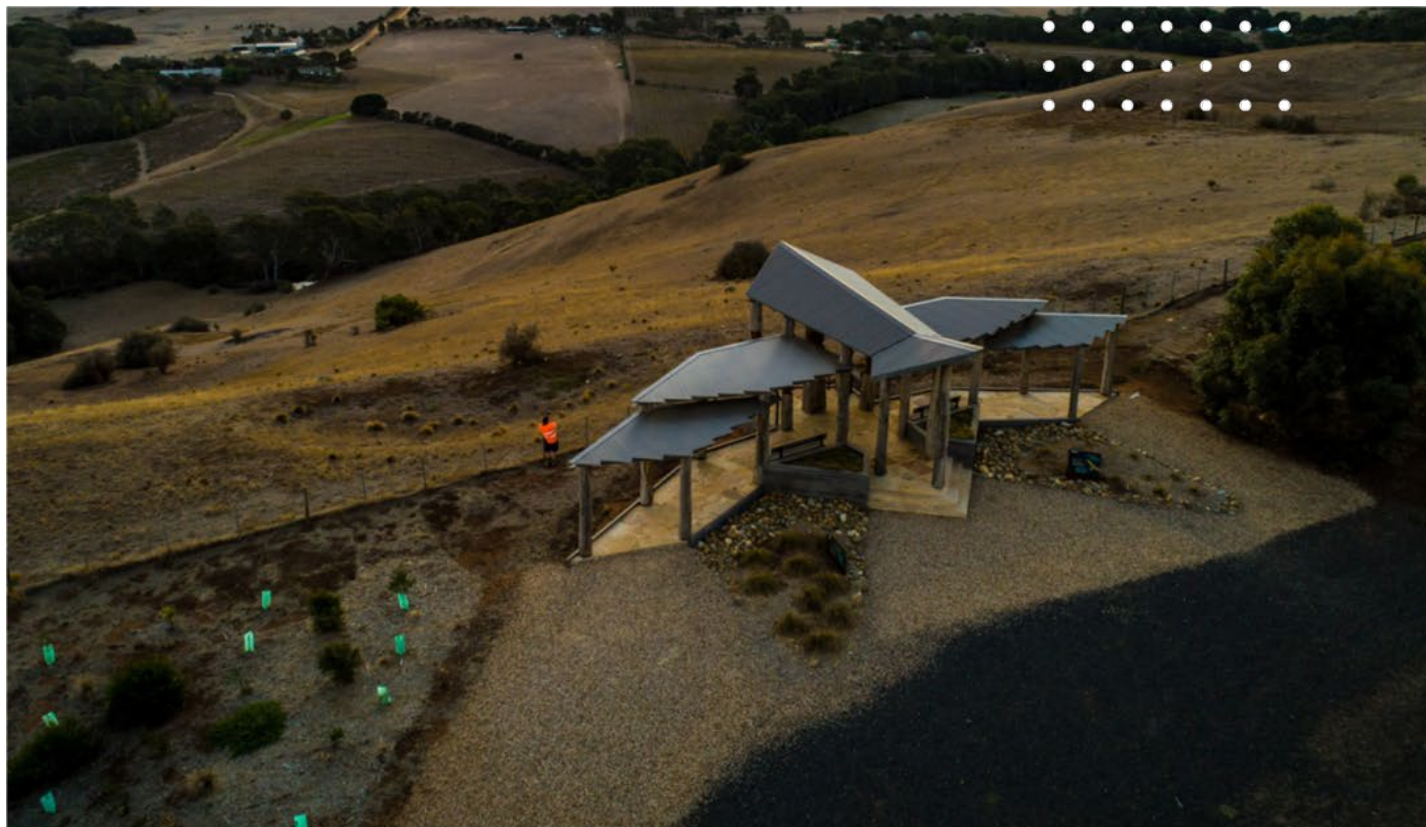




MUNICIPAL EARLY YEARS AND CHILDREN'S PLAN 2025-2029

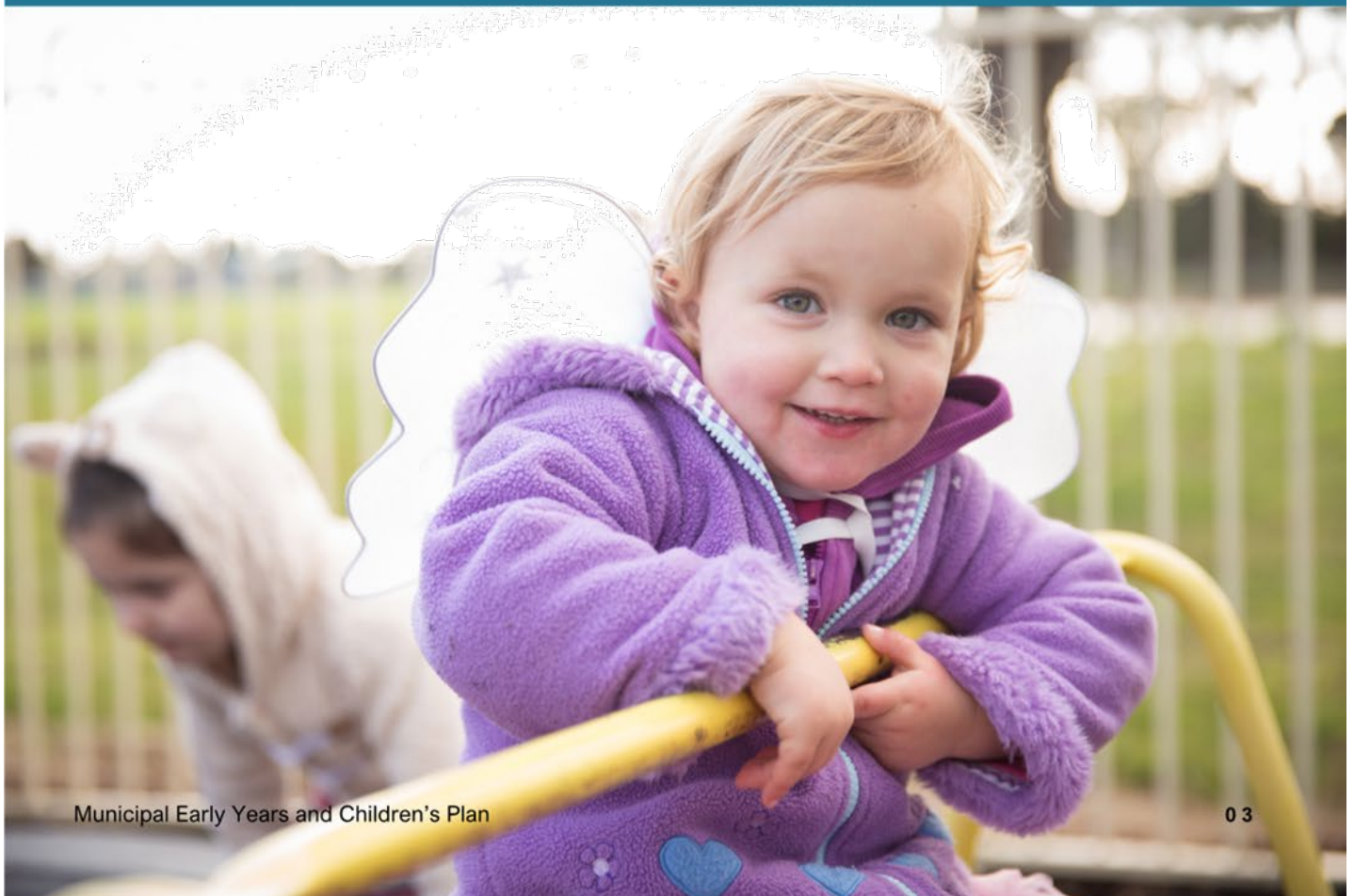


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar People. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians. Council pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging. Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.

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Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan

Message From The Mayor



Sarah Hayden

Golden Plains Shire Mayor

As Mayor of Golden Plains Shire, I am delighted to introduce our Municipal Early Years and Children's Plan, a strategic blueprint that reflects our commitment to supporting the health, wellbeing, and development of children aged 0-12 years in our community.

At Golden Plains Shire, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. From infancy through to early childhood and the primary school years, we recognise the crucial role that families, caregivers, educators, and the broader community play in shaping the future of our youngest residents. This plan lays out our vision for a child-friendly municipality—one where every child is nurtured, valued, and given the opportunities they need to thrive.



Through extensive consultation with families, early childhood professionals, schools, and community groups, this plan identifies key priorities that will guide our efforts in the years ahead. These include accessible early learning and care services, enhanced health and wellbeing programmes, family support initiatives, and opportunities for children to play, learn, and grow in safe and inclusive environments.

Council remains dedicated to working collaboratively with our partners, ensuring that we create an environment where all children and their families feel supported and empowered. By investing in the early years, we are laying the foundation for strong, resilient, and connected communities in Golden Plains Shire, both now and into the future.

I encourage all community members to engage with this plan and be part of our shared commitment to making Golden Plains Shire an even better place for children to flourish. Together, we can ensure that our youngest residents have every opportunity to learn, play, and achieve their full potential.

Golden Plains Shire Council is committed to creating a culture of child safety and recognises that protecting children and young people and preventing and responding to allegations of child abuse, is an organisation-wide responsibility, including empowerment of children and young people, diversity and cultural safety, and involvement of families and communities in our efforts to keep children and young people safeguarded.

About The Strategy

Golden Plains Shire Council’s Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan (MEYCP) 2025-2029 is a local area plan designed to provide a strategic direction for the development and coordination of early years and children’s programs, activities, and other local community processes that impact on children aged 0-12 years.



The MEYCP is not a statutory obligation of local government, however, it is a critical strategy which defines Council’s role in early years and articulates the work undertaken on behalf of children and families in their municipal area. This MEYCP sets the strategy for the Council’s work in early years between 2025-2029.

Golden Plains Shire Council’s Vision and Plan align with the MEYCP by prioritising health, inclusion, education, and community engagement to support children and families

Council Plan Goals & Objectives	MEYCP Goals & Objectives	Alignment
Liveability Health & Wellbeing, Rural & Urban Living, Country Feel, Active & Passive Recreation, Services & Facilities, Activities & Events, Connected Transport	Health & Well-being Improve access to health services, promote nutrition, and advocate for better transport solutions	Shared focus on physical & mental health, food security, and transport accessibility
Prosperity Learning, Education & Training, Employment Opportunities & Pathways, Advocacy & Partnerships	Education & Learning Support early years education, enhance workforce capacity, and facilitate smooth transitions for children	Joint efforts to enhance early learning, workforce development, and school transitions
Community Proud, Safe, Inclusive, Connected, Engaged, Resilient, Supported, Contributing	Diversity & Inclusion Promote cultural safety, strengthen representation, and ensure equitable access to resources	Commitment to inclusivity, representation, and equitable access to essential services
	Social & Community Engagement Strengthen local connections, improve access to social programs, and support inclusive community initiatives	Mutual goal of enhancing community engagement, participation, and intergenerational programs

Who is This For?

CHILDREN

PARENTS

CAREGIVERS

EDUCATORS

SERVICE PROVIDERS

COMMUNITY MEMBERS



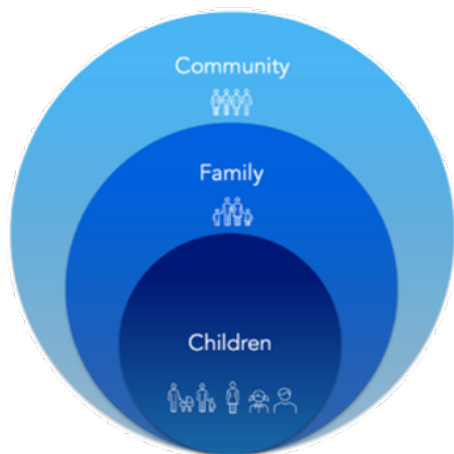
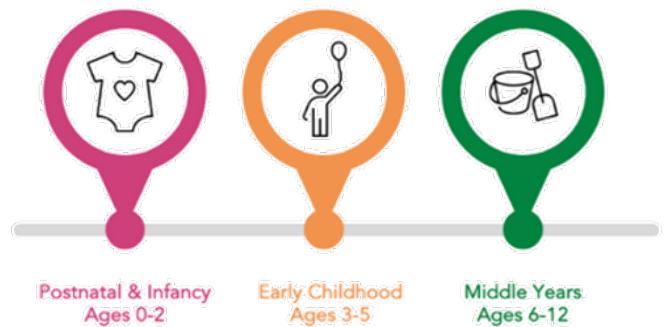
Approach

A Developmental Approach to Early Years & Childhood



Developmental Approach

Utilising a developmental stages approach to segment age groups, the evolving needs of children, young people, and their families at different stages of life – from postnatal & infancy, through the early childhood, and the middle years is recognised. This approach allows us to tailor our programs and services to support each stage of development effectively.



Socio-Ecology Approach

Children’s development is influenced by various socio-ecological factors, including their families and the broader community. These factors play a significant role throughout their lives and has be taken into account when developing strategies for positive change.



Our Community

Golden Plains Shire is located between Ballarat and Geelong and features a vibrant landscape, historic townships and award-winning businesses. The environment's beauty lies in its varied spectacles including river valleys, rolling hills, rugged bushland, miles of golden canola and rocky plains. Golden Plains Shire Council emerged out of the integration of former Bannockburn and Leigh and parts of Grenville and Buninyong Shires in 1994, and today is the fifth fastest growing municipality in regional Victoria.



Municipal Early Years and Children's Plan

07

Demographics

Children’s Population Trends in Golden Plains Shire (0-14 Years)

Young Population (2021)



1,590
0-4 year olds



1,862
5-9 year olds



1,850
10-14 year olds

Projected Population (2034):



2,514 (+58%)
0-4 year olds



2,682 (+44%)
5-9 year olds



2,579 (+39%)
10-14 year olds



Key Growth Areas

Bannockburn & surrounding townships



Drivers of Growth

New housing developments & land expansion



Challenges

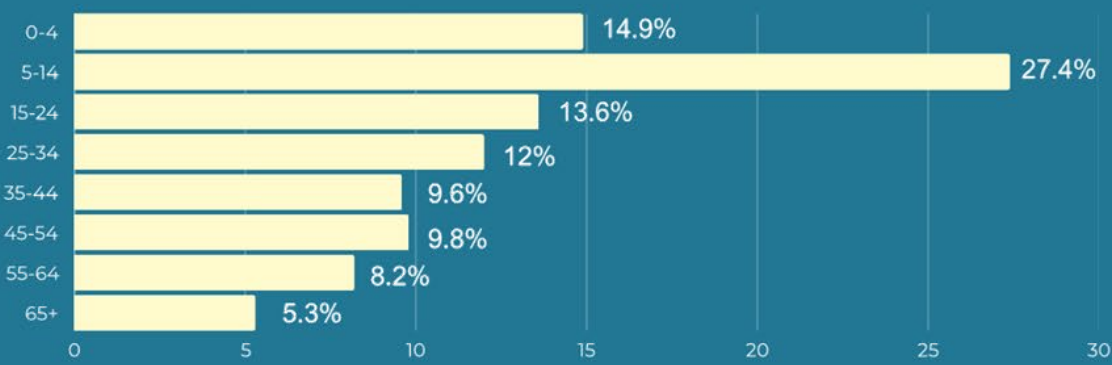
Increased demand for schools, childcare, transport & community services

Geographical Distances





Indigenous Population by Age Group 2021



Golden Plains Shire holds deep cultural significance for the Wadawurrung and Eastern Marr peoples. The population of young people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Golden Plains Shire is growing, with the highest increase in the 5-14 age group, highlighting the need for youth-focused services and community support.

Community Engagement



OVERVIEW

The Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan (MEYCP) for Golden Plains Shire Council was developed through a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process, ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders were considered. The methodology employed a multi-faceted approach to capture diverse perspectives and insights.



ENGAGEMENT METHODS

- The engagement methods included:
- Online community survey
- Targeted consultations (both in-person and virtual)
- Listening sessions at several locations
- Local school projects
- Solutioning workshop

>50



Community members were engaged across the LGA

>65



Individuals completed the community wide survey

>200



Children aged 3 -11 years drew and described their community

>30

Service providers were consulted and provided their input

21



Listening sessions held in Smythesdale, Teesdale, Cape Clear

>15

Community members and internal stakeholders attended workshops to design solutions

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED:

- Families and Community Members
- Education and Early Years Services
- Council Departments and Internal Staff
- Health and Social Services
- Community Organisations and Clubs

Survey Report

Overview of Survey Submissions



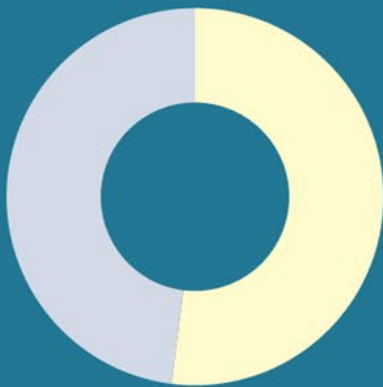
65
Submissions



59
Parents / Carers

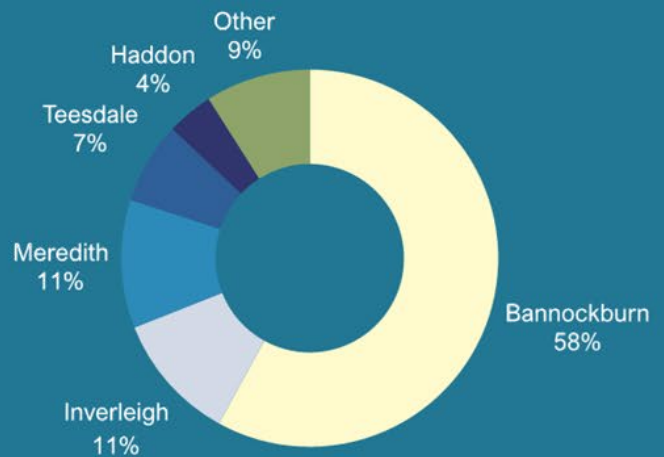


6
Community /
Service Providers



52%

Long Standing
Residents (< 5
Years)



15

Locations



Listening Sessions


Listening sessions were highly effective in gathering real-time feedback on the key themes such as health, well-being, transport, recreation, and so on. These sessions provided a platform for open dialogue, enabling community members to voice their experiences, concerns, and priorities. The information collected was directly reflective of lived experiences, aiding in the development of a more targeted and impactful plan.



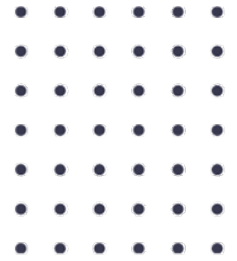
Locations

 Cape Clear Primary School

 Teesdale Kindergarten

 Smythesdale Supported Playgroup





School Projects

200+ children shared their voices for the Municipal Early Years & Children’s Plan.

Children Were Asked:

What would you like to see in your community?

Where do you spend time with your friends?

What activities do you enjoy participating in?

Responses From Schools



Engagement Summary

Where do you hang out?

- Home and friends' houses
- Parks and bushland
- Fishing at Lethbridge Lake
- Bike parks



What do you want to see in the future?

- Christmas celebrations
- New playgrounds and toys
- Swimming pool
- More art and creativity
- Bike trails



Dream Jobs

- Artist, dancer, rapper
- Firefighter, police officer, ambulance worker
- Ice cream maker, shopkeeper
- Engineer, stunt performer
- Photographer, Navy officer, explosive expert



Activities Kids Want

- Footy, cricket, scouts
- Camping, building huts
- Gaming, Dungeons & Dragons
- Ninja Warrior course, trampolining



What do you love about where you live?

- Lots of trees
- Friendly people who know each other
- Less traffic
- Quiet and peaceful
- Quick commute to school



Ideas for the Community

- More bus stops
- Road lights and bike tracks
- Expanded local shops
- Gymnastics and cricket nets



Council's Role

Golden Plains Shire Council supports the health, wellbeing, development and care of children and families throughout the municipality. This support is demonstrated through advocacy, service provision, community capacity building, strategic planning, and partnerships.

Advocacy

Golden Plains Shire Council actively seeks and participates in advocacy opportunities to support children and families. Council engages with various community level stakeholders to gather insights and advocate for the needs of the community. This commitment ensures the voices of children and families are heard and considered in policy making and service delivery.

Community Capacity

Golden Plains Shire Council actively working to enhance community capacity by supporting families and children aged 0-12 within the community. This underscores the Council's commitment to creating an environment where children can thrive, and families can access the support they need

Strategic Planning

Golden Plains Shire Council plays a crucial role in strategic planning ensuring future growth is well supported by appropriate and quality infrastructure as well as education, health and care services. These efforts include creating plans that address the needs of the community.

Service Provision

Golden Plains Shire Council is dedicated to deliver quality education, care and maternal and child health services. This commitment includes providing associated parenting support programs to ensure families receive comprehensive support. Council aims to support the well-being and development of children and families within the community.

Partnering

Golden Plains Shire Council actively facilitates partnerships and collaborates with all levels of Government, service providers, organisations to deliver health and education services. These collaborative efforts ensure that the community has access to high quality services and support. By working together with various stakeholders, Council aims to create a cohesive and supportive environment for all residents.

Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan

The MEYCP is structured around four key themes designed in line with the Victorian Early Years Compact to foster holistic well-being and development of children and families in the region. These areas provide a comprehensive framework that encompasses key areas such as health and wellbeing, education and learning, diversity and inclusion, and social & community. By segmenting into these four areas, the MEYCP aims to address the diverse needs of children and their families, fostering a supportive environment where they can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the community.



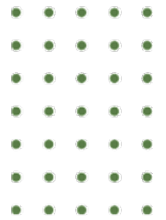
Key Themes

The Municipal Early Years & Children’s Plan is built around four key themes that align with the Victorian Early Years Compact and reflect the priorities of families and communities across Golden Plains Shire. These themes provide a structured approach to ensuring the holistic well-being, development, and inclusion of children from birth through to early adolescence.

By addressing these four focus areas, the MEYCP aims to create a supportive, connected, and thriving environment where all children and families—regardless of their background or location—can access essential services, feel valued, and actively participate in their community.



Key Themes



Health & Wellbeing

OVERVIEW



High childhood immunisation rates, but low adolescent vaccination uptake



Asthma rates exceed the state average; other conditions are lower



Strong mental well-being with high community trust and resilience



Healthcare access is limited, with most services in Bannockburn & Smythesdale



Residents travel to Geelong, Ballarat, or Melbourne for specialist care



Key priorities: Expanding local health services, improving transport, and boosting health awareness.

Access to health and wellbeing services in Golden Plains Shire is limited and concentrated in Bannockburn and Smythesdale, where General Practitioners and some Allied Health services are available. Outside these towns, families often need to travel to Geelong, Ballarat, or Melbourne to access specialist care such as paediatrics or mental health support—creating challenges around transport, availability, and long wait times.

Despite these gaps, the Shire shows strong community resilience, trust, and high childhood immunisation rates. Asthma rates are above the state average, but other long-term conditions such as diabetes and heart disease are less common than elsewhere in Victoria.

While community centres across the Shire offer spaces for outreach, service availability remains inconsistent. Mental health support—particularly for children—continues to be a critical need. With ongoing population growth, especially among young families, expanding timely and local access to comprehensive health services is essential.



4
General Practices



3
Community Health Providers



5
Community Centres



7
Pharmacies



2
Dental Services



Health & Wellbeing Goals

Goal 1: Access to health and well-being programs, with a focus on mental health, nutrition, and food security.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
1. Access to health and well-being programs, with a focus on mental health, nutrition, and food security.	Partner with providers to provide consultation, support programs and community workshops which increases access to relevant health and wellbeing services	H	M	Partner	Service Providers
	Collaborate with community to further engage children and families in food network, security and gardening initiatives	M	M	Partner	Service Providers Primary Schools Early Childhood Service Providers
	Support opportunities for information sharing, workshops and incursions for children and families around nutrition and healthy living	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers Primary Schools Early Childhood Service Providers



Health & Wellbeing Goals

Goal 2: Strengthen community voice through engagement, surveys and conversations.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
2. Strengthen community voice through engagement, surveys and conversations.	Identify opportunities for conversations and engagement with community - in community including children 0-12	H	H	Strategic Planner Capacity Builder	Local schools
	Collaborate with service providers and regional networks to maintain strong advocacy platforms for access to health services and funding	H	H	Partner	Service Providers Regional Networks
	Use data from community check-ins to prioritise program enhancements that align with identified needs. Undertake community and service user check-ins which provide feedback on health and wellbeing priorities.	M	H	Advocate	Service Providers

Key Themes



Health & Wellbeing Goals

Goal 3: Advocate for accessible transport solutions, especially for vulnerable populations.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
3. Advocate for accessible transport solutions, especially for vulnerable populations.	Advocate for transport subsidies, taxi vouchers and grant opportunities, to improve accessibility for vulnerable families	H	H	Advocate	Community Groups
	Advocate for improved Bus services that align with community need	M	M	Advocate	Community Groups
	Identify gaps in transport access through community consultation and partnerships initiatives	M	H	Strategic Planner	Community Groups



Health & Wellbeing Goals

Goal 4: Promote opportunities for social connection through existing community networks, facilities, and programs.

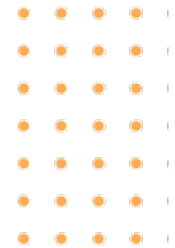
Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
4. Promote opportunities for social connection through existing community networks, facilities, and programs.	Provide facility access for the hosting of inclusive activities esp. those that reduce isolation	H	H	Partner	Community Groups Service Providers
	Promote intergenerational events and create opportunities for diverse age groups to connect	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers
	Partner with local groups to improve communication. Develop communication processes that improve the promotion of social and community engagement events and opportunities throughout the Shire	M	M	Partner	Community Groups



Key Themes



Education & Learning

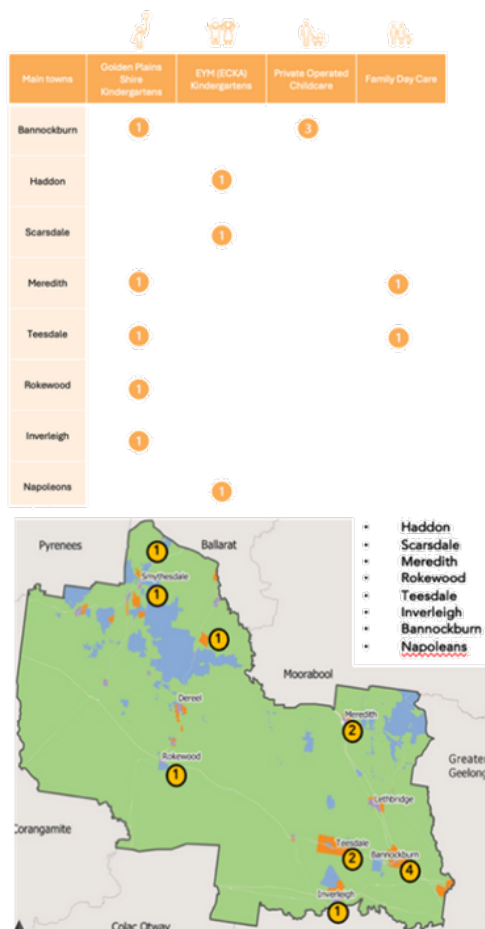


OVERVIEW

Early Childhood Education and Care services in Golden Plains Shire are distributed throughout the municipality. The Shire has eight sessional kindergartens, four of which are located adjacent to primary schools, however, childcare services are concentrated in Bannockburn, making access difficult for families in other areas.

All Childcare and Kindergarten services offer 15 hours of funded 3- and 4-year-old Kindergarten programs an alignment with State Government's Best Start Best Life (BSBL) reform. This reform will also see the transition from 15 hours per week of 4-year-old Kindergarten to 30 hours per week of Pre-Prep from 2028. This aspect of the BSBL reform will place further demand on both infrastructure and the early years workforce.

Whilst continued planning and investment are necessary to ensure all families can access quality, local education, with the current 15 primary schools, 15 OSHC services, and 6 playgroups, Golden Plains offers a strong foundation for early learning.



8
Kindergartens

3
Private Childcare

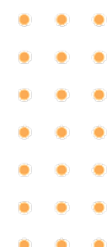
15
Primary Schools

7
Playgroups

15
OSHC Services

Municipal Early Years and Children's Plan

Education & Learning Goals



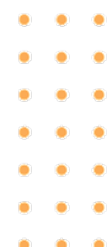
Goal 1: Support diversity and inclusion within the education system, particularly in early years learning.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
1. Support diversity and inclusion within the education system, particularly in early years learning.	Collaborate with schools and early years providers to implement inclusive policies and practices that address diversity	M	M	Partner	Early Years Service Providers
	Promote programs that encourage access to early years education for children from diverse and vulnerable backgrounds	M	M	Advocate	Early Years Service Providers
	Ensure council resources (e.g., communications, facilities) support diversity and inclusion outcomes in education settings	M	M	Advocate Strategic Planner	Local schools

Key Themes



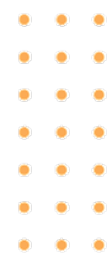
Education & Learning Goals



Goal 2: Strengthen collaboration with state government initiatives to deliver high-quality education reforms.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
2. Strengthen collaboration with state government initiatives to deliver high-quality education reforms.	Support the implementation of Best Start Best Life reform by ensuring comprehensive community level planning to accommodate the changes in supply and demand for Pre-Prep and Fee Sessional Kindergarten from 2026	H	H	Advocate	Early Years Service Providers
	Collaborate with state education departments to ensure the Shire is represented in early years planning initiatives	M	M	Partner	State Government
	Use council platforms and resources to promote funded health, education and care for families across the region	M	M	Advocate	N/A

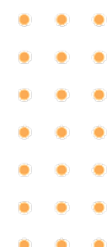
Education & Learning Goals



Goal 3: Enhance workforce capacity through support and networking opportunities for early years educators.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
3. Enhance workforce capacity through support and networking opportunities for early years educators.	Facilitate networking opportunities to share resources, best practices, and professional challenges	M	M	Capacity Builder Service Provider	Community Groups
	Partner with education networks to provide information and resources that support workforce capacity	M	M	Partner	Local schools
	Advocate for resourcing solutions to address workforce challenges in early years programs, aligning with the Golden Plains Shire Early Years Workforce Plan	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers

Education & Learning Goals



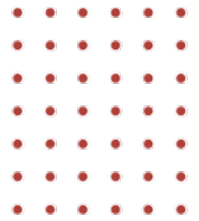
Goal 4: Facilitate smooth transitions for children through established programs.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
4. Facilitate smooth transitions for children through established programs	Promote consistency and municipal wide implementation of transition to programs including Kindergarten orientation events and transition programs to both Primary and High Schools (those both within and outside GPS)	M	M	Strategic Planner	Local Schools
	Use Council social media and communication platforms to cross promote orientation, enrolment and transition days, events and programs	M	M	Advocate Service Provider	N/A
	Share best practise and support through networking groups eg. Kindergarten orientation programs and resources	M	M	Capacity Builder Strategic Planner	Community Groups

Key Themes



Diversity and Inclusion



OVERVIEW



5% speak a language other than English including German, Croatian & Dutch



Since 2016, the number of residents born overseas has increased



1.5% of the population in the region identifies as Indigenous



4.5% of children (5-19) need assistance with core activities

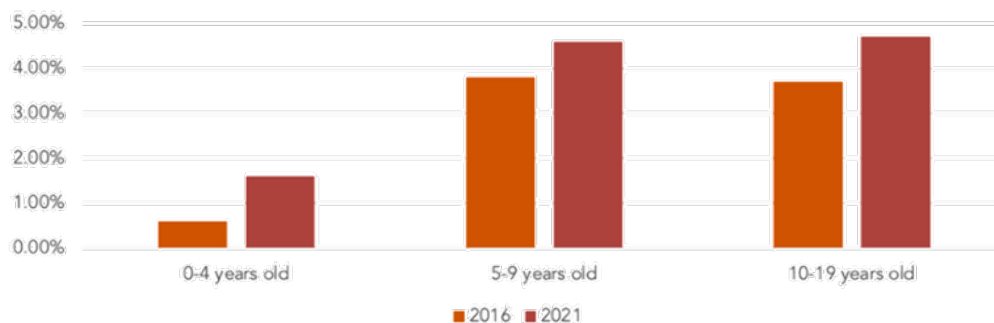


Key priorities: NDIS room hire, improved transport, and accessible information.

Golden Plains Shire is becoming increasingly diverse, with 5% of residents speaking a language other than English—most commonly German, Croatian, and Dutch—and a steady rise in overseas-born residents since 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.5% of the population, while 4.5% of children aged 5–19 require assistance with core activities, highlighting a growing demand for inclusive support services.

The rise in children needing assistance across all age cohorts underscores the importance of accessible and inclusive early years services. Council’s Access and Inclusion Network, alongside early childhood providers, plays a vital role in ensuring access to allied health support, inclusion aides, preschool field officers, and family support services.

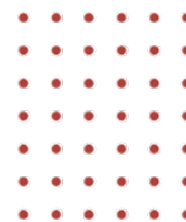
Percentage of Total Age Group Who Need Assistance With Core Activities (2016 & 2021)



Key Themes



Diversity and Inclusion Goals



Goal 1: Strengthen First Nations Cultural Safety and Inclusion in Early Years Services

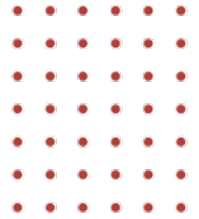
Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
1. Strengthen First Nations Cultural Safety and Inclusion in Early Years Services	Advocate for cultural training into Maternal and child health, early years, and primary school professional development	H	M	Advocate Partner	Early Childhood Service Providers
	Ensure Wadawurrung perspectives are included in cultural safety training programs	H	M	Advocate	Multicultural Service Providers Community Leaders
	Collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to provide early years educators with language and cultural learning opportunities	H	M	Partner	Multicultural Service Providers Community Leaders



Key Themes



Diversity and Inclusion Goals



Goal 2: Advocate for inclusive resources, facilities, and ongoing funding opportunities.

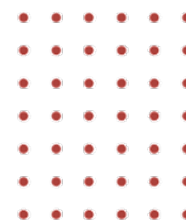
Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
2. Advocate for inclusive resources, facilities, and ongoing funding opportunities.	Seek funding opportunities through partnerships and/or agreements to undertake minor ECEC facility upgrades with specific reference to enhancing accessibility and inclusivity.	M	M	Partner Strategic Planner Service Provider	Early Childhood Service Providers
	Support ongoing review of early years facilities for compliance with accessibility standards	M	M	Advocate	Early Childhood Service Providers



Key Themes



Diversity and Inclusion Goals



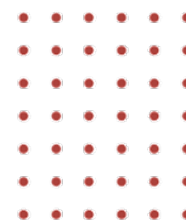
Goal 3: Strengthen representation and participation from diverse groups in council programs and advisory committees.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
3. Strengthen representation and participation from diverse groups in council programs and advisory committees.	Ensure diverse representation in the Active Ageing and Inclusion Advisory Committee, with input from the early years sector	M	M	Capacity Builder	Service Providers
	Develop inclusive engagement tools and practices to encourage participation from underrepresented groups in council initiatives	M	M	Strategic Planner	Early Childhood Service Providers
	Promote the use of safe and inclusive language, visuals, and processes to ensure all community members feel represented	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers

Key Themes



Diversity and Inclusion Goals



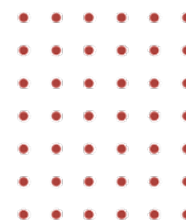
Goal 4: Promote events and initiatives that celebrate diversity across the Shire.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
4. Promote events and initiatives that celebrate diversity across the Shire.	Host and promote annual events that recognise diversity and culture	M	M	Partner Advocate	Community Leaders
	Ensure that all council operated ECEC service develop and have endorsed by Traditional Owners service reconciliation Action plans (narrowarralli)	M	M	Advocate Service Provider	Early Childhood Service Providers Community Leaders
	Aligned with Councils endorsed Reconciliation Action plan use council communication platforms to share stories and celebrate diverse families, cultures, and abilities	M	M	Advocate	N/A

Key Themes



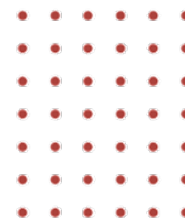
Diversity and Inclusion Goals



Goal 5: Promote events and initiatives that celebrate diversity across the Shire.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
5. Support diversity and inclusion within the education system, particularly in early years learning.	Promote and share best practice guidelines and initiatives relevant to inclusion and diversity with local schools and EC providers	H	M	Advocate Service Provider	Service Providers
	Promote and share best practice guidelines and initiatives relevant to inclusion and diversity with local schools and EC providers	M	M	Advocate	Early Childhood Service Providers
	Promote programs that encourage access for children from diverse and vulnerable backgrounds	M	M	Advocate	Early Childhood Service Providers
	Ensure Council Early Years resources support diversity and inclusion	M	M	Capacity Builder	Service Providers

Key Themes



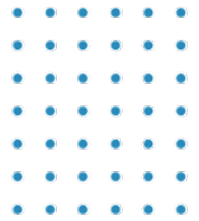
Diversity and Inclusion Goals

Goal 6: Ensure equitable access to services and programs for all families, including those with diverse needs.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
6. Ensure equitable access to services and programs for all families, including those with diverse needs.	Advocate for community-based NDIS area coordinator to improve access to disability support for families within the Shire	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers
	Review Councils ECEC programs, documentation, forms and resources for accessibility and prioritising areas to improve	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers
	Consider the needs and cultural safety of diverse families when planning community programs and events	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers



Key Themes



Social & Community

OVERVIEW



Crime Rates:

Golden Plains Shire’s criminal incident rate was found to be lower when compared to the rest of Victoria



Sporting Clubs:

Home to many competitive clubs like football, netball, cricket, equestrian, soccer, motorbike racing, gymnastics



Library:

15.49% of the population have a library membership
Loans per population: 3.64
Visits per population: 1.61



Key Priorities: After-school/holiday programs, expanded transport, low-cost activities, and boosting volunteerism

Golden Plains Shire offers a safe and connected environment for families, with a criminal incident rate significantly lower than the Victorian average. The Shire is home to a range of competitive sporting clubs—including football, netball, cricket, equestrian, soccer, gymnastics, and motorbike racing—providing valuable opportunities for physical activity and community involvement.

Library access is supported through one permanent library in Bannockburn and nine mobile library stops servicing smaller townships. Currently, 15.49% of the population are members, with an average of 3.64 loans and 1.61 visits per person—indicating steady, yet expandable, community engagement.

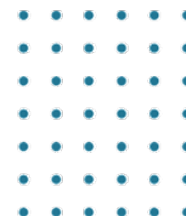
Recreational infrastructure across the Shire includes 28 public open spaces, 9 skate parks, 4 golf courses, and numerous sporting facilities. While these spaces support active lifestyles, engagement data highlights a gap in non-sport-based programs, especially for children and young people who prefer creative or social activities outside of sport.



Key Themes



Social & Community Goals



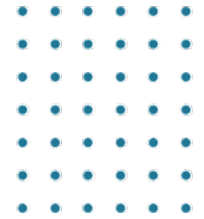
Goal 1: Improve access to social and community programs by removing barriers to participation.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
1. Improve access to social and community programs by removing barriers to participation.	Advocate for family friendly transport solutions. Seek recommendations and ideas for appropriate family friendly transport solutions including sourcing grant income to support fuel/taxi vouchers for our most vulnerable clients	M	M	Advocate	Service Providers
	Partner with providers to explore opportunities to subsidize program access for vulnerable families	M	M	Partner	Service Providers
	Identify and address barriers to participation through regular community engagement and consultation	M	M	Advocate	N/A

Key Themes



Social & Community Goals



Goal 2: Support community providers in delivering safe and inclusive programs.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
2. Support community providers in delivering safe and inclusive programs.	Provide resources and support to organisations reliant on volunteers to ensure they are fully aware of child safety training, risks and management	M	M	Capacity Builder Service Provider	Local Community Groups Service Providers

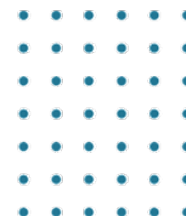


Municipal Early Years and Children's Plan

Key Themes



Social & Community Goals



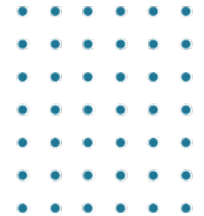
Goal 3: Strengthen communication channels to connect families with available services and programs.

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
3. Strengthen communication channels to connect families with available services and programs.	Enhance communication about existing programs and services through platforms such as Story Park, council newsletters, and digital resources	M	M	Capacity Builder	Service Providers Community Leaders
	Use council-led outreach initiatives to connect families with providers offering social and community programs	M	M	Advocate Service Provider	N/A
	Maintain up-to-date information about community services, ensuring accessibility for diverse families across the Shire. Develop resources for Council and Community service providers to review and assess programs and events against accessible and inclusive benchmarks	M	M	Strategic Planner	Service Providers

Key Themes



Social & Community Goals



Goal 4: Promote intergenerational and social connection opportunities

Goal	Action	Impact	Priority	Council's Role	Partners
4. Promote intergenerational and social connection opportunities	Encourage partnerships that enable and value intergenerational programs to connect cross aged cohorts	M	M	Capacity Builder Advocate	Service Providers
	Support local providers to access council and community spaces for new and emerging groups and clubs	M	M	Capacity Builder	Local Community Groups



Measuring Success

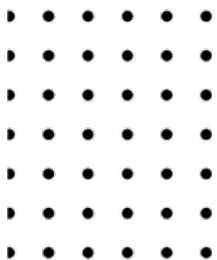
Monitoring & Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation framework will ensure Council and local service providers set aside time to regularly reflect on and review progress towards identified actions in line with the indicative measures. Ongoing review of the Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan ensures it remains a working document, which guides Golden Plains Shire Council providers in their efforts to promote better outcomes for children and families.

- **Every 1 Year** Council will review and monitor its proposed actions annually to evaluate the outcomes against the success metrics and update the priority and implementation timeline.

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

- **Every 5 Years** Council will review its commitment areas every 5 years and inform the development of the next Municipal Early Years and Children’s Plan.



Next Steps

Golden Plains Shire Council's Municipal Early Years & Children's Plan (MEYCP) 2025–2029 sets a clear and ambitious path for supporting children and families across the region. Developed through extensive research, community engagement, and collaboration with key stakeholders, this strategy outlines practical and impactful actions to enhance the well-being, education, and social inclusion of children aged 0-12.

Over the next four years, Golden Plains Shire Council will work closely with families, educators, health professionals, and community organisations to bring this plan to life. The implementation roadmap ensures that the strategy is action-oriented, measurable, and adaptable to the evolving needs of our growing community.

Acknowledgement

Golden Plains Shire Council sincerely thanks all community members, families, educators, service providers, and partners who contributed to the development of the Municipal Early Years & Children's Plan 2025–2029. Your insights, experiences, and commitment have shaped a strategy that reflects the real needs and aspirations of our growing community.

We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We honour their enduring connection to Country and recognise Elders past, present, and emerging. Their rich cultural heritage continues to play a vital role in shaping the future for our children and families.

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