

Kindergarten Service Statement

Date of Adoption:

Date of Last Review:

Date of Next Review: July 2022

Responsible Officer: Manager Community Support

**Purpose**

This Service Statement affirms Council’s approach to the provision of four year old and three year old kindergarten within an integrated service model in the City of Wyndham. It interfaces with a suite of council policies that relate to the provision of and support for services for children and families. It articulates Councils vision and sets the direction for the development of integrated models of service delivery.

**Context**

100% of Victorian Councils own the facilities that 3 and 4 year old community based sessional kindergarten are delivered from in their municipality. 32% of Councils are Early Years Managers which means that they are responsible for the employment of Educators. 64% of Councils operate a central enrolment system for their municipality.[[1]](#footnote-1)

State funded four year old kindergarten is delivered by a range of providers in Wyndham and through a variety of service types and models, including both long day care and sessional kindergarten. Council recognises that families require flexible options and a diversity of service models to meet their needs.

Council is introducing a model of integrated service delivery. All future service delivery models and facilities that Council develops will align with the following principles;

Services and facilities will:

* Support the integrated delivery of early childhood and related family services;
* Improve access to high quality early childhood services for the local community, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable families;
* Support the establishment of connections with local schools;
* Facilitate access for children of all abilities;
* Enable a positive learning and caring culture in the local area;
* Transform the physical and social environments that impact on child development;
* Enable uninterrupted support for children’s healthy growth, from prenatal to young people accessing education, training and employment;
* Support families to raise their children as well as provide educational and employment opportunities; and
* Build community across residents, institutions and other stakeholders

**Scope**

This statement applies to Council’s support for the planning, support, management and delivery of three and four year old kindergarten services for children in the City of Wyndham. It enables a flexible and iterative approach to the delivery of four year old kindergarten and articulates the vision and sets the direction for future models of service delivery. It enables the extension of enrolment services for 3 year old kindergarten in Wyndham.

**Vision**

Wyndham families have access to four year old kindergarten programs that support the capacity of the family through a range of targeted and integrated programs that respond to local community needs.

The planning, development, design and delivery of kindergarten services in Wyndham align with contemporary National and International models of best practice.

**Value Proposition**

Families have access to locally responsive and affordable sessional kindergarten programs provided by Council staff in integrated settings within Council facilities to meet government standards

**Council’s Role**

Leader

Lead the planning, development and design of four year old kindergarten services to ensure the availability of services where and when they are needed.

Service provider

At 2017 Council provide four year old kindergarten services that respond to the diverse needs of children, families and communities that are delivered within the context of service integration and best value, including; efficiency, cost effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

Plan, design and build infrastructure to support early years services and programs provided by both Council and other organisations for the benefit of local families and children.

Provide centralised enrolment and timetable function on behalf of all State funded four year old kindergarten programs and three year old kindergarten programs within the municipality.

Partner

Work in partnership with a range of stakeholders including children, early years providers , agencies, and schools to build a strong local early years system that values and supports children and their families in Wyndham. Partner with early childhood education and care providers to deliver three and four year old kindergarten programs from Council facilities.

Planner

Work in partnership with a range of community support services, early years providers agencies, education providers and families to plan and facilitate effective and coordinated services for children and their families in the municipality, this includes; service system planning and developments as well as a whole of community approach to meeting the needs of four year old children and their families.

Facilitator/Broker

Play a key role in information dissemination and in connecting local service providers through the facilitation of networks and the maintenance of information sharing systems. Council also supports the capacity of the sector through the provision of early year’s professional development opportunities.

Advocate

Advocate to State and Federal Government on behalf of the Wyndham community to ensure that the funding for and commitment to the provision of early year’s services meets the community’s needs.

**Service Commitment**

*Four Year Old Kindergarten*

* Council is committed to ensuring that children in Wyndham have access to a State funded four year old kindergarten program.

Council will retain the Early Years Manager status by managing a cluster of kindergartens within Wyndham. Kindergarten services will be delivered through an integrated service model that is responsive to the local needs of families.

From analysis of the Local Government Act’s Objectives of a Council, and with consideration to Best Value Principles, we commit to delivering services that are:

• Efficient

• Effective

• Accessible

• Affordable

• Equitable

• Responsive to community needs

• Responsive to community expectations and values

• Promote local employment growth or retention.

The redevelopment of existing sites and the development of new sites will encompass the establishment of an Early Years’ Service Model that includes a suite of integrated early childhood education and care services to meet community need including funded 4-year-old kindergarten.

Where there are new facilities built Council will partner with other specialist providers to deliver services from these sites.

When existing sites are redeveloped opportunities for partnerships to ensure that services are able to meet community need will be considered. The following framework will be used to guide Councils decision making process to determine when services will be delivered by Council and when they will be delivered by a partner.

*Decision Making Framework*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Service principle | Acquittal |
| Efficient  | The model and resourcing will provide value for money, with services and infrastructure delivered at a level of subsidy that is acceptable to Council. Council will seek to create efficiencies through partnering with other specialist and generalist providers. An integrated model can reduce duplication across allied services.  |
| Effective  | Council will ensure access to quality early childhood services for the local community. The planning, development, design and delivery of kindergarten services in Wyndham will align with contemporary national and international models of best practice.  |
| Accessible  | The diversity of our communities is a source of pride, not an access barrier. Families will not be disadvantaged to access Council services as a result of personal characteristics. In our role as leader, planner and our facilitating and leadership role as service provider, we will be cognisant of the cultural and personal needs of our community members, and support the local early years sector to ensure accessibility.  |
| Affordable | Affordability will not be a barrier to receiving quality services. Assessments of service gaps will inform Council’s decision to enter into service sectors to ensure a healthy market.  |
| Equitable | Council recognises that greater effort may be required for some children to achieve equality of opportunity.  |
| Responsive to community needs  | In our service system planning and development role, we will facilitate a whole-of-community approach to meeting the needs of four year old children and their families. We will ensure we base our services on the best information available in a timely manner. As an example of our responsiveness, provision of temporary sites may be established to meet an unplanned community need.  |
| Responsive to community expectations and values | Our services will be delivered through a model and level of subsidy that is acceptable to community members. We will ensure community voice is heard and responded to in our service design process, and reflected in our continuous improvement approach. This includes community preferences for the organisations that deliver services.  |
| Promote local employment growth or retention | We will support local employment. Many of our educators are from the local community. We support the further education and training of our staff for their own improvement as well as to create greater benefit for our community.  |

Council may make an operational decision to deliver kindergarten programs if there are no available partners and services can be delivered in line with the above decision making framework, and are:

* Provided from temporary facilities that are established to meet an unplanned community need; and
* Cost neutral to Council;

*Three Year Old Kindergarten*

* Access to three year old kindergarten will be facilitated in a manner which ensures that the access to State funded four year old programs is not compromised and is cost neutral to Council.
* Council will coordinate a central enrolment system for three year old kindergarten. Coordination and provision of three year old kindergarten will be cost neutral to Council.

**Associated Policies & Documents**

* Wyndham City Plan 2017-2021
* Wyndham Municipal Early Years Plan 2013-2017
* Wyndham Best Start Action Plan
* Asset Management Strategy
* Wyndham Service and Asset Management Strategy (in development)
* Wyndham Community Infrastructure Policy and Framework (in development)
* Wyndham Service Planning Framework (in development)
* Wyndham Lifecourse Framework (in development)
* Education and Care Services National Regulations and Standards October 2011
* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
* Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
1. Information provided by Municipal Association of Victoria, 20th November 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)