



# Municipal Early Years Plan

2012 - 2015

**This Plan will assist the Northern Grampians Shire to plan, implement and partner with other groups to provide and facilitate early childhood care and education programs in the municipality**

Adopted by Council 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012

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The Northern Grampians Shire Council wishes to thank the community members, early childhood care and education professionals, groups, agencies, organisations, individuals and families who participated with Council Officers in the development of this plan.

# 1. What is a Municipal Early Years Plan?

The Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) is a local area plan designed to provide for the development and coordination of early years programs, activities and other local community development processes that impact on children 0 – 8 years in the municipality.

The Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 – 2015 has a greater emphasis on the involvement of the whole community, groups, services and all early childhood education and care providers that are working to the same outcome of providing children with the best opportunities to develop to their full potential.

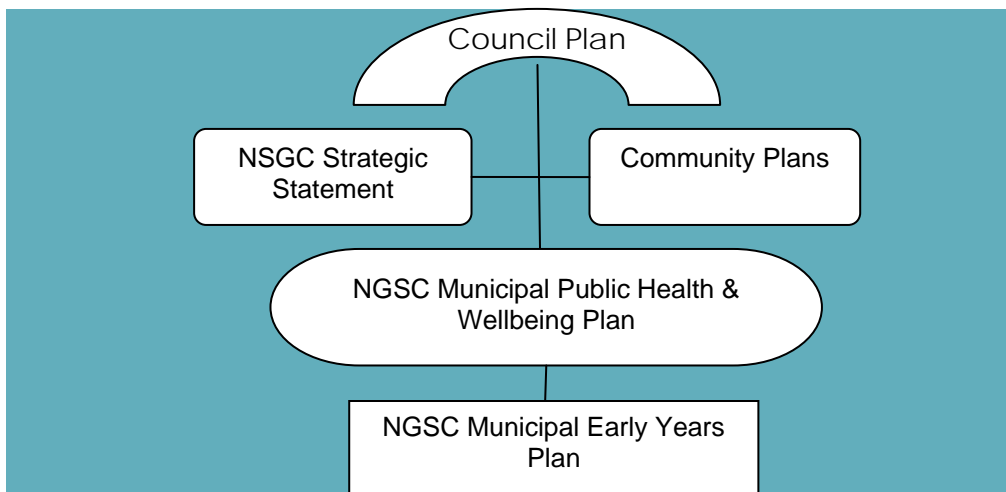
All Local Government Council Plans, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans and Municipal Strategic Statements are required by statute. While the Municipal Early Years Plan is not required by statute it is recognised to be an important local area planning document that allows Council's to focus on the universal development and delivery of early childhood services in the municipality.

By actively planning for the future of early childhood services, Council is able to be forward thinking in seeking opportunities to improve and assist in the development of services for young children through lobbying, advocating and building on existing partnerships while continually developing new partnerships. Through the updating of mapping services, Council is also able to visualise the strengths and weakness in the provision of children's services and plan for the future.

The Victorian State Government has specifically acknowledged the key leadership role of Local Government in early years planning. In August 2009 the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) signed a Partnership Agreement which recognises the collaborative relationship between the DEECD and councils in planning, development and provision of early year's programs.<sup>1</sup>

The Council Plan informs the development of the Municipal Early Years Plan as shown in the diagram below;

Figure 1 Structure of MEYP within Council planning



The age range for the Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 - 2015 has been raised to 8 years of age, reflecting the national approach of linking early childhood development into the age bracket of 0 – 8 years through new national framework initiatives such as the Early Years Learning and Development Framework, National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards.

<sup>1</sup> Municipal Early Years Planning Framework and Practical Resource Guide, May 2011  
Northern Grampians Shire Council Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 - 2015

*Our support for children and their families recognises that needs change through different stages of life. Our learning and development systems must adapt to meet these needs and ensure appropriate support for children, young people and their families.*

*This requires a lifecycle approach to children and young people's development and learning from birth to adulthood.<sup>2</sup>*

Council is the provider and supporter of many of the early childhood services in the municipality, however it is not alone in providing these types of services and assistance to the children and their families, this is one of the many reasons why Council's new MEYP is written to be inclusive of all services that supports young children and their families.

Building on the Municipal Early Years Plan 2008 - 2011, Council's role is still focused on developing a realistic and achievable Municipal Early Years Plan achieving the following objectives:

- Set a clear, strategic local direction,
- Promote beneficial partnerships and networks,
- Create an equitable, friendlier service system that is better understood by families,
- Highlight key local education, care and health issues and provide a realistic plan to address them,
- Promote linkages across Council, families and the community,
- Integrate specific service programs; e.g. the Maternal and Child Health Service direction with the whole early years' service system,
- Position Council to attract funding and resources for new initiatives and projects,
- Provide an influential collective force on government policy,
- Assist in the Best Value process for children's services,
- Enable Council to minimise any wasteful use of resources,
- Provide a guideline for facility planning, evaluation and development,
- Build on the roles already undertaken by Councils and provide a more formal and consistent framework for current and new emerging roles,
- Provide a strong advocacy tool for improved service funding and equitable cost sharing across the different levels of government,
- Develop valuable partnerships and resource sharing with groups in the community,
- Create an empowered, informed and a satisfied community,
- Link local government into the international advancement on critical early years reform (e.g. COAG National Agreement on Early Childhood Education),
- Clarify Council's current and future role in the early years at a local, regional, state and national level<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>2</sup> Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development, September 2008

<sup>3</sup> NGSC Municipal Early Year's Plan 2008 - 2011

## 2. Council Plan link to Municipal Early Years Plan

The current Council Plan was endorsed by Council in 2009 and was reviewed again by Council in April 2011. The Council Plan gives a strategic direction for the continuing improvement of the municipality for its residents, businesses and visitors to continue onwards towards '*Creating a Better Lifestyle and Environment*'. Within the Council Plan there are three outcomes that relate directly to the new MEYP. These have been referred to throughout the development of this Plan;

### **Outcome 1.1 A family friendly environment which provides quality family and child support services**

1.1.1 Ensure the community has quality childcare services

1.1.2 Provide and promote services that support families in meeting the health needs of children

### **Outcome 1.5 A Community with the capacity and willingness to support all people**

1.5.1 Partner with the community to plan for their future

### **Outcome 2.7.1 Buildings and facilities meeting the needs of the community**

2.7.1 Provide, maintain and develop Council buildings, facilities and amenities<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Council's role in Early Years in the municipality

Council provides early year's services to the townships of Stawell and St Arnaud within the municipality.

These services are provided to enhance and support families. This assist families to be able to return or join the workforce, follow study opportunities, provides respite care, prepares children for entry into the first years of formal schooling and allow for socialising opportunities for their children. Council offers two Maternal and Child Health Services that are located in its Children's Services buildings, also offering several early childhood education and care programs under one roof.

### **Council provides the following early childhood services and programs;**

- Long Day Care Centre's Stawell & St Arnaud,
- Vacation Care Program in St Arnaud,
- 3 & 4 year old Kindergarten in St Arnaud,
- Maternal & Child Health Services - Stawell & St Arnaud,
- Enhanced Maternal & Child Health Services – Stawell & St Arnaud,
- HACC services,
- Immunisation sessions Stawell & St Arnaud,
- Baby capsule, car seat and booster seat hire service Stawell and
- Library Services, Stawell & St Arnaud (through Wimmera Regional Library Service).

### **Council provides support to the following services;**

- Playgroups,
- Mother Goose Playgroup for vulnerable families in partnership with Wimmera Uniting Care and Centacare,
- Consultation room for use by; visiting specialists, Hearing Test services for newborn babies, family support services and
- Primary Schools.

### **Council Facility Provision;**

- Council owns and maintains Child Care and Kindergartens buildings in Stawell and St Arnaud,
- Maternal and Child Health venues,
- Libraries and
- Playgrounds, bicycle ways and public open spaces.

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<sup>4</sup> NGSC Council Plan 2009 - 2013

There are many other organisations that provide services and support to young children and their families:

**In the wider community other providers of early childhood education and care and support services are;**

- Primary Schools (public and private) located at Stawell, Great Western, Concongella, Marnoo, Navarre, Halls Gap, St Arnaud and two secondary colleges,
- Skene Street Specialist School Stawell – special school for children with a disability,
- One private long day care child care centre, currently incorporating a 4 year old non-funded Kindergarten program (providing a funded Kindergarten program from 2013, to be confirmed) in Stawell,
- Two Kindergartens located in Stawell providing 3 year old Kindergarten and funded 4 year old programs, operated by the Stawell and District Pre-School Association,
- Family Day Care providers in Stawell, coordinated by Wimmera Uniting Care,
- Parent run playgroups at Pomonal/Halls Gap, Stawell, Great Western and St Arnaud,
- GP medical practices, Hospital and dental services at Stawell,
- GP medical practice and Hospital at St Arnaud,
- Budja Budja Women's and Children's Group at Halls Gap and other outreach allied health services and General Practitioner,
- Family support services offered through Wimmera Uniting Care; Child First, Child Protection and Foster Care.

**Strengthening Communities – getting the best start**

- Council's Maternal and Child Health services is the first point of call for all families to access their child's key ages and stages assessments, provide immunisation advice, health care, parenting advice for their children and referral services. The Maternal and Child Health Nurses are a vital resource for families in keeping a track of how their children are developing and whether any outside assistance or referral is necessary for the health and wellbeing of the child and family. Maternal and Child Health Nurses have been closely involved in the development of Council's new MEYP.
- An area that had been identified in needing assistance in the MEYP 2009 -2011 within the shire, was connecting with vulnerable families in the St Arnaud region. A partnership has been established with Wimmera Uniting Care and Centacare to work closely with all families through a 'Mother Goose' Parenting Program that has brought families from all backgrounds including vulnerable families together to learn how to interact and play with their children. Council provides support with access to the St Arnaud Children's Precinct to host the playgroup. The availability of the Maternal and Child Health Nurse on site and child care places when availability exists. Playgroup sessions are lead by 'Mother Goose' trained and experienced staff. Parents can discuss issues with the staff such as housing, welfare, training opportunities and receive direct pathways to the correct agencies and organisations to assist them. The group has been developing well with some parents meeting outside of the playgroup to offer support and assistance in times of need and therefore reducing the feeling of isolation for many parents.
- Council has been an active driver in ensuring that families are aware of the services and support services that are available within the shire. Through the Council's Community Directory and Council Webpage families can access information about the services that are available. Council provides many venues for use by playgroups, community groups and organisations so that they have a suitable meeting place to run their activities.

## 4. Development of the Municipal Early Years Plan

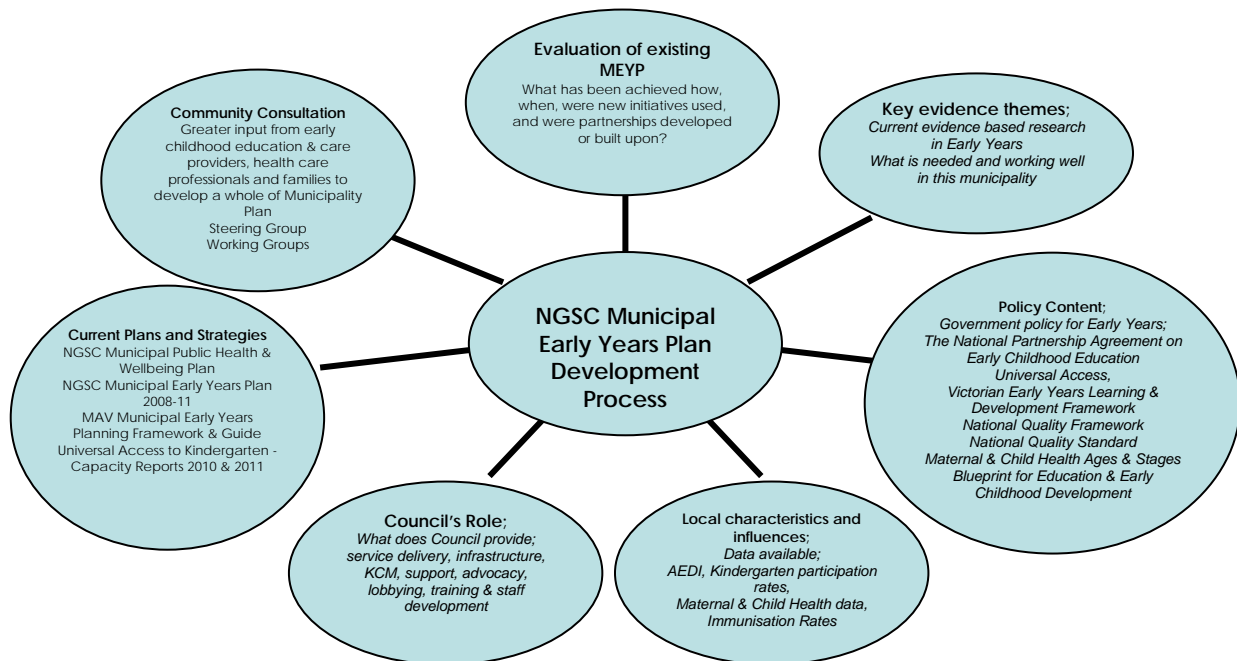
There are many factors that have led to develop the new MEYP to be an inclusive plan incorporating services and organisations not operated by Council. Council is not able to provide all services required by the community, so a collaborative approach to early years is the best option.

One of the largest drivers of developing the new MEYP inclusiveness is the wide ranging changes that have started to be implemented in the provision of early childhood education and care in Australia.

*There is now strengthened focus on achieving locally determined early year's outcomes in partnership with community stakeholders, who can equally share the responsibility of developing, implementing and evaluating the MEYP across the municipality<sup>5</sup>.*

The diagram below show how the process to develop the new MEYP was started.

**Figure 2** Municipal Early Years Year's Plan Development<sup>6</sup>



### 4.1 Steering Group

A Municipal Early Years Plan Steering Group was established as part of the process of developing the Plan. The members of the group came from within and outside of Council. The group members include early childhood education and care professionals, a Councillor, maternal and child health nurse, primary care partnership manager, council manager and Director, team leaders, coordinators and educators from long day care centres, Kindergarten representatives, foster carer and outside school hour's care coordinator and YMCA services Director.

### 4.2 Working Groups

A series of working groups for industry professionals and other stakeholders were run over the course of the development of the plan. The working groups were held to enable consultation with those directly working with or managing staff that work with young children and health promotion

<sup>5</sup> Municipal Early Years Planning Framework and Practical Resource Guide, May 2011

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Municipal Early Years Planning Framework and Practical Resource Guide, May 2011

officers supporting young children and their families. Other forms of consultation were undertaken through one on one meeting of community members and industry professionals, email correspondence and discussions at playgroup sessions across the shire.

### 4.3 Further Community Consultation

Once the plan was completed in its draft form it was made available in to the community through Councils website and hardcopies were available from NGSC Customer Services. This assisted in providing feedback to Council. All individual, community and organisation feedback received was considered when finalising the MEYP.

## 5. Current Federal, State and Local Government Policies influencing service provision

In the time since the previous Municipal Early Years Plan was adopted there has been many initiatives introduced by the Federal and State Governments to ensure that early childhood education and care standards are universally at a higher level.

Key government policies that impact on Councils early years services and planning for the municipal include:

- The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education between all States and Territory Governments, to action improvements in the supply and integration of early childhood services,
- The National Quality Framework, National Standards Framework, including the introduction of a new accreditation system, the National Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework,
- Universal Access for all 4 year old children to access 15 hours of Kindergarten from 2013 onwards, including the inclusion of Kindergarten programs into Long Day Care (to be confirmed),
- Using the available data from the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) program, Victorian Child and Adolescent Outcomes Framework (VCAMS) to assist in future planning and scope of early childhood education and care across all municipalities and
- National workforce strategies and incentives to improve the skills and retention of early childhood professionals in all States and Territories.

As Council operates two Long Day Care Centres and one Kindergarten in the shire, with an additional Kindergarten planned to be introduced in Stawell by 2014 (to be confirmed), in line with Universal Access to Kindergarten guidelines; Council has been actively planning for the implementation of upcoming changes in early childhood education and care. Planning for changes and implementation has been undertaken through Councils Family and Children's Services Unit.

Plans that have been produced to aid in the changes to be undertaken include;

- Universal Access to Kindergarten – Capacity Assessment Report, 2010
- Universal Access to Kindergarten – Capacity Assessment Report, 2011
- Change Management Grants – Plan of Action, 2011

*The Victorian Government explicitly acknowledges the role of Councils in improving early childhood services in a range of policy documents including the MAV/DEECD Partnership Agreement<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Municipal Early Years Planning Framework and Practical Resource Guide, May 2011  
Northern Grampians Shire Council Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 - 2015



Some of the changes being implemented into Long Day Care Centres and Kindergartens from 2012 onwards are;

- the increase of adult to child ratio in Long Day Care and Kindergarten,
- more qualified educators within Long Day Care services and higher qualified ratios of staff within Long Day Care,
- Early Childhood Teachers to be employed at all Long Day Care Centres.

While these changes will be implemented in staggered intervals, there are challenges for services to recruit enough qualified staff for their services, however the outcomes are expected to be of greater benefit to children providing higher outcomes for all children.

Maternal and Child Health Services have undergone a review of its Key Ages and Stages Activity Framework to ensure that all children are given every opportunity to develop to their full potential. The delivery of the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services program has grown in demand in recent years. More families are moving into the municipality that require enhanced assistance and support from Councils enhanced services.

All Maternal and Child Health Nurses play a vital role in advocating to families the importance of children attending Kindergarten in the year before children start primary school. The Victorian Government introduced the "I Love Kindergarten" kits to assist Maternal and Child Health Nurses to promote the value of children attending Kindergarten programs.

## **5.1 New Programs impacting on early childhood education and care services from 2012**

### **5.1.2 National Quality Framework – 2012; New Regulations**

The National Quality Framework (NQF) commenced in 2012 replacing the individual States and Territories Regulations Systems, so that across Australia Regulations are consistent. The NQF has standards and regulations that for the first time incorporate Kindergartens under the same regulations as Long Day Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services through;

- The National Quality Standard
- A national quality rating and assessment process
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements
- A new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments - the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – to oversee the new system.
- Key requirements such as qualifications, educator-to-child ratios, and other key staffing arrangements will be phased in between 2012 and 2020<sup>8</sup>.

### **5.1.3 National Quality Standard – 2012**

Part of the NQF role is the implementation of the National Quality Standard (NQS). This new Standard replaced the previous Accreditation system that was put in place to ensure all Long Day Care Services, Family Day Care providers and Outside School Hours Care providers were meeting the quality standards required to operate their services on an ongoing basis. NQF Standard Assessors from DEECD will visit all early childhood education and care services to ensure they are consistently meeting the standards required. For the first time Kindergartens are included in the organisations covered by the Standard. The NQS brings together the seven key quality areas that are important to outcomes for children<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> AECEQA Guide to the National Quality Standard, October 2011

<sup>9</sup> AECEQA Guide to the National Quality Standard, October 2011

#### **5.1.4 Early Years Learning Framework – 2012**

Nationally, an integrated framework for early childhood education and care providers including Kindergartens, Long Day Care Centres, Primary Schools and Outside School Hours Care providers are using one framework/curriculum system to ensure that all children will receive the same standard of quality programs to help them to develop to their full potential. Some States and Territories have developed their own framework based on the national framework. DEECD has developed the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework which services have started to use in 2011 to implement the new framework of planning, observations and documenting children's developmental progress and sharing this information with colleagues and children's families.

#### **5.1.5 Universal Access to Kindergarten – 2013**

Universal Access is the increase of Kindergarten hours to 4 year old children from 10.75 hours to 15 hours. It also includes the requirement for all Victorian Long Day Care Centre's to provide a Kindergarten program run by a qualified Kindergarten Teacher. The introduction of Universal Access is expected to affect the capabilities of the 3 Kindergartens in the Shire to continue to run their 3 year old Kindergarten sessions. This is due to the lack of available time in the existing Kindergartens timetable, lack of classrooms and qualified teaching staff availability.

Planning is still underway in this area, to try to allow for the continuation of the 3 year old Kindergarten program as the importance of this program is valued and supported in the Community. Councils and Kindergartens have been notified by the Victorian Minister for Children & Early Childhood Development in March 2012 that they will not be penalised if they are unable to implement 15 hours by 2013, and the Victorian Government will continue to work with Councils and Kindergartens to facilitate a considered move towards 15 hours that will not adversely impact on their ability to continue their existing programs.

#### **5.1.6 Change Management Grants – 2011/2012**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has provided training grants for early childhood educators and Kindergarten teachers for 2011-2012. Northern Grampians Shire Council has joined with Ararat Rural City to combine their grant allocation to develop a Plan of Action. The Plan includes an extensive training calendar to help develop networks between all early childhood education and care services within the Grampians region, to encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills and to engage quality facilitators to provide professional development sessions relevant to the new changes impacting on early year's professionals. The training calendar is being administered by Grampians Region YMCA.

#### **5.1.7 Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program for schools and early childhood education and care services (VPHAP)**

The Achievement Program will support the development of effective health promotion practice in primary and secondary schools and early childhood education and care services against state-wide benchmarks for health and wellbeing priorities. The Achievement Program establishes a process for schools and early childhood education and care services to identify and respond to health priorities in ways appropriate to their local context<sup>10</sup>. The program is expected to be launched mid 2012 and a framework has been developed that links directly into the National Quality Standards. Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership will support all services to implement the Achievement Program.

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<sup>10</sup> Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program for schools and early childhood education and care services Consultation paper, 2011

*Services for young people and their families should be effective and efficient and aimed at improving outcomes for the whole population as well as addressing those most in need<sup>11</sup>*  
*The importance of the early years of childhood development is well established, with evidence from neuroscience, molecular biology, genomics and the behavioural and social sciences suggesting that experiences early in life affect lifelong health and wellbeing in a number of ways<sup>12</sup>*

## New Frameworks and Regulations for Early Childhood Education & Care Services;

**Table 1** Changes introduced to Early Childhood Education & Care Services from 2012 onwards

LONG DAY CARE	FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS	KINDERGARTEN	OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE/VACATION CARE	PREP/PRIMARY SCHOOL
National Quality Framework	National Quality Framework	National Quality Framework	National Quality Framework	Introduction of National Australian Curriculum which will replace the current Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)
National & Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework	National & Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework	National & Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework	National & Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework	National & Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework
Improved educator to child ratios		Improved educator to child ratios		
New educator qualifications	New educator qualifications	New educator qualifications		
New National Quality Standard rating system (replacing Accreditation system)	New National Quality Standard rating system (replacing Accreditation system)	New National Quality Standard rating system (replacing Accreditation system)	New National Quality Standard rating system (replacing Accreditation system)	

*'The value of early childhood education programs... is undisputed and well substantiated... Short term benefits include improved cognitive functioning, school readiness and social skills. Longitudinal studies have demonstrated positive effects on school completion, further education participation, employment outcomes, earning and general social well-being.<sup>13</sup>*

## 6. Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) providers in the Municipality

The Northern Grampians municipality has a range of early childhood services available provided by Council, community based organisations and private operators to enhance the development opportunities of young children including their health and wellbeing. Once children reach six years of age it is mandatory for them to attend school, prior to that families have a choice whether to use these services for educational and care purposes. Extensive research has shown that children have a better start to their formal schooling if they have attended some form of pre-school education and/or care.

<sup>11</sup> Policy Brief No. 4, 2006 Services for young children and families an integrated approach, Royal Children's Hospital

<sup>12</sup> Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2010

<sup>13</sup> M Harrington, 'Early childhood programs – an overview of the research', Background Note, No. SP010, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2005

Quality child care services play an important role increasing children's learning and achievements throughout their lives. This in turn provides them with more positive lifelong opportunities as well as reducing poor health issues later in life<sup>14</sup>.

## 6.1 Current providers of Early Childhood Education & Care

**Table 2** ECE C providers in the Municipality

Service name	Service provision – present and future	Operator
Cooinda Kindergarten	Funded 4 year old Kindergarten program & 3 year old Kindergarten	Stawell & District Preschool Association
Marrang Kindergarten	Funded 4 year old Kindergarten program & 3 year old Kindergarten	Stawell & District Preschool Association
St Arnaud Children's Precinct	Long Day Care, Mother Goose Playgroup for vulnerable families, Maternal & Child Health Clinic, Enhanced Maternal & Child Health visits.	NGSC
St Arnaud Kindergarten	Funded 4 year old Kindergarten & 3 year old Kindergarten, Vacation Care during school holidays	NGSC
Stawell Early Learning Centre	Long Day Care, unfunded 4 year old Kindergarten program during 2012; Funded 4 year old Kindergarten program from 2013 (to be confirmed)	Kids in Care
Taylor's Gully Children's Centre	Long Day Care, Funded 4 year old Kindergarten program from 2014 (to be confirmed), New Mothers Group, Playgroup, Maternal & Child Health Clinic, Enhanced Maternal & Child Health visits, Baby Capsule and Car Hire seat service, Hearing Tests, Immunisation sessions, Visiting Specialists consulting room	NGSC
Family Day Care	Family Day Care provided in Carers own home for up to 7 children (depending on their ages) aged 0-13 years	Coordinator Unit – Wimmera Uniting Care
Outside School Hours Care & Vacation Care	Care for school aged children after school, pupil free days and school holidays at two school locations in Stawell	Grampians Region YMCA

## 7. Monitoring of Council Services – ongoing feedback of Councils Family & Children's Services facilities

Council has an ongoing monitoring system for all its early childhood education and care services to keep up to date from families' feedback about the services Council provides.

Some of the methods used in measuring community expectations in Councils involvement in early childhood education and care provision include;

- ❖ Customer Satisfaction Family surveys from Taylor's Gully Children's Centre, St Arnaud Children's Precinct and St Arnaud Kindergarten from years 2008 to present.
- ❖ Quality Improvement & Accreditation System (QIAS) – family questionnaires for Taylor's Gully Children's Centre and St Arnaud Children's Precinct on an annual basis.
- ❖ Educators parent feedback survey for each child in their group – ongoing.
- ❖ Parental input into Parent Handbooks, Policies and Centre Philosophies.

<sup>14</sup> Choosing and using quality child care – a guide for families, NCAC 2009

## 8. Community Profile – how our children and families are progressing

Located in the Grampians region of Western Victoria, the Shire is home to the Grampians and St Arnaud Range National Park, covering almost 6,000 square kilometres and services the major towns and villages of Stawell, St Arnaud, Great Western, Halls Gap, Navarre, Glenorchy, Marnoo and Stuart Mill.

The Shire's estimated population in 2011 is 12,997 and the Shire's economy is based on agriculture, gold mining, tourism, wine production and manufacturing. Stawell the main centre is home to brick, textiles and meat production.<sup>15</sup>

### Local demographics for young children aged 0 to 8 years and their families<sup>16</sup>

- At June 2008, there was an estimated 12,322 people residing in Northern Grampians. Of these 1,258 were aged between 0 to 8 years, representing 10.2 per cent of Northern Grampians' total population.
- The population aged 0 to 8 years in Northern Grampians is projected to decrease by 31.5% by 2026, while the total population in Northern Grampians is expected to decrease by 11.0% over this period.
- Using the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD), Northern Grampians was ranked 6 out of 79 LGA's in Victoria. A rank of 1 was assigned to the most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria.
- Of the 751 families with children aged between 0 to 8 years in Northern Grampians, 81.8% were couple families and 18.2% were one parent families.
- There were 87 Aboriginal persons in Northern Grampians, representing 0.7% of the total population. 21.8% of the Aboriginal population in Northern Grampians were aged 0 to 8 years.

### Health, learning, wellbeing, development and safety indicators for children in the municipality<sup>17</sup>

- 49.3% of infants in Northern Grampians were fully breastfed at 3 months and 39.9% of infants were fully breastfed at 6 months.
- 95.9% of children in Northern Grampians were fully immunised at 12-<15 months, 92.4% were fully immunised at 24-<27 months and 85.5% were fully immunised at 60-<63 months.
- 132 Prep children were surveyed in the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in Northern Grampians during 2009. Of these, 29.1% were vulnerable on one or more domains and 14.2% were vulnerable on two or more domains. (*Physical health and wellbeing & Emotional maturity*). More detailed information in the AEDI table 3.
- In 2008, 80.0% of students enrolled in government schools in Northern Grampians were achieving a reading accuracy score of 90% or more on Level 5 texts, 83.2% of Year 1 students were reading Level 15 texts with over 90% accuracy and 88.8% of Year 2 students were achieving 90% accuracy or higher on Level 20 texts.

### Supports and services in Northern Grampians

- In 2008 -2009, 93.3% of infants in Northern Grampians received a home consultation visit and 81.5% of children attended the 3.5 year key ages and stages visit.
- The Kindergarten participation rate in Northern Grampians during 2009 was 89.6%, less than the Kindergarten participation rate in Victoria (92.7%).

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<sup>15</sup> NGSC Sustainable Living Strategy, 2011

<sup>16</sup> Source: 2006 Census data

<sup>17</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles, DEECD 2008/2009

Table 3 AEDI local community data within the shire of Northern Grampians<sup>18</sup>

Vulnerable across domains<sup>^</sup> (%)

Local community	Total children surveyed	Physical health and wellbeing	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language and cognitive skills	Communication skills and general knowledge	Vulnerable on one or more domain	Vulnerable on one or more domain	SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage # (IRSED)	IRSED quintile across all LGAs (1=most disadvantage)
Victoria – total	61187	7.7	8.4	8.3	6.1	8.3	20.2	10.0		
Shire of Northern Grampians* - total	132	15.0	11.8	18.3	7.9	11.8	29.4	14.2	946.62	2
St Arnaud and surrounds	38	15.8	13.2	21.6	7.9	21.1	32.4	15.8	948.0	2
Stawell	77	13.5	10.8	17.6	8.1	9.5	28.4	13.5	916.9	1
* Stawell surrounds	17	20.0	13.3	13.3	6.7	0.0	26.7	13.3	1016.4	3

2. The number of local communities shown above with data available within Northern Grampians

\*Data for communities with fewer than 15 children are shown above, but are included in the total for the LGA.  
<sup>^</sup>Data excludes children with special needs and those deemed invalid due to their age or the low number of responses across the checklist.  
 \*The number of children surveyed by the AEDI in this local community is between 60% and 80% of the estimated resident population released by the ABS. AEDI advises that data for this community be interpreted with caution.  
 #The IRSED – Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage – is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). A lower score means an area is more disadvantaged.  
**Domain scores are represented by a number between 0 & 10. A higher domain score indicates a higher level of development within a particular domain<sup>19</sup>.**

Northern Grampians Shire like many other rural communities in Victoria is witnessing a slow decline in the birth rates of children in the municipality. This is predicted in the data below;

Population Projections for Northern Grampians (S), 2006 to 2026<sup>20</sup>

	2006 Population	2011 Population	2016 Population	2021 Population	2026 Population
0 to 8 Years	1,328	1,106	996	936	910
<b>Total Population</b>	12,330	11,991	11,595	11,266	10,980

Despite the projected decline in children 0-8 years, Council continues to support and promote services for young children in the municipality to retain those families residing in the shire and to attract new families to the region. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) projects, the total population in Victoria is expected to increase by 30.9% from 5,128,310 in 2006 to reach 6,711,190 by 2026<sup>21</sup>. Planning is well underway in the region with Northern Grampians Shire Council one of eight municipalities' partners in the development of the Central Highlands Regional

<sup>18</sup> Australian Early Development Index, 2009

<sup>19</sup> AEDI Data User Guide Version 3, May 2010

<sup>20</sup> Source: Victoria in Future Population Projections, DSE, Early Childhood Community Profiles, DEECD 2010

<sup>21</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles, DEECD 2010

Strategic Plan designed to best position the Central Highlands to 2030 and beyond so as to provide a productive, sustainable and liveable region for its people.<sup>22</sup>

There are some encouraging strategies and initiatives taking place that could assist in encouraging more families to settle in the municipality such as; the extension of the Ararat Correctional Precinct which will provide a further 150 correctional services officers and support staff positions in the Grampians, the introduction of National Paid Maternity Leave in 2011 and Council's attendance at the inaugural Regional Living Expo held in Melbourne in April 2012 to promote the liveability of the municipality. In 2012 Council will introduce a "Liveability Micro-site" from its own website server that will show web visitors direct web-links to early childhood education and care services and some specialist support services own websites.

## 9. Support services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

The Victorian State Government provides free 3 and 4 year old Kindergarten places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait children to ensure that all children receive the best to start in life. All Kindergartens in the Municipality ensure that they have places available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children.

There are other services available to children and families giving them the opportunity to grow to their full potential;

- Koorie Kindergarten Support Officers,
- Maternal & Child Health Nurse visiting Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative, Halls Gap,
- Budja Budja Mother & Children's group,
- Immunisation available via Maternal & Child Health,
- Vulnerable families targeted support,
- Victorian State government through DEECD has initiated an education strategy for Koorie students – Wannik, from the Gunai/Kurnai language meaning 'Learning Together – Journey to Our Future'. Wannik represents a new era of collaboration, where the Department works in partnership with Koorie parents and the community to create an education system that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity and provides a range of programs designed to increase and develop the learning opportunities and outcomes for Koorie students.



## 10. Community

## Consultation into

<sup>22</sup> Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan, June 2010

## the Municipal Early Years Plan

### Discussions with community groups, health agencies and early childhood education and care service providers

Throughout the development of the MEYP community groups such as playgroups, Early Childhood Education and Care providers such as local Primary and Secondary Schools, Kindergartens and Family Day Care providers have been engaged to share their ideas for objectives and given the opportunity to contribute to ideas and strategies that could be considered for inclusion into the new MEYP. Local health promotion agencies have contributed to the plan through informal talks, the attendance at working group sessions and feedback into the draft stage of the MEYP.

### NGSC Community Plans

Council has undertaken a series of community consultations in recent years to canvass residents about what they feel is needed in their townships for their communities to grow, prosper and be sustainable. The findings from the consultations have produced Community Plans. The Community Plans are frequently used by Council when developing plans and strategies as they offer current strengths, weakness and opportunities for development for the towns.

Below is a list of areas highlighted by participants taken from the most recent Community Plans that relate directly to the new Municipal Early Years Plan:

*Table 4 Community Plans – key issues indentified*

Health, Wellbeing & Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New baby change facilities for town centre (<i>Stawell</i>) #</li> <li>- All year round heated pool, swimming lessons, water slide and water safety activities (<i>St Arnaud</i>)</li> <li>- Keep pool going for all community and solar heating (<i>Marnoo</i>)</li> <li>- Sunshade over playground (<i>Stuart Mill</i>)</li> <li>- 40kms signs at School for am &amp; pm times (<i>Navarre</i>)</li> <li>- Retain visiting Health Services (<i>Marnoo</i>)</li> <li>- Provide a safe environment for towns children and families (<i>Stuart Mill &amp; Navarre</i>)</li> <li>- Disabled car park space outside VIC (<i>Halls Gap</i>)</li> <li>- Doctor, Bush Nurse, Chemist (<i>Halls Gap</i>)</li> <li>- Flat concreted area for children to ride bikes, scooter etc in safe area (<i>St Arnaud</i>)</li> <li>- Support for families that move into town (<i>Stawell</i>)</li> </ul>
Sustainability, education, early years and youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child care facilities incorporated into existing community organisation (<i>Halls Gap</i>)</li> <li>- Assistance to run youth and community events (<i>Great Western</i>)</li> <li>- Make school more sustainable (<i>Great Western</i>)</li> <li>- More events &amp; activities for children (<i>Stawell</i>) #</li> <li>- Encourage sustainable population growth with emphasis on young families (<i>Stuart Mill</i>)</li> </ul>

# Some of the suggestions listed are being actively planned for by Council





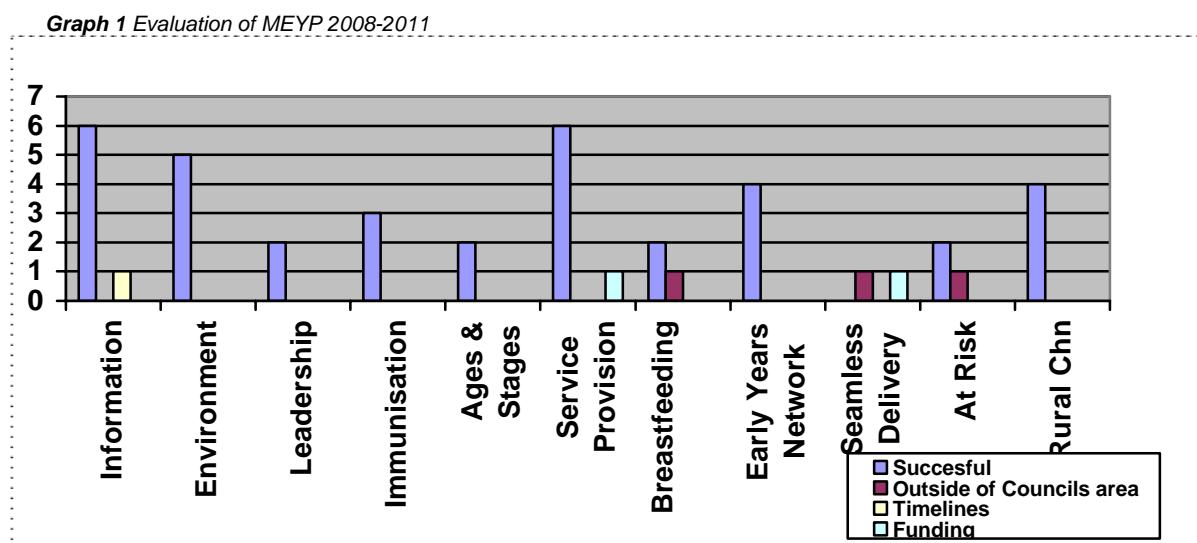
## 11. Building on the success of the MEYP 2008 – 2011

Before work commenced on the development of the new MEYP, it was vital to go through the previous plan, to discuss the following points with the Municipal Early Years Steering Group members;

- Have any of these objectives been successful?
- Were there any impediments to the success of these goals, strategies and actions?
- Were some actions too high to achieve at this stage?
- How can we show that these goals have been met and did they require partnerships?

From a target of 42 objectives set in the MEYP 2008-11, 36 objectives have been successfully achieved during the life of the Plan. There are a total of 6 objectives that were not able to be met during this time.

The graph below shows the main objective headings that are covered in the action plan.



To assist with the development of the new plan it was important to ask and then consider the answers to the following questions;

- What have we learnt about how to implement the actions in the 2008 Plan that we can take into the next plan?
- Did any issues arise that hindered the implementation of actions?
- For the next MEYP look at how future timelines for the action plan be linked to existing reporting cycles for Council.

### 11.1 Successful programs from the MEYP 2008-11 objectives

#### **Mother Goose Playgroup (objective 4.1)**

A very successful outcome from the MEYP is the DEECD award winning 'Little Nuggets - Mother Goose Playgroup' that has been running from early 2011 at St Arnaud Children's Precinct. This valuable program was developed in conjunction with Wimmera Uniting Care, Centacare and Northern Grampians Shire Council. The program is for children aged 0-2 years showing parents in a supportive and non-judgemental environment how to interact and engage with their children in a positive way through songs, rhymes and positive actions. It has enabled parents to engage with other group members and professionals from various services in a welcoming, supportive and nurturing group and has resulted in members of the group providing support to each other outside of the sessions with very positive outcomes.

### **Change Management Grants (objectives 3.2.2, 4.2.2)**

DEECD provided funding for all Councils in Victoria to assist their Early Childhood Education & Care providers with more funds in training educators and early childhood teachers with the many new programs and standards that have started to be implemented from the start of 2012. Northern Grampians Shire and joined its grant money with the Ararat Rural Council to ensure that the joint grants will provide quality speakers and trainers to share their skills and knowledge with the educators in the region. The shared training also provides opportunities for educators to network and share ideas and programs that are working well at their services.

### **DEECD recognition award for Taylor's Gully's Children's Centre (objective 4.2.4)**

In December 2011 Taylor's Gully Children's Centre was presented with a recognition award for the work educators had undertaken for the implementation of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – VEYLDF at the Long Day Care Centre. Throughout 2011 educators at Taylor's Gully Children's Centre took part in a mentoring program run by Gowrie Victoria to assist them in understanding and implementing the new Framework that is reflective and respectful of children and families. The award from DEECD recognises the dedication, professionalism and collaborative approach that all educators have undertaken in order to provide the best outcomes in advancing children's learning and development for the children in their care.

## **12. NGSC Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan – link with the Municipal Early Years Plan to create healthy children**

The development of this current Municipal Early Years Plan has been informed by the NGSC Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPH&WP) 2009 -2013.

There are new initiatives being introduced by the Federal and state governments that will address some of the objectives listed in the MPH&WP. Along with other programs that are already being implemented within the municipality, these new initiatives have the potential to help achieve the objectives in the current MPH&WP.

While the MPH&WP still has one more year before it is reviewed, evaluated and updated there are many objectives relating to the Municipal Early Years Plan 2008 - 2011 that have already been met. Table 5 (over page) shows the progress so far in achieving these objectives.

*The early child period is considered to be the most important developmental phase throughout the lifespan. Healthy early child development – which includes the physical, social – emotional, and language – cognitive domains of development, each equally important – strongly influences wellbeing, obesity/stunting, mental health, heart disease, competence in literacy and numeracy, criminality and economic participation throughout life. What happens to the child in the early years is critical for the child's developmental trajectory and life course<sup>23</sup>.*

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<sup>23</sup> Total Environment Assessment Model for Early Child Development, World Health Authority (WHO), June 2007

**Table 5** Northern Grampians Shire Council Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013, Children & Young People p. 23

Objective	Strategy-what is planned	Accountability-measuring the success	Who is responsible for this	Environments for Health Framework	Links to other plans	Possible Partnerships	Timeline
<b>Maximise the level of immunisation of children</b>	Increase the percentage of children assessed at key developmental stages by the Maternal and Child Health Service	Improved immunisation rates	Council	Social	Early Years Plan	West Vic Division of GP Stawell Regional Health, East Wimmera Health Dept of Health Schools	Ongoing
<b>Ensure quality immunisation service is provided within the municipality</b>	Coordinate and provide accessible immunisation in accordance with NH&MRC standards	Rates comparable to Victorian Average	Council	Social Economic	Early Years Plan Pandemic Influenza Plan Public Health Emerg Mgmt Plan	Stawell Regional Health, East Wimmera Health Dept of Health West Vic Division of General Practice Schools	Ongoing
<p><i># Healthy Start for School – introduced by the Federal Government now links the ongoing payments to families of the Family Tax Benefit A with a health check completed on 4 year old children. Health checks are an assessment of children’s physical health and general wellbeing, including height, weight, hearing and vision tests. Health checks can be made by Child &amp; Maternal Health Nurses, GP, Practice Nurse or registered Aboriginal Health Worker.</i></p>							
<p><i># New funding program by the Federal Government Department of Human Services to commence “Strengthening immunisation for children” from July 2012 to replace the Maternity Immunisation Allowance, children must meet the scheduled immunisation program, be on a recognised immunisation catch up schedule or have an approved exemption for each of the key immunisation ages to be eligible for financial supplement of \$726 for each valid financial year that their child turns one, two and five years of age. This is an increase on the current level of supplement received by parents and will encourage families to keep their children up to the scheduled program of having their children immunised.</i></p>							
<p><i>^ Patrick Street Medical Practice, Stawell provides free immunisations (bulk billed) at their premises at the Stawell Health &amp; Community building; many young families are taking advantage of this free service as they are close to the main shopping area and have a greater range of available dates to choose from. The Medical Practise is hopeful of setting up Immunisation Clinic’s one to two days a week in 2012.</i></p>							
<p><i>^ Northern Grampians Shire’s Maternal and Child Health Nurses now hold the monthly free immunisation sessions at Taylor’s Gully Children’s Centre, the aim of the Children’s Hub has been to have a “one stop shop” of early years services under the one roof.</i></p>							
<b>Improved oral health</b>	Advocate for water fluoridation in the municipality	Fluoridated water in the municipality	Council	Social	Early Years Plan	Department of Health GWM Water	Ongoing
	Continue to support the Smile 4 Miles program	Increased number of Early Years Settings involved in the Smiles 4 Miles program	GPPCP	Social	Early Years Plan	Dental Health Services Victoria, GPPCP, Council, Schools	Ongoing
<p><i>Stawell &amp; District Preschool Association has been implementing the ‘Smiles 4 Miles’ dental care program since its inception at Marrang &amp; Coinda Kindergartens.</i></p> <p><i>^ Taylor’s Gully has held visits to the Long Day Care by Dentist to show children how to care for their teeth and pass on information to families of the services available. St Arnaud Kindergarten and Long Day Care are part of the ‘Smiles 4 Miles’ dental care program.</i></p>							

Objective	Strategy-what is planned	Accountability-measuring the success	Who is responsible for this	Environments for Health Framework	Links to other plans	Possible Partnerships	Timeline
<b>Ensure a family friendly environment that provides quality family and child support services</b>	Ensure the community has quality childcare services	Quality childcare services available locally	Council	Social Built Economic	Early Years Plan	Community Childcare providers DEECD National Childcare Accreditation Council	Ongoing
	Provide and promote services that support families in meeting the health needs of children	Support services available that meet the health needs of children	Council	Social	Early Years Plan	Grampians Community Health Stawell Regional Health East Wimmera Health DEECD	Ongoing

*# From 2012 the National Childcare Accreditation Council has been replaced by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACE&CQA), this new authority will oversee the implementation of the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards (refer to page 8 for this and other new initiatives). The new authority will replace the current system of ensuring all Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and Family Day Care are meeting the minimum standards required to offer all children quality care. All childcare services in the Grampians region are under this new system. There are quality childcare options available in the larger townships of the Grampians and the inclusion of funded 4 year old Kindergarten into Long Day Care Centre's from 2013/4 onwards (to be confirmed).*

*^ Through newsletters provided for families utilising Councils Long Day Care services regular information regarding support services are included to inform parents of available services to support their children's health needs.  
Maternal and Child Health advise parents of support services available and in some cases provide introductions and referrals.  
Taylor's Gully Children's Centre has a visiting specialist room available for use by visiting early childhood specialists to meet with clients.*

*Programs and initiatives' so far; # Federal/State programs  
^ Municipality program*

## 13. Vision, Goals & Objectives

The Action Plan Tables shows the direction that Council is aiming towards working in partnership with all early childhood education and care services, community groups, health agencies and other early year's organisations to have an integrated and coordinated service delivery for the children and families of the municipality.

### 13.1 The Northern Grampians Shire Council Plan 2009/2013 Vision states;

*“Creating a better lifestyle and environment”.*

### 13.2 The Northern Grampians Shire Council Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 - 2015 Vision states;

*“The Northern Grampians Shire is located in an inspiring natural environment enabling children to reach their full potential with the support and guidance of well facilitated partnerships and coordinated early childhood care and educational services”.*

### 13.3 Goals for the MEYP 2012-2015

1. To aim to provide children with opportunities to access the best health and wellbeing start in life.
2. To support children and families to connect with services and programs.
3. To encourage all Early Childhood Education & Care services to utilize professional development opportunities and develop reflective practices to be well placed to implement quality programs to assist families and children in the municipality.
4. To assist Early Childhood Education & Care services to work with the community to access support services in the municipality.

*The Australian Government and state and territory governments recognise the importance of increasing their focus on the early years to ensure the wellbeing of children throughout their lives and to lift the productivity of our nation as a whole. The drive for change is based on clear evidence that the early years of a child's life are very important for their present and future health, development and wellbeing.<sup>24</sup>*

### 13.4 Development of MEYP 2012 – 2015 Objectives & Strategies

The objectives and strategies in the MEYP 2012 – 2015 were identified and discussed by the Municipal Early Years Plan Steering Group members, agency and organisation representatives, working groups and input from community members. The MEYP Steering Group then identified the top 10 objectives to highlight as the priority strategies to be focused on being achieved first.

There are 25 objectives in total, many of which will require Council to work in partnership with outside organisations, agencies, volunteer groups and individuals to achieve the outcomes listed. It is expected that there will be a need to seek external sources of funding or support for many of the full list of objectives in this Plan to be able to implement many of the specific actions along with consideration for funding in line with the Council budget process.

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<sup>24</sup> ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework, October 2011

## 14. Priority Action Table – Top 10 Objectives of the MEYP 2012 – 2015

Action No.	Priority Action/Strategy	Target
<b>Linking families to access services &amp; programs</b>		
7.	Establish and maintain links between Maternal and Child Health and Stawell Early Learning Centre to ensure that all families accessing care are aware of the services that are provided by the Maternal & Child Health.	All families aware and able to utilise the services of Maternal & Child Health
2.	Promote the support services of Maternal & Child Health to assist in the continuation of breastfeeding to mothers encountering difficulties	More mothers successfully breastfeeding their babies
<b>Promoting wellbeing in children</b>		
3.	Redevelopment of 108 Main Street Stawell, to include a private room designed for use by breastfeeding mothers	Mother & Baby Room installed as part of redevelopment
4.	All Municipality Early Childhood Education and Care services will actively integrate the new Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program for schools and early childhood education and care services	All Children's Services reaching Recommended Practice requirements as a minimum (links in directly to National Quality Standards)
5.	Smiles 4 Miles or similar program to be implemented into Stawell Early Learning Centre and Taylor's Gully Children's Centre from 2014 (TBC) as part of the UA Kindergarten Program	Participation in Smiles 4 Miles dental health program
8.	Promote the Ages & Stages Health Check for 3 ½ - 4 year olds - Maternal & Child Health Nurses are able to provide these checks in accordance with Federal Policy	Data showing visits numbers improving
1.	Encourage businesses and organisations across the municipality to become part of Australian Breastfeeding Association's "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" Program	Number of businesses and organisations registered with Australian Breastfeeding Association and displaying signage and certificate
<b>Supporting families and Early Childhood Education &amp; Care services (ECEC) to develop positive outcomes for all children</b>		
15.	Continuation of Mother Goose or new supported Playgroup in St Arnaud; establishment of new Mother Goose or other supported Playgroup in Stawell	St Arnaud Little Nuggets Mother Goose or other supported playgroup continuing & Mother Goose or other supported playgroup established in Stawell
13.	Support a Mentoring Program for families needing assistance and support in parenting their children – positive parenting skills model	Mentoring program in place and families utilising service
19.	Support and utilise training offered for ECEC educators and teachers to implement new Standards & Frameworks	All Council & outside ECEC services to have sufficient training & experience to deliver the new national frameworks

## 14. Action Tables – Objectives of the MEYP 2012 – 2015

Goal 1; to aim to provide children with opportunities to access the best health and wellbeing start in life

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
Increase breastfeeding rates for the municipality	1. Encourage businesses and organisations to become part of Australian Breastfeeding Association's "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" Program. Actively promote businesses and organisations that are part of the program through Council's webpage, community directory, Children's and Families Services.	Families & Children's Services Team  Maternal & Child Health  NGSC Marketing & Communications Officer	July 2012 – Ongoing	Australian Breastfeeding Association  StawellBiz  SCAN  Playgroups  Community groups	Number of businesses and organisations registered with Australian Breastfeeding Association and displaying signage and certificate	H
	2. Promote the support services of Maternal & Child Health to assist in the continuation of breastfeeding to mothers encountering difficulties.	Families & Children's Services Team  Maternal & Child Health	July 2012 – Ongoing	Australian Breastfeeding Association	Data to show increase in breastfeeding rates in municipality	H
	3. Redevelopment of 108 Main Street Stawell, to include a private room designed for use by breastfeeding mothers.	Community Development Team  Family & Children's Services Team	Ongoing	Community Development  Rotary Club  Apex Club	Mother & Baby Room installed as part of redevelopment	H

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
Optimising health initiatives programs aimed at children 0-8yrs	4. All Municipality Early Childhood Education and Care services will actively integrate the new Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program for schools and early childhood education and care services (previously called "Go for Life").	Family & Children's Team	Expected to be introduced mid year 2012	Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership Stawell Regional Health Stawell & District Preschool Association Stawell Early Learning Centre Grampians Region YMCA All schools in the municipality	All Children's Services reaching Recommended Practice requirements as a minimum (links in directly to National Quality Standards)	H
	5. 'Smiles 4 Miles' Dental Health Care Program or similar program to be implemented into Stawell Early Learning Centre and Taylor's Gully Children's Centre from 2014 (TBC) as part of the Kindergarten Program.	Family & Children's Team	2013	Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership	Participation in 'Smiles 4 Miles' dental health program	H
	6. Kindergartens and Long Day Care Centres under the direction and guidance of Stawell Regional Health to implement a screening program for 4 year old Kindergarten children to assess whether there is the need for referral to speech therapy and other therapies.	Family & Children's Team	2012	Stawell Regional Health	Children referred for specialist services receiving treatment	M



Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
	7. Establish links between Maternal and Child Health and Stawell Early Learning Centre to ensure that all families accessing care are aware of the services that are provided by the Maternal and Child Health. Discuss privacy issues that can be looked into to allow for exchange of information.	Family & Children's Team  Maternal & Child Health	2012 – ongoing	Stawell Early Learning Centre	Bi-annual visits to Stawell Early Learning Centre to promote services	H
	8. Promote the Ages & Stages Health Check for 3 ½ - 4 year olds (now linked to the family tax payment system) Maternal & Child Health Nurses are able to provide these checks in accordance with Federal Policy.	Family & Children's Team  Maternal & Child Health  NGSC Marketing & Communications Officer	2012 – annual media reminder	Stawell & District Preschool Association  Stawell Early Learning Centre	Data showing visits numbers improving	H
	9. Investigate provision of “opportunist” immunisations at St Arnaud Maternal & Child Health, as families present themselves for scheduled Ages & Stages appointments.	Environmental Health  Maternal & Child Health	2012	NGSC Maternal & Child Health Immunisation provider  NGSC Environmental Health Team	Increase in rates of immunisation in the municipality	L
	10. Collect data of utilization of Enhanced Maternal & Child Health to show whether there is increased need and demand for the Enhanced service due to an increase in clients needing to access this service.	Family & Children's Services Team Leader  Maternal & Child Health	2012-2013  2013-2014  2014-2015	DEECD	Data collected shows if there is an increase need in Enhanced Service – investigation of joining the “Best Start” program to offer more support and programs to families and children in need	L

## Goal 2; to support children and families to connect with services and programs

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
Communities assisting children to grow and develop to their full potential	<p><b>11.</b> Investigate ways Council can establish partnerships to assist families with transport issues to attend kindergarten and child care options. Develop Transport Connections Strategy that will identify target groups and assist their needs with transport issues; changes to bus timetables &amp; bus stops. Investigate installation of appropriate baby/child seats mechanisms for nominated Council Fleet Cars, baby &amp; child seat fitting training for Council staff and insurance liabilities.</p> <p><b>12.</b> Sub-project Mentoring families through the trained volunteer drivers of the transport vehicle.</p>	<p>Manger Community Sustainability</p> <p>Family &amp; Children's Services Team</p>	2012 – trial project	<p>Grampians Pyrenees Flexible Transport Project Transport Connections Program</p> <p>Grampians Community Health</p> <p>Stawell Early Learning Centre</p> <p>Stawell &amp; District Preschool Association</p> <p>Baby/ Child Seat installer</p>	Increased rates in Kindergarten & Child Care participation for vulnerable children	<b>M</b>
						<b>L</b>
	<p><b>13.</b> Lobby and support a Mentoring Program for families needing assistance and support in parenting their children – positive parenting skills model and training for families.</p>	<p>Manager Community Sustainability</p> <p>Family &amp; Children's Services Team</p> <p>Material &amp; Child Health</p>	2012 - 2015	<p>Wimmera Uniting Care</p> <p>Grampians Community Health</p> <p>CaFS Ballarat/Ararat</p>	Mentoring program in place and families utilising service	<b>H</b>

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
	<b>14.</b> Monitor of usage of all Kindergarten places available and utilised and underutilised within the municipality to track the implementation of Universal Access from 2013.	Manager Community Sustainability	2013 2014 2015	MAV DEECD All ECEC services in the municipality	Mapping of utilized and underutilized places within the municipality	<b>M</b>
	<b>15.</b> Continuation of Mother Goose; or other supported Playgroup in St Arnaud; establishment of new Mother Goose Playgroup in Stawell and investigate the support of other parenting support playgroups such as Playgroup Victoria.	Manager Community Sustainability  Family & Children's Service  Maternal & Child Health	2012	Centacare  Wimmera Uniting Care  NGSC	St Arnaud Little Nuggets Mother Goose or other supported playgroup commencing & continuing  Stawell Mother Goose or other supported playgroup established	<b>H</b>
	<b>16.</b> Council to continue to support playgroups to operate in the municipality through some provision of venues, opportunities to apply for Community Grants and promotion via Website & Community Directory.	Manager Community Sustainability	Ongoing	Various Playgroup committees  Playgroup Victoria	Playgroups operating across the municipality	<b>L</b>
	<b>17.</b> Council to support a "needs analysis" as to whether there is a demand and need for child care services; long day care, occasional care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care, In-Venue care in the Halls Gap that could also service the surrounding townships areas.	Manager Community Sustainability	2013	Stawell & District Preschool Association  Schools  Playgroups  Budja Budja Co-operative  Maternal & Child Health	A "needs analysis" conducted and results collated	<b>L</b>

**Goal 3; Aim for Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) Services to utilize programs and training to implement programs to assist families and children in the municipality**

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
Supporting educators and teachers to provide quality programs and practises in Council ECEC services	<b>18.</b> Council to provide professional development opportunities for all its Family & Children's educators relevant to the new Frameworks and the ongoing needs of the families & children utilizing its ECEC services.	Manager Community Sustainability  Team Leader Family & Children's Services	Ongoing	Encourage other ECEC service providers in the region to attend training offered in the region (user pays basis)	Highly trained educators in the municipality offering quality skills and programs to children and families in the region (especially vulnerable children/families)	<b>M</b>
	<b>19.</b> Support and utilize training offered for ECEC educators and teachers especially training to implement Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard & National Quality Framework, as part of the Change Management Grants joint program with Ararat Rural City and Grampians Region YMCA.	Manager Community Sustainability  Team Leader Family & Children's Services  Co-coordinators ECEC services	2012	Ararat Rural City  Grampians Region YMCA  DEECD  MAV	All Council & non Council ECEC educators and teachers have sufficient training and experience to deliver the new ECEC frameworks	<b>H</b>
	<b>20.</b> Seek funding opportunities to offer training sessions for parents in learning new skills to care, interact with and nurture their children.	Team Leader Family & Children's Services  Maternal & Child Health	2012 – ongoing	Centacare, CaFS, Wimmera Uniting Care  DDECD  Stawell & District Preschool Association  Stawell Early Learning Centre	At least one training session provided a year at Taylors Gully Children's Centre & St Arnaud Children's Precinct - open invitation to all families utilising early childhood services including all schools in the municipality	<b>L</b>

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
	<b>21.</b> Budget for release of Council ECEC educators to attend Stawell Early Intervention Network meetings (or similar network programs) throughout the year to be well resourced to apply skills to the families and children in their services.	Manager Community Sustainability  Team Leader Family & Children's Services  Co-coordinators Council ECEC services	2012  2013  2014	Stawell Early Intervention Network  Other professional Networking opportunities	All Council ECEC Services	<b>L</b>

**Goal 4; To assist Early Childhood Education & Care services to work with the community to access support services in the municipality**

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
	<b>22.</b> Support the development of a comprehensive list of support agencies that are available to assist Kindergartens, schools, educators and families in obtaining the correct support strategies for children/students.	Manager Community Sustainability  Team Leader Family & Children's Services	2012	All schools in the Municipality  Stawell & District Preschool Association  DEECD Specialist Children's Services  Scope, Noah's Arc & other Support Agencies  Wimmera Uniting Care	Support services list distributed to all schools, teachers and ECEC providers	<b>L</b>

Objective	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Council role/partnership	Outcome measure/performance indicator	Priority
	<b>23.</b> Support Wimmera Uniting Care to attract more Respite Carers and to “grow” Family Day Care in the municipality.	Manager Community Sustainability  Team Leader Family & Children’s Services	2012	Wimmera Uniting Care  DEECD	More Respite Carers and Family Day Care Educators in the municipality	<b>L</b>
	<b>24.</b> Work with Skene Street Specialist School Stawell community to assist in the promotion and implementation of a special needs playgroup at Skene Street Specialist School Stawell.	Manager Community Sustainability	TBA	DEECD  Skene Street Specialist Primary School Stawell  Families	Playgroup established and operating	<b>M</b>
	<b>25.</b> Councils Stawell ECEC services implementing a transition process for children moving onto Primary School and Outside School Hours Care from it’s long day care Kindergarten Program.	Team Leader Family & Children’s Services  Coordinator  Kindergarten Teacher  Educators	2014	Stawell & District Preschool Association  Schools  Families  Children	Taylor’s Gully to join the Stawell & District Early Childhood Network  Policy and procedures in place by 3 <sup>rd</sup> Term 2014	<b>M</b>

**Note; Priorities – H – High, M – Medium, L - Low**

## 15. Possible future Infrastructure needs for the municipality for Early Childhood Education and Care services

Local Government has a valuable role in planning for the future needs of its residents, visitors and businesses in the municipality. In term of the NGSC Municipal Early Years Plan there are expected to be some future infrastructure needs within the life of the 2012 – 2015 Plan;

- Council has identified the need for further expansion of the St Arnaud Children's Precinct in order to continue to provide the 3 year old Kindergarten program to the community from 2013 onwards due to the introduction of Universal Access by 2013.  
In order to provide for the introduction of Universal Access by 2013 preference has to be given to 4 year old Kindergarten programs. An additional Kindergarten room is required to continue to offer 3 year old children their Kindergarten program. The addition of another Kindergarten room will assist in providing an overflow for children needing child care before and after Kindergarten as the Long Day Care Centre is at capacity. Other early year's programs such as the valuable and award winning program "Little Nuggets" Mother Goose playgroup for vulnerable families would be able to continue to be run from the preferred and most suitable location of the Children's Precinct.  
Council will seek out grant opportunities to enable the needs of families of St Arnaud to be met in the future by building an additional room at Children's Precinct.
- Council may consider seeking further funding opportunities available in the future to work towards adding an additional room for the St Arnaud Children's Precinct. From 2012 there is one room that provides care for 12 children from the ages of birth to 3 years of age (previously this was up to 15 children now lowered to 12 due to the implementation of new staff to child ratios). There is ongoing demand for child care for this age group in the St Arnaud region. A new room that could cater for up to 12 additional children would enable the age group to be split into 0-2 years and 2-3 years to meet this demand. Currently the only other type of child care available in St Arnaud is through a limited number of private carers.
- From January 2012, all available children's rooms at Taylor's Gully Children's Centre have been utilized by the provision of long day care programs. From January 2014 this may also include the provision of a funded 4 year old Kindergarten program (TBC). The multi-purpose room that has previously been available to the community for use as a venue for playgroup, training sessions, meeting room and family meetings is now only available for one and a half to two days a week. Council may seek out future grant opportunities to apply for funding to build an additional room for use by community groups etc.

## 16. Related Issues for further investigation

Through the course of developing the Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 – 2015 and after discussions with stakeholders, working groups and community groups some possible ideas and projects that could be developed in the future are listed below;

- **Access to Early Learning Program** – project trialled in 2011/2012 in selected areas in Victoria including through CaFS Ballarat enables an early years Project Worker to work directly with vulnerable families known to Child Protection, Child First, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and families receiving Enhanced Maternal & Child Health service to access Kindergarten. The project focuses on working with the family to overcome barriers such as lack of transport, low literacy skills, low confidence in parenting skills to be supported in enrolling their children in a supportive Kindergarten environment. The Project Officer works with the family to give them the confidence and skills to enrol their child and to work through issues such as lack of transport to regularly attend Kindergarten and therefore have the best start their pre-primary education year(s).  
Northern Grampians Shire has many families across the municipality that are being supported by Enhanced Maternal & Child Health that would benefit from this additional service. The Family & Children's Services Team well placed to advise Council on whether any future opportunities arise to link into the program if future funding is rolled out across Victoria.
- **Proposed Regional Baby Sleep Clinic** – for families that require the assistance of trained supportive nursing staff in accessing a sleep program for babies that are not settling, the only option for day and overnight stays is to travel to metropolitan areas of Melbourne and Geelong. At present there is no program available in the Grampians region. The suggestion from the MEYPSG has been to investigate the option of encouraging the Tweddle or similar organisation to consider setting up a day stay clinic in the Grampians region so that distance is no longer an added obstacle for families in receiving assistance.
- **Quality Improvement Officer for Council's Children's Services** – many large private and community based organisations that operate long day care centres, kindergartens, family day care coordination units and other early childhood services employ a Quality Improvement Officer to develop programs, update and create new policies, mentor and provide training to educators and coordinators with up to date information about the new National and State Standards and Frameworks. As part of Council's Family and Children's Services Team a position could be created to enable the integrated development of each service of quality programs and care for all children and families that use Councils services.
- **Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Grants & Project opportunities** – in conjunction with outside organisations such as Wimmera Uniting Care and Grampians Community Health, Council will seek opportunities to apply for funding to assist agencies and organisations to implement strategies and programs that will support primary prevention and early intervention focused partnership projects aimed at reducing violence against women and their children.
- **Review of existing family toilet amenities in the Municipality** - it may be an good opportunity for Council when reviewing the existing family amenities and planning for future amenities, to take into account the needs of families and especially breastfeeding mothers that require a suitable and safe environment to feed their babies while away from their home. St Arnaud and Hall Gap currently do not have a suitable venue to breastfeed in private in the town area and well designed family room would be of great benefit to residents and visitors alike showcasing Northern Grampians Shire as a 'family friendly' Council.



## 17. Implementation Plan

Family and Children's Services Team will build on existing partnerships and develop new partnership bases that will include;

- Stawell Regional Health
- Grampians Community Health
- Budja Budja Health Services
- Stawell Early Learning Centre
- Pyrenees Grampians Primary Care Partnership
- Wimmera Uniting Care
- Centacare – Ararat/Ballarat
- CaFS – Ararat/Ballarat
- Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Taylor's Gully Children's Centre joining the Stawell & District Early Childhood Network that includes Stawell & District Preschool Association, Stawell Early Learning Centre and transition to primary school partnerships with Stawell West, Stawell 502, St Patricks, Concongella, Marnoo and Great Western Primary Schools.

A detailed Implementation Plan has been developed to assist Council, Council Officers and partners in the process of achieving the outcomes of the Municipal Early Years Plan 2012 – 2015.

The Family and Children's Services Team will hold bi-annual meetings to discuss, monitor and mark progress so far on the objectives implementation and report back to Council on progress and adjust set timelines depending on budget and partnerships.

Annual reporting on the progress of the MEYP objectives to Council in line with all other Council reporting cycles.

## 18. Evaluation and Review

In line with all annual reporting to the Executive Management Team Committee, the Manager of Community Sustainability will report to Councillors on the progress, the success of the objectives that have enabled objectives of the Municipal Early Years Plan to be met in full or in part and any obstacles that have hindered the implementation of the objectives.

Other areas that will need to be considered when conducting the bi-annual review include;

- The impact to the objectives and expected outcomes in the Municipal Early Years Plan due to any changes made to NGSC Council Plan 2009/2013 new Vision statement when the current Council Plan is reviewed,
- The review and update of NGSG Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2009/2013,
- Any policy changes from Federal and State Governments,
- Updated information on population predications, latest Census information expected to be available from July 2012, new ADEI results and new SEIFA data
- Monitor age range of Local Learning & Employment Networks – as their age range for target groups may come into the younger age bracket in the future.

## 19. Appendices

### 19.1 Mapping of ECEC & Support Services

There are many services and organisations in the region that are available to support and link ECEC services, educators, teachers and families to access services to be able to assist them in providing the best start in life for young children. Some of these organisations are listed below;

*Table 5 Mapping of ECEC & Support Services*

<b>Service type; Organisation/Operator</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Long Day Care;</b>		
Stawell Early Learning Centre – <i>Kids in Care</i>	0 – 6	<a href="mailto:elcstawell@kidsincare.com.au">elcstawell@kidsincare.com.au</a> 53584266
St Arnaud Children’s Precinct – NGSC	0 – 6	<a href="mailto:staccp@ngshire.vic.gov.au">staccp@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 54952666
Taylor’s Gully Children’s Centre - NGSC	0 – 6	<a href="mailto:taylorsgully@ngshire.vic.gov.au">taylorsgully@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 53589000
<b>Kindergarten;</b>		
Cooinda Kindergarten – <i>Stawell &amp; District Pre-school Association</i>	3 – 5	<a href="mailto:cooinda.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au">cooinda.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au</a> 53581249
Marrang Kindergarten – <i>Stawell &amp; District Pre-school Association</i>	3 - 5	<a href="mailto:marrang.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au">marrang.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au</a> 53582357
St Arnaud Kindergarten - NGSC	3 - 5	<a href="mailto:sta.kind@ngshire.vic.gov.au">sta.kind@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 54952666
Stawell Early Learning Centre – <i>Kids in Care (Non funded in 2012 – TBC funded 4 year old program from 2013)</i>	4 - 5	<a href="mailto:elcstawell@kidsincare.com.au">elcstawell@kidsincare.com.au</a> 53584266
Taylor’s Gully Children’s Centre – NGSC ( <i>TBC funded 4 year old program from 2014</i> )	4 - 5	<a href="mailto:taylor-gully@ngshire.vic.gov.au">taylor-gully@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 53589000
<b>Outside School Hours Care/Vacation Care;</b>		
Stawell West Stawell 502 - <i>Grampians Region YMCA</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:westvichildcare@ymca.org.au">westvichildcare@ymca.org.au</a> 53525273
St Arnaud Children’s Precinct (Vacation Care only) - NGSC	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:staccp@ngshire.vic.gov.au">staccp@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 54952666
<b>Antenatal Care;</b>		
Patrick Street Medical Centre		53587555
Stawell Medical Centre		<a href="mailto:info@stawellmedicalcentre.com.au">info@stawellmedicalcentre.com.au</a> 53581410
St Arnaud Medical Centre – <i>visiting EWHS midwives</i>		54951766
<b>Maternal &amp; Child Health;</b>		
Taylor’s Gully Children’s Centre, Stawell – NGSC	0 - 6	<a href="mailto:mch@ngshire.vic.gov.au">mch@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 53589060
St Arnaud Children’s Precinct, St Arnaud - NGSC	0 - 6	<a href="mailto:stamch@ngshire.vic.gov.au">stamch@ngshire.vic.gov.au</a> 54952666
<b>Kindergarten Field Officers;</b>		
<i>Wimmera Uniting Care</i>	3 - 6	<a href="http://www.wuc.org.au">www.wuc.org.au</a> 53587400
Koorie Student support services – <i>DHS</i>	3 - 6	53336669
<b>Inclusion &amp; Professional Support;</b>		
<i>Noah’s Ark Inc</i>	All ages	<a href="mailto:isa.wimmera@noahsarkinc.org.au">isa.wimmera@noahsarkinc.org.au</a> 53388854
<i>Noah’s Ark Specialist Equipment Program (SET)</i>	All ages	88238630

<b>Service type; Organisation/Operator</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Child Protection, Child First;</b>		
<i>Wimmera Uniting Care</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.wuc.org.au">www.wuc.org.au</a> 53587400
<b>Foster Care;</b>		
<i>Wimmera Uniting Care</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.wuc.org.au">www.wuc.org.au</a> 53587400
<b>Primary Schools &amp; Secondary Colleges;</b>		
Concongella Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:concongella.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">concongella.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53581811
Great Western Primary School - <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:great.western.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">great.western.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53562235
Halls Gap Primary School - <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:halls.gap.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">halls.gap.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53564235
Marnoo Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:marnoo.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">marnoo.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53592313
Navarre Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:navarre.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">navarre.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53574256
Skene Street Specialist School Stawell - <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 18	<a href="mailto:skene.street.sch.stawell@edumail.vic.gov.au">skene.street.sch.stawell@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53582448
St Arnaud Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:st.arnaud.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">st.arnaud.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 54951028
St Arnaud Secondary College – <i>DEECD</i>	12 -18	<a href="mailto:st.arnaud.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au">st.arnaud.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 54957811
St Patricks Primary School, St Arnaud – <i>Catholic Education</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:principal@spstarnaud.catholic.gov.au">principal@spstarnaud.catholic.gov.au</a> 54951038
St Patricks Primary School, Stawell – <i>Catholic Education</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:principal@spstawell.catholic.gov.au">principal@spstawell.catholic.gov.au</a> 53582493
Stawell 502 Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:stawell.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">stawell.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53581255
Stawell West Primary School – <i>DEECD</i>	5 - 12	<a href="mailto:stawell.west.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">stawell.west.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53581661
Stawell Secondary College – <i>DEECD</i>	12- 18	<a href="mailto:stawell.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au">stawell.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53581700
<b>HACC;</b>		
St Arnaud - <i>NGSC</i>	All ages	54951500
Stawell - <i>NGSC</i>	All ages	53587590
<b>Playgroups;</b>		
Glenorchy Playgroup – <i>volunteers</i>	0 - 5	<a href="http://www.playgroup.org.au">www.playgroup.org.au</a> 53590250
Great Western – <i>volunteers</i>	0 – 5	<a href="http://www.playgroup.org.au">www.playgroup.org.au</a> 53562427
Halls Gap/Pomonal Playgroup - <i>volunteers</i>	0 – 5	<a href="mailto:halls.gap.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">halls.gap.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53564235 <a href="mailto:pomonal.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">pomonal.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a> 53566292
St Arnaud Playgroup - <i>volunteers</i>	0 - 5	<a href="http://www.playgroup.org.au">www.playgroup.org.au</a> 54963254
Stawell Playgroup - <i>volunteers</i>	0 – 5	<a href="http://www.playgroup.org.au">www.playgroup.org.au</a> 53589000
Stawell – Scallan Street Playgroup - <i>volunteers</i>	0 - 5	53582118

<b>Service type; Organisation/Operator</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Library Services;</b>		
St Arnaud Library – <i>Wimmera Regional Library Services</i>	All ages	<a href="mailto:starnaud.library@wrlc.org.au">starnaud.library@wrlc.org.au</a> 54952188
Stawell Library – <i>Wimmera Regional Library Services</i>	All ages	<a href="mailto:stawell.library@wrlc.org.au">stawell.library@wrlc.org.au</a> 53581274
<b>Health Promotion;</b>		
<i>East Wimmera Health Services</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.ewhs.org.au">www.ewhs.org.au</a> 54772100
<i>Grampians Community Health</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.grampianscommunityhealth.org.au">www.grampianscommunityhealth.org.au</a> 53587400
<i>Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership</i>	All ages	<a href="mailto:gppcadmin@grampianscommunityhealth.org.au">gppcadmin@grampianscommunityhealth.org.au</a> 53526200
<i>Stawell Regional Health</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.srh.org.au">www.srh.org.au</a> 53588500
<i>Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative</i>	All ages	<a href="http://www.budjabudjacoop.org.au">www.budjabudjacoop.org.au</a> 53564751
<b>Leisure Services;</b>		
St Arnaud – <i>NGSC</i>	All ages	54951981
Stawell – <i>NGSC</i>	All ages	53582430
<b>Toy Library;</b>		
Stawell Toy Library – <i>Stawell Baptist Church Volunteers</i>	0 - 8	53582118
<b>Early Childhood Network;</b>		
Stawell & District Early Childhood Network – <i>Kathryn Richards</i>	4 - 6	53582357 <a href="mailto:cooinda.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au">cooinda.stawell.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au</a>

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- AECEQA Guide to the National Quality Framework, October 2011  
 AECEQA Guide to the National Quality Standard, October 2011  
 Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development DEECD, September 2008  
 Census, 2006  
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 Choosing and using quality child care – a guide for families, NCAC 2009  
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 Early Childhood Community Profiles, DEECD 2010  
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 M Harrington, 'Early childhood programs – an overview of the research', Background Note, No. SP010, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2005  
 NGSC Council Plan 2009 - 2013  
 NGSC Municipal Early Years Plan 2008 – 2011  
 NGSC Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009 – 2013  
 NGSC Sustainable Living Strategy, 2011  
 Total Environment Assessment Model for Early Child Development, World Health Authority, June 2007  
 Victoria in Future Population Projections, DSE, Early Childhood Community Profiles DEECD, 2010

### 19.3 Acronyms

ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
CaFS	Child and Family Services Ballarat Inc
DEECD	Department Early Education And Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EWHS	East Wimmera Health Service
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
HACC	Home and Community Care
IRSD	Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage
M & C H	Maternal & Child Health
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MEYP	Municipal Early Years Plan
MEYPSG	Municipal Early Years Plan Steering Group
MPH&WP	Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
NGSC	Northern Grampians Shire Council
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
QIAS	Quality Improvement and Accreditation System
TBC	To Be Confirmed
VCAMS	Victorian Child and Adolescent Outcomes Framework
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards
VEYLDF	Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
VPHAP	Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program
WHO	World Health Authority
WUC	Wimmera Uniting Care

### 19.4 Websites

[www.acecqu.gov.au](http://www.acecqu.gov.au)

[www.budjabudjacoop.org.au](http://www.budjabudjacoop.org.au)

[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

[www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

[www.grampianscommunityhealth.org.au](http://www.grampianscommunityhealth.org.au)

[www.grampianspyreneespcp.org.au](http://www.grampianspyreneespcp.org.au)

[www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au)

[www.ngshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au)

[www.rdv.vic.gov.au/victorian-regions/grampians/centralhighlands](http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/victorian-regions/grampians/centralhighlands)

[www.wimmeraunitingcare.org.au](http://www.wimmeraunitingcare.org.au)

