

**Wyndham 0-8 years Literacy and
Numeracy Network**

***The State of Literacy and
Numeracy in Wyndham
Research Report
2021***

Written by Mona Chehaita and Indy Mannix, Victoria University with
support from Jac Torres-Gomez, Wyndham City Council

Contents

Acknowledgement to Country	3
Executive Summary	3
Background	4
Project Working Group	4
Why Focus on Early Years Literacy and Numeracy?	4
Transition to School	5
Research Project Goal	6
Data Review	7
Population and Census Data	7
Disability Data	8
Wyndham Births	9
Cultural Diversity	9
Language Spoken at Home	10
Proficiency in English	11
NAPLAN	12
Proposed National Early Language and Literacy Strategy	17
The Australian Early Development Census	18
Literature and Data Analysis	19
Maternal and Child Health Programs	22
Early Literacy Program	22
Regular Early Years Library Programs	23
Opportunities and Recommendations	25
Reference List	28

Acknowledgement to Country

We acknowledge the Wathaurung, Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung as the First Peoples of the land on which we work, learn, play and live across Wyndham. We pay respect to Elders and the diversity of Aboriginal communities past, present and future and the rich learning that has taken place here for thousands of years including in literacy and numeracy.



Image: Werribee River, Wyndham

Executive Summary

The State of Literacy and Numeracy in Wyndham Research Report 2021, focuses on young people aged 0-8 years of the Wyndham Local Government Area (LGA) and recommendations on how to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills to support greater transitions to school and to improve life outcomes. During August - September 2021, Mona Chehaita and Indy Mannix, both third-year Bachelor of Education Studies students from Victoria University led the development of this report, with support from Jac Torres-Gomez from Wyndham City Council.

This report draws on data from a variety of sources such as NAPLAN results and The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) which highlight the vulnerabilities affecting children and their literacy and numeracy. It aims to inform and propose the implementation of new opportunities and programs to further the Network's goal to promote the enhancement of early literacy and numeracy within the Wyndham community. The recommendations provide a roadmap for moving forward, and we are excited to see this work contribute to enhancing literacy and numeracy for Wyndham.

Jac Torres-Gomez and Diane Tabbagh, Coordinating Team, Wyndham 0-8 years Literacy and Numeracy Network

Background

The City of Wyndham is located on the western edge of Melbourne, Victoria in south-eastern Australia between the metropolitan area of Melbourne and the coastal City of Geelong. Wyndham covers an area of 542km² and features 27.4km of coastline bordering Port Phillip to the east. The municipality is situated in one of Australia's most productive regions, part of the continent's largest area of rich basalt soils. Wyndham has a diverse richness that covers elements of the city, coast and country areas making it a unique place to live, work, learn and play. Wyndham is adjacent to the municipalities of Greater Geelong, Moorabool, Melton, Brimbank and Hobsons Bay. There are 51,198 0-8-year-olds in Wyndham (ABS 2021, available online). This number is set to grow exponentially towards 2040 with the population, including new births and migrant arrivals with young children, boosting the population to a projected 500,000.

The Wyndham Learning Community team is a small team working to implement the [Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023](#) (LCS), which includes 18 key actions. Action 8 involves Strengthening the Literacy and Numeracy Network, which meets once each term and completes a shared project annually.

Project Working Group

Mona Chehaita is studying a Bachelor of Education Studies at Victoria University and is in her third year of studies. Her interests align with this project as she believes Wyndham's future generations should have the key resources and knowledge to support and enrich their learning and growth development, from their early learning through to adult learning.

Indy Mannix is also a third-year student at Victoria University currently completing a Bachelor of Education Studies. Having grown up in regional Victoria, Indy understands the importance of having access to educational resources at a young age, especially for early numeracy and literacy development.

Supporting both students, Jac Torres-Gomez is the Learning Community Officer at Wyndham City Council. Jac's role is to support the implementation of the LCS, including convening the Wyndham 0-8 years Literacy and Numeracy Network which meets quarterly.

Why Focus on Early Years Literacy and Numeracy?

Literacy and numeracy is much more than the narrow view that many in the community have, of writing, reading and counting or recognising numbers and reciting the alphabet. In fact, literacy and numeracy is far broader and richer than

that definition and is in just about every aspect of life (Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011, available online).

Literacy and numeracy skills extend beyond reading and mathematics; and have a significant impact on how young people interact with the world and the people around them. Literacy and numeracy skills are particularly crucial for the early years age group because the foundation that is set in this area from an early age informs lifelong learning and life and employment outcomes more broadly.

There is a growing recognition of the important role for families and communities to take in the development and educational performance of the children surrounding them. Educational reading to children is found to majorly increase the child's reading and other cognitive skills, at least until the child reaches the age of eight. This is a prompt to an early-life intervention that is known to be beneficial for the rest of the children's lives.

Babies, toddlers and young children aged 0-8 years and their future is important because when communities have young people that have a love of learning and are supported to engage and thrive in literacy and numeracy from an early age, this has lifelong benefits for those young people and their communities as a whole.

Knowing the state of literacy and numeracy in Wyndham is important because it provides a foundation of where to start enhancing existing programs, and driving change where there are gaps and vulnerabilities. It also provides the opportunity to accurately inform national policy such as the proposed National Early Language and Literacy Strategy. Literacy concepts that families can implement in their child's life to help enhance their literacy skills in reading and writing include:

- Looking at signs/logos and sharing books to encourage reading.
- Gaining meanings from advertising prints enables critical thinking.
- Drawing and scribbling to build a foundation for writing.
- Playing word games and re-enacting stories to support pattern recognition and remembrance of sequences (DSS 2015, retrieved online August 2021).

Transition to School

School readiness is an important indicator of early literacy and numeracy development, as well as social and emotional wellbeing. When children enter grade one in Victoria, they are expected to have reached certain developmental milestones and have the basic skills necessary for formal education. All children go through these developmental milestones at different stages, and some may need extra help mastering specific skills. For example, a

child who still battles with correct pencil grip may find the initial writing tasks more challenging than those who have mastered this skill. Children who readily transition to school with early school success tend to maintain higher social competence and literacy and numeracy achievements in the long term (University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education, 2021, retrieved online).

Research Project Goal

Guided by the LCS, this research project aims to research and develop a final report and presentation on the current state of 0-8 years literacy and numeracy in Wyndham, and provide recommendations for the next steps in 2022 as aligned to action 8 of the LCS.

Data Review

To establish a baseline analysis of the current situation of 0-8 Literacy and Numeracy for the LGA of Wyndham, the team has gathered data from various sources including data around population and broad census, NAPLAN and the AEDC.

Population and Census Data

0-8 Population, 2021

Year	2021										
Gender	Person										
Sum of Number	Column Labels	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Grand Total
Hoppers Crossing (locality)		561	564	566	565	562	528	538	538	535	4,957
Little River - Rural West (locality)		18	17	17	16	15	17	13	11	13	137
Manor Lakes (locality)		213	221	227	229	225	230	215	201	208	1,969
Point Cook (locality)		1,280	1,320	1,334	1,356	1,347	1,365	1,375	1,309	1,314	12,000
Tarneit (locality)		1,137	1,183	1,204	1,216	1,162	1,231	1,175	1,096	1,092	10,496
Truganina (locality)		828	900	938	950	881	942	848	810	740	7,837
Werribee (locality)		924	890	868	846	826	785	765	752	754	7,410
Werribee South (locality)		46	43	40	36	35	27	30	27	27	311
Williams Landing - Laverton North (locality)		198	209	209	214	194	234	221	201	187	1,867
Wyndham Vale (locality)		482	494	498	505	483	463	448	424	415	4,212
City of Wyndham		5,687	5,841	5,901	5,934	5,731	5,822	5,628	5,368	5,286	51,198

(ABS, 2021, available online).

Disability Data

ASSNP Core Activity Need for Assistance by LGA (UR) and AGEP Age - Disability

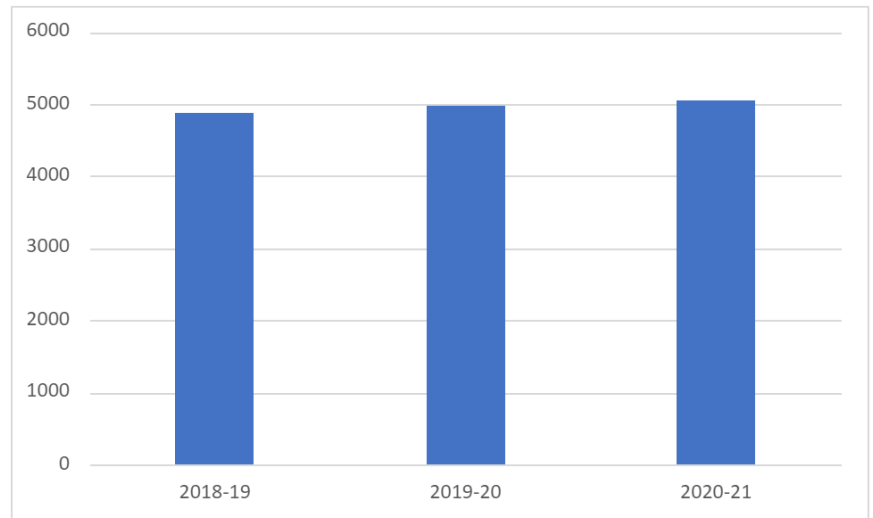
	Wyndham (C)								
AGEP Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Has need for assistance with core activities	7	24	46	73	101	124	141	138	136
Does not have need for assistance with core activities	3,688	4,093	4,014	4,155	3,871	3,683	3,615	3,273	3,097
Not stated	285	290	253	263	221	228	221	165	209
Total	3,978	4,407	4,312	4,489	4,191	4,039	3,978	3,575	3,446
Has need for assistance with core activities	0.2%	0.5%	1.1%	1.6%	2.4%	3.1%	3.5%	3.9%	3.9%
Does not have need for assistance with core activities	92.7%	92.9%	93.1%	92.6%	92.4%	91.2%	90.9%	91.6%	89.9%
Not stated	7.2%	6.6%	5.9%	5.9%	5.3%	5.6%	5.6%	4.6%	6.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(ABS, 2016, available online).

Wyndham Births

Year	Birth Notices received
2018-19	4882
2019-20	4975
2020-21	5061

The above are births recorded by the MCH team for Wyndham.



Cultural Diversity

Highlighting the cultural diversity of Wyndham, 22% (17,603) of those aged 0-24 years were *born overseas* at the time of the 2016 Census.

Of the 17,603 residents aged 0-24 born overseas, 42% of these (7389 people) are *recent arrivals* –having arrived in Wyndham between 2012 and 2016.

Cultural Diversity Indicators	Age 0-4	Age 5-11
First-Generation – one or both parents born overseas	69%	60%
% born overseas in Age Group	12%	25%
% of recent arrivals in Age Group	89%	45%

Language Spoken at Home

Language	Number 0-8 years old in Wyndham, 2016	%
English	19716	54%
Language other than English	13742	38%
Non-verbal	750	2%
Not stated	2214	6%
Total	36422	100%

(ABS, 2016, Table builder available online)

More than half of all 0-4-year-olds in Wyndham speak English, however considering the cultural diversity amongst their parents, it is likely many are bilingual. According to the 2016 Census, around 30% of 0-4-year-olds in Wyndham can speak another language in addition to English to varying degrees. Punjabi and Mandarin are the two most commonly spoken languages other than English amongst Wyndham and Greater Melbourne 0-4-year-olds.

Compared to Greater Melbourne, a smaller proportion of Wyndham's 5-11-year-olds speak English at home. This may be due to the high proportion of parents born outside Australia speaking their native language to their children. Languages originating in India, including Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi are the most common in Wyndham, while Mandarin, Arabic and Vietnamese are common across Greater Melbourne.

Age	% Born Overseas in Age group	Top 2-3 Countries of Birth (excluding Australia)	Language other than English Spoken at Home	Top Language Other than English
0-4	12%	India and New Zealand	30%	Punjabi
5-11	13%	New Zealand, India, Thailand	31%	Hindi
12-17	31%	New Zealand, India, Philippines	32%	Arabic
18-24	18%	India, New Zealand, Philippines	35%	Punjabi

Top 10 languages spoken at home, 0-8 years old in Wyndham, 2016

Top 10 languages	Number	%
Punjabi	1471	4%
Mandarin	1308	4%
Hindi	1205	3%
Urdu	1038	3%
Arabic	840	2%
Gujarati	701	2%
Telugu	574	2%
Bengali	512	1%
Karen	412	1%
Tamil	336	1%

(ABS, 2016, Table builder, available online)

Proficiency in English

Proficiency in English of 0-8 years old in Wyndham, 2016	Number	%
Speaks English only	19716	54%
Speaks other language and speaks English: Very well	6524	18%
Speaks other language and speaks English: Well	3403	9%
Speaks other language and speaks English: Not well	2307	6%
Speaks other language and speaks English: Not at all	2114	6%
<i>Not stated - both language and proficiency</i>	1915	5%
<i>Not stated - language stated, proficiency not stated</i>	436	1%
Total	36422	100%

(ABS, 2016, Table builder, available online).

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), is an annual assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The tests cover skills in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. The assessments are undertaken every year in the second full week in May. The table below shows the state percentage of students who did not meet or exceed the national benchmark for literacy and numeracy in Wyndham for the years 2009, 2014 and 2019. NAPLAN didn't happen in 2020 because of COVID19. At the time of writing this research report, preliminary research data has just been released for 2021 but the main detailed data was not yet available to the public for analysis.

NAPLAN - Reading

Select domain	Select year level
Reading	3

Achievement of Year 3 students in reading, by state and territory, 2021

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Mean scale score / (S.D.)	442.6 (88.3)	451.3 (82.1)	426.4 (88.0)	425.9 (88.6)	426.1 (85.0)	425.7 (92.2)	445.2 (88.9)	367.4 (110.3)	437.3 (87.8)

State / Territory	Average age/ Years of schooling	Participation rate (%)	Absent (%)	Withdrawn (%)	Below NMS (%)		At NMS (%)	Above NMS (%)				At or above NMS (%)
					Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above	
NSW	8yrs 8mths 3yrs 4mths	97.1	1.2	1.7	1.3	2.2	7.1	12.6	19.9	22.9	34.1	96.5
Vic	8yrs 9mths 3yrs 4mths	95.3	2.1	2.6	1.0	1.4	4.9	11.1	19.3	24.9	37.4	97.6
Qld	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	93.4	1.8	4.8	1.0	3.6	9.3	14.6	21.0	22.6	27.9	95.4
WA	8yrs 5mths 3yrs 4mths	96.3	1.8	1.9	1.1	3.9	9.5	14.1	21.3	22.3	27.8	95.1
SA	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	95.2	1.3	3.5	2.3	2.9	9.0	14.8	21.8	22.6	26.5	94.7
Tas	8yrs 11mths 3yrs 4mths	95.8	1.8	2.4	1.5	3.8	11.2	14.2	19.9	21.0	28.4	94.7
ACT	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.5	1.1	4.4	1.5	2.0	7.1	12.5	19.3	22.2	35.4	96.6
NT	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	83.3	14.4	2.3	2.6	21.3	14.3	13.3	16.4	15.4	16.6	76.1
Aust	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	95.4	1.8	2.8	1.2	2.8	7.6	13.0	20.2	23.1	32.2	96.0

NAPLAN Writing

Select domain
Writing

Select year level
3

Achievement of Year 3 students in writing, by state and territory, 2021

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Mean scale score / (S.D.)	433.8 (63.1)	432.4 (51.6)	414.3 (66.8)	425.9 (62.5)	411.5 (60.2)	413.7 (61.8)	421.7 (62.6)	339.5 (119.2)	425.4 (63.1)

State / Territory	Average age/ Years of schooling	Participation rate (%)	Absent (%)	Withdrawn (%)	Below NMS (%)		At NMS (%)	Above NMS (%)				At or above NMS (%)
					Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above	
NSW	8yrs 8mths 3yrs 4mths	97.3	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.6	4.2	9.1	25.5	34.9	23.6	97.2
Vic	8yrs 9mths 3yrs 4mths	94.5	3.6	1.8	0.7	0.4	2.6	8.9	30.7	38.8	18.1	99.0
Qld	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	92.7	2.5	4.9	1.0	3.1	6.3	13.6	29.9	31.1	15.1	95.9
WA	8yrs 5mths 3yrs 4mths	95.5	2.6	1.8	1.1	2.1	4.6	10.2	27.3	36.1	18.5	96.8
SA	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.0	2.4	3.6	2.3	2.2	5.6	14.6	33.2	30.9	11.2	95.5
Tas	8yrs 11mths 3yrs 4mths	94.5	3.0	2.5	1.5	2.5	6.0	13.1	31.9	32.1	12.9	96.0
ACT	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.0	1.6	4.4	1.4	2.4	4.6	11.0	30.3	33.7	16.5	96.2
NT	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	88.8	8.9	2.3	2.6	24.7	9.9	14.0	24.0	18.1	6.7	72.7
Aust	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	95.0	2.4	2.6	1.1	2.0	4.5	10.6	28.6	34.7	18.5	96.9

NAPLAN Spelling

Select domain	Select year level
Spelling	3

Achievement of Year 3 students in spelling, by state and territory, 2021

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Mean scale score / (S.D.)	433.1 (88.9)	430.4 (83.2)	407.6 (88.8)	410.3 (91.6)	412.1 (86.7)	395.9 (94.0)	415.9 (87.6)	331.8 (138.8)	421.0 (89.7)

State / Territory	Average age/ Years of schooling	Participation rate (%)	Absent (%)	Withdrawn (%)	Below NMS (%)		At NMS (%)	Above NMS (%)				At or above NMS (%)
					Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above	
NSW	8yrs 8mths 3yrs 4mths	96.9	1.4	1.7	1.3	4.5	6.4	12.9	19.9	23.3	31.7	94.2
Vic	8yrs 9mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.3	2.6	1.0	3.1	6.4	14.8	22.3	23.8	28.7	95.9
Qld	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	92.9	2.3	4.8	1.0	7.1	9.2	16.6	22.4	22.1	21.6	91.9
WA	8yrs 5mths 3yrs 4mths	95.9	2.2	1.9	1.1	7.5	8.5	15.3	21.9	22.5	23.2	91.4
SA	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.8	1.7	3.5	2.4	6.1	8.6	15.8	22.0	22.6	22.6	91.5
Tas	8yrs 11mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.5	2.4	1.5	10.0	10.9	17.5	20.4	20.2	19.5	88.5
ACT	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	93.9	1.7	4.4	1.4	5.9	8.3	15.7	21.1	22.7	24.8	92.6
NT	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	82.7	15.0	2.3	2.6	30.3	9.4	13.6	15.8	15.0	13.2	67.1
Aust	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.1	2.8	1.2	5.6	7.5	14.7	21.4	22.9	26.7	93.2

NAPLAN Grammar and Punctuation

Select domain	Select year level
Grammar and Punctuation	3

Achievement of Year 3 students in grammar and punctuation, by state and territory, 2021

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Mean scale score / (S.D.)	442.5 (88.1)	445.0 (81.8)	422.4 (87.7)	421.3 (90.9)	418.3 (82.2)	410.8 (87.7)	433.4 (80.4)	353.3 (119.5)	433.2 (87.8)

State / Territory	Average age/ Years of schooling	Participation rate (%)	Absent (%)	Withdrawn (%)	Below NMS (%)		At NMS (%)	Above NMS (%)				At or above NMS (%)
					Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above	
NSW	8yrs 8mths 3yrs 4mths	96.9	1.4	1.7	1.3	2.9	6.5	11.7	20.0	23.6	34.0	95.8
Vic	8yrs 9mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.3	2.6	1.0	1.9	5.0	11.7	21.2	25.3	33.9	97.1
Qld	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	92.9	2.3	4.8	1.0	4.7	8.7	14.5	21.7	23.3	26.1	94.3
WA	8yrs 5mths 3yrs 4mths	95.9	2.2	1.9	1.1	6.0	8.4	13.7	21.7	22.8	26.3	93.0
SA	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.8	1.7	3.5	2.4	4.3	8.4	14.9	23.7	23.9	22.6	93.4
Tas	8yrs 11mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.5	2.4	1.5	6.3	10.4	15.4	22.5	22.1	21.8	92.2
ACT	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	93.9	1.7	4.4	1.4	2.5	6.6	13.0	22.9	24.6	29.0	96.1
NT	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	82.7	15.0	2.3	2.6	26.8	11.0	12.8	16.9	15.3	14.6	70.6
Aust	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	95.1	2.1	2.8	1.2	3.8	7.1	12.8	21.1	23.8	30.2	95.0

NAPLAN Numeracy

Select domain
Numeracy

Select year level
3

Achievement of Year 3 students in numeracy, by state and territory, 2021

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Mean scale score / (S.D.)	411.5 (75.0)	412.4 (71.1)	391.5 (68.9)	395.3 (71.1)	393.8 (67.3)	393.6 (66.8)	410.2 (69.2)	339.6 (92.6)	403.4 (72.7)

State / Territory	Average age/ Years of schooling	Participation rate (%)	Absent (%)	Withdrawn (%)	Below NMS (%)		At NMS (%)	Above NMS (%)				At or above NMS (%)
					Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above	
NSW	8yrs 8mths 3yrs 4mths	96.5	1.9	1.6	1.3	2.6	9.0	19.2	27.2	22.6	18.2	96.2
Vic	8yrs 9mths 3yrs 4mths	94.4	3.1	2.4	1.0	1.8	8.1	19.6	28.4	23.5	17.6	97.2
Qld	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	92.4	3.0	4.6	1.0	3.6	12.2	23.9	29.1	19.8	10.4	95.4
WA	8yrs 5mths 3yrs 4mths	95.7	2.5	1.8	1.1	3.7	11.4	22.4	29.0	20.5	11.9	95.2
SA	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.5	2.1	3.4	2.3	2.8	11.3	23.6	30.0	19.6	10.5	94.9
Tas	8yrs 11mths 3yrs 4mths	94.3	3.3	2.4	1.5	2.8	11.8	23.8	29.9	19.8	10.5	95.8
ACT	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	93.8	2.1	4.1	1.4	1.7	7.8	20.5	29.5	23.1	16.0	96.9
NT	8yrs 6mths 3yrs 4mths	82.0	15.7	2.3	2.5	24.4	15.6	19.7	20.3	11.8	5.7	73.1
Aust	8yrs 7mths 3yrs 4mths	94.6	2.7	2.6	1.2	3.0	10.0	21.0	28.3	21.6	14.9	95.8

NAPLAN Literacy

For all years except year 9, the percentage of students not meeting the benchmark for literacy decreased from 2009 to 2019:

- Year 3 almost halved from 2009 6.4% to 3.3% 2019;
- Similarly, year 5 steadily decreased from 9.7% in 2009 to 7.7% in 2014 and 5.7% in 2019.
- Year 7 decreased from 7.9% in 2009 to 5.3% in 2019.

NAPLAN Numeracy

All year levels decreased in the percentage of students not meeting the national benchmark in Wyndham between 2009 and 2019 for numeracy:

- Year 3 results almost halved from 8.5% in 2009 to 4.6% in 2019.
- Year 5 results declined slightly from 6.15 in 2009 to 5.0% in 2019, however with a spike in 2014 of 8% of students who were not meeting the national benchmark in Wyndham
- Year 7 results declined from 6.1% in 2009 to 5.0% in 2019.
- Year 9 saw the smallest decrease in meeting the national benchmark with 5.5% in 2009 to 5.0% not meeting the national benchmark in 2019.

Proposed National Early Language and Literacy Strategy

According to the ABS, 44 per cent of the Australian adult population do not have the functional literacy skills they need to cope with the demands of everyday life and work (ABS, 2021, available online). This legacy needs a significant, coordinated national response and the antidote has to happen at the earliest stage of life.

Developed by the National Early Language and Literacy Coalition, the proposed strategy sets out the scale of the issue, describes what is happening on the ground in different communities, and puts forward a framework for action.

It has been two years in development and has been made possible through funding from the Ian Potter Foundation. Supporters include children's authors Alison Lester and Ursula Dubosarsky, early language and literacy experts and academics, including Professor Tom Calma and Associate Professor Tanya Serry.

The Australian Early Development Census

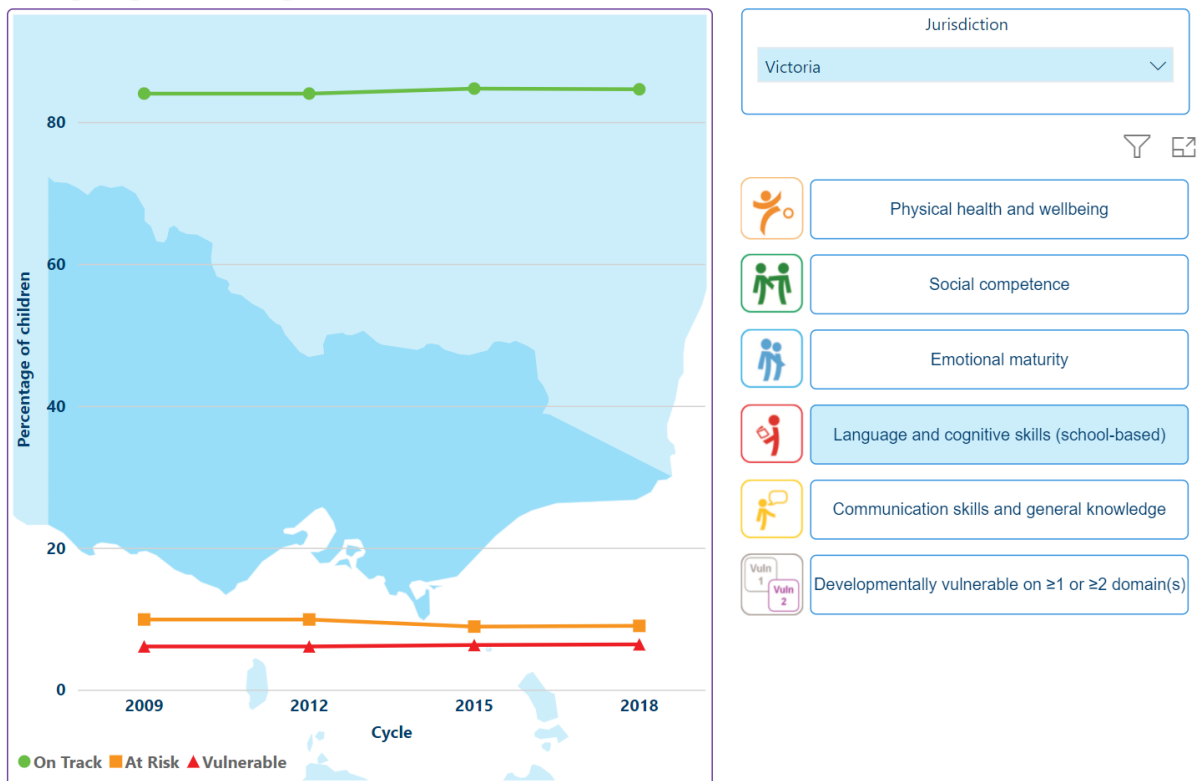
The AEDC is a full-population census of children's health and development in their first year of full-time school. It measures children's developmental vulnerability in five key domains.

The latest AEDC results indicate that Wyndham is the municipality with the largest number of children who are developmentally at risk in Greater Melbourne. A total of 1,016 children are developmentally vulnerable on at least one of the five domains, which is comparable with Casey (1,018) and ahead of Hume (898) Whittlesea (619) and Geelong (585) domains. 11.7 per cent of children are vulnerable, compared with 10.1 per cent in Victoria.

There are higher proportions of developmentally vulnerable children in Wyndham compared to Victoria across all five AEDC areas. As shown in the graph below, Wyndham children are most vulnerable in the social competence and communication skills domains (10.5% and 10% vulnerability rates respectively), followed by physical health (9%), emotional maturity (8.2%) and language (7.6%).

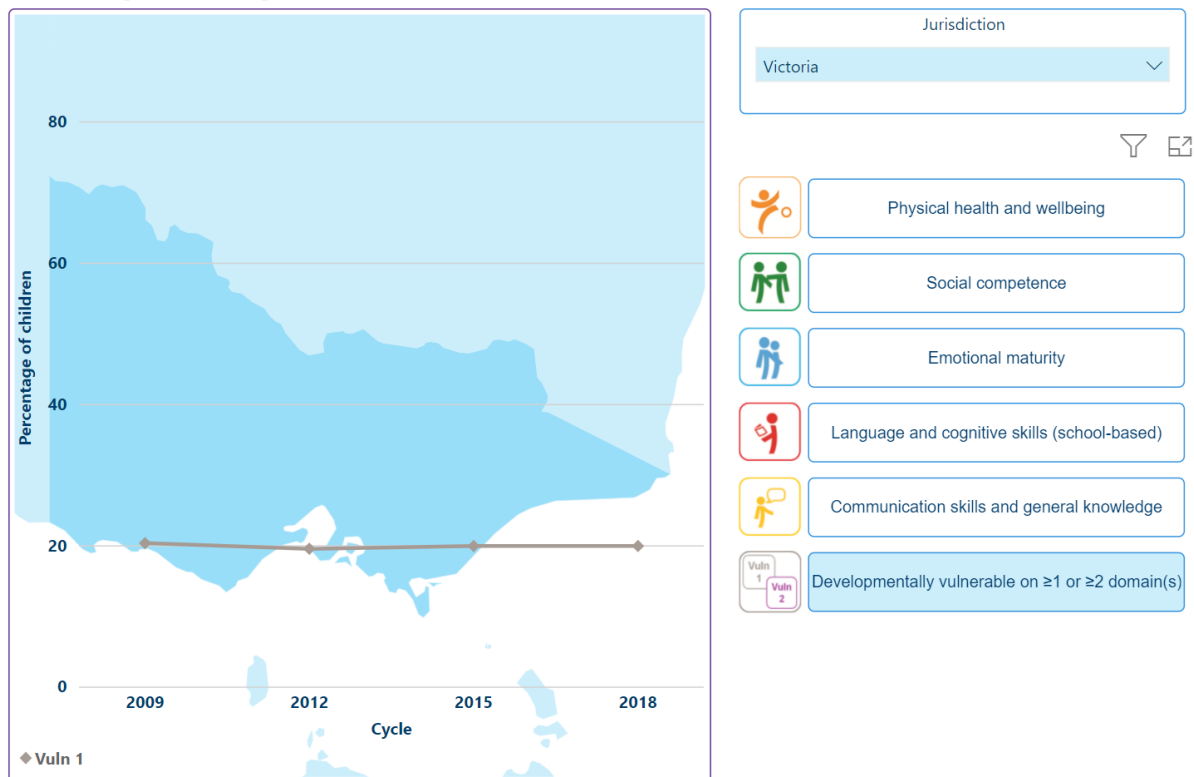
AEDC Results, Wyndham and Victoria 2018

Language and cognitive skills (school-based) (VIC)



(AEDC, 2018, available online).

Developmentally vulnerable on ≥1 or ≥2 domain(s) (VIC)



(AEDC, 2018, retrieved online).

Literature and Data Analysis

The AEDC results indicate that Wyndham is the municipality with the largest number of children developmentally at risk in Metro Melbourne, with a total of 1,016 children developmentally vulnerable. Further statistics show that suburbs within Wyndham have up to 26% students who are ranked by the AEDC as developmentally vulnerable. Percentages of developmentally vulnerable students range from 25.5% of students in Wyndham Vale to 12% in Truganina.

Furthermore, the developmentally vulnerable data from Wyndham for grade 3 shows developmentally vulnerable data almost halved from 6.4% in 2009 to 3.3% in 2019. Grade five students also had a decrease in their vulnerability, shifting from a ranking of 9.7% in 2009, to 7.7% in 2014, and 5.7% in 2019.

Within Wyndham, AEDC results differ by suburb as the table below shows. When looking at developmental vulnerability in at least one dimension, Wyndham Vale has the highest proportion of vulnerable children with 25.5 per cent. This is followed closely by Williams Landing (24.8%) and Hoppers Crossing (24.1%). The suburb with the lowest proportion of

developmentally vulnerable children is Point Cook, with 19.7 per cent of children being vulnerable in at least one dimension. Wyndham Vale also has the largest proportion of children vulnerable across at least two dimensions (14.3%), followed by Williams Landing (12.8%) and Truganina (12%).

Along with the physical wellbeing domain, suburbs with the highest proportion of vulnerable children are Williams Landing (11.3%) and Wyndham Vale (9.9%). Children in Point Cook (7.4%) and Hoppers Crossing (7.8%) are the least developmentally vulnerable along with this domain.

In the social competence domain, suburbs with the highest proportion of vulnerable children are Wyndham Vale (13.9%) and Williams Landing (11.3%). Children in Hoppers Crossing (7.2%) and Werribee (9.2%) are the least developmentally vulnerable in this domain.

In the emotional maturity domain, the suburbs' results are close, with Williams Landing (9.9%) having the largest proportion of developmentally vulnerable children, and Tarneit the lowest (6.7%).

In the language domain, suburbs with the highest proportion of vulnerable children are Werribee (9.6%) and Hoppers Crossing (9.3%), and the lowest in Point Cook (5.3%).

In the communication domain, Tarneit and Hoppers Crossing both have the equal highest proportion of developmentally vulnerable children (10.9%), and Point Cook the lowest (8.3%).

AEDC Results by Suburb Across Wyndham, 2018

Suburb	Physical Health & Wellbeing	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & cognitive skills	Communication Skills & General Knowledge	Developmentally Vulnerable on at least one domain	Developmentally Vulnerable on at Least Two Domains
Hoppers Crossing	7.8%	7.2%	8.9%	9.3%	10.9%	24.1%	11%
Point Cook	7.4%	10.5%	8.1%	5.3%	8.3%	19.7%	10.2%
Tarneit	9.1%	9.5%	6.7%	7.8%	10.9%	23%	10.7%
Truganina	8.4%	10.6%	8.3%	7.4%	10.1%	23.4%	12%
Werribee	8.8%	9.2%	7.4%	9.6%	9.8%	23.7%	11.2%
Williams Landing	11.3%	11.3%	9.9%	8.5%	9.2%	24.8%	12.8%
Wyndham Vale	9.9%	13.9%	8.8%	8.8%	9.5%	25.5%	14.3%

AEDC, 2018, retrieved online

Existing 0-8 Literacy and Numeracy Programs in Wyndham

Maternal and Child Health Programs

The earliest accessible service for babies is the Maternal and Child Health Nurse Program. The Maternal and Child Health Service is designed to give parents support, advice and information about Child and Family health issues and assist in monitoring growth, health, development and behaviour in infants and young children. The service provides a comprehensive and focused approach to the promotion of physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of families. The Program currently contains a baby bundle for first-time parents that includes 4 picture books, all written by Victorian authors. This is encouraging parents to read to their newborns and beginning the child's literacy skills, which is vital. The Maternal and Child Health Service also offers Key Age and Stage Visits (KAS) which coincides with 10 different milestones of a child from birth until 3.5 years. The MCH centre is often where parents find out information about services offered by the council such as library sessions. MCH nurses will provide information about these sessions and how to access them during KAS visits. Due to COVID restrictions distribution of physical flyers have ceased and most information is sent via SMS/email in the form of links to parents.

An idea to improve this distribution of information could be for MCH nurses to send the link to the library page when sending other information links for the visit. An idea is to start sending the link at earlier KAS visits so parents can be aware of this service when their babies are young and promote literacy right from birth.

Early Literacy Program

An early literacy pilot is planned to be undertaken by Wyndham Library Service to raise awareness of the importance of reading to children aged 0-5 years and support vulnerable families in Wyndham. A targeted, take-home, free, Library resource kit/bag is being developed which will include a variety of early literacy information and resources for parents and carers, along with a token to receive a free board book from any Wyndham Library. The kit will be distributed by key stakeholders to vulnerable families with new babies within Wyndham.

Regular Early Years Library Programs

Wyndham City Libraries run a range of early years programs for children from 0-5 years throughout the school term, including Baby Time, Songs & Stories, Story Time, Rhyme Time in the Park, and Karen Story Time. The Libraries also run other bilingual storytime sessions with hopes to extend to more languages. Due to Covid-19, the library team has adapted some of these programs to online and created a collection of pre-recorded sessions on the Libraries in Wyndham YouTube channel for Baby Time, Rhyme Time & Story Time. At the time of writing, 'in-person' early years programs have recently recommenced.

1000 Books Before School

The 1000 Books Before School (1000BBS) program aims to encourage and support reading and early literacy skills in preschoolers, to assist with school readiness and a love of books and reading. It is hoped that this will inspire and nurture many little bookworms in our community. Starting the week of Monday 30 August, Wyndham City Libraries began a campaign to distribute the 1000 Books Before School supplies to preschoolers and babies, so families could participate in the program during the lockdown and beyond. The 1000BBS supplies include a flier and reading record sheets (1-1000), a pack of pencils, plus a colouring page and sticker sheets. These supplies were added to orders for both Wyndham Libraries to You (WLTY) home delivery and Click & Collect during the lockdown.

Read With Me

Read With Me provides primary school-aged children with an opportunity to practise their reading. During each session, librarians from the Wyndham City Libraries Education and Youth Team provide one-on-one support to guide a child's reading and recommend new authors and books for them to try. During the COVID pandemic, Read With Me continued to run online two afternoons per week via Microsoft Teams.

Library Program Delivery Statistics Summary 2020-2021

Wyndham City Libraries currently offers a range of Literacy and Numeracy Programs for children aged 0-8 years old. Many of the programs usually delivered live in libraries have been impacted due to various COVID-19 lockdowns. A total of 3094 early years programs were delivered during this timeframe of 2020-2021. This was the most recent and complete data at the time of writing this report.

Program	Total	Early Years	Parent / Carer	Junior	Youth	Adult	Senior
Total	3878	3094	784	337	281	822	739
1000 Books before school	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Baby Time	339	0	339	169	163	0	0
Chess	304	300	4	0	0	304	0
Code Club	157	157	0	0	0	133	24
Holiday Activity	62	62	0	0	0	62	0
Imagination Creation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Junior Whizz Kids	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lego	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lego - Online	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Library Tours	16	0	16	0	0	0	0
OSMO Playtime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach	32	20	12	6	6	0	0
Outreach Schools	286	278	8	0	0	0	264
Partnership Programs	231	231	0	0	0	0	169
Read with Me	163	163	0	1	10	132	0
Rhyme Time	111	0	111	58	29	0	0
Songs and Stories	189	0	189	101	101	0	0
Special Children's Program	28	28	0	0	0	28	0
Storytime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Opportunities and Recommendations

To support Wyndham’s 0-8 years cohort now and in the future, the following holistic approach is recommended:

<p>Council Goal <i>A safe, connected and inclusive community. We respect, acknowledge, value and celebrate the First Nations people, our heritage, cultural diversity and multicultural strengths.</i></p>				
<p>Literacy and Numeracy Network Goal <i>The role of the Wyndham 0-8 years Literacy Numeracy Network is to be a platform for collaboration and sharing of ideas and research to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes of 0-8-year-old children in Wyndham. The network will collaborate on a shared project each year, alternating between a project focused on literacy and numeracy annually.</i></p>				
<p>Implemented By A Coordinated Approach To Supporting 0-8 Literacy and Numeracy Programming, Policy and Events</p> <p>Driven by Paint The Town ReAD Program</p>				
<p>Support to MCH and Early Childhood Services</p> <p>MCH Early Literacy and Numeracy Champions</p>	<p>The Suite of Existing 0-8 Library Literacy and Numeracy Programs</p> <p>Free board books to new babies from libraries and MCH</p>	<p>A Walk Through Education</p> <p>Transition support</p> <p>Community Literacy Champions</p>	<p>Education to staff who are working with 0-8 children and their families</p>	<p>Aboriginal Learning</p>
<p>Leading To</p>				
<p>Increased 3 year old and 4-year-old kinder enrollments</p>	<p>Increased confidence for staff in supporting early literacy by families across Wyndham</p>	<p>Uptake of Transition Statements from Kinders by families and schools</p>	<p>Higher participation in library programs for 0-8 years cohort and their families</p>	<p>An increase in outcomes in the AECD through integrated and interconnected 0-8 literacy and numeracy programs and family education delivery</p>

The following provides further detail on the literacy and numeracy initiatives recommended enhancing support for the target 0-8 age cohort and their families in Wyndham:

1. Implementation of Paint The Town ReAD (PTTR) Literacy Program

Paint The Town ReEA is an early literacy movement initiated to encourage families, friends and peers to not only talk but read, sing and rhyme to their young ones from birth. The PTTR movement aims to prepare children for literacy-related studies in school. Additionally, the movement aims to mainly target children in low socio-economic areas or communities that report having over 20% of children struggling within literacy-related aspects. The AEDC stats show Wyndham Vale with a percentage of 25.5% - thus Wyndham Vale could be one of the starting suburbs for PTTR to be rolled out.

Implementing PTTR in Wyndham could help demolish these percentages and increase NAPLAN literacy results by at least 30% (Paint The Town REad, 2021, retrieved online August 2021)

2. A Walk Through Education

Wyndham Community and Education Centre is currently running A Walk Through Education Program, to inform the community on the different elements of education in Wyndham. Where families are identifying gaps in their knowledge to support literacy and numeracy in their young people, there could be a link to using this information gathered from the Walk Through Education to support culturally and linguistically diverse families of children aged 0-8 in Wyndham.

3. Transition Statements

Transition points for the 0-8 cohort are times of added vulnerability, especially as caregivers or educators change between areas such as kindergarten to primary school. The transition into kinder from childcare and home-based learning, as well as the transition from kinder to primary school, is an area that requires further support. The work in the Transition Statement is an excellent start to supporting families to understand the importance of sharing literacy and numeracy milestones, and it is recommended to strengthen systems around these.

4. Community survey based on gaps in data

A needs-based survey would help discover what the needs of families are around early literacy.

5. Supporting Families to Link to Libraries

This might be done through targeted marketing to families, particularly through:

- Read With Me at Home
<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/whats-on/read-me-home-0>
- Board Book Program - raise awareness of the importance of reading from 0-8, and supporting the vulnerable families in Wyndham (
- Early Literacy Program - Library Staff supporting MCH nurses with early literacy resource bags.

6. Other Initiatives for Consideration

- MS Read-A -Thon <https://www.msreadathon.org.au/about>

For over 40 years the MS Readathon has been igniting children's passion for books and adventures. The foundation is a resourceful way to encourage and incorporate reading into the studies of Wyndhams' students to enhance their literacy and reading skills.

- Supporting advocacy such as the proposed National Early Language and Literacy Strategy.

Reference List

Bates, B 2021, *Let's all read with babies from birth so they're ready to learn at school 2021, Paint The Town REad*, retrieved online 22 August 2021, <https://www.paintthetownread.info/>

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2011, *Early Years Learning and Development Framework Evidence Paper Practice Principle 3: High expectations for every child*, Authored for DEECD by Madeleine Saffigna, Amelia Church & Collette Tayler of University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Retrieved online August 2021, <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/highexpect.pdf>

DSS 2015, *Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy - Building Good Practice Booklet*, retrieved online August 2021, https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2015/ed13-0077_ec_literacy_and_numeracy_building_good_practice_resources_booklet_acc.pdf

Kalb, G.R.J. and van Ours, J.C. (2013). Reading to Young Children: A Head-Start in Life? *SSRN Electronic Journal*, [online] 1. Available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/readtoyoungchild.pdf>

National Childcare Accreditation Council, 2008, School readiness and transition to school, retrieved online August 2021, http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_13_school_transition.pdf

Raising Children Network (2018). *Developing literacy*. [online] Raising Children Network. Available at: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/literacy-reading-stories/developing-literacy> [Accessed 10 September. 2021].

Royal Children's Hospital, 2019, School Readiness, retrieved online August 2021, http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CPR_Vol14No3_PS_SchIRead.pdf

Wyndham City 2021, *1000 Books Before School | Wyndham City*. [online] Available at: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/libraries/early-years/1000-books-school> [Accessed 11 September. 2021].

Wyndham City Council 2020, *Health and Development in First Year of School*, retrieved August 2021, <https://wyndham-digital.iconagency.com.au/node/13#health-and-development-in-first-year-of-school>