

ATTACHMENT 1

CHILD CARE SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN YARRA – ISSUES AND RESPONSES

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December 2005



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a number of factors have combined to significantly increase community demand for formal child care. Across Australia, the child care sector has grown rapidly and in proportion to the increased work force participation by parents of pre school aged children.

The introduction of Child Care Benefit by the Commonwealth Government to ease the financial burden of child care costs for working families has also increased demand for formal childcare.

The childcare arena has changed markedly during this period, with the rapid emergence of the private sector as a significant care provider, and the development of larger services offering one hundred plus child care places.

In Yarra, a recent trend has emerged for families to remain or to move into the municipality with their young families, and this has contributed to a resurgence of strong local demand for child care provision.

There are also indications that many families residing outside Yarra utilise child care in the municipality on their way to work or study destinations, and the contribution of this factor to local demand is significant.

Yarra municipality has a strong culture and proud history of community based early year's service provision. More than two thirds of all long day care places in Yarra are provided by community managed services, and many of these services offer less than 50 places.

Though the trend to private provision and larger child care services has not been significant in Yarra to date, the capacity to keep fees competitive in smaller services is set to become a real issue, and it is possible that a number of local services may be forced to amalgamate or close in the future.

As an inner metropolitan municipality keen to improve access and increase affordability of child care for families, there are particular challenges associated with high land prices, shortage of suitable available land and the issue of ageing community assets requiring significant injection of funds to remain safe and compliant with industry regulations.

The current roles undertaken by Council in child care service delivery, facility provision and through resource and advice provision to child care providers are all significant, highly valued by the community and worthy of continuation. This position was strongly supported in the Municipal Early Years Plan community consultations.

However, the limitations of Council's role to act alone should also be acknowledged. It is far beyond the scope of Council to be solely responsible for providing child care for all. In determining a strategy to increase child care provision, Council should continue to work in partnership to develop new and innovative approaches to funding.

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1.1 Background

Yarra's Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2007 (MEYP) was developed to review progress and to determine future actions across the care, health and educational service systems for children aged 0 – 6 years and their families.

Community consultations undertaken during the development of the MEYP provided strong indications that demand for all types of child care was high, most particularly for children aged under 3 years and that long waiting lists were a source of great frustration for parents. Service affordability was also identified as a major issue for many families.

In May 2005, media attention and community interest became focussed on low supply levels of childcare in inner metropolitan Council areas. A delegation of parents attended a Yarra City Council meeting in response to a lack of available child care to support families in Yarra, and to call on Council to address the shortage.

In response to community concerns, the Inner South Mayors Group was formed and the Mayor of Yarra at that time, Councillor Kay Meadows was an active participant. With a broad range of child care issues as its focus, the group developed a survey which was circulated to each of the 8 participating Councils.

Key issues identified included an undersupply of child care, in particular long day care and occasional child care, affordability for families and high land costs acting as a disincentive for prospective child care developers.

Local consultations with parents of school aged children undertaken as a part of the development of the Service Performance Plan for Yarra's Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services in late 2004 revealed a need for increased care provision for children attending primary school and early secondary school before and after school, on pupil free days and during 10 weeks of annual school holidays.

The 2005/06 Council budget included an allocation to assess child care access and supply issues and to develop practical responses to address identified issues.

1.2 Scope

This report represents the first stage in the development of a Council response to childcare availability and access issues experienced by Yarra families of children aged from birth to early secondary school age. In doing so, it analyses current child care supply and demand, considers known and likely changes to supply, and proposes roles and actions for Council to pursue in the future.

It is proposed that local area child care planning be integrated to occur in conjunction with Council's wider neighbourhood planning processes and timelines.

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2. COUNCIL CONTEXT

2.1 Council's Vision

The Council Plan 2005-2009 states that Council's community development strategic objective is:

to support the continued growth of Yarra's population, and, to respect, protect and promote the value of Yarra's diversity by ensuring that all activities and developments reinforce and enhance Yarra's identity, character, safety, tolerance and liveability.

The commitment within the Council Plan to people, communities and neighbourhoods *is to work to ensure that every Yarra resident can find a way to engage and enjoy all their community, neighbourhood has to offer through the achievement of the following strategic objectives:*

Improved quality of life for socially disadvantaged and excluded members of the community

Commitment to Wurundjeri Reconciliation and Aboriginal Social Justice

Acknowledgement of Yarra's different suburbs and neighbourhoods needs

A healthy, connected and active community which has access to a range of quality recreation and sporting places, spaces and activities

An inclusive, tolerant, supportive and involved community.

A Council commitment to local level planning for early years services including child care , ensures that neighbourhoods are child and family friendly and that appropriate services and facilities are available.

The Council Plan, Municipal Public Health Plan, Municipal Strategic Statement, Asset Management plan and Open Space Master Plan all identify specific objectives to plan for more integrated services for children and families across Yarra.

2.2 Council's Current Role in Relation to Child Care and Early Childhood Education

In addition to an extensive range of service activities that support the health, wellbeing and recreational needs of Yarra families and children, Council plays a significant role in relation to child care from birth to 12 years, some limited provision of teenage holiday care and in early childhood education.

The financial contribution of Council is significant, with \$2.9 m committed to overall service provision for families and children. Of that sum, \$950,000 is spent on child care and related support. The child care and early childhood role includes the following elements:

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2.2.1 Service delivery

- Cluster manager of 4 stand alone kindergartens including Princes Hill Preschool, North Carlton Preschool, Richmond Preschool, and Atherton Gardens Preschool and 2 kindergarten programs provided in Council managed long day care services at Yarraberg Children's Centre and Gold Street Children's Centre.
- Long day care children's services for children aged 0-5 years, these being Yarraberg Children's Centre, Gold Street Children's Centre and North Carlton Children's Centre, together providing 170 places.
- Occasional child care programs at Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood Leisure Centres, offering 130 sessions of care each week (each session is measured as 1.5 hours of care).
- 180 funded places in Family Day Care. (there are approximately 60 places utilised, due to a shortage of care providers)
- Facilitated playgroups at Collingwood Neighbourhood House and Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House
- Support for a facilitated early intervention playgroup at Atherton Gardens
- After School Care Programs providing 130 places for children aged 6-12 years at 3 locations.
- Vacation Care Programs providing 180 places for children aged 6-12 years at 4 locations during 10 weeks of school term holidays per year

2.2.2 Facility / infrastructure provision

- Council owns and maintains buildings for 17 children's services including long day care, kindergartens and occasional care services. The total value of the properties is in excess of \$3m. All of these services are community managed and provided for a peppercorn rental.
- Annual sand and soft fall grants provided to 25 community based children's centres.
- A grant of \$13,000 was made by Council in 2005/06 to Holden Street and Burnley Neighbourhood Houses as a contribution to the cost of expansion of Occasional Child Care.

2.2.3 Resourcing/ Planning/ Coordination

- Council's Early Years Unit coordinates, resources and supports services within the Yarra Children's Services sector. The activities of the unit focus on the provision of high quality, flexible and responsive Long Day Care and Kindergarten.

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- The Early Years Unit has a particular focus on children's service management in Council managed services and supports accreditation/quality assurance processes, human resource development and training, policy development, strategic planning and service development.
- The Early Years Unit facilitates and resources a range of early years networks, and manages the provision of an equipment and book resource library for children's services staff.
- Council's Strategic Planning Branch provides advice on planning issues to prospective new children's services operators.

2.2.4 Advocacy and Consultation

- Council provides executive support to the Yarra Early Years Reference Group to advise and contribute to the implementation of Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-7.
- Council is involved in a range of advocacy activities in relation to early years services, including contributing to the development of children's services policy at local, state and federal levels.
- Council also advocates on behalf of the Yarra community to ensure that an equitable distribution of government funds are directed to support Yarra's needs.
- Council is an active member of the Inner South Mayors Group. Childcare is a focus for each of the 8 participating Councils.

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SECTION TWO: YARRA'S FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

3. FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- At the 2001 Census there were 7,013 children under 12 years living in the City of Yarra. This comprised 10.1% of the City's total population.
- Based on data from the 2001 census, the numbers of children residing in Yarra's neighbourhoods varies significantly. The highest numbers of children resided in Richmond 1 (1340) and in North Fitzroy (1071), Richmond 2 (784) and Fitzroy (871). Fairfield/Alphington recorded the fewest with 296 children aged 0-12 years and Abbotsford had 389 children. (see Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Children within Yarra Neighbourhoods, 2001

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AGED 0-12 YEARS BY NEIGHBOURHOOD 2001

AGE IN YEARS	TOTAL 0-6 years	Total 7-12 years
Abbotsford	222	167
Carlton/Princes Hill	477	304
Clifton Hill	375	256
Collingwood	357	210
Fairfield/Alphington	156	140
Fitzroy	533	338
Fitzroy North	641	430
Richmond 1	745	595
Richmond 2	502	282
Cremorne/Burnley	190	81
TOTAL CHILDREN	4198	2803

Source: Derived from the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing

- Population forecasts prepared for the City of Yarra in 2003 projected the number of children aged up to 12 years in 2004 at 7,382 (up 369 since 2001). By the year 2016 it is estimated that there will be over 8,200 children in Yarra.

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- Changing fertility trends (i.e. births) and anticipated continued migration to the City as a result of implementation of Melbourne 2030 has also been taken into consideration when forecasting populations of families and children.
- The number of children in the 0 to 5 years age group is expected to increase in line with the total population, although at a slightly lower rate.
- Forecast trends differ from the historical trends experienced in Yarra between 1991 and 2001. During the 1990s inner city areas of Melbourne increased in popularity and became more desirable to live in, ending decades of population decline. The related increase in young children however was not established by 2001. The forecasts produced anticipate an increase in children resulting from the increased population during the 1990s.

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SECTION THREE: CURRENT CHILD CARE SUPPLY, UTILISATION AND DEMAND IN YARRA

4. CHILD CARE PROVISION

4.1 Commonwealth Child Care Supply Data

- According to data from the 2001 ABS Census, there were 1418 children aged 0-4 years residing in Yarra whose parents (both parents in couple families or lone parent) were working, training or studying.
- In October 2005, there were 1410 registered childcare places in Yarra for 1418 children aged 0-4 years whose parent(s) were working, training or studying. This equates to 99.44 places per 100 of target population.
- Based on Commonwealth Child Care supply data provided in October 2005, and with the exception of the City of Melbourne, Yarra has the highest number of places per 100 target population in metropolitan Melbourne, and the third highest in Victoria.
- There are strong indications that many families residing outside Yarra utilise child care in the municipality on their way to work or study destinations. When considering supply data, the proximity of Yarra to the Melbourne CBD should be taken into consideration.
- Table 2 below provides information on registered long day care and family day care places per 100 of target population in neighbouring and inner city municipalities.

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Table 2: Commonwealth Supply Data for Selected Municipalities in Melbourne, October 2005.

L.G.A.	TARGET POPULATION 0-4 YEARS	CENTRE BASED	FAMILY DAY CARE	OTHER	TOTAL PLACES	PLACES PER 100 OF TARGET POPULATION
Banyule	3258	1215	275	50	1540	47.27
Boroondara	4208	1015	175	14	1204	28.61
Darebin	3321	1401	160	30	1591	47.91
Melbourne	648	1438	0	25	1463	225.77
Port Phillip	1582	1125	125	0	1250	79.01
Stonnington	1995	829	50	65	944	47.32
Yarra	1418	1220	180	10	1410	99.44
STATE TOTAL	135875	51526	15638	1615	68779	50.62

4.2 Numbers of Places – Long Day Care

Table 3: Management Arrangements - Long day Care Services in Yarra

Management	Number of places	% Total Provision
Committee/Not for Profit	815	67
Private/For Profit	250	20
City of Yarra	170	13
Total Number of Places	1220	100

- There are 1220 registered Long Day Care places in Yarra. Two thirds are community managed.
- Yarra City Council provides 170 long day care places. This represents 13% of total provision in the municipality.
- 80 % of long day care places (Council and community managed places) are provided by not for profit operators.

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- The Municipal Early years Plan 2005-7 Action Plan identifies a number of strategies which aim to retain the not for profit sector as a component of a diverse service system

4.3 Numbers of Places – Occasional Child Care

- Occasional child care programs at Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood Leisure Centres, offer 130 sessions of care each week (each session is measured as 1.5 hours of care).
- Burnley Neighbourhood House and Holden Street Neighbourhood House to provide 130 sessions of Occasional Childcare each week. This provision was expanded in 2005/06 in response to high demand, and with the financial assistance of Council.
- There are also a number of community and private providers of Occasional Care in Yarra, though accurate data on the actual number of places is not easily obtained.

4.4 Numbers of Places – Family Day Care

- There are 180 approved Family Day Care places in Yarra. Care is provided by a pool of care providers. Yarra contracts care providers for the Yarra scheme and also a component of the Melbourne City Council scheme.
- The service experiences difficulties in attracting sufficient care providers that meet the standards as set by the National Childcare Accreditation Council. Currently, 95 full time places are provided to 140 children.

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4.5 Numbers of Funded Places – Kindergarten

- According to Department of Human Services data, there are 802 funded kindergarten places for 4 year olds in Yarra. Of that number, 161 places are provided in Council managed services, 550 places are provided in community managed programs and 91 places in privately managed services.
- In 2001, there were 785 children aged under 1 year in Yarra. Indications are that places were available for all children seeking 4 year old kindergarten places in 2005.

Table 4: Numbers of Funded Places- Kindergarten

PROGRAM	MANAGEMENT	PLACES
Sessional Kindergarten	Yarra City Council	93
Sessional Kindergarten	Community	195
Sessional Kindergarten	Private	42
Kindergarten in Long Day Care	Yarra City Council	68
Kindergarten in Long Day Care	Community	355
Kindergarten in Long Day Care	Private	49
TOTAL PLACES		802

4.6 Numbers of Places – Outside School Hours Care

- There are 230 funded Before School Care places offered in 9 primary schools in Yarra. Council does not manage any of these programs;
- There are 875 After School Care places offered in 15 primary schools in Yarra. Council manages 3 of the programs, these being at Atherton Gardens Public Housing Estate, Richmond West Primary School and Collingwood College;
- There are 260 funded Vacation Care places in Yarra. Council manages 180 of those places

4.7 Numbers of Places – Teenage Holiday Care

- Programs operating each school holidays for 12 –18 year old at Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy Public Housing Estates offer a total of 60 places.

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5. CHILD CARE SERVICE DEMAND

5.1 Service Uptake and Waiting Lists

- In late 2005, there were 653 children on the waiting list for Council managed long day care services, and no vacancies. Of those on the waiting list, around two thirds were Yarra residents;
- In late 2005, there were no vacancies reported by community based or private childcare services, and no accurate waiting list data was available for these providers;
- In 2006, indications suggest there will be no vacancies in Council managed kindergartens. Limited waiting lists are kept;
- There are 50 children on the waiting list for Family Day Care and the list is capped at 50;
- Vacation Care places are generally fully utilised and waiting lists are not kept;
- Utilisation of before and after school care program places in 2005 were at approximately 80%.

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SECTION FOUR: FUTURE CHILD CARE SUPPLY IN YARRA

6. ANTICIPATED NEW CHILD CARE PLACES

6.1 New Places - Council Managed Services

- Gold Street Children's Centre has expanded its provision by 25 places for children under 3 years from January 2006 with the opening of the Keele Street annex. There is potential to expand places by a further 12 places at Keele Street annex without capital cost;
- An additional 20-25 places are planned for Yarraberg Children's Centre from 2007, subject to the outcomes of a feasibility study, which is being undertaken at the time of writing.
- In late 2005, Committee of Management rights were granted by the State Government to Yarra City Council to develop the Lourdes site in Abbotsford for child care and related community purposes. An integrated family and children's services hub is planned for this site, incorporating a minimum of 100 child care places. It is likely that service management will be contracted to another organisation.
- Richmond West Primary School After Care Program (Council managed service) is set to expand by 10 places from Term 1, 2006.

6.2 New Places in Community Managed Services

- Lady Gowrie Child Centre have plans to increase long day care places by 60 (subject to approval)
- Feasibility study is underway in relation to the establishment of a new integrated child and family service in Fitzroy (Fitzroy Early Childhood Project), to be operated in partnership with a number of community agencies. It is envisaged that the service will provide up to 180 child care places.
- 15 additional Occasional Child Care places are planned to operate from 134 Napier Street from early 2006 funded through the Community Support Fund project, Belonging In Australia.
- Six primary schools in Yarra have been granted approval to expand Before /After School Care places from Term 1, 2006, representing an increase of 60 places.
- St Brigid's Catholic Primary school has been granted approval to establish a 30 place vacation care program

6.3 New Places in Privately Managed Services

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- Kids on Richmond Hill have made application to register a further 24 places in an available room in their centre, and expect to have the places operating before mid 2006.
- The parish at St Andrew's Church, Clifton Hill have foreshadowed their intention to redevelop the kindergarten site adjacent to their church as a children's service. No further details are available at this stage, but it is understood that long day care places and kindergarten services form a part of the vision.
- St Vincent's Hospital plan to establish a 120 place child care centre adjacent to the hospital site in Fitzroy. It is envisaged that the places will be operational from mid 2006. A decision is yet to be made by the hospital board whether or not the current 40 places at the hospital are to be retained.
- Discussions have taken place between General Electric and Council which indicate an intention to establish a 100 plus place child care centre.

6.4 Possible Service Losses

- St Andrew's Kindergarten is on notice from the St Andrew's parish that the service will close. St Andrew's currently provides 20 places for 3 year olds, 37 places for 4 year olds, plus 17 places in facilitated playgroup for children aged 18 months to 3 years. Currently the Anglican diocese has a 12 month lease with Council, who sub lease to the St Andrew's Kindergarten Committee of Management. The current lease expires in December 2006.
- Annie Todd Children's Centre offers 28 places for 3-5 year olds in a long day kindergarten program. It is set to close when Fitzroy Early Childhood Project child care services become operational.

6.5 Supply Changes – Summary

- Table 5 below summarises foreshadowed changes to child care supply over the next 2 years;
- An increase of 600 plus long day care places across Yarra are currently under consideration, with no long day care service losses anticipated at time of writing;
- The foreshadowed closure of St Andrew's Kindergarten and Annie Todd Children's Centre will result in the loss of 65 kindergarten places for 4 year olds and 20 places for 3 year olds. It should be noted that subject to the establishment of service developments at the St Andrew's site and Fitzroy Early Childhood Project, the place gains will more than compensate for kindergarten place losses;
- There will be a net gain of 95 sessions per week of occasional child care from early 2006;

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- An increase of 60 places in Before and After School Care programs at six Yarra based primary schools and 10 places in After School Care program at Richmond West Primary School, and the establishment of a new 30 place Vacation Care program at St Brigid's Primary School from Term 1, 2006.

Table 5: Supply Changes – Summary

	Name	Potential service gains	Potential service losses	Note
Long Day Care	Gold Street Children's Centre	25 places for under 3's		Places from January 2006. Potential to expand by further 12
Long Day Care	Lady Gowrie Child Centre	60 places		Application pending
Long Day Care	Yarraberg Children's Centre	20-25 places from mid 2007		Subject to outcome of feasibility study
Long Day Care	Lourdes Project	100 places		From 2007
Long Day Care	Fitzroy Early Childhood Project	180 places		To include provision of long day care, kindergarten and occasional child care from 180 places
Long Day Care	St Andrew's Church development	Not known		Child care on kindergarten site foreshadowed
Long Day Care	St Vincent's Hospital	120 places		Plan for places to be operational by mid 2006
Long Day Care	General Electric	100 plus places		No further details available at time of writing
Long Day Care	Kids on Richmond Hill	25 places		Plan increase of 24 places in 2006
Kindergarten	St Andrew's		20 places for 3 year olds and 37 places for 4 year olds	Lease to December 2006
Kindergarten	Annie Todd (Uniting Care)		28 places (long day kindergarten)	
Occasional Care	CSF Belonging In Australia Project	45 sessions per week		From early 2006
Occasional Care	Lourdes Project	50 sessions per week		From 2008
Before/After /VacationCare	7 Yarra based schools	90places		From Term 1, 2006
After School Care	Richmond West Primary School	10 places		From Term 1, 2006

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SECTION FIVE: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO CHILD CARE

7. MUNICIPAL EARLY YEARS PLAN

7.1 Actions from Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2007

The table below summarises a number of actions which were committed to by Council in 2005. They include actions identified in the Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2007, as well as initiatives which followed heightened media attention and community interest in lack of sufficient child care availability in inner metropolitan Council areas in mid 2005.

Key outcomes which were determined in relation to childcare are as follows:

- Improved access to child care places for Yarra families
- Support for the provision of more child care places, especially long day care and occasional child care
- Improved affordability for low income and vulnerable families
- Retention of a mixed provider sector

Table 6: Actions which assist in provision of more child care choices and more places

Priority Area	Critical Issue	Council Response
Access and Participation	Child care supply	<p>Develop and implement a Council Priority of Access Policy to improve access for Yarra residents and for people who work or study in Yarra and who seek care in Council managed services (MEYP)</p> <p>Pilot a central enrolment system for Council managed child care and preschool enrolments (MEYP)</p> <p>Increase licensed capacity of Council managed children's centres (MEYP)</p> <p>Identify sites for future development of children's services (MEYP)</p> <p>Identify future potential providers/ partners (MEYP)</p> <p>Expanded provision of Vacation Care places across Yarra including care for 10- 14 year olds (SPP)</p>

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	Neighbourhood focus	<p>approach to planning and service development</p> <p>Multi-purpose and multi-disciplinary early years services to meet local demand (MEYP)</p>
Community participation and engagement	Resourcing	<p>Participate in and resource community consultation processes (MEYP)</p> <p>Establish and resource Early Years Reference Group to advise on future policy, planning and service development (MEYP)</p> <p>Resource and support Parent Advisory groups in all Council managed services (MEYP)</p> <p>Develop strategy to consult with non service users (MEYP)</p> <p>Develop and implement Family and Children Services Communication strategy (MEYP)</p>
Advocacy	Other Levels of Government	<p>Participation in Inner South Mayors Group</p> <p>Participation in proposed National Summit on Childcare</p> <p>Work with State Government to encourage release of appropriate land for children's service development.</p>

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8. CONCLUSION

The child care environment has changed markedly over the past decade and changes continue to occur within Yarra. Use of formal child care by families has grown dramatically as the workforce participation level of parents has increased. Child Care demand has been fuelled by the introduction of Child Care Benefit by the Commonwealth Government. The tendency for families to remain in Yarra to raise their children has also added to increased demand for services, as has the geographical location of Yarra in close proximity to the Melbourne CBD, and the desire of parents travelling into Yarra or the city to have their children in care close to their place of work or study.

In Yarra, the supply of places in Long Day Care, Occasional Child Care and Outside School Hours Care have all increased over the last year, and current indications are that this trend is set to continue, with 600 or more additional places under consideration. Planned creation and expansion of places by a number of local employers is a positive initiative which is worthy of Council support.

Some future potential service losses have been identified, but their impact should be softened by the foreshadowed creation of new places. Based on information to hand, it would appear that Council's intention to support the creation of more child care places is largely being realised. Council should continue to monitor supply and service demand on at least an annual basis.

Based on Commonwealth child care supply data and 2001 census data, there are 99.44 child care places per 100 target population. Yarra has the highest number of places per 100 target population in metropolitan Melbourne, and the third highest in Victoria. These ratios do not take account of non resident service users, nor do they utilise more current demographic information.

Yarra faces a complex task in endeavouring to establish the actual number child care places required in the municipality. The challenge that it faces is to offer priority in Council managed services to its own residents.

The introduction of a centralised wait list for Council managed child care services will improve understandings of community demand and will enable a Priority of Access Policy to be applied to the allocation of available places. This initiative should aim to increase access for Yarra residents.

As a community with significant numbers of low income and disadvantaged families, Council should continue its efforts to improve affordability and access to services, especially for the most vulnerable families. The impact of Council's trial of a funded fee assistance program should be evaluated. Whilst the fee assistance program is a positive initiative, it should be emphasised that the Federal Government has both the responsibility and the mechanisms for addressing affordability for families, and Council should continue to raise this issue in forums with the Federal Government.

Council plays a significant and valued role in relation to child care. Its activities, encompassing service delivery, facility and infra structure provision, funding, planning and advocacy are all strongly supported by families and service providers alike, and these should all continue. There are financial limitations to Council significantly expanding its role in service delivery and it should pursue its work to encourage other parties to provide child care in the municipality.

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The issue of Council's ageing community assets which are likely to require significant injection of funds to remain safe and compliant with industry regulations will require further attention. Current policies for children's and family services favour multi purpose integrated services capable of responding to a broad range of needs. Co location and integration of services will improve safety for staff and access to services for families. Refurbishment of single purpose services should be considered within the context of opportunity for development of integrated service model. The development of a detailed Family and Children's Asset Management Plan will provide guidance in this area.

This report represents the first stage in the development of a Council response to childcare availability and access issues experienced by Yarra families of children aged from birth to early secondary school age. In doing so, it analyses current child care supply and demand, considers known and likely changes to supply, and proposes roles and actions for Council to pursue. It also provides information which will be of interest to prospective services.

This work is most timely and it is proposed that local area child care planning be integrated to occur in conjunction with Council's wider neighbourhood planning processes and timelines.