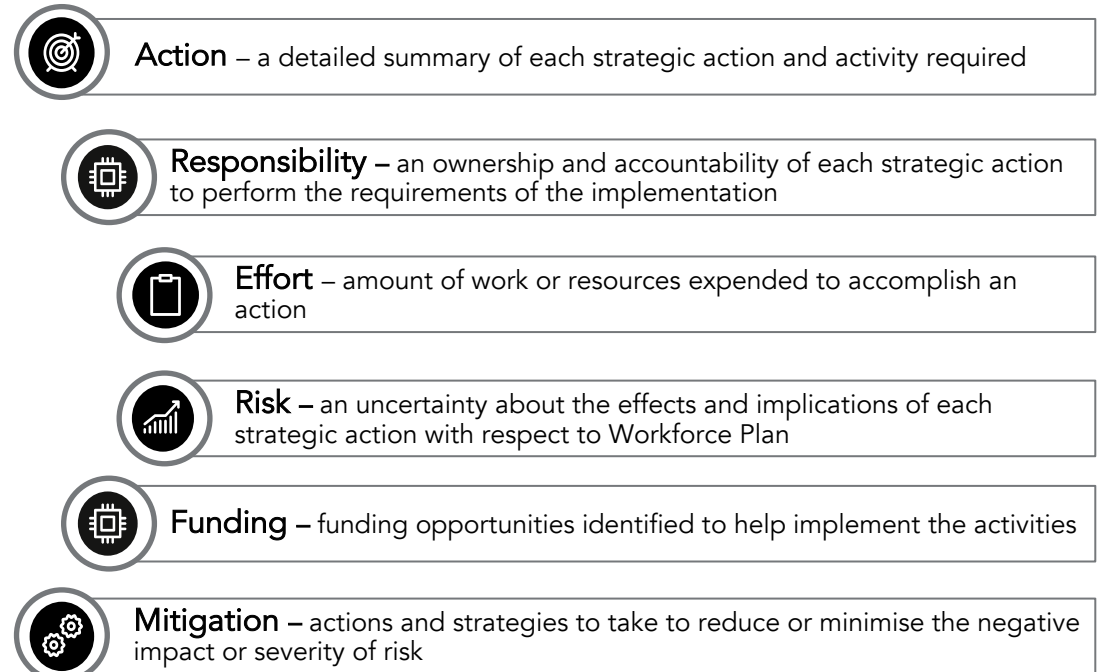
The future state actions utilise the six key elements that consist of Description, Responsibility, Effort, Funding, Risk, and Mitigation. By evaluating the workforce actions against the six key elements of the methodology, the ECE workforce goals are defined in each layer by service providers and key stakeholders within region during the design-thinking workshop and one-on-one discussions.

The proposed workforce development actions are presented with a high-level assessment of impact and effort. Three categories have been used in relation to implementation effort:

- **Low effort**: implementable in the next 6-12 months;

- **Medium effort**: implementable in the next 2-3 years;

- **High effort**: implementable in 3+ years

Key Elements

Action – a detailed summary of each strategic action and activity required

Responsibility – an ownership and accountability of each strategic action to perform the requirements of the implementation

Effort – amount of work or resources expended to accomplish an action

Risk – an uncertainty about the effects and implications of each strategic action with respect to Workforce Plan

Funding – funding opportunities identified to help implement the activities

Mitigation – actions and strategies to take to reduce or minimise the negative impact or severity of risk

6.7.1 Future State: Workforce Strategy 1

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 1: Establish guidelines and support systems for sustainable Early Childhood Education providers to create quality work environments.

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 1: Advocate for more suitable ECE centre buildings

Action	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
• ECE providers and Council to form consultative group to inform on advocacy direction.	L	ECE providers/Council	
• Develop a proposal outlining the specifications and benefits of facilities with flexible space arrangements for current and future ECE infrastructure needs.	H	ECE consultative group	No additional funding required
• Collaborate with the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) to advocate for improved building facilitates where current facilities are aging and no longer fit for purpose.	H	ECE consultative group	

Risk

- There is a risk that the VSBA's current policies and budgets may not accommodate the changes being advocated for.

- Resistance may be encountered due to the cost implications of larger, more versatile building designs.

Mitigation

- Case studies demonstrating the success and benefits of versatile ECE spaces could be showcased to strengthen the advocacy efforts.

- Engage with community leaders, local businesses and parents to generate grassroots support for the advocacy efforts.

6.7.1 Future State: Workforce Strategy 1

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 1: Establish guidelines and support systems for sustainable Early Childhood Education providers to create quality work environments.

Objective 2: Advocate for the well-being of ECE workforce

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
ECE providers and Council to form consultative group to inform on advocacy direction.	L	ECE providers/Council	
Advocate to the Department of Education for the well-being of the ECE workforce	M		
Advocate for strategies aimed at ensuring a sufficient pool of casual staff to address concerns regarding leave requests	M	ECE consultative group	No additional funding required
Advocate for strategies that address the challenge of insufficient casual staff availability when existing staff transition to permanent roles	M		

Risk

- Lack of alignment within the consultative group formed by ECE providers and Council
- Limited effectiveness of advocacy efforts to the Department of Education due to bureaucratic hurdles or resistance

Mitigation

- Establish clear objectives and guidelines for the consultative group
- Engage with community leaders, local businesses and parents to generate grassroots support for the advocacy efforts.

6.7.2 Future State: Workforce Strategy 2

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 2: Establish and sustain a localised training model in partnership with local education institutions for ECE providers in the region

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 1: Partnerships with local education providers

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
Formalise partnership agreements with local educational institutions for work placements, centralised mentoring, professional development strategies.	M	Council/education institutions/ECE providers	
Customise successful training models that exist between education providers and ECE providers to align with local context for the partnership.	M	Council/education institutions/ECE providers	Additional funding required
Council to facilitate workshops/in person catch-ups.	M	Council/ECE providers	
Include early years sector in the Council's proposed plans for the Tertiary Education Hub, ensuring accessibility for local people who cannot travel for study purposes.	M	Council	No additional funding required

Risk

- Misalignment between educational curricula and hands-on ECE skills needed creates trainee readiness gap.

- Trainee surplus or shortage leads to logistical challenges for ECE centres and educational institutions.

- Variable training and mentorship quality at ECE centres affects traineeship consistency.

Mitigation

- Collaborate on curriculum reviews between ECE and training providers for to ensure alignment with the needs of the sector and region.

- Maintain flexible schedules for trainees to rotate through providers, providing diverse training while meeting seasonal and regional demands.

- Standardise ECE mentorship programs with regular training.

6.7.2 Future State: Workforce Strategy 2

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 2: Establish and sustain a localised training model in partnership with local education institutions for ECE providers in the region

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 2: Offer local mentoring and professional development

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
• Develop and implement a mentoring program within the ECE community to provide support and guidance for professional growth	M	Council/ECE Providers	
• Organise local workshops, training sessions, and seminars to enhance skills and knowledge among professionals in the ECE sector	H	Council/ECE Providers	
• Foster networking opportunities for professionals to connect and exchange insights on best practices, program planning, and innovative approaches	L	Council/ECE Providers	Additional funding required
• Collaborate with local educational institutions and industry experts to facilitate mentorship and professional development initiatives tailored to the needs of the Murrindindi community	M	Council/Local Education Institutions	

Risk

- Limited participation from attendees due to competing priorities or lack of awareness

- Ensuring the quality and effectiveness may be challenging, if mentors lack experience or expertise

- Limited resources, including time and funding, could restrict the scope and effectiveness of the activities

Mitigation

- Conduct targeted promotional campaigns to raise awareness

- Provide comprehensive training and support for mentors

- Collaborate with local educational institutions, industry organisations and other government bodies (i.e., Department of Education) to leverage resources and expertise

- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness through participant feedback

6.7.3 Future State: Workforce Strategy 3

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 3: Implement a coordinated approach to recruitment and workforce development for ECE in the region.

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 1: Develop tailored strategies for diverse recruits

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
Formulate customised strategies for "return to work" parents, school leavers, and change of career recruits	H	Council/ECE providers	
Establish and promote a distinctive Employee Benefits Proposition including offerings such as optimised staff-child ratios, fostering an environment that supports both work-life balance and professional development.	M		Additional funding required
Enrich job satisfaction through services offering best practice and continuous professional development opportunities.	M	ECE providers	

Risk
- Resistance or lack of interest from target groups in customised strategies.
- Difficulty in establishing and promoting a distinctive Employee Benefits Proposition
- Challenges in implementing optimised staff-child ratios and fostering work-life balance

Mitigation
- Conduct comprehensive surveys and interviews, communicate benefits clearly
- Continuously evaluate and update the Employee Benefits Proposition
- Provide sufficient training and resources, offer flexible scheduling options
- Invest in training programs, foster a culture of learning

Objective 2: Coordinate regional and ECE specific marketing campaign

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
Provide internal advocacy to the Council to ensure ECE sector is part of the greater Murrindindi attraction campaign.	M	Council	No additional funding required
ECE providers to attend the Murrindindi Jobs Expo	M		
Create a coordinated marketing video or content utilising staff testimonials to advertise the Murrindindi region as a lifestyle destination to attract workers from overseas, interstate and other areas of regional Victoria.	H	Council/ECE providers	Additional funding required

Risk
- Limited effectiveness of ECE providers' participation in the Murrindindi Jobs Expo
- Ineffectiveness of marketing video or content attracting workers from overseas
- Difficulty in aligning all stakeholders' interests and objectives

Mitigation
- Ensure ECE providers are well-prepared with materials and information about Job Expo
- Collaborate with Council's internal team to promote ECE-specific job offerings and attract potential recruits for the Job Expo
- Ensure effective communication, collaboration, and buy-in from all stakeholders

6.7.3 Future State: Workforce Strategy 3

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 4: Cultivate collaboration and partnerships with government bodies to collectively advocate for the needs of ECE providers.

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 1: Partnerships with other LGAs and Government Bodies

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
• Form a partnership with other LGAs (i.e., Mitchell Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council) to provide region wide advocacy for the needs of ECE providers.	M	Council	Additional funding required
• Collaborate with other LGAs and Department of Education to utilise existing job boards to streamline the recruitment process for ECE workforce	H	Council Department of Education	

Risk
- Certain Councils may have limited resources to share due to budget constraints or competing priorities.
- Cross-council partnerships could be logistically complex to organise.

Mitigation
- Rules and regulations between councils to be agreed upon ensuring realistic expectations for shared resources.
- Appoint a representative from each council involved to simplify communication channels.

Objective 2: Advocate for the development of affordable housing

Activity	Effort	Responsibility	Funding
• Provide internal advocacy to the Council's Economic Development Department to ensure ECE sector impacts are considered in the existing "Economic Development" and "Housing and Settlement" Strategy	M	• Children Services Team • Economic Development Department	No additional funding required

Risk
- Council Departments may not be fully aware of the economic impact of the ECE sector
- ECE sector needs may not be given priority

Mitigation
- Educate relevant Departments and team members about the importance of considering ECE impact
- Foster collaboration and consistent communication with relevant Departments

6.7.3 Future State: Workforce Strategy 3

The resultant workforce strategies and actions for the future state

Strategy 4: Cultivate collaboration and partnerships with government bodies to collectively advocate for the needs of ECE providers.

PRIORITY AREA(S)

Objective 3: Advocate for the inclusion of ECE sector into the Council's skilled workforce strategies

Action	Effort	Responsibility	Funding	Risk	Mitigation
• Provide internal advocacy to the Council's Economic Development Department to ensure ECE sector impacts are considered in the existing skilled workforce strategies	M	Children's Services Team	No additional funding required	• Economic Development Department may not be fully aware of the economic impact of the ECE sector	• Educate relevant Departments and team members about the importance of considering ECE impact
• Develop a comprehensive case demonstrating the ECE workforce needs in the Murrindindi region	M	Children's Services Team/Economic Development Department		• ECE sector needs may not be given priority amidst competing interests and priorities within the Council's workforce planning initiatives	• Foster collaboration and consistent communication with relevant Departments • Advocate for inclusion through formal channels

Murrindindi Shire Council

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6.8 Future State: Workforce Strategies Summary

The future state analysis of workforce strategies and actions mapped against the NMC's Workforce Framework elements

Workforce Strategies and Objectives	NMC's Workforce Framework					
	Attraction	Recruitment	Retention	Skills & Training	Migration	Housing
1. **Quality Work Environment:** Establish guidelines and support systems for sustainable Early Childhood Education providers to create quality work environments 1. Advocate for more suitable ECE centre buildings 2. Advocate for the inclusion of ECE sector into the Council's skilled workforce strategies 3. Advocate for the well-being of ECE workforce 4. Advocate for the development of affordable housing	�		▥		✈	⌂
2. **Localised Training Initiatives:** Establish and sustain a localised training model in partnership with local education institutions for ECE providers in the region 1. Partnerships with other LGAs and Government Bodies 2. Partnerships with local education providers	▣	◉		▦		
3. Workforce attraction, recruitment and retention initiatives. 1. Develop tailored strategies for diverse recruits 2. Coordinate regional and ECE specific marketing campaign 3. Offer local mentoring and professional development	▣	◉	▥	▦	✈	
4. Cultivate collaboration and partnerships with government bodies to collectively advocate for the needs of ECE providers. 1. Partnerships with other LGAs and Government Bodies 2. Advocate for the development of affordable housing 3. Advocate for the inclusion of ECE sector into the Council's skilled workforce strategies	▣	◉	▥	▦	✈	⌂

6.8 Future State: Monitor & Evaluate

Guided by the NMC's Implementation Matrix, Murrindindi Shire Council can strategically prioritise initiatives, mitigate risks through proactive measures and utilise data and dashboards for comprehensive review and evaluation of workforce strategy outcomes

Monitor & Evaluate

Monitoring and evaluating proposed workforce strategies for the early years sector in the Murrindindi Shire region region is crucial to ensure their success and effectiveness. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework involves a clear governance rhythm, continuous assessment of key performance indicators (KPIs) and the collection of relevant data to gauge the impact of implemented strategies.

Through a clear delineation of effort and impact for each strategy, the Council will be well-equipped to prioritise initiatives based on the Implementation Matrix provided by NMC.

NMC have identified individual risks associated with each workforce strategy, such as potential resistance to change or resource constraints. To mitigate these risks, NMC have incorporated proactive measures including effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and the identification of adequate resources and support tailored to each workforce strategy.

Utilising data and dashboards, the Council will be able to review, monitor and exercise control over the outcomes of the proposed workforce strategies.

Example Communications Rhythm
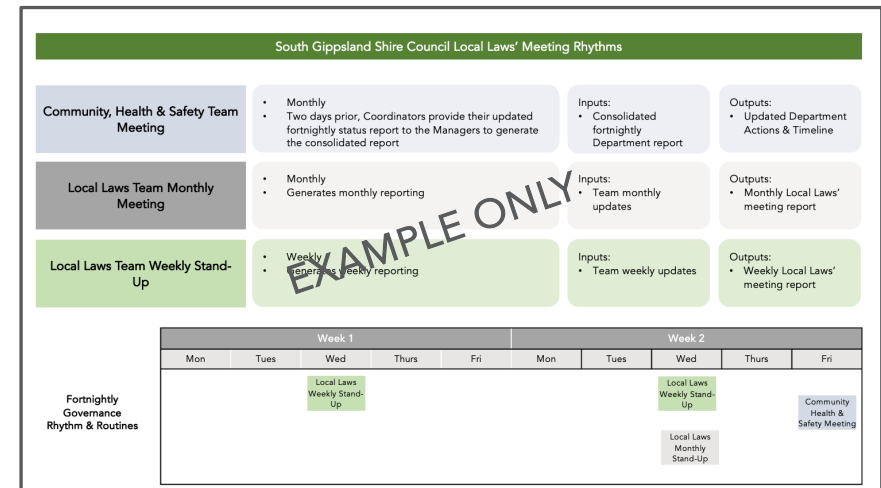
Example Dashboard & Report
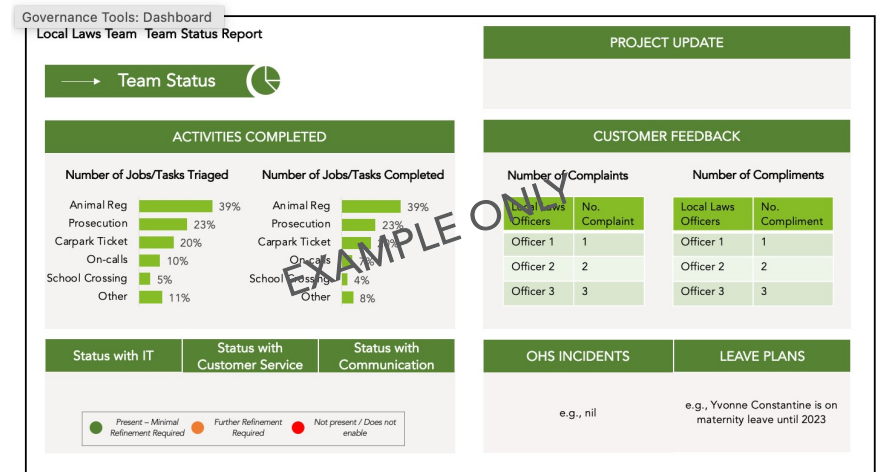
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