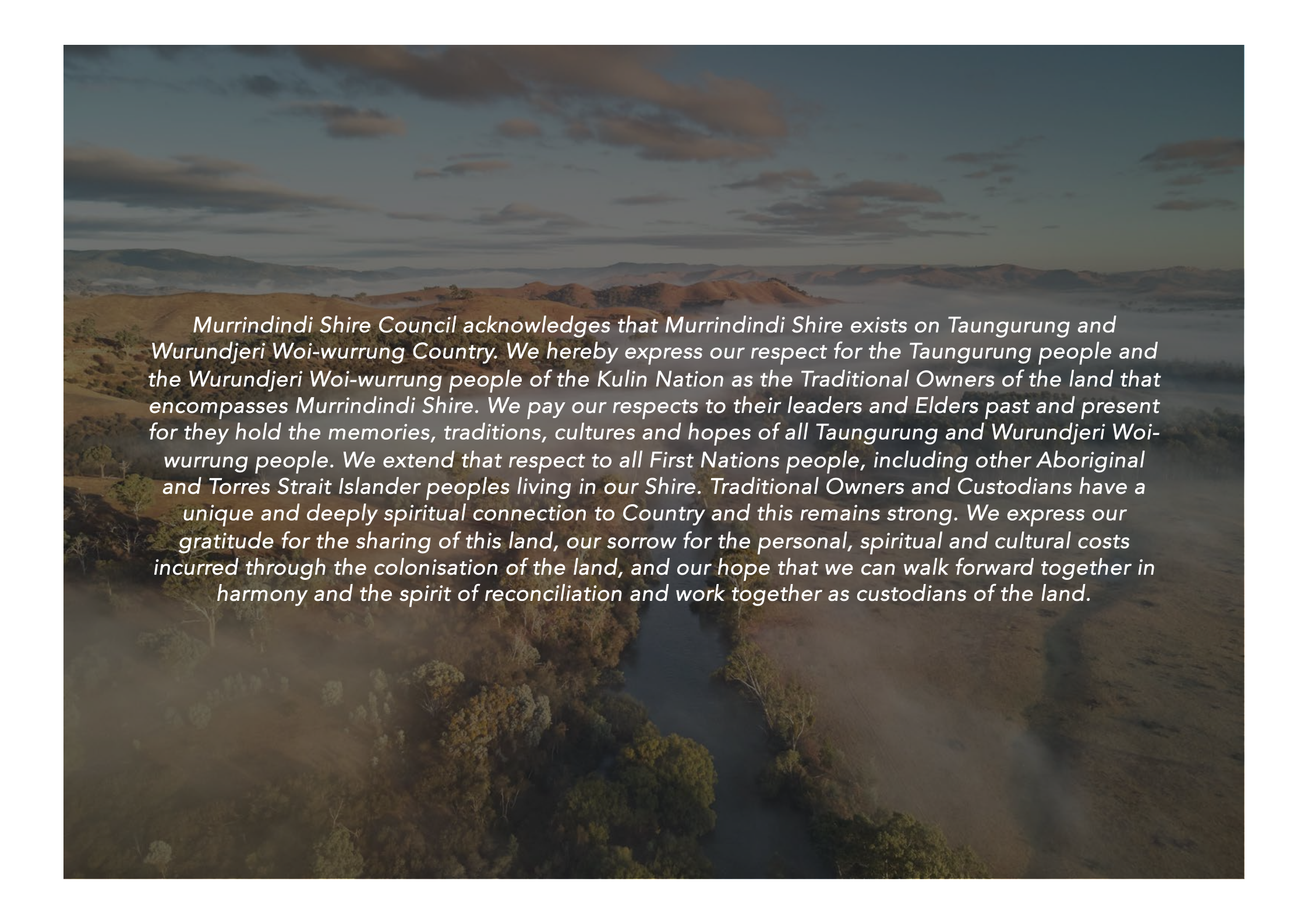




Murrindindi Shire Council

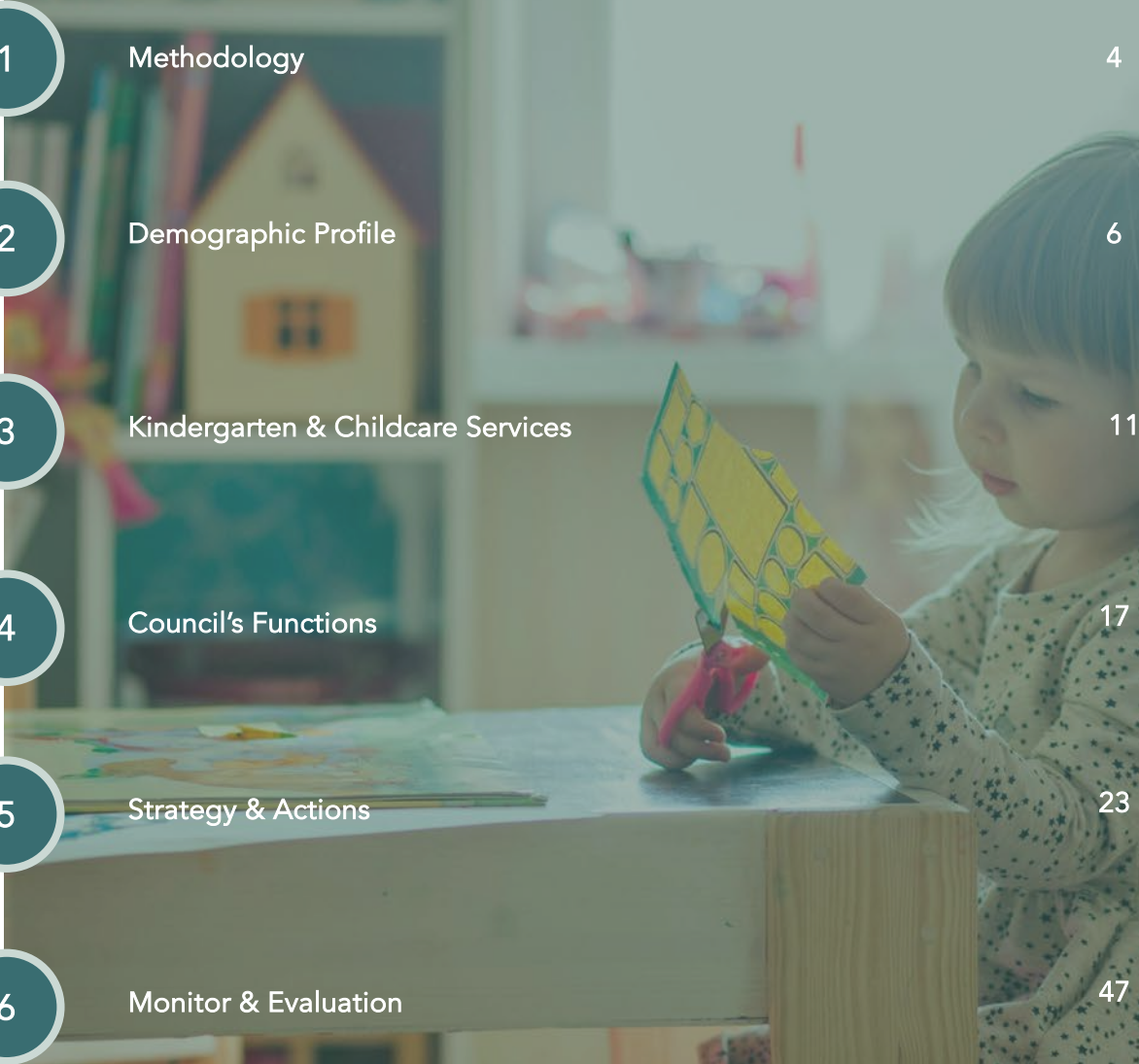
Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy 2024 – 2029



An aerial photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, a dense forest of green trees is visible. A river flows through the middle ground, winding between hills. The background shows rolling hills under a sky with scattered clouds. The overall scene is a natural, rural landscape.

Murrindindi Shire Council acknowledges that Murrindindi Shire exists on Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. We hereby express our respect for the Taungurung people and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land that encompasses Murrindindi Shire. We pay our respects to their leaders and Elders past and present for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of all Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. We extend that respect to all First Nations people, including other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in our Shire. Traditional Owners and Custodians have a unique and deeply spiritual connection to Country and this remains strong. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs incurred through the colonisation of the land, and our hope that we can walk forward together in harmony and the spirit of reconciliation and work together as custodians of the land.

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Methodology



Methodology

The methodology involved elements of quantitative analysis through data analysis, and qualitative analysis via one-on-one consultations, site visits, and co-design workshops aiming to develop a comprehensive Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy

Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy

A mixed methodological approach was used to inform the development of the Murrindindi Shire Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy 2024-2029. This included an analysis of research pertinent to the kindergarten and childcare sector. It also included a review of key initiatives, strategies and policies at the level of local government. Murrindindi Shire’s demographic profile was also considered to ensure the Strategy reflected the local context, and factors impacting on the lives of children and families, now and in the future.





A critical component of the methodological approach was facilitating a co-design workshop with the Councillors to define Council’s positions on strategic pillars.

The Strategy considers Council’s legislative requirements to ensure compliance with laws, and reviews Council’s existing plans and strategies to shape the direction of Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy as outlined in the Legislative and Strategy Policy Framework.




Council’s Legislative and Strategy Policy Framework

Methodology

	Data Analysis	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 existing and emerging early years challenges and opportunities for the region
	Workshops	Facilitate a workshop with Councillors based on principles of design-thinking to define and validate Council’s position, strategic pillars, and strategic actions
	Site Visits	Travel to kindergarten and childcare sites to identify current state and existing and emerging challenges and opportunities for the region

Photos from stakeholder consultations



A photograph of a classroom scene. A teacher, wearing a face mask and a yellow shirt, stands at the front of the room with her right hand raised. Several young students are seated in a circle on colorful plastic chairs (green and blue). They are also raising their hands, indicating an interactive lesson. The classroom features a large green chalkboard in the background, a bulletin board with colorful papers, and a desk with a printer. The floor is made of light-colored wood. The text "Demographic Profile" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Demographic Profile

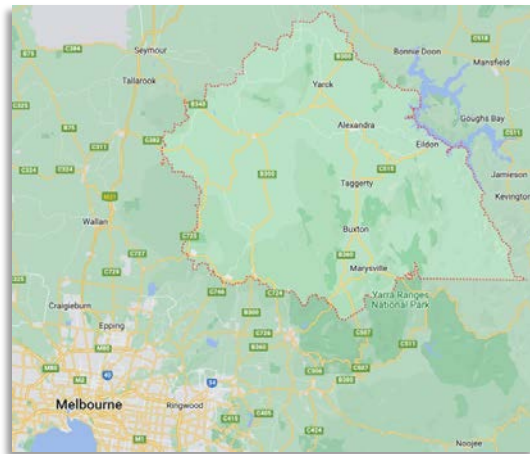
Demographic Profile

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

Murrindindi Shire

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.

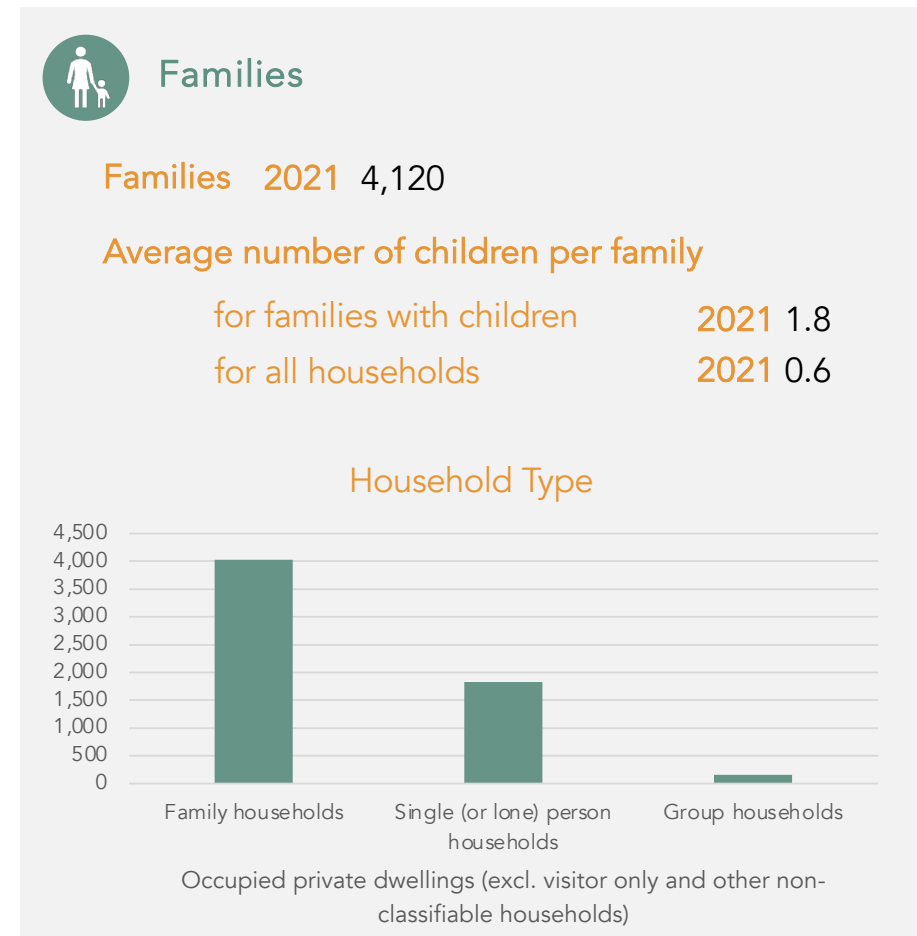
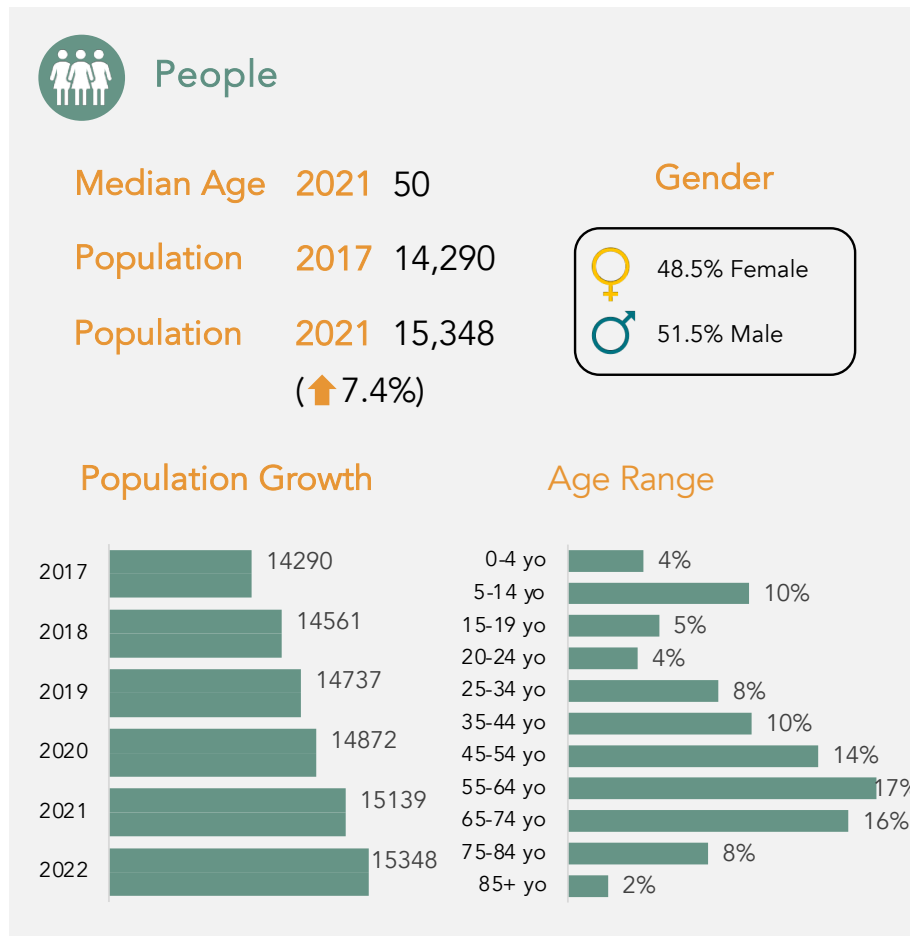
- **Alexandra:** Known as the commercial hub of the Shire, Alexandra is a picturesque town famed for its historical buildings and vibrant local community.
- **Eildon:** This township is a popular destination for water sports and fishing, particularly known for the nearby Eildon Dam, which offers stunning 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.



Demographic Profile (contd.)

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

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



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

Demographic Profile (contd.)

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

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.

Demographic Profile (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

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.

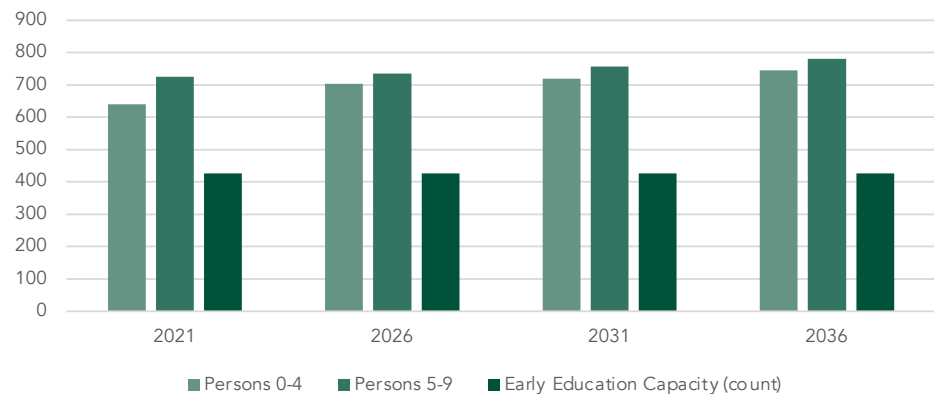
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Community Profiles, Murrindindi Shire (2021)

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

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



ERP vs Early Education Capacity



Kindergarten & Childcare Services



Kindergarten and Childcare Supply & Demand

The kindergarten and childcare sector in Murrindindi is underpinned by an undersupply of educators and teachers to meet the high demand in the region

Supply and Demand

Kindergarten and Childcare Demand Overview:

- There is a strong demand for kindergarten and childcare in the Murrindindi Shire, where historical enrolment rates for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds are significantly higher than the state averages in Victoria by 16% and 23%, respectively.



Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy

Rates of enrolment in CCS (Child Care Subsidiary) funded services, Murrindindi Shire (2022) and Victoria (2021)

	Murrindindi	Victoria
0-2 Years	36.4%	38.3%
3 Years	78.5%	62.7%
4 Years	85.2%	62.7%
5 Years	35.2%	35.5%

Enrolment of children aged 6 weeks to 5 years in Murrindindi Shire education and care services, October 2022

Current enrolments (October 2022)	6 weeks to 1 year	1 year	2 years	6 weeks to 2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Alexandra & District Kindergarten					31	43	2
Alexandra Baby Care	2	11	5	18	13	9	5
Eildon and District Kindergarten					4	3	
Flowerdale Kindergarten					4	7	5
Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	3	11	14	28	25	27	19
Marysville and District Kindergarten	6	3	9	18	35	43	1
Murrindindi Family Day Care				24	11	5	5
Yea Uniting Early Learning				47	22	31	20

Kindergarten and Childcare Supply & Demand (contd.)

While the infrastructure meets the demand for kindergarten places, there is a significant unmet need for childcare services, which is exacerbated by the workforce shortage and a declining number of FDC educators

Kindergarten

Kindergarten Supply Dynamics:

- While the infrastructure exists to meet the growing demand for kindergarten places in Alexandra and Yea, there is a shortage of early childhood teachers. ECE centres struggle with staffing issues, preventing them from offering additional places.

Kindergarten Demand Overview:

- The Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP) estimated an undersupply of kindergarten places in Kinglake based on forecast of SA2 (Statistical Area 2).
- While this facilitated broader demand analysis, it can also obscure local context and understanding of individual smaller regions within the Shire, potentially leading to less precise local insights.

KISP Unmet demand	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Alexandra	0	0	0	0	0
Yea	0	0	0	0	0
Kinglake	37	30	33	33	37

Revised KISP 2023 unmet demand estimates – including Council provided inputs

Childcare

Childcare Supply Dynamics:

- There is a shortage of available childcare, which was previously alleviated by Family Day Care (FDC) educators both within and outside the region. However, this is changing as FDC educator waitlists are growing without an increase in the number of educators in the Murrindindi region and beyond. In the past five years, nine educators have left, exacerbating the shortage.
- Waitlists for childcare in the LGA are longest in Kinglake and Yea, where Yea has a waitlist of 32, with some educators no longer accepting new waitlist requests.

Historical FDC Enrolment

- Murrindindi Shire Council oversees FDC educators who serve both the Shire and beyond, with 72 enrolments coming from outside the council's LGA.
- Since 2021, FDC enrolments have increased substantially, more than tripling between 2021 and 2023, indicating a growing demand over time.

	2021	2022	2023	2024 (as of May 24)
FDC Enrolment	31	96	113	54

FDC – Enrolment Summary Report 5/7/2021 – 24/5/2024

Kindergarten and Childcare Services & Providers

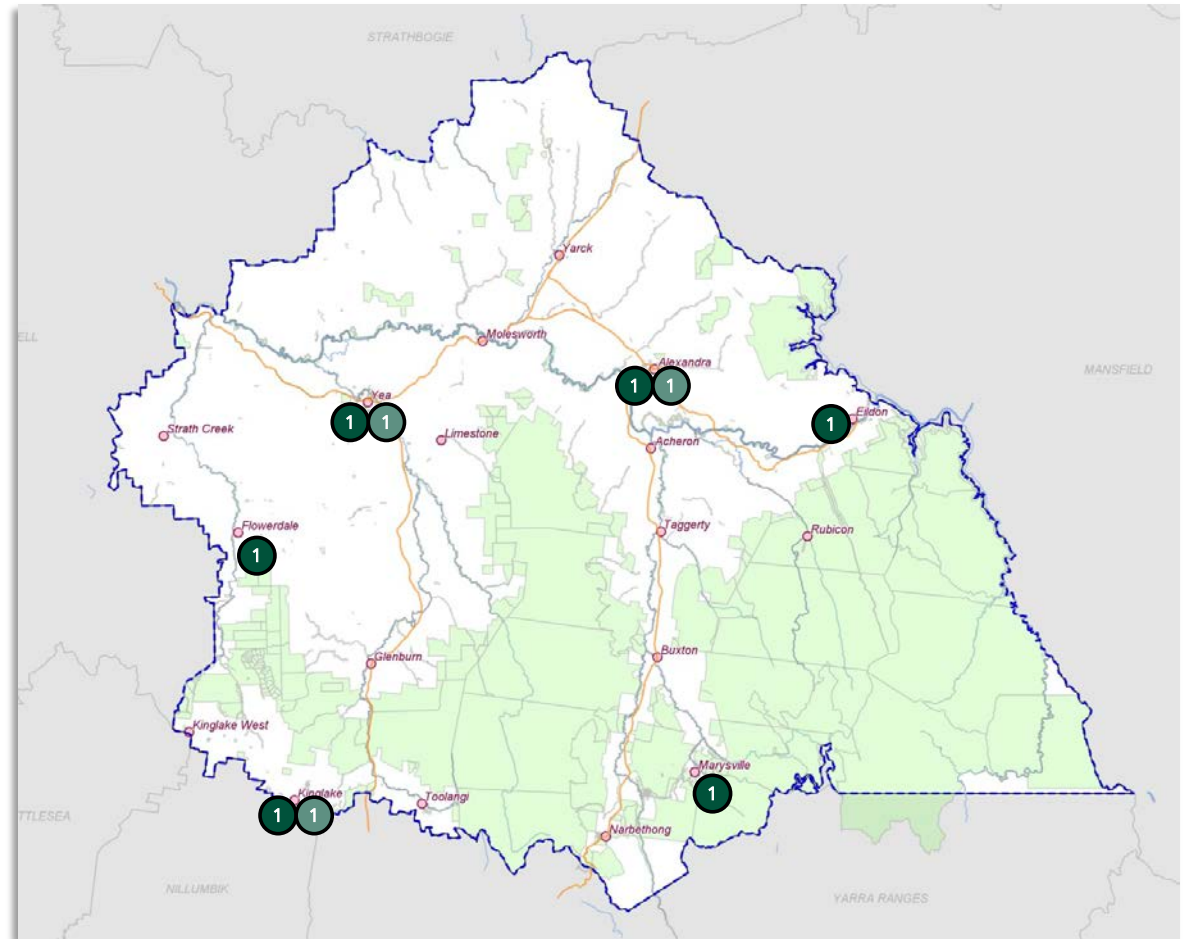
In Murrindindi, there are 6 Early Childhood Education (ECE) services, and 4 Childcare services offering long day care, kindergarten, bush kinder and OSHC

Kindergarten

Alexandra & District Kindergarten	51
Eildon and District Kindergarten	23
Flowerdale Kindergarten	41
Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	120
Marysville and District Kindergarten	60
Yea Uniting Early Learning	67

Childcare/Long Day Care

Alexandra Baby Care (recently acquired by Happy Campers)	29
Kinglake Ranges Children's Centre	120
Marysville and District Kindergarten	60
Yea Uniting Early Learning	67



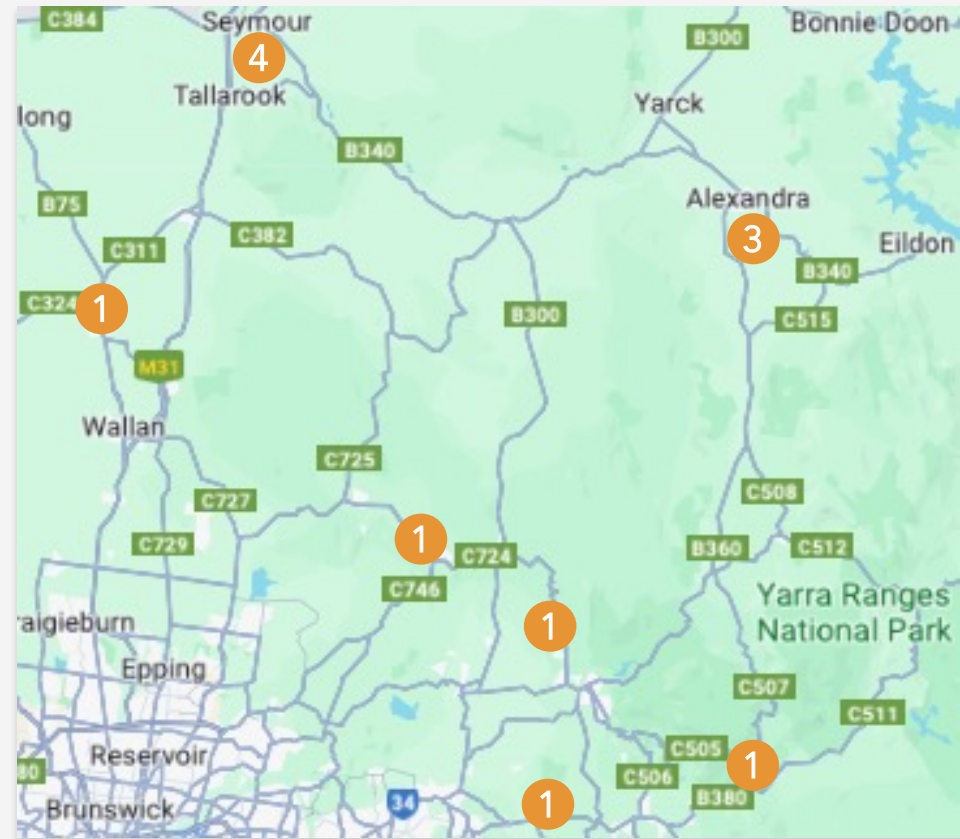
Family Day Care Providers

Murrindindi Shire Council oversees 12 family day care educators who operate internally and externally to the LGA

FDC Educators by Location

Location	# of Educators	Within LGA
Seville	1	
Chum Creek	1	
Seymour	4	
Alexandra	3	✓
Kinglake	1	✓
Millgrove	1	
Kilmore	1	

Murrindindi Shire Council supports 8 FDC educators located outside the LGA.



New Services & Providers

Four potential new ECE centres and providers are being considered for the Murrindindi Shire region

Yea Primary School

Yea Primary School Kindergarten (interim name) is set to open their doors in Term 1, **2025**.

To meet urgent demand in Yea, a one-room kindergarten, playground and carpark facilities are set to open at Yea Primary school, to provide an extra 33 kindergarten spots for the local community.



Kindergarten

33

Alexandra Childcare

Alexandra has been selected as one of the locations for the opening of government-owned and operated childcare centre in **2027/2028**.

The childcare centre will be co-located alongside Alexandra Primary School.

The Department is currently assessing the suitability of different sites in Alexandra. The anticipated size of the site is ~3,000m2.

The Department of Education is currently exploring following options for the building capacity:



Child Care*

57
(one room)

102
(two room)

Dindi Day Care (Alexandra)

Private investor is planning to build a 44 place long day care centre – Dindi Day Care on Bayley Street, Alexandra. **No timeline provided.**



Kindergarten

44



Child Care*

Alexandra Montessori

Private investors are planning to build a 110 place Montessori Early Years Centre at 33 Nihil Street, Alexandra. **No timeline provided.**

The permit for kindergarten use has been granted.



Kindergarten

110



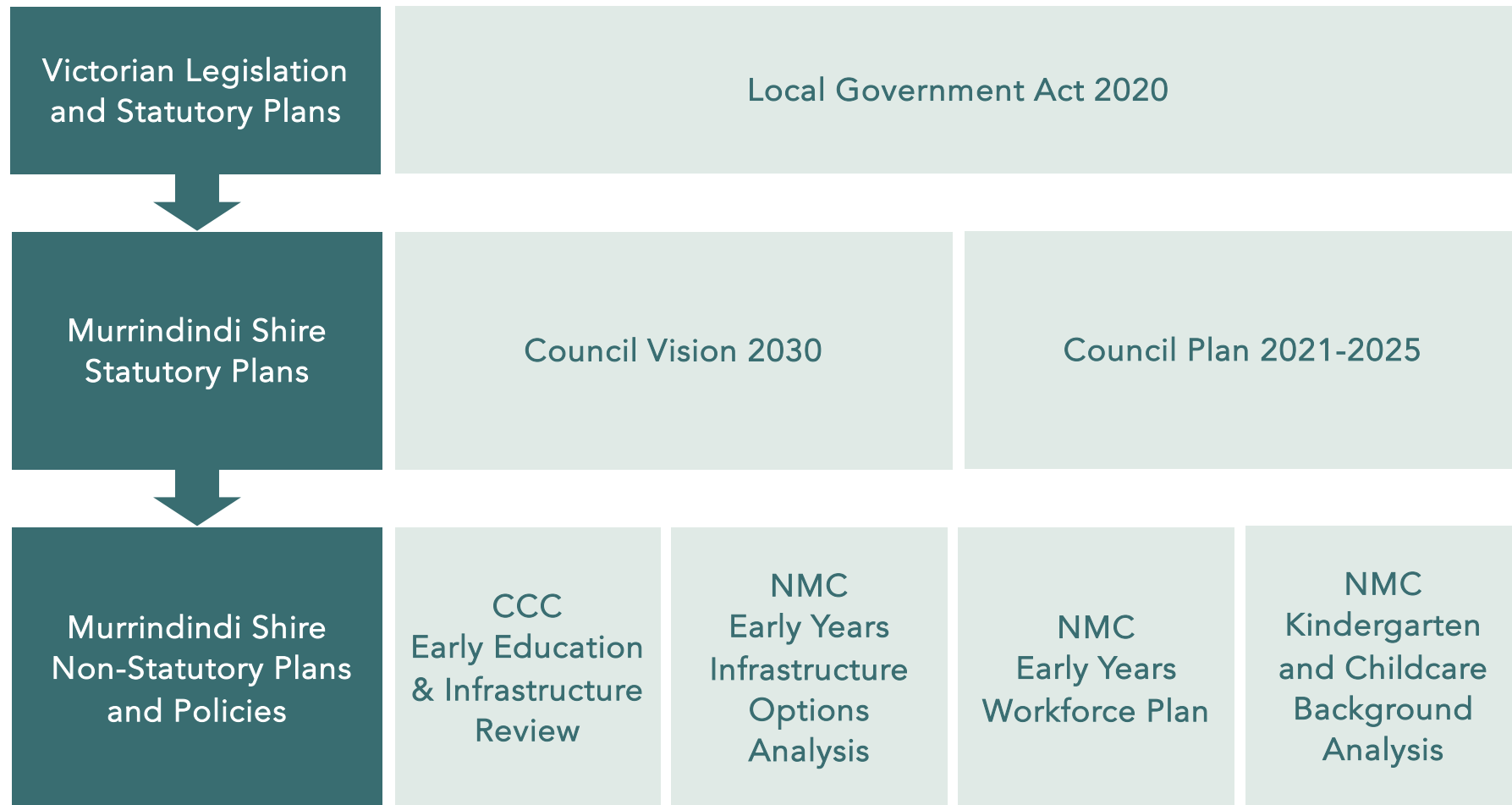
Child Care*

Council's Functions



Council's Strategic Policy Framework

The Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy recognises and builds on existing Council Plans and Policies



Council's Functions & Legislative Requirements

In compliance with the Local Government Act 2020, Murrindindi Shire Council offers various services across Childcare, Kindergarten, and Family Day Care, but serves as a direct provider only for Family Day Care

Council's Functions

The Council develops and maintains early education infrastructure, supports service delivery, coordinates sector capacity building, and strategically plans to ensure accessible and adequate services for the community.

- **Family Day Care Functions**
 - Administration
 - Compliance
 - Marketing
 - Direct Service Delivery
 - Support

- **Childcare & Kindergarten Functions**
 - Infrastructure Provision
 - Sector Coordination and Capacity Building
 - Capacity Planning



Legislative Requirements

The Local Government Act 2020 mandates Councils to incorporate the needs for early childhood education services within their overall governance and service provision responsibilities, prioritising community well-being, strategic planning, service performance, community engagement, and advocacy.

- Community Well-being and Needs Assessment
- Strategic Planning and Reporting
- Service Performance and Accountability
- Community Engagement and Consultation
- Advocacy and Collaboration

The image shows three overlapping document pages. The leftmost page is the 'Local Government Act 2020' Table of Provisions, listing sections from 1 to 42. The middle page is 'Part 3 - Council decision making' from the same act, detailing sections 30-39. The rightmost page is '90 Council Plan' with three numbered requirements: (1) A Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election... (2) A Council Plan must include the following... (a) the strategic direction of the Council; (b) strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction; (c) strategies for achieving the objectives for a period of at least the next 4 financial years; (d) strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives; (e) a description of the Council's initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure and amenity; (f) any other matters prescribed by the regulations. (3) A Council must develop or review the Council Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Council Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.

EYM Policy Framework: Local Government's Role

Council's Strategies & Plans

Analysis and assessment of the outcomes and results from existing plans and strategies to identify success areas and elements that require additional focus in the Strategy Plan

Current Plans & Strategies



Community Child Care Association - Early Education & Infrastructure Review

Recommended Actions

- **Recommendation 1:** Council and service providers to investigate and plan for infrastructure delivery requirements in Alexandra within the next 5 years
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop Yea into an early education and care service hub and build a kindergarten service as part of the Yea Primary School
- **Recommendation 3:** Further support around governance from Council with the most preferred option for Council to be an Early Years Manager
- **Recommendation 4:** Develop an Early Years Workforce Plan or support strategy to retain and attract staff in the Shire
- **Recommendation 5:** Within 15 years establish a kindergarten, long day care, and community services hub in Eildon
- **Recommendation 6:** Continue to support and explore the expansion of Family Day Care within the Shire of Murrindindi
- **Recommendation 7:** Expand the Children's Support Unit in Council

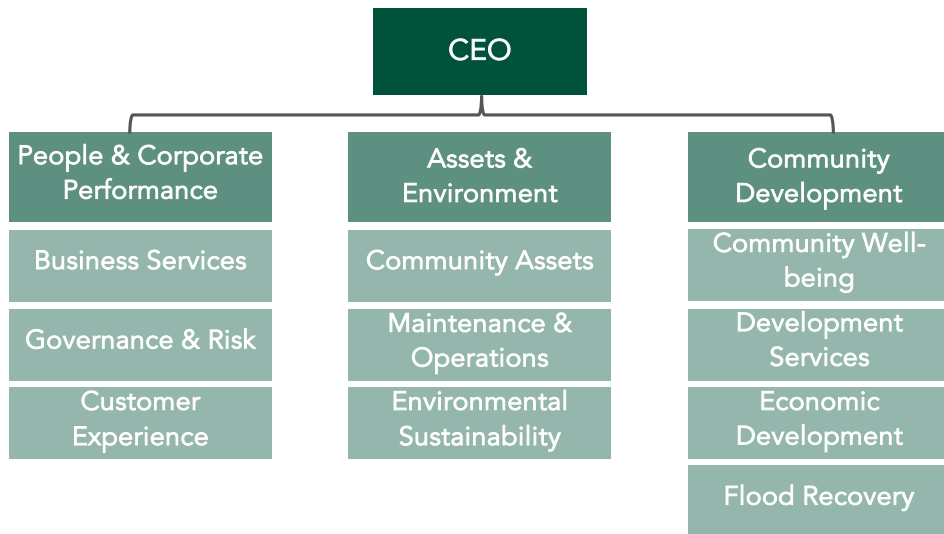
Outcomes

- **Recommendation 1:** Council undertook comprehensive options analysis and evaluation for the Early Years Infrastructure in August 2023.
- **Recommendation 2:** Council is currently exploring the potential early education and care service hub, also known as Open University Initiative in Yea Library.
- **Recommendation 2:** As part of the Early Years Infrastructure Options Analysis, Council advocated to the opening of modular kindergarten at Yea Primary School.
- **Recommendation 4:** Council developed an Early Years Workforce Plan with the grant funded by the Department of Education.
- **Recommendation 6:** Council is currently undertaking detailed options analysis for Family Day Care services in Murrindindi

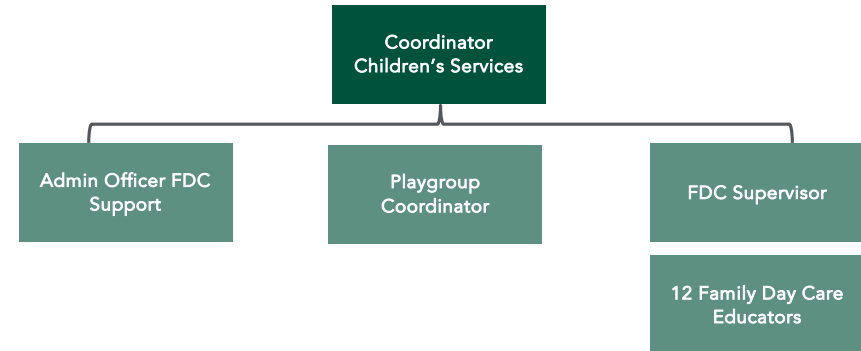
Internal Team

Murrindindi Shire Council’s Children’s Services Team and their family day care educators as of 2024

Organisational Structure



Children’s Services Team



Children’s Services Team sits under the Community Wellbeing Department of the Community Development Directorate.



Children’s Services Team consists of Coordinator, Playgroup Facilitator, Admin Support Officer, Family Day Care Supervisor.

In Murrindindi Shire, there are twelve family day care educators, providing services in the region.

Infrastructure

Murrindindi Shire Council supports ECE providers by providing infrastructure and maintenance

Alexandra	Eildon	Flowerdale
Alexandra & District Kindergarten	Happy Campers	Eildon and District Kindergarten
<p>Leasing Arrangement: Privately owned building</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Council provided one-off grant/donation</p>	<p>Leasing Arrangement: Privately owned building</p> <p>Council's Involvement: NA</p>	<p>Leasing Arrangement: State-government owned building</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Council provided one-off grant/donation</p>
		<p>Leasing Arrangement: State-government owned building Joint user agreement with Council</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Provides ongoing maintenance</p>
Kingslake	Marysville	Yea
Kingslake Ranges Children's Centre	Marysville and District Kindergarten	Yea Uniting Early Learning
<p>Leasing Arrangement: State-government owned building Joint user agreement with Council</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Provides ongoing maintenance</p>	<p>Leasing Arrangement: State-government owned building Joint user agreement with Council</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Provides ongoing maintenance</p>	<p>Leasing Arrangement: Council owned building Leasing agreement</p> <p>Council's Involvement: Provides ongoing maintenance</p>

 Within Council's responsibility
 Outside Council's responsibility

Strategy & Actions

2P
8. - 6
→

MURRINDINDI
SHIRE COUNCIL



Methodology

Council’s position and strategic pillars were developed through a co-design workshop with Executive Leadership Team and Councillors

Methodology

Data Analysis and Current State Design:

A thorough analysis of current state was conducted. This involved assessing Council’s existing responsibilities, legislative requirements, resources, maintenance and family day care costs .

Benchmarking:

NMC conducted an extensive benchmarking analysis, involving a number of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) that are similar to Murrindindi Shire Councils and neighbouring Councils regarding their role and responsibilities in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

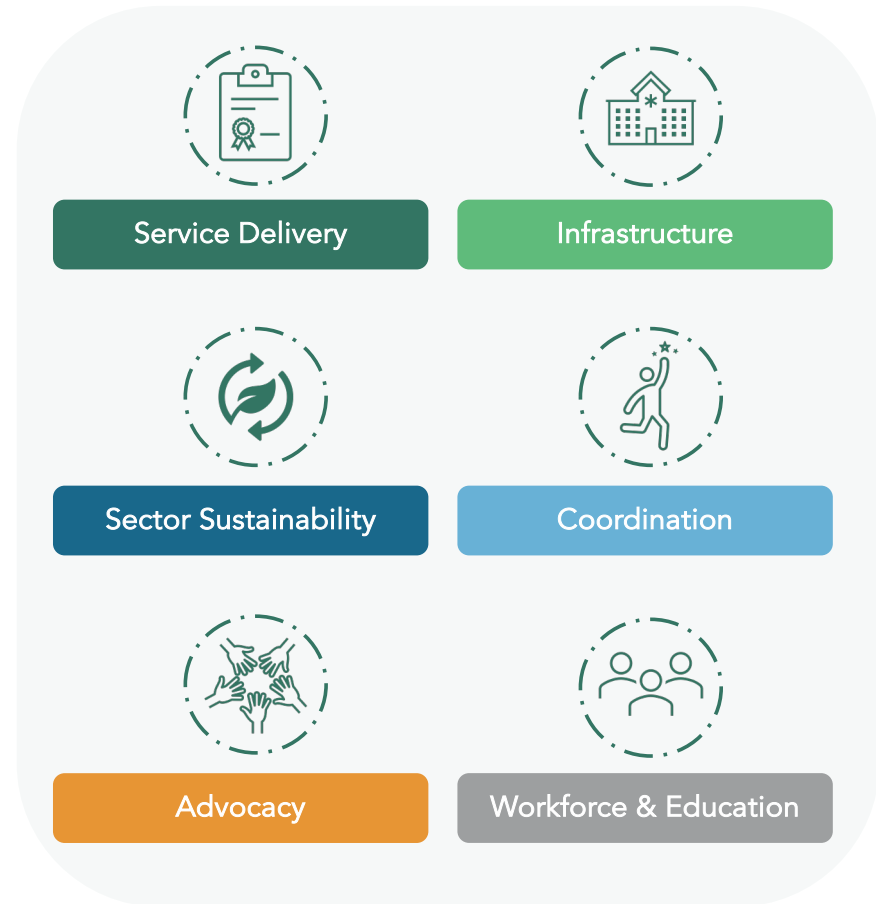
Councillor Brief/Workshop:

Our findings were validated through multiple briefings and co-design workshop with the Councillors. These collaborative sessions led to the refinement and finalisation of our strategic pillars and Council’s position on each pillar.

Development of Strategic Pillars and Position:

Based on these comprehensive steps, we developed six strategic pillars, each supported by Council’s position statement and strategic goals to enable these positions. This structured approach ensures targeted and effective strategic initiatives. The goals were evaluated against criteria and timeline for achievement, with the following time categorisation utilised

Key Strategic Pillars



Methodology – Criteria For Evaluating Actions

Strategic goals and Council’s position were designed through consultations, data analysis, and workshop findings, resulting in detailed actions evaluated against impact, priority, effort, and phase



Impact:

The degree to which the action will contribute to achieving the desired goal, measured in terms of financial return, impact on community and families, and Council.

Impact Level	Financial Return	Community & Families	Council
High	>\$50,000 savings or revenue increase	Significant positive impact on community and families	Major benefits or improvements for the Council
Medium	\$10,000-\$50,000 savings or revenue increase	Moderate positive impact on community and families	Noticeable benefits or improvements for the Council
Low	<\$10,000 savings or revenue increase	Minimal positive impact on community and families	Minor benefits or improvements for the Council



Effort:

The amount of resources, time, and energy required to implement the action, measured in terms of cost, time, and personnel required.

Effort Level	Cost	Time	Personnel
High	>\$50,000	>3 years	Requires cross-departmental effort involving >5 people
Medium	\$10,000-\$50,000	2-3 years	Requires departmental effort involving 2-5 people
Low	<\$10,000	<12-24 months	Can be managed within a single department involving <5 people



Priority:

The urgency and importance of the action in relation to other actions, measured in terms of strategic alignment, risk mitigation, and stakeholder demand.

Priority Level	Strategic Alignment	Risk Mitigation	Stakeholder Demand
High	Critical to achieving strategic goals	Essential for mitigating high risks	High demand from key stakeholders (e.g., Councillors, Executive Leadership Team)
Medium	Important but not critical to strategic goals	Important for mitigating moderate risks	Moderate demand from key stakeholders
Low	Nice-to-have but not essential	Helpful for mitigating low risks	Low demand from key stakeholders



Phase:

The stage at which the action is planned to be executed, measured in terms of readiness and impact timeline.

Phase	Readiness	Impact Timeline
Phase 1	Ready to implement immediately	Expected impact within 1-2 years
Phase 2	Requires some preparation	Expected impact within 2-3 years
Phase 3	Long-term preparation needed	Expected impact within 3-5 years

Council's Position Statements

Council's position statements and strategic pillars were defined by the Executive Leadership Team and Murrindindi Shire Councillors during a co-design workshop



Service Delivery

Infrastructure

Sector Sustainability

<p>Council does not provide early years services, but it focuses on developing and implementing a sustainable delivery model for family day care services.</p>	<p>Council provides and maintains existing infrastructure for selected early learning centres, with a transition towards a cost neutrality position, and advocates for new sites to government agencies and the private sector.</p>	<p>Council actively attracts third-party providers to the region and collaborates constructively with providers to support qualified applicants capable of fostering a sustainable and thriving childcare and kindergarten sector.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Goals</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a sustainable delivery model for family day care services ensuring that the model meets community needs and promotes accessibility 2. Ensure quality care and regulatory compliance for family day care services 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Goals</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing infrastructure maintenance agreements and joint user agreements and ensure that it does not impose a financial burden on the Council 2. Advocate for the establishment of new early learning centre sites 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Goals</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attract third party childcare and kindergarten providers to the region 2. Collaborate with these providers to support and ensure that qualified applicants are capable of fostering a sustainable and thriving sector 3. Ensure that the providers are capable of delivering high-quality and sustainable services

Council's Position Statements (contd.)

Council's position statements and strategic pillars were defined by the Executive Leadership Team and Murrindindi Shire Councillors during a co-design workshop



Coordination

Council provides support to the sector, accessible to all providers, focusing on capacity building, service planning, and regional workforce initiatives.

Goals

1. Offer support that is accessible to all early childhood education and care providers and assistance with service planning and capacity building



Advocacy

Council advocates to state and federal governments, as well as private providers, to promote the sustainability and growth of childcare and kindergarten services, contributing to a healthy and resilient community.

Goals

1. Promote the sustainability and growth of childcare and kindergarten services, contributing to a healthy and resilient community
2. Support the development and expansion of early childhood services
3. Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood services



Workforce & Education

Council supports the sector by fostering a collaborative forum with state government agencies and local childcare and kindergarten stakeholders to advance initiatives, including workforce development.

Goals

1. Foster collaboration between government agencies, RTOs, local childcare and kindergarten stakeholders
2. Align local and state efforts in workforce development



Strategic Pillars: Service Delivery – Goal One

Strategic pillar for service delivery goal one is developing a sustainable delivery model for family day care services to ensure that community needs are met and promotes accessibility

SERVICE DELIVERY

1 Develop a sustainable delivery model for family day care services ensuring that the model meets community needs and promotes accessibility

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recommendations based on FDC Options Analysis including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase admin levy Expand & recruit additional educators Review position based on financial modelling criteria and consider transfer of management 	H	M	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with community stakeholders to gather input about potential changes to the family day care services 	L	M	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver marketing strategies to promote accessibility 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to gather feedback via options available to families in the service, and requirements of regulations to have a (QIP) combine with stakeholders 	M	M	M	1

Risk

- These actions require additional funding and resources
- Lack of community engagement
- Ineffective marketing strategies

Mitigation

- Council is undertaking an in-depth options analysis for the provision of family day care services.
- Provide incentive and continuous support for family day care educators regarding training and upskilling.

Success Metrics

- Increase in the number of family day care services
- Financial sustainability and stability of the model
- Positive feedback from community and families
- Increased enrolment in family day care services
- Improved accessibility metrics

Required Resources:

- Financial analysts
- Community engagement officers
- Coordinator Family day care
- Coordinator Children’s Services



Strategic Pillars: Service Delivery – Goal Two

Strategic pillar for service delivery goal two is focused on ensuring quality care and regulatory compliance for family day care services

SERVICE DELIVERY

2 Ensure quality care and regulatory compliance family day care services

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular audits and compliance checks 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivering professional development programs for family day care educators (e.g., child protection course) 	M	H	H	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a quality improvement framework 	H	H	H	3

Risk

- Non-compliance with regulations
- Resistance to quality improvement initiatives
- There could be a low participation from educators.

Mitigation

- Regular training and updates on regulatory changes
- Engage educators in the development process and provide incentives

Success Metrics

- Compliance with all regulatory requirements
- High quality ratings from assessments
- Positive feedback from families and educators

Required Resources:

- Coordinator Family Day Care
- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Training specialists



Strategic Pillars: Infrastructure – Goal One

Strategic pillar for infrastructure goal one is focused on reviewing existing infrastructure maintenance agreements and joint user agreements and achieving cost neutrality

INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Review existing infrastructure maintenance agreements and joint user agreements, ensuring that there is no financial burden on the Council

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a comprehensive audit of current maintenance agreements 	M	M	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage stakeholders to renegotiate terms where necessary 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long-term financial plan for infrastructure maintenance 	H	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek external funding and grants for infrastructure capital projects 	M	H	H	2

Risk

- Resistance from stakeholders to renegotiate terms
- Incomplete or outdated data during the audit
- Decrease in number of early childhood providers due to the renegotiated terms
- Limited external funding and grants
- Unexpected maintenance costs

Mitigation

- Provide clear benefits and incentives for renegotiation
- Use multiple data sources and cross-verify information
- Communication with stakeholders regarding the new rental fee
- Advocate to the VSBA and State Government regarding the maintenance cost of newly built facilities (i.e., Yea Primary School)

Success Metrics

- Number of agreements reviewed and updated
- Stakeholder satisfaction with new terms
- Improved efficiency in maintenance operations
- Cost saving and neutrality
- Financial sustainability and stability of infrastructure projects

Required Resources:

- Legal advisors
- Governance department
- Manager Asset Management
- Assets Accountant



Strategic Pillars: Infrastructure – Goal Two

Strategic pillar for infrastructure goal two is advocating for the establishment of new early learning centre sites

INFRASTRUCTURE

2

Advocate for the establishment of new early learning centre sites where needed

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to support Yea Primary School Kindergarten* 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to support state government run and operated childcare centre in Alexandra* 	M	H	M	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with MACS to support Sacred Heart Primary School for kindergarten and/or childcare services* 	M	H	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with private sector providers to support new kindergarten and childcare places* 	M	H	M	2

Risk

- Lack of interest from private sector partners
- Regulatory hurdles (i.e., license and/or permit)
- Lack of initial investment for capital projects

Mitigation

- Highlight potential benefits and provide incentives
- Work closely with the Council's planning department and provide support to the private providers

Success Metrics

- Number of new early learning centre sites established
- Positive feedback from patients and the community.
- Successful partnerships with government agencies and private sector

Required Resources:

- Planning Officers
- Manager Community Well-being
- Coordinator Children's Services

NOTE: * as outlined in the recommendations from Infrastructure Options Analysis



Strategic Pillars: Sector Sustainability – Goal One

Strategic pillar for sector sustainability goal one is focused on attracting third party childcare and kindergarten providers to the region

SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

1 Attract third party childcare and kindergarten providers to the region as appropriate

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a marketing campaign to attract providers as appropriate in collaboration with consultative group 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support informational sessions and workshops for potential providers 	L	M	M	1

Risk

- Lack of interest from providers

Mitigation

- Highlight potential benefits and unmet demand in Murrindindi

Success Metrics

- Number of new providers attracted to the region
- Positive feedback from new providers
- Increased availability of childcare and kindergarten services

Required Resources:

- Communications Team



Strategic Pillars: Sector Sustainability – Goal Two

Strategic pillar for sector sustainability goal two is collaborating with early childhood providers and providing support

SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

2 Collaborate with these providers to support and ensure that qualified applicants are capable of fostering a sustainable and thriving sector

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a support network for new providers 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training and professional development opportunities 	M	H	H	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate partnerships between new providers and established ones 	L	M	M	1

Risk

- Providers not utilising support network
- Insufficient participation in training programs

Mitigation

- Regularly promote the benefits and success stories
- Offer flexible training schedules

Success Metrics

- Number of providers participating in the support network
- Positive feedback from training participants
- Successful partnerships formed

Required Resources:

- Community Team
- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being



Strategic Pillars: Sector Sustainability – Goal Three

Strategic pillar for sector sustainability goal three is ensuring that the providers are capable of delivering high-quality and sustainable services

SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

3 Ensure that the providers are capable of delivering high-quality and sustainable services

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the Department of Education where appropriate in running Expression of Interest (EOIs) new upcoming kindergarten and childcare centres 	M	H	H	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a criteria for evaluating potential providers 	L	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and monitor the evaluation criteria for continuous improvement 	L	M	L	2

<p>Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient interest in EOIs 	<p>Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance marketing efforts
<p>Success Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of EOIs received and evaluated Positive feedback from patients and the community. 	<p>Required Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Officers Manager Community Well-being Coordinator Children’s Services



Strategic Pillars: Coordination – Goal One

Strategic pillar for coordination goal one is focused on offering support that is accessible to all early childhood education and care providers, assist with service planning and capacity building

COORDINATION

1 Offer support that is accessible to all early childhood education and care providers, assist with service planning and capacity building

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue facilitating partnerships between existing providers 	M	H	M	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline communication channels between Council and all providers 	L	M	M	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support collaboration amongst providers 	L	M	L	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate area specific-forecasting and early years population growth data with providers 	L	H	H	1

Risk

- Providers may see each other as competitors rather than collaborators.
- Using outdated or inappropriate communication tools can hinder effective information sharing.
- Data may not be relevant service planning.

Success Metrics

- Greater communication between providers
- Greater utilisation of council support from providers

Mitigation

- Promote the benefits of partnership through workshops, case studies, and success stories.
- Utilise modern, user-friendly communication platforms (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams) to facilitate efficient information sharing.
- Discuss with providers which data is most relevant to service planning and ensure sound logic is behind projection conclusions.

Required Resources:

- Community Team
- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being



Strategic Pillars: Advocacy – Goal One

Strategic pillar for advocacy goal one is focused on promoting the sustainability and growth of childcare and kindergarten services

ADVOCACY

1

Promote the sustainability and growth of childcare and kindergarten services, contributing to a healthy and resilient community

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with state and federal governments to advocate towards increased funding and grants for childcare and kindergarten services in Murrindindi 	H	M	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain partnerships with community run and not-for-profit organisations (e.g., MACS) to support funding and resources for childcare and kindergarten services 	M	M	M	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain competitive neutrality to ensure Council’s advocacy efforts are transparent and equitable, supporting all childcare and kindergarten services, including community and for-profit organisations 	M	L	H	1

Risk

- Inadequate funding from state and federal governments.
- Changes in government regulations could impact the feasibility of certain initiatives.
- Lack of community support or resistance.
- Potential conflicts of interest or perceived unfair competition could arise.

Mitigation

- Maintain regular communication with regulatory bodies to stay informed about potential changes and adapt strategies accordingly.
- Establish clear policies and guidelines to maintain competitive neutrality and ensure transparency in all advocacy efforts.

Success Metrics

- Sufficient supply of childcare and kindergarten places
- Financial viability and stability of all childcare and kindergarten providers

Required Resources:

- Community Team
- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being



Strategic Pillars: Advocacy – Goal Two

Strategic pillar for advocacy goal two is advocating to support the development and expansion of early childhood services

ADVOCACY

2 Support the development and expansion of early childhood services

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to collaborate with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to identify new infrastructure for childcare and/or kindergarten places in Murrindindi 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy for infrastructure grants for existing childcare and/or kindergarten services to increase capacity and improve service quality 	H	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy for government funded and operated childcare and/or kindergarten centres in Murrindindi 	H	H	H	2

Risk

- Changes in local, state, or federal budgets could impact potential funding opportunities

Mitigation

- Regularly monitor and review local, state, and federal government funding changes

Success Metrics

- Number of new government funded and run childcare and/or kindergarten centres
- Improved quality of infrastructure
- Amount of funding secured for potential capital improvement

Required Resources:

- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being
- Director Community & Development



Strategic Pillars: Advocacy – Goal Three

Strategic pillar for advocacy goal three is focused on raising awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood services

ADVOCACY

3 **Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood services**

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with government agencies, RTOs, providers to support public awareness campaigns on the importance of early childhood education 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support marketing campaign to improve the public perception of early childhood education in collaboration with government agencies and consultative group 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing informational materials, such as kindergarten booklet for distribution in collaboration with consultative group 	L	M	M	2

Risk

- Low public engagement
- Insufficient funding for campaigns

Mitigation

- Use multiple channels and tailored messages to reach different segments
- Seek additional funding sources and partnerships

Success Metrics

- Increased public awareness and understanding of early childhood education benefits
- Positive feedback from community and stakeholders
- Higher participation rates in early childhood services

Required Resources:

- Communications Team
- Events Team
- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Wellbeing



Strategic Pillars: Workforce & Education – Goal One

Strategic pillar for workforce and education goal one is focused on fostering collaboration between government agencies, RTOs, local childcare and kindergarten stakeholders

WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

1
Foster collaboration between government agencies, RTOs, local childcare and kindergarten stakeholders

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate partnership agreements with government agencies, RTOs, providers and form a consultative group 	M	H	H	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular review and monitoring of early childhood education workforce and education program delivery within the consultative group 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support mentorship and professional development initiatives within the consultative group 	M	M	M	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring and review of collaboration and partnership efforts and enable feedback loop 	L	M	L	3

Risk

- Low participation from stakeholders
- Different stakeholders may have conflicting priorities
- Difficulty in engaging all relevant stakeholders consistently

Success Metrics

- Greater communication between providers
- Greater utilisation of council support from providers

Mitigation

- Facilitate workshops and meetings to align goals and create a shared vision among all stakeholders
- Create an engagement plan that includes regular check-ins, updates, and collaborative platforms for feedback and discussion

Required Resources:

- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being



Strategic Pillars: Workforce & Education – Goal Two

Strategic pillar for workforce and education goal two is focused on aligning local and state efforts in workforce development

WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

2 Align local and state efforts in workforce development

Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with local service providers to implement recommendations from Early Years Workforce Plan in alignment with State Government initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote quality work environment Support localised Training initiatives Promote workforce attraction, recruitment and retention Support collaboration and partnership on sector advocacy 	H	H	H	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review and monitoring of strategies and actions 	M	M	M	2

Risk

- Misalignment of efforts
- Insufficient engagement from state agencies
- Insufficient funding to implement certain strategies
- Insufficient resources
- Insufficient engagement from key stakeholders

Mitigation

- Regularly review and adjust alignment strategies
- Foster strong relationships and demonstrate mutual benefits
- Identify external funding opportunities

Success Metrics

- Successful implementation of the Murrindindi Early Years workforce plan
- Improved alignment of local and state workforce development efforts
- Successful collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders
- Increased pool of early childhood workforce
- Sufficient supply of early childhood services

Required Resources:

- Coordinator Children’s Services
- Manager Community Well-being



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council’s strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 1: Service Delivery					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Develop a sustainable delivery model for family day care services ensuring that the model meets community needs and promotes accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recommendations based on FDC Options Analysis including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase admin levy Expand & recruit additional educators Review position based on financial modelling criteria and consider transfer of management 	H	M	H	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with community stakeholders to gather input about potential changes to the family day care services 	L	M	H	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver marketing strategies to promote accessibility 	M	M	M	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to gather feedback via options available to families in the service, and requirements of regulations to have a (QIP) combine with stakeholders 	M	M	M	1
2. Ensure quality care and regulatory compliance family day care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular audits and compliance checks 	M	H	H	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivering professional development programs for family day care educators (e.g., child protection course) 	M	H	H	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a quality improvement framework 	H	H	H	3



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council's strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 2: Infrastructure					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Review existing infrastructure maintenance agreements and joint user agreements, ensuring that there is no financial burden on the Council	• Conduct a comprehensive audit of current maintenance agreements	M	M	H	1
	• Engage stakeholders to renegotiate terms where necessary	M	M	M	2
	• Develop a long-term financial plan for infrastructure maintenance	H	H	H	1
	• Seek external funding and grants for infrastructure capital projects	M	H	H	2
2. Advocate for the establishment of new early learning centre sites where needed	• Continue to engage with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to support Yea Primary School Kindergarten*	M	H	H	1
	• Continue to engage with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to support state government run and operated childcare centre in Alexandra*	M	H	M	3
	• Continue to engage with MACS to support Sacred Heart Primary School for kindergarten and/or childcare services*	M	H	M	2
	• Continue to engage with private sector providers to support new kindergarten and childcare places*	M	H	M	2

NOTE: * as outlined in the recommendations from Infrastructure Options Analysis



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council’s strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 3: Sector Sustainability					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Attract third party childcare and kindergarten providers to the region as appropriate	• Support a marketing campaign to attract providers as appropriate in collaboration with consultative group	M	H	H	1
	• Support informational sessions and workshops for potential providers	L	M	M	1
2. Collaborate with these providers to support and ensure that qualified applicants are capable of fostering a sustainable and thriving sector	• Establish a support network for new providers	M	H	H	1
	• Provide training and professional development opportunities	M	H	H	2
	• Facilitate partnerships between new providers and established ones	L	M	M	1
3. Ensure that the providers are capable of delivering high-quality and sustainable services	• Partner with the Department of Education where appropriate in running Expression of Interest (EOIs) new upcoming kindergarten and childcare centres	M	H	H	2
	• Develop a criteria for evaluating potential providers	L	M	M	2
	• Review and monitor the evaluation criteria for continuous improvement	L	M	L	2



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council’s strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 4: Coordination					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Offer support that is accessible to all early childhood education and care providers, assist with service planning and capacity building	• Continue facilitating partnerships between existing providers	M	H	M	1
	• Streamline communication channels between Council and all providers	L	M	M	1
	• Encourage and support collaboration amongst providers	L	M	L	1
	• Circulate area specific-forecasting and early years population growth data with providers	L	H	H	1



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council’s strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 5: Advocacy					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Promote the sustainability and growth of childcare and kindergarten services, contributing to a healthy and resilient community	• Engage with state and federal governments to advocate towards increased funding and grants for childcare and kindergarten services in Murrindindi	H	M	H	1
	• Maintain partnerships with community run and not-for-profit organisations (e.g., MACS) to support funding and resources for childcare and kindergarten services	M	M	M	2
	• Maintain competitive neutrality to ensure Council’s advocacy efforts are transparent and equitable, supporting all childcare and kindergarten services, including community and for-profit organisations	M	L	H	1
2. Support the development and expansion of early childhood services	• Continue to collaborate with Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to identify new infrastructure for childcare and/or kindergarten places in Murrindindi	M	H	H	2
	• Advocacy for infrastructure grants for existing childcare and/or kindergarten services to increase capacity and improve service quality	H	H	H	1
	• Advocacy for government funded and operated childcare and/or kindergarten centres in Murrindindi	H	H	H	2
3. Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood services	• Collaborate with government agencies, RTOs, providers to support public awareness campaigns on the importance of early childhood education	M	M	M	2
	• Support marketing campaign to improve the public perception of early childhood education in collaboration with government agencies and consultative group	M	M	M	2
	• Update existing informational materials, such as kindergarten booklet for distribution in collaboration with consultative group	L	M	M	2



Strategic Pillars: Goals Summary

The future state analysis of Council’s strategic pillars and strategic actions for the kindergarten and childcare services in Murrindindi Shire region

Pillar 6: Workforce & Education					
Goal	Action	Effort	Impact	Priority	Phase
1. Foster collaboration between government agencies, RTOs, local childcare and kindergarten stakeholders	• Investigate partnership agreements with government agencies, RTOs, providers and form a consultative group	M	H	H	1
	• Regular review and monitoring of early childhood education workforce and education program delivery within the consultative group	M	M	M	2
	• Support mentorship and professional development initiatives within the consultative group	M	M	M	2
	• Regular monitoring and review of collaboration and partnership efforts and enable feedback loop	L	M	L	3
2. Align local and state efforts in workforce development	• Collaborate with local service providers to implement recommendations from Early Years Workforce Plan in alignment with State Government initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote quality work environment • Support localised Training initiatives • Promote workforce attraction, recruitment and retention • Support collaboration and partnership on sector advocacy 	H	H	H	2
	• Annual review and monitoring of strategies and actions	M	M	M	2

Monitor & Evaluation



Monitor & Evaluation

This monitor and evaluation process will assist Council remain on track with individual and collaborative efforts; acknowledge and celebrate key achievements; and remain responsive to new and emerging needs and priorities

This requires Council and Early Childhood Education (ECE) service providers to set aside time to regularly reflect on and review progress towards identified actions in line with the indicative measures. Ongoing review of the Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy 2024-2029 ensures it remains a working document, which guides Murrindindi Shire ECE service providers in their efforts to promote better outcomes for children and families.

EVERY

1 year



EVERY

3 years



EVERY

5 years



Council will review and monitor its proposed **actions** annually to evaluate the outcomes against the success metrics and update the priority and implementation timeline.

Council will review its **goals** every 3 years and update the resources and funding required for successful implementation.

Council will review its **strategic pillars and position statements** every 5 years and inform the development of the next Kindergarten and Childcare Strategy.

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